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On the Diachronic Development of the Syntax of Clauses in the English Language

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The English language has gone through significant changes from Old English (450–1150) through Middle English (c. 1150–1500) and Early Modern English (1500-1750) to Modern English (1750–present) by becoming an analytic language from a synthetic language rich in inflections. Instead of inflections Present-Day English makes intensive use of prepositions and auxiliary verbs and depends upon word order to indicate syntactic relations in a sentence. The present paper discusses how English advanced from the free word order of Old English to the relatively fixed word order that is used in Present-Day English by touching upon noun declension, inversion and fronting, quoting examples from literature and popular culture.

Keywords: Old English, Middle English, Present-Day English, word order, inflection, inversion, fronting.

1 Introduction

Throughout its history English changed from a synthetic, inflecting language to an analytic language dependent on word order and prepositions for indicating the relationships among words in a sentence. There are several reasons for that (Millward 1989, 80 and 141, Baugh and Gable 1978, 55). One of the standard explanations is that exposed to the varying inflectional systems of three different languages (English, French and Scandinavian), inflections started to drop due to the necessity of adopting hundreds and even thousands of loanwords from two other inflecting languages, Old Norse and French, into English. The simplest solution was just to leave off inflections entirely. Thus, both French and Old Norse tended to support inflectional loss in English. Another important contributing factor to the loss of inflections in English was the phonological development of English, i.e., the reduction of all unstressed final vowels to /ə/. Thus, the information formerly carried by inflections was shifted to word order. By Old English (OE) times (approximately the period between 450–1150) the language had already developed relatively fixed word orders that indicated the function of words in a clause. Similarly, the increasing

use of prepositions and particles helped carry most of the syntactical information formerly conveyed through inflections.

The primary aim of the paper is to explore the diachronic development of the syntax within clauses in English from Old English through Middle English (ME, approximately the period of 1150–1500) and Early Modern English (EMnE, approximately the period of 1500–1800) to Present-Day English (PDE, from 1800 to present) by focussing on changes of word order in clauses, touching upon noun declension, including the category of case marked by inflections, the loss of which resulted in a relatively fixed word order in English. Furthermore, I will also give an insight into inversion and fronting as used in literature and popular culture. However, a complete discussion of this topic is beyond the scope of this paper and requires further research.

2 The Development of English from a Synthetic Language to an Analytic One

Unlike Present Day English, Old English was a synthetic language indicating the relations of words in a sentence largely by means of inflections. OE nouns were inflected for three genders (masculine, feminine and neuter), four cases: nominative (marking the subject), accusative (marking the direct object), genitive (possessive) and dative (marking the indirect object), and two numbers (singular and plural). In fact, there was also a fifth case, instrumental (for agency, instrument, or means), which was not different in form from the dative (and for this reason, in some books, the instrumental is not recognized as a separate case).

In addition to being inflected for gender, case and number, each OE noun belonged to one of several different classes, the vocalic *a*-stem masculine (e.g. *hund* 'dog') and neuter nouns (e.g. *ścip* 'boat', *hūs* 'house') and the vocalic *ō*-stem feminine nouns (e.g. *ġiefu* 'gift', *rād* 'ride') often called *strong nouns* and the consonantal *-an* declension, both masculine (e.g. *mōna* 'moon') and feminine (e.g. *sunne* 'sun'), the so called *weak nouns*, the remnants of which are *ox – oxen, brother – brethren* in PDE (Millward 1989, 82, Baugh and Cable 1978, 55–61).

However, nouns were not distinguished formally in all the cases. In most declensions 2 or even 3 forms were homonymous. In strong nouns the accusative was always identical to the nominative in the plural, but also in the singular for many classes of nouns, whereas weak masculine and feminine nouns had the same *-an* inflections in singular accusative, genitive and dative and plural nominative and accusative as illustrated by the strong *a*-stem masculine *stān* 'stone' and the weak *-an* declension masculine *nama* 'name' (Millward 1989, 82, Baugh and Cable 1978, 55–61). Consider the following:

Singular	N stān	nam-a
	G stān-es	nam-a
	D stān-e	nam-an
	A stān	nam-an
Plural	N stān-as	nam-an
	G stān-a	nam-an
	D stān-um	nam-ena
	A stān-as	nam-um

As mentioned above, fundamental changes were brought about by the Middle English period in the English language. Many Old English grammatical features were simplified or disappeared. In the case system of nouns, the weakness of the accusative must have contributed to its eventual loss. As for the dative case, by late OE, the *-um* of dative endings (pl. dative *namum* 'name', pl. dative *brycgum* 'bridge') had become *-un*. At about the same time, all the vowels of inflectional endings were reduced to /ə/, spelled *e*. Thus, *-um, -an* and *-en* became /ən/, usually spelled *-en*. Later, this final *-n* was also lost in most, though not all, noun endings. Finally, by late Middle English, final inflectional *-e* had dropped (Millward 1989, 142, Baugh and Cable 1978, 159–161). The result was only three different forms for nearly all nouns – essentially the state we have in English today. After the radical inflectional losses that characterised Middle English, in Early Modern English only the distinction between singular and plural remained, and cases were reduced to two – common case and possessive (genitive) case just like in PDE. The reduction in the number of case endings resulted in a loss in the distinction of grammatical gender as well. (Millward 1989, 227, Baugh and Cable 1978, 159–162, Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 457). Compare the declension of the former OE strong masculine *ā*-stem noun *stǭn* 'stone' and the former OE *n*-stem masculine weak noun *nama* 'name' in ME:

Singular	N stǭn	nām-e
	G stǭn-	nām-e
	D stǭn-(e)	nām-e
	A stǭn	nām-e
Plural	N stǭn-es	nām-en
	G stǭn-es	nām-ene
	D stǭn-es	nām-en
	A stǭn-es	nām-en

Of these categories it seems to be necessary to examine case in PDE, which – as defined by Huddleston and Pullum (2002, 455) – "applies to a system of inflectional

forms of a noun that serve to mark the function of a noun phrase (NP) relative to the construction containing it". Compare, for example:

	Function of NP	Case of pronoun
(1a) *I* slept soundly.	subject of clause	nominative
(1b) Please help *me.*	object of clause	accusative
(1c) Where is *my* bag?	subj-det of NP	genitive

The pronouns are head of NPs functioning in clause structure: the nominative *I* marks the subject, while accusative *me* marks the object. The primary function of the genitive is to mark one NP as a dependent in the structure of a larger NP. Huddleston and Pullum analyse the dependent NP as subject determiner within the matrix NP.

In PDE the contrast between nominative and accusative is found with only a handful of pronouns. At earlier stages of the language the contrast applied to the whole class of nouns, but the inflectional distinction has been lost except for a few pronouns, the personal pronouns *he/him* and the interrogative/relative pronoun *who/whom.*

Huddleston and Pullum (2002, 456) use the term 'plain case' for the form that neutralises the distinction between the nominative and the accusative, contrasting simply with the genitive:

	Function of NP	Case of pronoun
(2a) The doctor slept soundly.	subject of clause	plain
(2b) Please help the doctor.	object of clause	plain
(2c) the doctor's bag	subj-det of NP	genitive

Quirk et al. (1985, 318) distinguish between two cases of nouns as well: the unmarked common case and the marked genitive case. However, for pronouns they identify subjective and objective cases: *I/me, who/whom.* In their view, the normative grammatical tradition associates the subjective pronouns with the nominative case of pronouns in inflectional languages such as Latin, and the objective case with the oblique cases (especially accusative and dative cases) in such languages. Hence the subjective form appears not only in subject position, but in that of subject complement, as in *It's I/me* or *It was she/her who came,* with the accusative being more informal (Quirk et al. 1985, 338).

The situation with the interrogative or relative *who* is significantly different from that obtaining with the personal pronouns. Personal pronouns have the nominative as formal and the accusative as informal, but with *who* the alternations are typically between accusative *whom* as formal and nominative *who* as informal or relatively neutral (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 464), e.g.:

(3a) *Whom* did you meet?   *Who* did you meet?
(3b) those *whom* we consulted   those *who* we consulted

As mentioned above, the earlier case system of English distinguished not only nominative, accusative and genitive, but also dative (a case that characteristically serves to mark the indirect object and the object of certain prepositions). The loss of inflectional endings has resulted in the dative dropping out of the system altogether, for it is not even retained in the personal pronouns (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 464).

(4a) We took him to the zoo.   (Direct object: accusative case)
(4b) We showed him the animal.   (Indirect object: accusative case

As a result of the inflectional losses described above, the word order served to mark the syntactic functions of subject, and direct and indirect object in a clause by the EMnE period. Next let us examine the diachronic changes in word order in clauses in English.

3 Word Order in Old English

As stated by Millward (1989, 94–95), in OE there were six theoretically possible orders in which the clausal elements occurred: SVO, SOV, VSO, VOS, OSV and OVS, the first three being the most common. However, the order of elements was by no means random, but was governed by rules. The (a) OSV order and the (b) AVS order, which also occurred, are used in PDE mainly for focus or emphasis. Consider:

(5a) ðæt wat ælc mon. ('That knows every man.')
(5b) And egeslice spæc Gregorius be ðam, ('And sternly spoke Gregorius about that.')

However, in dependent clauses, the typical order was SOV, which is virtually impossible in PDE. The order VSO was the rule in (a) interrogative clauses and (b) imperative clauses with an expressed subject and in (c) declarative clauses preceded by an adverbial.

(6a) Hæfst ðu hafocas? ('Have you hawks?')
(6b) Ne sleh þū, Abraham, þīn āgen bearn. ('Not slay you, Abraham, your own son.')
(6c) Ðā cwæþ se fæder tō his þēowum… ('Then said the father to his servant...')

Of these three types of constructions, PDE regularly has auxiliary-subject inversion (a) in interrogative clauses and (b) it is obligatory after a preceding negative adverbial:

(7a) Why do you say that? Can you play backgammon?
(7b) Never have I seen such a mess.

In fact, word order in OE was in many ways similar to that of PDE. In particular, the subject usually preceded the verb, so the favourite order in independent declarative clauses was SVO, as it remained in PDE. As will be shown below, in PDE unconventional phrasing, such as the use of subject-auxiliary inversion, subject–dependent inversion and fronting an object, a complement or an adverbial is used in declarative clauses for effective, rhetorical purposes, frequently occurring in formal contexts and literature but occasionally also in everyday speech.

4 Word Order in Middle English

As pointed out above, the Middle English period was marked by significant changes in the English language, making English from a highly inflected language to an extremely analytic one due to the rapid and drastic loss of inflections (cf. Millward 1989, 162–63, Baugh and Cable 1978, 159–163). We find the continuation of some OE patterns different from those of PDE, but the trend was toward modern word order and by the end of ME, PDE patterns were firmly established.

For affirmative independent clauses, the SVO pattern was, as it has always been in English, the most common. Unlike OE, however, the SVO pattern was frequent after (a) adverbials and in (b) dependent clauses, including (c) indirect questions as well:

(8a) In the contre of Ethyop *they slen here childeryn* byforn here goddys. ('In the country of Ethiopia they slay their children in front of their gods.')
(8b) Þe taverne ys þe scole of þe dyevle *huere his deciples studieþ*. ('The tavern is the school of the devil where his disciples study.')
(8c) Men askede hire *how scho myghte swa lyffe*. ('People asked her how she could thus live.')

The SOV pattern, which is impossible in PDE, can at least occasionally be found throughout the entire ME period. The OSV and CSV patterns were a fairly common means of emphasising (a) the direct object or (b) the complement, respectively:

(9a) This bok I haue mad and wretyn. ('This book I have made and written.')
(9b) Merchaunt he was in his Zonghede. ('Merchant he was in his youth.')

Another common variant was the (O)VS pattern:

(10a) Clothis have they none but of skynnys of bestis.
('Clothes have they none except of the skins of beast.')

As was pointed out by Millward (1989, 240), most of the PDE patterns of subject (S), verb (V), and object/complement (O) were established by the end of ME. In EMnE, especially by the 17th century, the SVO pattern was regular in both independent and dependent declaratives clauses, as in *I confess nothing, nor I deny nothing*. It is worth mentioning here that it was quite common in the Old English and Middle English times for a clause to contain more than one negation, which was lost in the Modern English period (Baugh and Cable 1978, 248).

The SOV pattern was still an available option during most of the EMnE period, for pronoun objects and for emphasis, particularly in dependent clauses, as in *As the law should them direct*. Just as in PDE, the VSO pattern was regular in (a) open-ended questions and (b) conditional clauses:

(11a) What desireth God of me? Why askst thou?
(11b) Were he my kinsman… It should be thus with him.

Unlike PDE, imperatives in EMnE frequently had an expressed subject, as in the following example: *Go, go, my servant, take thou Troilus' horse.* The subject-verb inversion that was so common in Old English and that is encountered frequently in Present-Day English is rarely found in ME. In fact, it declined substantially.

5 Word Order in Present-Day English

As seen above, throughout the history of English, the SVO word order has always been the favourite for declarative statements in independent clauses. As far as interrogatives in PDE are concerned, both (a) closed interrogatives and (b) non-subject open-interrogatives require subject-auxiliary inversion (Quirk et al. 1985, 806–27, Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 856).

(12a) Did they see her?
(12b) Which one did they choose?

However, besides interrogatives inversion is also used in various other constructions in PDE. Since EMnE the language has lost the option of VSO pattern after a non-negative adverbial. PDE does not use SVO order in a clause that begins with (a) a negative adverbial or even (b) a negative object; subject–auxiliary inversion to VSO (the movement of an auxiliary verb to a position in front of the subject of a main clause) is often required (Huddleston and Pullum, 2002: 96, Quirk et al., 1985: 779), as illustrated in:

(13a) Nowhere *does he* mention my book.
(13b) Not one of them *did he* find useful.

Besides, as was mentioned above, there are several other adverbials and determiners which are negative in meaning but not in form, causing subject–operator inversion when they are positioned initially, such as *seldom, rarely, scarcely, hardly little* and *few*, characteristically in literary and oratorical style (Quirk et al. 1985, 780–81), as in:

(14a) Rarely *does crime pay* so well as many people think.
(14b*) Scarcely ever has the British nation suffered* so much obloquy.
(14c) Little *did I expect* such enthusiasm for so many.

Nor and *neither* used as negative additive adverbs also require subject–operator inversion when they introduce a clause, a feature which they share with a negative adjunct in the examples above, and they generally presuppose a previous negative clause (Quirk et al. 1985, 937, Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 1309), as in:

(15a) The Germans haven't yet replied*;* nor/neither *have the French*.

Similarly, subject–operator inversion is used after *only*, which behaves just like a negative element and after initial *so/such* as well. For example,

(16a) Only two of them *did he find* useful.
(16b) So little time *did we have* that we had to cut corners.
(16c) Such a fuss *would he make* that we'd all agree.

Subject–operator inversion with optative *may*, which expresses (a) hope or wish also generally belongs to formal style. In fact, wish or hope is also conveyed by (b)

the formulaic subjunctive, which also tends to be formal and rather old-fashioned (Quirk et al. 1985, 224, Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 944). Compare:

(17a) *May God* bless you. Long *may the queen* live.
(17b) God *bless* you. Long *live* the queen.

Subject–auxiliary inversion also occurs in subordinate clauses of condition with the omission of *if* and in concession cluses, especially in rather formal usage (Quirk et al. 1985, 1382, Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 753):

(18a) *Were she* alive today, she would grieve at the changes.
(18b) *Had I known,* I would have gone to her.
(18c) *Even had the building been* open, we would not have entered.

As noted by Huddleston and Pullum (2002, 857), exclamative clauses usually have (a) the exclamatory phrase–subject–verb order. However, (b) subject postponing and (c) subject-auxiliary inversion are also possible, as illustrated in:

(19a) How polite they are! What a disaster it was!
(19b) How great would there be *their embarrassment* if the error was detected.
(19c) How happy *would he be* if he could see her once more.

In relatively formal style inversion may also occur following the preposing of a wide variety of elements (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 96, Carter and McCarthy 2006, 778–82), as in:

(20a) Thus *had they parted* the previous evening.
(20b) Tourism will continue to grow. Particularly *is this the case* of Queensland.
(20c) Many another poem *could I speak* of which sang itself into my heart.
(20d) Well *did I remember* the crisis of emotion into which he was plunged that night.

Besides subject–auxiliary inversion, there is another type of inversion, the so-called subject–dependent inversion, i.e., inversion of the subject and another dependent of the verb, in (a) CVS and (b) AVS, placing emphasis on the subject complement or the adverbial (Quirk et al. 1985, 1379–80, Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 1385–90, Carter and McCarthy 2006, 778–82). However, as noted by both Quirk et al. and Huddleston and Pullum, this type of inversion can be mannered in tone, often poetic and commonly used in narrative contexts. As examples consider:

(21a) *Especially remarkable* was her oval face.
(21b) *In a distant grave* lies his beloved body.

Preposing adverbials in ASV is a common phenomenon in ordinary informal speech as well (Quirk et al. 1985, 1380) as shown in:

(22a) *Here* comes my brother.
(22b) *Down* came the rain.
(22c) *Up* went the flag.

However, they more frequently occur in written, formal style such as:

(23a) *Slowly out of the hangar* rolled the gigantic aircraft.
(23b) *There at the summit* stood the castle in all its medieval splendour.

Preposing a clausal element, such as a complement or adverbial has pragmatic constraints: the preposed element is discourse-old while the postposed element is discourse new. (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 1386–87).

In existential sentences with *there,* typically followed by intransitive verbs, inverted word order also serves to bring something on to the discoursal stage (Quirk et al. 1985, 1408), Examples, characteristic of literary style, include:

(24a) *There rose* in his imagination *grand visions of a world empire*.
(24b) *There exist a number of similar medieval crosses* in different parts of the country.

However, such inversion may occur in informal style as well as:

(25a) I opened the door and *there stood Michael*, all covered in mud.
(25b) She looked out and *there was Pamela*, walking along arm in arm with Goldie.

The construction *Here/There* + BE + Subject is used as a stylistic device for presenting a personal narrative in a vivid way (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 1390).

(26a) [viewing a photograph] *Here's/There's me*, when I was six.
(26b) *Here's/There's the money* I owe.

The expressions *Here* + Subject + BE and *There* + Subject + BE with a personal pronoun as subject and with the adverbial being fronted are commonly used to draw attention to the presence of somebody or something (Quirk et al. 1985, 512), as given in:

(27a) *Here it is*, just where I left it.
(27b) *There she is*, by the phone box.

Besides subject–auxiliary inversion and subject–dependent inversion, fronting. i.e., moving an element of the clause into initial position often occurs both in informal spoken PDE and in formal style, especially "in the heightened language of rather mannered rhetoric, including the strenuous colourfulness of journalistic writing" (Quirk et al. 1985, 1377–79). Fronting typically involves moving objects, complements or adjuncts to front position in a clause, which, in unmarked word order, is typically occupied by the subject in PDE.

The marked (untypical) word order may be used for a variety of purposes, such as introducing new topics, distinguishing between new and old information, flagging or highlighting the importance of something, foregrounding some things and backgrounding others. In fact, the OSV and ASV order was a common phenomenon in both OE and ME. Consider the following examples for (a) OSV and (b) ASV in PDE (Quirk et al. 1985, 1377–79, Carter and McCarthy 2006, 778–82):

(28a) *Soup* are you making? Vow, lovely. *His face* not many admired while *his character* still fewer could praise.
(28b) *Without my glasses* I can't see anything. *Defiantly* they have spoken but *submissively* they will accept my terms.

Even (a) subject complements, (b) object complements and (c) objects of prepositional verbs may be fronted for focus or contrast, especially in spoken language. However, this kind of fronting is not confined to colloquial speech, it is very common in conventional written style as well (Carter and McCarthy 2006, 778–82, Quirk et al. 1985, 1377–79), as in:

(29a) Mm, *my very first car*, that was. *Traitor* he has become and *traitor* we shall call him.
(29b) *'Ray the Bookie'* we used to call him.
(29c) *The other list* we can look at later. *To this list* may be added ten further items of importance.

Occasionally a non-finite predicate, i.e., an infinitive predicate, an *ed*-predicate or an *ing*-predicate also occurs in initial position to give end-focus to the subject, which is very common in journalism (cf. Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 1385–86, Carter and McCarthy 2006, 778–82, Quirk et al. 1985, 1378–79).

(30a) I had said he would come down and *come down* he did.
(30b) Also *billed* to appear as a special mystery guest is Vivacious Val.
(30c) *Coming* to Belfast this month are The Breeders and The Levellers.

Occasionally, an auxiliary and a lexical verb may be fronted, which typically occurs in spoken language (Carter and McCarthy 2006, 782):

(31) Why didn't you phone your mother? *Been really panicking* she has.

However, we can find examples for it in informal style as well, such as *Sitting in the garden I've been, all morning* (Carter and McCarthy 2006, 782).

As far as objects are concerned, since OE times, when both a direct and an indirect object are present in a clause, English has preferred the order IO – DO. Of the two types of object, the direct object occurs in both monotransitive and ditransitive clauses, whereas the indirect object occurs only in ditransitive ones. As defined by Huddleston and Pullum (2002, 244–45), "the direct object expresses the patient while the indirect object is characteristically associated with the semantic role of recipient in clause structure". In languages with richer case systems than English, such as German, direct and indirect objects are characteristically marked by the accusative and the dative case, respectively. As was mentioned above, English has lost its earlier dative case, so that the two types of object are somewhat more alike than in such languages.

The relative order of the two objects is fixed, with IO preceding DO. If we switch the order of the two NPs, we change their functions, yielding a clause with a quite different meaning or else an anomaly (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 248):

(32a) They offered all the overseas students one of the experienced tutors.
                                                                        [IO – DO]
They offered one of the experienced tutors all the overseas students.   [IO – DO]
(32b) He gave Sue the key.   [IO – DO]
*He gave the key Sue.   [anomalous]

In the latter example the switch results in anomaly, because in the great majority of such clauses the IO is human (or at least animate) and thus an inanimate IO is anomalous.

As noted by Huddleston and Pullum (2002, 248), some varieties of English, particularly BrE varieties, allow the order DO – IO when both objects are personal pronouns, as in *He gave it her* rather than the more widespread *He gave her it*.

However, when both DO and IO are pronouns, it would be usual to replace the latter by a PP with *to* (Quirk et al. 1985, 1396). Compare, for example:

(33a) She gave it her.
(33b) She gave it to her.

In fact, most ditransitive clauses have alternants with a single object and a PP complement with *to* or *for* as head:

(34a) I sent Sue a copy.   I sent a copy to Sue.
(34b) I ordered Sue a copy.   I ordered a copy for Sue.

Eventive objects represent a special type of ditransitive construction (Quirk et al. 1985, 1396). The order of the two objects depends on whether we put the focal emphasis on (a) the activity or (b) on a human participant. Consider the following examples:

(35a) We paid them a visit.
(35b) We paid a visit to some old friends.

As the examples above show, PDE frequently uses both types of inversion, i.e., the subject–auxiliary inversion and subject–dependent inversion and fronting as well for various reasons, primarily to place emphasis on certain clausal elements. Nevertheless, such clause constructions differ syntactically from the most basic, or canonical clause types, SV, SVC, SVA, SVO, SVOC, SVOA, SVOO (Huddleston and Pullum 2002, 46–50, 1365–67). The rearrangement of clausal elements serves to add emphasis and to give special effect. Although inversion is a common phenomenon in English sentences, it is not so much used in everyday speech, but it is more often found in written English and in formal style. Consequently, it is generally used in literature for emphasis or for special effect.

6 Inversion in literature and popular culture

The use of inversion is an important stylistic technique in literature, both in prose and poetry. Inversion is defined as follows (Literary Devices 2023):

> Inversion involves reversing the usual word order of a sentence to create a different effect or

emphasis. This can involve placing the verb before the subject or using a different word order to create a more dramatic or poetic effect. Inversion can be used to create emphasis, suspense, or to draw attention to a particular word or phrase.

In fact, in literature the term *anastrophe* is more commonly used for inversion (Baldick 2001, 36; Wikimedia Foundation 2024). It comes from Greek, meaning 'a turning back or about' and is a figure of speech in which the normal word order of the subject, the verb, and the object is changed, emphasizing the displaced word or phrase.

Writers purposefully rearrange clausal elements in a non-traditional order to achieve some special artistic effects. It allows them to organize thoughts in an interesting way, to lay an emphasis on certain ideas and to make the reader pay more attention to the foregrounded elements. It can be illustrated by the following examples taken from a novel titled *For my daughters* (1994) written by a contemporary American author, Barbara Delinsky, who very often uses unconventional phrasing, including (a) subject–dependent inversion such as fronted adverbials, typically expressed by a PP or an AdvP, or a subject complement realised by an AdjP, (b) subject–auxiliary inversion, most frequently with a phrase or clause of negative or restrictive meaning, conditional clauses with the omission of *if* or after the negator *nor* and *neither* or (c) fronting the complementation of a noun or the complementation of a verb or the verb itself without using inversion for emphasis:

(36a) *With that thought* came the realisation that she hadn't yet seen the day's mail. (32)
Straight ahead and alone was a sleeping loft. (103)
Along with mellowness came infinite patience. (161)
Inside were portraits. (98)
Warm and fuzzy was the kind of kiss that was so gentle and sweet you wanted to melt. (245)
(36b) *Rarely* did a week go by when he wasn't in touch with the research station. (89)
Only recently had Leah come to understand that. (33)
Only when she had both bags did she head for the door. (50)
Only through passion could she say all she felt. (176)
Had I been of my daughters' generation, I would never have returned to the city with Nick. (155)
Nor did talk of moving to New York do anything to dampen the feeling. (245)
He didn't balance the book. *Neither* did my mother. (328)
(36c) At that moment, *on that matter* she had no doubt (106)
A sad day it was when she'd closed the place down. (156)

Cold we don't need. *Wind* we do, as long as it's gentle. (218)
On their far side, she stopped. (114)
So in love I was with him by this time. (219)
He hadn't planned asking but *there* it was. (217)

In her novels Delinsky also uses the reversal of the lexical verb and the subject, as in *Come fall she would have a job* (241), or preposing an auxiliary in exclamations, e.g. *Vow, did she love those stories* (245). In fact, stylistic inversion used by writers in Modern English cannot be regarded as a violation of the norms of standard English but as an expressive means of the language creating a variety of rhetorical effects.

Used as a stylistic device, inversion is prevalent not only in prose but in poetry as well. As defined by Baldick (2001, 129), "inversion of word-order is a common form of poetic licence allowing a poet to preserve the rhyme scheme or the metre of a verse line, or to place special emphasis on particular words". The term *poetic licence* describes "the freedom an artist or writer has to change details, distort facts, or ignore the usual rules – especially if the art they produce is better as a result". (Vocabulary. com 2025). For example, in both his poems and his plays, Shakespeare (1564–1616) often rearranges clausal elements to create dramatic effect. The following patterns of stylistic inversion can be identified in his sonnets: (a) the object is placed in clause-initial position, (b) the adverbial is placed in initial position with subject–verb inversion or subject–auxiliary verb inversion, (c) the predicate is placed before the subject and d) the non-finite verb precedes the auxiliary verb, with the word order in (a) and (b) being the most common. In fact, inversion enabled him to follow the specific rhythm and rhyme scheme required in this form of poetry and to add emotional colouring to it. In fact, sonnets are traditionally used to convey the idea of love. Consider the following examples for inversion and fronting in Shakespeare's sonnets (Kerrigan 1995, 77–152):

(37a) *Full many a glorious morning* have I seen (Sonnet 33)
Him have I lost; thou hast both him and me (Sonnet 134)
*But no such ros*es see I in her cheeks (Sonnet 130)
So *him* I lose through my unkind abuse (Sonnet 134)
Two loves I have, of comfort and despair (Sonnet 144)
Me from myself thy cruel eye hath taken (Sonnet 133)
This silence for my sin you did impute (Sonnet 83)
Three April perfumes in three hot Junes burned (Sonnet 104)
(37b) *With virtuous wish* would bear your living flowers (Sonnet 16)
Not from the stars do I my judgment pluck (Sonnet 14)
In other accents do this praise confound (Sonnet 69)

In process of the seasons have I seen (Sonnet 104)
Herein lives wisdom, beauty, and increase (Sonnet 11)
Three April perfumes in three hot Junes burned (Sonnet 104)
In so profound abysm I throw all care (Sonnet 112)
But *from thine eyes* my knowledge I derive (Sonnet 14)
And from the forlorn world his visage hide (Sonnet 33)
In me thou see'st the twilight of such day (Sonnet 73)
(37c) *Gentle* thou art, and therefore to be won (Sonnet 41)
Better becomes the gray cheeks of the east *(Sonnet 132)*
Past cure I am, now reason is past care (Sonnet 147)
(37d) *Suspect* I may, yet not directly tell (Sonnet 144)

As even these few examples show, the language used by Shakespeare, referred to as Early Modern English, dated from around 1500, was in many respects very close to the language that is used today.

Roughly 200 years later, John Keats (1795–1821), one of the best-known poets of Romanticism, a representative of the Early Modern English period and a great admirer of Shakespeare, also made use of the poetic technique of inversion and fronting in his odes and sonnets. Consider the examples in italics in Keats' poem titled "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer" (1816) (Bullet and Gittings 1974, 35):

Much *have I travell'd* in the realms of gold
And many *goodly states and kingdoms seen*;
Round many western islands *have I been*
Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.
Oft of one wide expanse *had I been told*
That deep-browed Homer ruled as his demesne;
Yet *did I never breathe* its pure serene
Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold:
Then *felt I* like some watcher of the skies
When a new planet swims into his ken;

On the one hand, the unconventional rearranging of clausal elements helps Keats to maintain the rhyme schemes and metrical patterns in his sonnet, which contributes to its the melodic nature. On the other hand, it captivates the reader and enhances the meaning or emotion the poet is trying to achieve.

Besides literature, anastrophe also occurs in popular culture, like films. A good example for that is the language used by Yoda, one of the most iconic and wise characters from the *Star Wars* series, who uses an unusual speech pattern inverting

the typical English syntax, which highlights his intelligence and allows for his wise words to stand out to the audience. Much of this wisdom is captured in wise Yoda quotes, some of which have even found their way into everyday speech. Of the most common inverted sentence patterns used in OE and ME, the (a) OSV, (b) CSV, (c) AVS and (d) VS(A) patterns can be identified in Yoda's use of inverted syntax. Consider the following examples (Parade 2024):

(38a) *Patience* you must have my young Padawan.
Your path you must decide.
The dark side I sense in you.
A different game you should play.

(38b) *Truly wonderful,* the mind of a child is.
Smaller in number are we, but larger in mind.
Powerful you have become.
The greatest teacher, failure is.

(38c) *On many long* journeys have I gone"
Soon will I rest, yes, forever sleep. Earned it I have.
Out of acceptance comes wisdom.

(38d) *Happens* to every guy sometimes this does.
Named must your fear be before *banish* it you can.
Close your mouth and *open* your ears, you must.

Even these few examples demonstrate that inversion, also known as anastrophe, is not only a device commonly used by writers or poets but is gaining ground in popular culture as well. By deviating from the normal word order, authors achieve emphasis that creates a special effect on the reader or the viewer. In fact, the word order used by Yoda shows a lot of similarities to the inverted sentence patterns so characteristic of the language in which Shakespeare wrote.

7 Conclusion

As has been seen in the above analysis, word order in Old English was more flexible than in modern English, due to the fact that OE had a rich inflectional system. However, most of the inflections that characterised Old English and the early period

of Middle English had been lost by the time of Early Modern English. The base word order of Old English was SVO, with the occasional appearance of the VSO, SOV, OSV and OVS patterns. The SVO pattern dominated in the main clauses while the SOV pattern was common in subordinate or embedded clauses.

Middle English was characterised by the decline of inflections and the simplification of the case system in nouns, which had an impact on the word order. SVO was the dominant word order in Middle English in both main and embedded clauses and has continued to do so until today. The SOV pattern still appeared in Early Middle English, but it had completely disappeared from the language by the Modern English period. Since EMnE, the language has lost the option of the VSO pattern after a nonnegative adverbial or object. PDE cannot use the SVO pattern in a clause that begins with a negative adverbial or a negative form or meaning; subject-auxiliary inversion is now required, which is typically used in formal, literary style, such as in *Never had they seen so many people in the village* or *Not a single word did he say.* Subject–auxiliary inversion also occurs in subordinate clauses of condition and concession, especially in rather formal usage. (E.g., *Were that to be happen we would be in a very difficult situation, Had I known I would have gone to her.*) The other kind of inversion, reversal of subject and verb, used mainly in the CVS and AVS patterns occurs in PDE when emphasis is placed on the subject complement, as in *A thorough rogue was James Bacharach*, or the adverbial, as in *Under the bed were the children's toys* or *The following morning came the news of her father's arrest*, being also primarily characteristic of written formal English. For emphasis or focus fronting is also frequently used in written literary and formal contexts, especially in journalism, but in informal spoken English as well. The fronted element is typically an adjunct (*He might agree under pressure: willingly he never would*), a subject complement (*Faint grew the sound of the bell*), an object (*This one she accepted*) or a predication (*There is no greater honour than to serve them and serve them they will*).

Since OE times, when both a direct and an indirect object are present in a clause, the indirect object has usually preceded the direct object. Like in present-day German, in OE direct objects took the accusative case and indirect objects the dative case both for nouns and pronouns, the latter completely disappearing in Modern English even for pronouns (*We took him to the zoo, We showed him the animals*).

As noted above, inversion (also referred to as anastrophe) is also a literary device used by poets, writers and even by characters in films when they deviate from the norms of syntax by re-sequencing of clausal elements and changing the normal word order. The use of this stylistic device enables writers to place emphasis on important subject matters, to achieve a dramatic and impressive effect and add variety to their writing. It helps writers to bring attention to a particular point or change the focus of the readers from a particular point. Besides, inversion is also

widely used by poets to maintain the meter of a poem, to keep the rhythm or make a rhyme, or because it generates some special meaning in the poem evoking emotions and thoughts in the reader. In the *Star Wars* series, representing popular culture, the inverted syntax that Yoda, one of the most beloved characters of the series, uses helps the viewers to understand the messages that he tries to convey and creates a lasting impact on them. In fact, for pragmatic purposes people use inversion in everyday informal speech as well, when wanting to place emphasis on a certain word in the clause, as in *Time I have, money I don't; Scared I was* or *Here comes the bus*.

In this paper I attempted to show how the word order in clauses changed, with the SVO pattern becoming prevalent in declarative statements in independent clauses over times, due to the loss of inflections of nouns throughout the diachronic development of the English language. Hopefully my study has contributed to a better understanding of clause structure in Present-Day English.

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Norms, Contexts and Functions of Arabic–English Code-Switching in Egyptian Computer-Mediated Communication

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This paper investigates the linguistic characteristics of English in the Instant Messaging (IM) discourse as one of the most common computer-mediated communication modes in Egypt, where English is considerably used. It also aims to explore the reasons for the preference of English to Arabic in certain contexts, types of English errors, contexts of English and Arabic use, age of users, addressees, and purposes/functions of code-switching in English–Arabic discourse. Two sources of data were used: a corpus of 30 IM conversations by 60 interlocutors and responses to a survey by a group of 49 participants (including some of the conversation providers). Findings of both qualitative and quantitative methods of analysis indicate that English in Egypt is used as an interactive medium of communication among Egyptian professionals, students, and younger generations in general, regardless of their English proficiency levels, in both formal and informal contexts for various purposes. Moreover, IM English used by Egyptians is generally mixed with Arabic, and this code-switching between English and varieties of the Arabic language occurs in many contexts to fulfill different functions.

Keywords: English–Arabic code-switching, online communication in Egypt, Egyptian instant messaging, digital use of English, CMC in Egypt

1 Introduction

1.1 The Sociolinguistic Situation in Egypt

Linguistic ideologies in Egypt have cultural and social implications associated with Classical Arabic (CA), Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), Egyptian Colloquial Arabic (ECA), and English in the Cairo area. Commenting on the role these varieties play, Stadlbauer (2010, 1) stated that "the language ideologies of these varieties are a product of both the past and the present; they emerged during British colonialism in the late nineteenth century and are maintained in the postcolonial climate through discourses on the increasing use of English as a symbol of Western capitalism and modernity".

Generally speaking, there are two dominant varieties of Arabic used in Egypt. On the one hand, the standard, taught variety of official, religious and highly formal use is Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) and, on the other hand, the vernacular, the informal variety of casual conversation and everyday use. In the case of Egypt, this is Egyptian Arabic, which is predominantly a spoken variety acquired at home. Present-day Egypt is a diglossic environment. Apart from Arabic, English is visibly present in Egypt. The use of English in Egypt is dynamic; a fact that has made changes to the position of English from a mere foreign language to a language of daily use. English is now regarded as "a practical vehicle for educational, economic and [...] social mobility"; a development which "parallels, in many ways, the development of Egypt's identity as a modern nation" (Imhoof 1977, 3; cited in Aboelezz 2012, 54).

1.2 English in Egyptian Everyday Life

The idea of global participation is developed in the National Curriculum Framework for English as a Foreign Language: "The learning of English opens up the world for our children and youth. It gives them the ability to become active participants in the knowledge making society and raises their awareness of the multilingual and multicultural world they live in" (McIlwraith and Fortune 2016, 3). English today serves as the main lingua franca utilised in diverse fields of life including business, science, media, technology, tourism and international diplomacy worldwide. The use of English is evident in numerous aspects of Egyptian life. English today is being introduced to all children in early primary stage or even in pre-school (Dirou, 2016). Educational institutions often offer bilingual or English-medium programmes, or at least have English as an entry requirement (Dirou 2016).

Concerning English in Egyptian media, a considerable number of radio channels are operated by both private-owned and government-owned companies to broadcast news, songs, talk shows and other programmes in English, mainly to the region of Greater Cairo. Regarding television broadcasts, Egyptian ground-broadcast television (Egyptian Radio and Television Union/ERTU) is government-controlled and has two main channels: Channel I that uses mainly Arabic, and Channel II dedicated to non-Arabic speakers and bilingual audiences, broadcasting English and French as well as Arabic content (Media Landscapes, 2024).

The presence of English extends to speaking in everyday life situations. Spoken English is used on the level of phrases, words, and sentences. The younger generations tend to believe that the use of English marks them as more outward-looking and less constrained by the narrow limits of whatever is interpreted as "local", including language, culture and social life. For younger generations, English is usually linked to positive, in-group local values of education, competence in English, and peer group

prestige. Explaining the increasing interest in English, Schaub (2000, 228) notes that "an obvious motivation [...] is the promise of more money or better jobs that many Egyptians associate with the 'commodity' of English". Similar to Schaub's conclusions, Haeri (1997, 800) states that "foreign languages have greater commercial and symbolic capital to Egyptians than MSA, the official language in Egypt".

Language and culture, in relation to English in Egypt, is a topic of debate. Although the vast majority of people from different parts of the world believe that English language teaching/learning is dominated by "linguistic imperialism", in their exploration of the sociolinguistic situation in Egypt, McIlwraith and Fortune (2016, 11) assert that English in Egypt is regarded as a tool employed for certain needs and purposes rather than a vehicle for a foreign culture or identity to be absorbed along with the language. Younger generations tend to believe that English will not have any negative impact on their Arab identity. It is rather an opportunity to gain a rich identity and a higher social status.

1.3 Computer-mediated Communication (CMC) in Relation to English and Arabic

The global spread of computer-mediated communication (CMC) has established changes in how languages are used. According to Baron (2004), these changes include "faster composition and reading of texts and diffusion of oral discourse features into written language". Research into these phenomena has focused mainly on the English language as the language of international, and therefore intercultural, communication. Although software support for the world languages is hardly an issue today, English is the actual language of international communication, including CMC, among the majority who are non-native speakers of English. As a result, languages that are typically written in other scripts have undergone a process of Romanisation, as is the case with the Egyptian users of a wide range of CMC modes. In this paper, I examine this phenomenon, where English is used in instant messaging (IM) as one of the most common synchronous CMC modes in Egypt.

One of the most widely used Latinised versions is Latinised Arabic (LA), a written form of Arabic that employs Latin orthography as a substitute for the Arabic script, which the Arabic language uses. The use of LA in CMC has been reported across the Arab world from countries such as Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and the United Arab Emirates (Aboelezz 2012, 52) with regional variation influenced by local spoken dialects. These varieties may differ in how they represent Arabic consonants that do not have English equivalents. Those consonants are represented through numeric characters that resemble the Arabic consonants in appearance.

Drawing on all the above, and in light of the presence of English in everyday activities of Egyptian life, it is significant to explore the daily common use of English as in CMC. The current research study was conducted due to the limited number of existing studies on instant messaging (IM) conversations as an aspect of Egyptian life in which English is used as the main language of communication among Egyptians, especially ones that aimed to investigate the linguistic characteristics of both the English and Arabic used in IM conversations by Egyptian young generations. Moreover, to the best of my knowledge, no studies have been conducted aiming to touch upon the contexts and functions of CS in English–Egyptian Arabic IM discourse.

2 Research Questions

The study addressed the following questions:

How strong is the use of English in Instant Messaging by young Egyptians?
What linguistic features of English are adopted in Instant Messaging by young Egyptians?
Who in Egypt employs English in IM communication, with regard to age, context, and the target addressee(s), and for what purposes?
How and when does code-switching take place?
Why do young Egyptians often prefer English to Arabic in online communication despite some using English imperfectly?

3 Methodology and Participants

The study involves two sources of data: a corpus of IM conversations and survey responses. First, the sample studied is a collection of 30 pre-saved short IM conversations of young native speakers of Egyptian Arabic (including both males and females). Young Egyptians are the target sample since English is more extensively used by younger generations in both formal and informal contexts for various purposes, such as personal, work and educational purposes. For the investigation of the characteristics of English used by Egyptians, reasons for the preference of English to Arabic, types of English errors, punctuation conventions, contexts of use, age of users, addressees, purpose of code-switching and code-mixing, convenience sampling is used.

Participants in the current study are the researcher's friends, colleagues and acquaintances (23 male and 37 female participants, ranging in age between 13 to 40 years old. They have been to different schools (state-governed Arabic medium and foreign language medium schools in Egypt), and they all share the same mother-tongue (Egyptian Arabic). They come from a range of backgrounds and professions: 21 teachers, 4 accountants, 3 engineers, 18 university students, 12 postgraduate students and 2 housewives. All participants are literate in both English and Arabic and use instant messaging extensively for academic, work, and social purposes. Participants are referred to with their initials and all information (such as names, phone numbers, places, etc.) by which individuals could be identified have been excluded in the presentation of analysis. All conversations occurred before the participants knew their conversations would be studied to avoid any bias in the results and to enhance validity.

Second, a questionnaire, in which a group of 49 participants (including some of the conversation providers) were involved, was administered. Participants were asked questions on how dominant English in their daily activities was, and on the reasons of preferring English to Arabic (either Modern Standard Arabic, the formal variety Arabs use in writing and learn in schools, or Egyptian Colloquial Arabic, the dialect native speakers of Egyptian Arabic use in speaking and informal writing) in specific situations. Participants were also asked about how they code-switch in different contexts with different addressees. Before publishing the questionnaire, it had been forwarded to a pilot group of five people to test it. Two of them had two comments. The first commented that the question asking if learning English raises one's awareness of the world (Question 19 in the Appendix section) might be vague for some in terms of phrasing. The rest thought it was understandable in the context of the spread of English in Egypt as indicated in the questionnaire instructions. Another member commented that I might get the same answers for the variety and written form of Arabic used with family and friends (supposing they were both likely to be more informal, which was his own case). Other respondents' answers for the question on family were different from those of friends. Hence, the same version of the survey that they answered was kept as they all agreed it was generally clear and well-developed.

The set of data was analysed quantitatively and qualitatively. The characteristics of English used in IM by young Egyptians and cases of code-switching are highlighted through the quantitative analysis of the corpus of conversations while the quantitative analysis of conversations and qualitative analysis of questionnaire responses contributed to the understanding of how strong the use of English in online communication is, and how and when code-switching occurs. The qualitative analysis of questionnaire answers sheds light on the reasons behind the preference

for English over Arabic in online communication and other contexts as well as on how Egyptians perceive the dominance of English in Egyptian everyday life. Further, quantitative data from the questionnaire helped in specifying the age groups responding, how frequently English is used in the participants' everyday activities (online and other), and how code-switching takes place in relation to Arabic and English in Egyptian everyday life.

4 Findings and Discussion

4.1 Corpus of Conversations

As previously mentioned, the text analysed is a corpus of 30 two-way WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger conversations. This is clearly not a large corpus, but it includes contributions from 60 different interlocutors, and seems sufficient for an initial exploration of the phenomenon of the extensive presence of English in Egyptian IM. The setting involved three language varieties: English and two varieties of Arabic: MSA and ECA, typical to the linguistic situation in the everyday life of Egyptians as described earlier by linguists and researchers. The corpus included a total of 6,196 words of English with an amount of Arabic material in the conversational turns (11.5% or 716 Arabic words). The amount of MSA found in the corpus constituted only 5.7% (41 words) of the total number of Arabic words used, as two copied sentences for invitation and greeting purposes. The writing system used was the Standard English Alphabet. In addition, two written forms of both MSA and ECA were found in the corpus: the Arabic script and LA. The register used would be seen as informal English, but with some features of formality (e.g., the standard future modal verb "will" and its contraction "'ll" are more frequent than the vernacular "gonna" that is more common in informal contexts).

Normally, people who know more than one language tend to use the one they master. However, English in the corpus is used as a medium of interactive communication (both formal and informal) among Egyptian professionals, students and younger generations in general for various purposes such as personal, work and educational reasons, who share Arabic as a native language, regardless of their English proficiency levels. Those with lower proficiency levels may prefer using erroneous English to the use of ECA or even MSA, especially in writing.

4.1.1 Abbreviations and Short Forms

The amount of abbreviations (mainly through vowel deletion) in the whole corpus of the current study constitutes less than 2% of the data, mostly done for the sake of speed increase. The most frequent abbreviation was "u" for the pronoun *you*, which constitutes over 40% or 42 out of 101 (the total number of words abbreviated). Other abbreviations, such as "lol" (*laugh out loud*), normally a turn on its own, "r" for *are*, "coz" and "cuz" for *because*, "bro" for *brother,* and "ur" for *your* are also found. The conversations adhere to the generally accepted rules of writing, but with errors. The findings challenge the perception of the IM discourse as the "funky" distorted form where the language is "stripped down" (Palfreyman and Al Khalil 2003, 13). However, in line with previous literature on IM, the data showed that IM is a contemporary trend predominantly utilised by younger generations favouring a more informal style of communication.

4.1.2 Code-switching

Concerning combining Arabic and English, in common with Warschauer et al.'s (2002) and Palfreyman and Al Khalil's (2003) findings, in the present corpus there is a fair amount of code-switching (CS) (changing mid-utterance or mid-sentence from one language to another) and code-mixing (CM) (using words or phrases from one language within sentences in the other language). This mixing of varieties is often correlated with different functions or topics.

Several researchers have studied the functions, characteristics, determining factors and effects of code-switching in a wide range of linguistics domains. Gumperz (1982) specifies six functions of code-switching: Quotation, Addressee Specification, Repetition, Interjection, Message Qualification, and Personification. Based on the data collected for the current study, it was found that English–Arabic CS fulfills the following conversational functions: Quotation, Addressee Specification, Interjection, Message Qualification, and Personification versus Objectification. Many examples of CS in the corpus studied served the Quotation function that relies on a language other than the one spoken to convey a certain message (Gumperz 1982, 76). This can be explained through the notion that "quotations are more effective if cited in the language originally used" (David 2003, 15). CS as a phenomenon allows the speaker to establish and practise his or her identity in diverse discourses (e.g., social, political, cultural, religious, etc.). In the current study, the function Quotation was employed when participants preferred to mention a religious saying, express some cultural content or copied content to perform the speech acts of greeting, inviting, wishing, thanking, advising or sympathising by using ECA expressions.

Participants preferred to switch to Arabic whenever they wanted to express some religious meaning. The most frequently used expression was "in sha Allah" (also spelt: "isa", "isA", "inshalah" in the corpus, meaning 'If God/Allah wills'), to indicate acceptance of God's will when expressing an intention or hope. Such an example of switching to Arabic occurs for establishing a religious identity, even among speakers of other languages. One of the participants, when asked why she preferred to switch to Arabic to use such phrases, replied: "An Islamic phrase does not sound right to my ears/eyes when in English". The interlocutors tended to switch to Arabic to say the exact formulaic phrases used in certain situations/occasions. Some examples of these phrases are:

> Allah yekhaleeky ('May Allah bless you'/'Thank you') (female addressee)
> matez3alish ('Don't be upset') (female addressee)
> Rabena yesahel ('May God make it easy')
> od balak mn nfsak ('Take care of yourself') (male addressee)
> mish hate5sary 7aga ('You would lose nothing') (female addressee)

The second function of CS that occurred was Addressee Specification. Participants tended to switch to Arabic using the word "ya" (a vocative particle used to call someone) before a person's name. Addressee Specification occurred in the corpus by participants to specify their addressees or to attract their attention and add emphasis on the content (e.g., "Your kind care is everything ya F"; "no ya M. u didnt have to"; "Congrats. ya R").

Gumperz (1982, 77) considers the Interjection function of CS as the one which may be used as a "sentence filler" (e.g. OK, yes/no, please, thank you, already, maybe, hi, bye). Some instances that fulfilled the interjection function in the studied conversations are:

> *Asl* I always have the feeling ('I *basically* always have the feeling')
> *El mohem* r u ok? ('*Anyway*, are you OK?')
> *Yalla* enjoy ('*All right*, enjoy')

The Message Qualification function of CS may occur when the speaker tends to add information or details on a topic in the alternate language (Huerta-Macías and Quintero 1992, 78). In examples such as: "I understand this location is kilometers away from *ma2waf el3acher*, right?", meaning 'I understand this location is kilometers away from *the Tenth District Bus Garage*, right?' and "we are not in *handasa*", meaning 'We are not at *the Faculty of Engineering*', the interlocutors chose to add more details

on directions in ECA, as people will normally be more familiar with places in ECA as known by the local community.

The Personification versus Objectification function of CS in the corpus was used by Egyptians when they wanted to express personal opinions. These opinions are believed to refer to "specific instances or have the authority of generally known fact" (Gumperz 1982, 80). One of the informants switched to Arabic: "*7aram* to take two subjects again", meaning '*It is unfair* to take two subjects again' to express her opinion on a certain situation she mentioned to the other interlocutor earlier in the same conversation.

4.1.3 Accuracy

Errors occurring in the corpus were mainly grammatical/structural, lexical, and common typographical errors. They are categorised into: inserting/omitting a character/word, sentence structure, word/tense choice, and capitalisation (lower case where upper case should be used). Any comprehensive investigation of IM errors has to attain a distinction between errors and online norms. Some types of errors such as the failure of choosing a correct form, tense or word, and those based on L1 transfer, are typical to L2 learners. On the other hand, errors such as omitting punctuation marks (e.g. full stops and commas) as well as using lower case instead of upper case where capitalisation is necessary normally occur in the use of IM even among native speakers of English.

According to Lee (1990), grammatical and structural errors, exemplified in the data in turns like: "please i have been waiting like two weeks now to know at which time my course will be" and "i am sorry did i bothered u be sms you ??", fit into the *mistakes* category rather than in *errors* as they are not major errors that hinder comprehension or communication. Lexical errors of word choice occurred in the corpus in examples such as in archaic words like "ail", literary words like "avail", and adjectives like "bossy" and "masterful" when the interlocutor actually meant *pushy* or *commanding* (due to lower language proficiency level).

Apart from the structural and lexical mistakes, the typos are typical to those one might find in native English messaging. Other spelling errors included "okey" and "okkay" for *okay*, "raffly" for *roughly* and "allot" for *a lot*. However, those did not hinder intelligibility and messages could be well-communicated between the chatters. The only example where the lack of comprehension was evident: "sorry wasn't what ...?" is caused by the lack of knowledge of the meaning of the word "bossy" or the wrong choice of the word "bossy" in the conversation context.

In some instances, errors occurred due to L1 interference; those errors which Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991) referred to as *interlingual errors* as opposed to *intralingual*

errors, in "from 15/9", for instance, the word *since* should be used in place of *from* to indicate a period of time from the past until a moment in the present. *From*, in time indication, is often used along with *to*. The use of "from" here is an influence of ECA.

Furthermore, the most frequent error found was omission. Inserting unneeded spaces, separating words and punctuation marks, is a common typographical error. Swipos (swiping typos) were also found in examples like: "webistes" (*websites*), "scholar" (*scholar*) and "actuslly" (*actually*). Typographical conventions were adapted to add verbal or attitudinal effects. Duplication of letters (mainly vowels) occurred to express and emphasise emotions (e.g., to show happiness in response to good news, as in "greaaaat", to express gratitude, as in "thank youuuu" and "thxx"), similar to the way punctuation marks such as *!* and *?* behave.

The standard of correctness was found to be generally acceptable, and most of the conversations occurred for work and study purposes. This challenges the findings of Palfreyman and Al Khalil (2003, 13) that instant messaging reflects casual use and intimacy between friends and acquaintances where no background information is provided, and where ellipsis, slang, and interruptions are common.

4.2 Questionnaire Results

The questionnaire consisted of 36 questions (including yes/no, multiple choice, and open-ended questions; see the Appendix section). Questions were designed to investigate issues such as the dominance of English in the everyday life of Egyptians (exemplified in texting, social media networking, online and real life chatting, writing formal and informal emails and writing essays, reports and formal letters, media, cinema, and music), the ease of English use and the amount of effort and time participants devote to communicating in English, the relation between the spread of English in Egypt and the Egyptian identity as perceived by Egyptians, the functional appropriateness or advantages of the preference of English over Arabic with Arabic speakers in certain contexts. Answers also shed light on topics such as code-switching between English and Arabic, the variety of Arabic, the form of written Arabic used in contexts when code-switching occurs, and some reactions and perceptions concerning the learning/teaching of English in Egypt.

In the first group of questions (1–3), respondents were introduced in terms of age and their use of English as a foreign language in learning/teaching. The questionnaire targeted Egyptian younger generations ranging in age between 13 to 40 years old. The dominant age group was the one between 20–34 (65.31%), followed by the teenage group between 13–19 (30.61%), while only two participants (4.08%) were between 35–40. All participants said that they use English, some in their studies, some in teaching English as a foreign language, and some in both.

As indicated in the responses of questions 4–10, English appears to be the dominant language of everyday Egyptian activities. The results show a high frequency of using English between once to more than 20 times a day in texting (91.84%), social media networking sites (97.96%), online chatting (91.84%), writing formal emails (87.76%), writing informal emails (63.27%), writing essays, reports or formal letters (85.42%), and speaking (on the level of words, phrases, or sentences) (85.71%), which emphasises how English is spreading as a language for national and international communication in Egypt.

In comparison with the other activities, the absence of the "more than 20 times a day" group in writing informal emails can be attributed to the fact that there is no need for participants to write informal emails as frequently as other activities. It is also worth noting that a substantial number of people use English in formal contexts: formal emails and essays, reports and formal letters, for more than 20 times a day (16.33% and 16.67%, respectively), a frequency that can be considered high even among members of English-speaking communities. Although it might not have been expected from an Arabic native speaker to use English in his or her home country with other native Arabic speakers extensively in everyday activities, participants stated that they use English in mobile texting (22.45%), on social media sites (28.57%), in online and real-life chatting (20.41%) for more than 20 times a day. In response to Question 11, some participants confirmed that their offline use of English surpasses online use: they use English at home with their families and siblings, in schools with their friends, classmates and teachers, in courses or in foreign facilities in Egypt.

Answers to Questions 12–18 about checking and proofreading shed light on the amount of effort and time participants put into communicating in English. The Egyptian use of English does not seem to be spontaneous. Egyptians do not use English because they can use it more effectively than the different varieties of Arabic. It can also be noted that there is a positive correlation between the frequency of proofreading and the level of formality of the activities themselves. Synchronous activities, such as instant messaging and speaking, and informal activities, such as text messaging, social media, and informal emails, involve less proofreading than more formal activities such as formal emails and academic writing. In addition, English in the synchronous activities (instant messaging and speaking) is the least edited due to time factors.

Drawing on the 93.88% who reported a positive correlation between knowing English and one's awareness of the world, as well as the 97.96% who believe in the importance of English for one's future, it can be said that the functional and cultural utility of English cannot be underestimated in Egypt, or generally, in any country seeking development and progress. As stated by some respondents: English

is nationally and internationally important since "everyone speaks it" and because "you may travel to a foreign country for work". The English language is now argued to belong to everyone who speaks it, and the ability to use English efficiently is an asset in every walk of life.

Based on the responses of Questions 21–23, English is also the language of international news, films, and music. Such high proportions for news, films and music respectively ("yes, usually or always": 36.73%, 81.63% and 69.39% and "sometimes": 55.10%, 18.37% and 26.53%) cannot be underestimated in light of the presence of English in various areas of Egyptian life. Knowing English for the majority means "one no longer has to rely on translations".

Given that English has come to the status of a lingua franca in Egypt, any fair investigation on the impact of this on the Arab Egyptian identity must remain open to both its potential positive and negative impacts. Participants in their responses can be divided into two groups: those who can see a relation between the spread of English in Egypt and the Egyptian identity and others who believe their bilingualism and native identity are two separable entities; their bilingualism should not influence/ interfere with their native culture/identity. 57% of respondents believe that language is inseparable from identity and culture. By using the language, individuals tend to "take up a position in a social field in which all positions are moving and defined relative to one another" (Hanks 1996, 201).

The comments of respondents revealed the way they perceive the effect of the English language on the Egyptian and Arab identity. Some responded that the use of English in English-related contexts, or when one wants to use an English word because the equivalent does not exist in Arabic, is generally acceptable. It only means "Arabic as a language is becoming more inclusive of different cultures, which is generally what makes a language thrive". On the other hand, some came to view that the use of English in circumstances where there is no need to (e.g. in speaking to fellow Egyptians) might be a sign of a distorted identity. Sometimes people use English just to imitate "foreign actions" not for self-development. Many Egyptians adhere to the use of English words in their daily lives and they mainly focus on teaching English to their children, which, in turn, lessens their proficiency level in Arabic, and makes them "less attached to their roots". According to these respondents, Arabic is facing a serious threat from the dominance of English in education due to the lack of language planning and the inadequacy of scientific resources available in Arabic (those translated from other languages into Arabic and/or those originally published in Arabic). According to Al-Khatib and Sabbah (2008), such "modern" practices of westernisation get attacked by the conservative generations in the Arab communities. The same perception was expressed by some respondents who criticised those who look up to people who speak multiple languages. Consequently,

this may lead to a gap between the educated and uneducated as well as between the modern and conservative generations, growing wider every day.

42.55% of participants believe knowing English as a foreign language does not have an impact on the Egyptian identity. English for them is not seen as a vehicle for spreading westernisation in their country. For them, it only shows that "Egyptians can learn anything they want if they put their minds into it". English is not more than a tool of self-development and communication with the world. Further, some stated that learning English does not diminish their religiousness; on the contrary, they believe that it can be beneficial as a means of conveying real Islamic values to non-Muslims.

Other respondents believe it is true that knowing other languages imports new ways of thinking and changes the new generations' way of speaking, thinking, and even social traditions. However, to balance between two, three or more languages, by bearing in mind that the native language is the basis of one's culture and identity, it is thought to be the right thing people should prioritise. Arabic is regarded as the mother tongue Egyptians should be proud of, and more importantly, the language of the Holy Book for the vast majority. For these reasons, Arabic must be spoken correctly and should be given priority among other languages available to speakers.

Similar to what the analysis of the conversations showed, questionnaire respondents agreed that both Arabic and English are vital in Egyptian society. Arabic is believed to be an inseparable part of the unique Egyptian culture and identity, and it was found to be more appropriate in the contexts of religion, Arabic history and Arabic literature. On the other hand, English is believed to be more appropriate in the context of English as the language of international communication, and the language of science and technology, world trading, research, and in contexts involving new inventions or scientific terms that are more widely used in English than in Arabic (when the English equivalents of the terms are more frequently used) or when the English terms have no Arabic equivalents. Others believe it is in the field of education that English is particularly necessary, as English proficiency has become one of the entry requirements of study programmes both within Egypt and worldwide, and it is often the medium of instruction. English can be spoken in any foreign institutions and academic contexts such as conferences and business environments (e.g. in meetings and interviews). However, for this group of respondents, the use of English should receive less emphasis in other contexts where it is not required. Some respondents stated that English is more appropriate when it comes to "taboo" topics. Sexual topics or swear words, for example, "sound less offensive and more decent when expressed in a foreign language". English is also used in contexts related to prestige and social class. It is the language some use to "show off" among friends and relatives regardless of how (in)competently they may be using English.

This is viewed as a negative thing though, and there is an implied criticism of those Egyptians who are believed not to value the uniqueness of the native identity.

7 respondents answered that they see no advantages for the use of English over Arabic. They simply do not deliberately decide on whether to use English rather than Arabic in speaking or writing. Some responses came as follows:

Sometimes my brain can't think of an appropriate word in Arabic that fits.
Certain words just pop up in my mind faster in English at those moments.
To me, it just depends on the mood. Plus, it depends on how fluent the person I am talking to is. I always pick Arabic over English if they're not fluent speakers.

Interestingly, 6 participants answered that English fits better where there is a need to be "direct", "to the point", "specific" and more "understandable" (e.g., when expressing a certain idiom or a figure of speech), especially when they speak to other Egyptians who are more proficient in English than in Arabic.

4 people answered that they use English for the sake of improving their own English skills. For them, English skills would not improve if they did not practise English, either in speaking or writing. A teacher of English also added "English is an asset to myself and my students when I use it with my students to help them improve their language".

Responses to Question 27 supported the findings of the quantitative data analysis, where it was found that the IM English used by Egyptians is generally mixed with Arabic in daily use. 85.41% of respondents answered that they switch from English to Arabic, especially to ECA as the dominant variety. The questionnaire results showed that MSA continues to serve the same function of formality; there is a correlation between the addressee and the variety used. The percentage of MSA use rises as the relationship between interlocutors becomes more formal (12.50% with both friends and family, 16.67% with colleagues and acquaintances, and 35.42% with seniors).

To compare the conversations to the questionnaire responses, the questionnaire responses to Questions 32–35 and the conversation analysis seem contradictory in relation to the form of Arabic used. In the conversations, Arabic constituted 11.55% of the quota (716 out of 6196 words): 551 Arabic words (76.90%) were in LA, while 165 words (23.1%) were in Arabic script, which shows that LA was more frequent than Arabic script. On the other hand, questionnaire respondents seem to all agree that they prefer Arabic script to LA regardless of the addressee (62.50% with friends, 87.50% with family, 68.75% with colleagues and acquaintances, 79.17% with seniors).

It might seem insignificant to ask the participants if they wish to see an expansion in the teaching of English in Egypt after a list of questions about the contexts where participants prefer to use English. However, Question 36 was asked on purpose to elicit more reactions and points of view concerning the learning and teaching of English in Egypt, which could bring to the surface some teaching implications. 47 out of 48 (97.92%) answered yes, but only 15 people provided reasons for learning English.

4 out of 15 respondents (26.6%) believe everybody in the whole world must have a solid knowledge of English as "it is basically a tool to communicate with the entire world and help expand one's horizons". English is believed to "provide a window to the world" and open other countries and cultures to individuals. Others (3 out of 15 respondents, 20%) think that "English is important to qualify students for the global market" and "it helps in finding better jobs when students graduate". Learning English, the language of technical innovation and economic development, opens job prospects, helps in finding more profitable jobs and more prestigious positions and increases one's standard of living.

The rest of the responses happened to critique the approaches used in the teaching and learning of English. The traditional modes of learning and instruction used are incompatible with most modern methods of learning and instruction, which foster the development of communication skills and individual learning skills. At school, students go through heavy and rigid programmes of classroom work in which they are not encouraged to think for themselves or make use of their knowledge. The teaching method the students are used to is one which tends towards habitual memorisation. On this basis, suggestions are made toward better teaching methods. 7 out of the 15 respondents feel that teachers of English take English "for granted" and believe it should be "fun" to learn and teach. They all agree that English lexis and idiomatic expressions of real-life situations as well as the productive skills of speaking (with more focus on pronunciation) and writing (both formal and informal), should be properly taught and learnt in Egypt. In some responses, there was a call for teachers to update their old, traditional, "difficult" and "boring" methods which are no longer used in any effective teaching and learning environment. Classroom techniques would need to create fun and enjoyment in the teaching and learning process.

5 Conclusion

English in Egypt is used as an interactive medium of communication among Egyptians, who share Arabic as a native language, regardless of their English proficiency levels. Both formal and informal varieties of English are used (with considerably high

frequency) in various contexts for work, personal, business and educational purposes by Egyptian students, professionals and the young generations in general. As noted by Schaub (2000, 232) English appears to have the greatest appeal among Egyptians who are characterised as young, educated, and middle or upper class. The overarching ideological and symbolic factors underlying the sociolinguistic situation in Egypt are by no means simple. The situation is often associated with globalisation and the status of English as a global language (Warschauer et al. 2002). Both Arabic and English are regarded to be vital for Egyptian society, each for its own purposes and in its own contexts. Code-switching between English and Arabic occurs to fulfill various functions. Knowing English is the key to more life opportunities "regardless of one's ethnicity, color or background", and the world nowadays leans towards the belief that English belongs to "everyone or to no one" (Wardhaugh 1987, 30). The use of the English language as a means of communication among individuals, communities and nations is crucial in the study of human relations.

6 Limitations of the Study

Statistically speaking, there is a need to consider the inclusion of a larger sample to obtain more conclusive and generalisable results. Moreover, the current study is restricted to the researcher's acquaintance, which guarantees, in one way or another, a certain social and educational level. Therefore, my suggestion for further research would be to include a larger number of participants belonging to different age groups, educational levels, and social classes.

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Appendix: Questionnaire

Q1 How old are you?
  Answer Choices: 13–19, 20–34, 35–40
Q2 Are you studying English?
  Answer Choices: Yes - No
Q3 Do you teach English?
  Answer Choices: Yes - No
Q4 Do you use English to send text messages on a mobile phone?
  Answer Choices: Never - Once or twice a day - Up to 5 Times a day - Between 5 and 20 times a day - More than 20 times a day
Q5 Do you use English on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram or other social networking sites?
  Answer Choices: Never - Once or twice a day - Up to 5 Times a day - Between 5 and 20 times a day - More than 20 times a day
Q6 Do you use English when you chat on the web?
  Answer Choices: Never - Once or twice a day - Up to 5 Times a day - Between 5 and 20 times a day - More than 20 times a day
Q7 Do you use English to send write formal emails?
  Answer Choices: Never - Once or twice a day - Up to 5 Times a day - Between 5 and 20 times a day - More than 20 times a day
Q8 Do you use English to send write informal emails?
  Answer Choices: Never - Once or twice a day - Up to 5 Times a day - Between 5 and 20 times a day - More than 20 times a day
Q9 Do you use English to send write essays, reports, formal letters?
  Answer Choices: Never - Once or twice a day - Up to 5 Times a day - Between 5 and 20 times a day - More than 20 times a day
Q10 Do you use English to speak to Egyptians or Arabic speakers in general (on the level of words, phrases, sentences)?
  Answer Choices: Never - Once or twice a day - Up to 5 Times a day - Between 5 and 20 times a day - More than 20 times a day
Q11 Please state other contexts when you use English (if there are any).
Q12 Do you check and edit your English when you send text messages on a mobile phone?
  Answer Choices: Yes, usually or always - Sometimes - No, rarely or never - Not applicable

Q13 Do you check and edit your English when you use Twitter, Facebook, Instagram or other social networking sites?

Answer Choices: Yes, usually or always - Sometimes - No, rarely or never - Not applicable

Q14 Do you check and edit your English when you chat on the web?

Answer Choices: Yes, usually or always - Sometimes - No, rarely or never - Not applicable

Q15 Do you check and edit your English when you write formal emails?

Answer Choices: Yes, usually or always - Sometimes - No, rarely or never - Not applicable

Q16 Do you check and edit your English when you write informal emails?

Answer Choices: Yes, usually or always - Sometimes - No, rarely or never - Not applicable

Q17 Do you check and edit your English when you write essays, reports, formal letters?

Answer Choices: Yes, usually or always - Sometimes - No, rarely or never - Not applicable

Q18 Do you check and edit your English when you speak (on the level of words, phrases, sentences)?

Answer Choices: Yes, usually or always - Sometimes - No, rarely or never - Not applicable

Q19 Do you think learning English as a foreign language raises one's awareness of the world?

Answer Choices: Yes – No

Q20 Do you think learning English as a foreign language is important for one's future (e.g. developing a career path)?

Answer Choices: Yes – No

Q21 Do you watch/listen to any news in English?

Answer Choices: Yes, usually or always - Sometimes - No, rarely or never

Q22 Do you watch films in English?

Answer Choices: Yes, usually or always - Sometimes - No, rarely or never

Q23 Do you listen to any songs in English?

Answer Choices: Yes, usually or always - Sometimes - No, rarely or never

Q24 Do you think that using English in Egypt changes Egyptian identity and Arabic culture in some way? If yes, could you briefly say how?

Q25 As an Egyptian, do you think that using English is more appropriate than using Arabic (with its all varieties) in certain situations/contexts? Please give details.

Q26 If you sometimes prefer to use English when speaking/writing to Arabic speakers, what are the advantages (if any) of using English rather than Arabic?

Q27 When you chat in English, do you switch to Arabic (in any of its different varieties?

Answer Choices: Yes, usually or always - Sometimes - No, rarely or never - Not applicable

Q28 When you switch between English and Arabic, which variety of Arabic do you normally use in chatting with your friends?

Answer Choices: Modern Standard Arabic (formal) - Egyptian Colloquial Arabic (informal) - Not applicable

Q29 When you switch between English and Arabic, which variety of Arabic do you normally use in chatting with your family?

Answer Choices: Modern Standard Arabic (formal) - Egyptian Colloquial Arabic (informal) - Not applicable

Q30 When you switch between English and Arabic, which variety of Arabic do you normally use in chatting with your colleagues/acquaintance?

Answer Choices: Modern Standard Arabic (formal) - Egyptian Colloquial Arabic (informal) - Not applicable

Q31 When you switch between English and Arabic, which variety of Arabic do you normally use in chatting with your seniors?

Answer Choices: Modern Standard Arabic (formal) - Egyptian Colloquial Arabic (informal) - Not applicable

Q32 When you switch between English and Arabic, which form of written Arabic do you use with your friends?

Answer Choices: Arabic script - Latinised script (Arabic in Latin script/Franco form) - Not applicable

"The Question of Palestine":
Power and Resistance in Fadia Faqir's *Nisanit*

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This study examines aspects of the Palestinian–Israeli conflict as depicted in Fadia Faqir's *Nisanit*. It explores both the methods of subjugation employed by the Israeli occupier and the forms of resistance undertaken by the Palestinian occupied. Drawing upon political perspectives that classify this encounter as a neo-colonial paradigm, alongside postcolonial critical views, the textual analysis of Faqir's text reveals that the settler–native clash is an existential conflict constructed on imposing an exclusivist identity in Palestine. *Nisanit* exemplifies that the Israeli authorities use a range of domination methods to achieve their goals of settler colonialism, including discrimination, violence, arrests, imprisonment, social segregation, and cultural stereotyping. Meanwhile, the Palestinians respond to the Israeli domination by adopting various models of resistance such as guerrilla warfare and revolutionary actions organised by the local resistance movements.

Keywords: settler colonialism, occupation, subjugation, resistance

1 Introduction

Fadia Faqir's *Nisanit* (1987) is set in Palestine after the Six-Day War (1967), which marked the triumph of Israel that paved the way for attaining extraterritorial privileges with the tangible increase in the establishment of Jewish settlements, on the one hand. On the other hand, it brought about the defeat of the Arab coalition, which resulted in giving up huge portions of the land of Palestine and, by extension, in the coercive dispossession of their Arab indigenous inhabitants. By centring on this transformative time, the novel deals with a decisive era of the social and political upheavals that witnessed momentous turns in the contemporary history of Palestine. Thematically, the text addresses the acute tension as well as the intricate ramifications arising from, what I argue for in this study, a colonial encounter between a dominant power structure represented by the Israeli hegemony and an anticolonial nationalist struggle represented by the Palestinian resistance movements. The novel problematises the idea of legitimacy over the contested land by juxtaposing

the different perspectives of the two parties, each driven by its unique causes and impulses. Given this colonial feature, a postcolonial approach can prove valid in understanding the structures of control and defiance depicted in the narrative.

Indeed, postcolonialism can serve as an insightful theoretical framework for understanding the settler–native conflict delineated in Faqir's text. Emerging as a response to both colonialism and imperialism, this critical approach identifies colonialism – including its various paradigms such as settler colonialism – as an unrelenting exercise of dominance. It thus provides essential conceptual and analytical tools for examining not only the mechanisms of subjugation employed by Israeli settlers, but also the resistance strategies adopted by Palestinian natives. Moreover, postcolonial theory conceptualises imperialism as an ideological construct that endorses geographical and territorial expansion, offering a lens through which the Zionist enterprise can be interpreted as fundamentally driven by the acquisition of land. In this context, Robert J. C. Young makes it clear, in a way that can illustrate how the Zionist project is oriented on geographical growth, that "empires were political formations that were developed over time from particular geographical areas or through nomadic occupation" (2015, 9–10). This postcolonial scholar elaborates that imperialism is an "overarching concept or ideology" that advocates domination over the territories of other peoples of a different race. "Colonisation is the practice of actual settlement or occupation" (53). Said makes a comparable argument by asserting that "imperialism and the culture associated with it affirm both the primacy of geography and an ideology about control of territory" (1994, 78). Said further posits that colonialism "is almost always a consequence of imperialism, is the implanting of settlements on distant territory" (9). When contextualising the Israeli–Palestinian situation within the postcolonial perspectives, it becomes evident that it shares a set of features with classical European colonialism by means of constructing colonial-like settlements that engender geographical expansion, even though the Zionist scheme diverges from classical colonialism insofar as it does not include the occupation of distant territories. A distinguishing characteristic lies in its foundation upon a religious doctrine, while a fundamental similarity is its reliance on racial divides.

Arguably, the Zionist project shares essential characteristics with classical settler colonialism in the sense that it features settler migration from the colonial West to foreign territories. This movement involves the permanent habitation of settlers – a conditional element and a tradition of settler colonialism, as articulated by Bill Ashcroft et al., who demonstrate that colonial settlers are those "Europeans who moved from their countries of origin to European colonies with the intention of remaining" (2013, 193). While settler movements in classical settler colonialism are most likely encouraged by particular causes and impulses, depending on cultural,

religious, social, political, and economic aspects, the Zionist movement is similarly influenced by these factors. According to Young, "colonies, settlements, or trading posts abroad were established for a number of reasons: freedom of religion, need for land for surplus population, or desire to accumulate wealth through trade or the establishment of plantations" (2015, 52). Further, Young holds that a "large number of millions who left Europe to colonise other parts of the world did so for the same reason most people migrate today: economic need. They were themselves often victims – of persecution or poverty" (33). In the case of the Israelis' settlement, their migratory movement has been basically undertaken for religious emancipation, since they have, as a matter of fact, endured an extended history of religion-based persecution within Christian societies (the most noteworthy experience to mention is their brutal victimisation at the hands of the Nazi tyranny). Such accumulated experiences of violence consequently made the Zionist leaders in Europe feel the urgent need to have a secure place where they could unite those disfranchised minority Jews and save them from anti-Jewish and anti-Semitic discrimination. This Zionist position, regarded as the foundational impetus for the establishment of Israel as a Jewish state, is observed by Shahak, demonstrating that the only solution that the Zionist leaders in Europe found to avoid the continuing anti-Jewish mistreatments is to "remove all the Jews bodily and concentrate them on Palestine or Uganda" (1994, 70). However, the question arises: to what extent do these rationales legitimise settling in an already populated location and causing the suffering of its indigenous inhabitants by subjugating them and forcing them to an institutionalised marginal position? This dilemma – of contested legitimacy and the suffering of indigenous inhabitants – lies at the core of many narratives portraying the Israeli-Palestinian strife, as exemplified in Faqir's *Nisanit*.

In the realm of the fictional representation of the colonial confrontation between the Israelis and the Palestinians (a contentious subject that has not only permeated modern Arabic and Hebrew literatures, but also diffuses into worldwide cultural, social, and political studies exploring the contemporary Middle East), Faqir's *Nisanit* is a significant case in point. Through the interweaving of both subjective and objective accounts, the novel provides an inclusive perspective on the conflict, while it also incorporates numerous allusions to the enduring Israeli–Palestinian clashes, unfolding across a variety of historical events embodied within Faqir's narrative. These conflicts engender varying degrees of suffering among ordinary individuals, with a particular focus on the most marginalised group – the Arab women. This is emphasised by the Jordanian–British Faqir, stating that the three main characters of her literary text are all "victims of history, geography and politics" (Moore 2011, 4), but it is also Eman, her Arab female protagonist, who is exposed to the highest degree of victimisation. Moreover, the text uncovers pivotal aspects of the

settler–indigenous confrontation, exemplifying not only colonialist but also cultural, political, and military strategies of domination employed by Israeli forces to assert prevalence on contested territories and maintain public security. Simultaneously, the novel portrays resistance methods undertaken by Palestinian fighters in reaction to their subjugation, driven by a quest for national freedom. This overlapping exploration within Faqir's fictional world provides a subtle understanding of the complex dynamics inherent in the Israeli–Palestinian clash.

The novel is narrated through the perspectives of three characters: it includes Eman's first-person narrative, as well as third-person narratives showcasing the viewpoints of Shadeed, a Palestinian Fedayee combatant and guerrilla fighter imprisoned in an Israeli jail, and David, an Israeli interrogator and a Holocaust survivor of Polish origins, respectively. Thus, the text presents the counter-relationship between the Israelis as the occupier and the Palestinians as the occupied in a distinctive mode that closely exhibits their conflicting sense of rootedness in and entitlement to the land. It also discloses how each side perceives the other, functioning as catalysts for their persistent actions of domination and resistance. The Israeli perspective, shaped by a master discourse, degrades Arab Palestinians, stereotypes their cultural traditions, and views their existence as a barrier to the realisation of the Zionist vision of occupying the contested lands. Conversely, Arab Palestinians take on a rejectionist stance rooted in decolonising aspirations, deeming the arrival of Israelis as a colonial aggression and a foreign settlement that encroaches upon their enduring desire for national liberation and self-autonomy. Faqir represents the beliefs underpinning these divergent perspectives. With those and its complex characterisations, Faqir's literary work can be seen as a compelling depiction of the layered complexities encompassing cultural and national identity, historical narratives, and territorial acquisition central to the Israeli–Palestinian encounter.

The discord surrounding contemporary Palestine, which renders it, as Edward Said puts it, "a much debated, even contested, notion" (1979a, 4), found its origins in the imperialist epoch when the great colonial power structures, Britain and France, not only dominated the Near East, but also determined its destinies to great degrees. Said explicates this historical context by claiming that "despite their differences, the British and the French saw the Orient as a geographical – and cultural, political, demographical, sociological, and historical – entity over whose destiny they believed themselves to have traditional entitlement" (1979b, 221). As regards Palestine, after the dismantling of the Ottoman Empire, which had ruled the Arab Levantine regions for several centuries, Palestine subsequently became subject to the British colonial sphere of influence from the early 1920s until the late 1940s, which brought about a substantial change to its geopolitical configuration and influenced the social conditions of its Arab natives.

Faqir makes the following remark on this crucial turn in an interview with Lindsey Moore: "the demise of the Ottoman Empire was a tragedy," but it also "marked the beginning of the suffering of Palestinians" (Moore 2011, 2), since it was followed by another transformative activity of colonialism. Namely, it is the British Mandate which remained in place until the British authority gradually handed over parts of Palestine to the Zionist Party in fulfilment of the Balfour Declaration, regardless of the fact that it did not, at the same time, disregard the right of Arab Palestinians to constitute a territory of their own on the West Bank of the Jordan River. The following excerpt from the Declaration aligns with these facts:

> [h]is Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine. (qtd. in Brenner 2018, 89)

The Balfour Declaration, a statement issued in the form of a political letter on 2 November 1917 by the British Foreign Secretary, Arthur Balfour, and addressed to the Zionist leader of the British Jewish Community, Lord Rothschild, pledged the full support of the British government to reconstituting the land of Palestine as a national homeland for the Jewish people. Though the actual foundation of the state of Israel transpired only in 1948, the steady arrival of Jewish colonists started in the 1880s as an initial serious move towards achieving the Zionist vision of establishing a Jewish state, which continued and accelerated with the facilitation of the British authority during the Mandate time. In her studies on colonialism in the post-independent Arab world in general and Palestine in particular, Moore points out that "the Israeli–Palestinian context remains emphatically colonial," but it is ultimately the Balfour Declaration that created a Jewish homeland in Palestine, which was British-mandated, "with half of Palestine split off to become Transjordan (later Jordan). The remaining half of Palestine also came under the control of Britain and a sharp increase in Jewish immigration was permitted" (2008, 2). Similarly, Hisham Sharabi notes that "[t]he Jewish Zionists, late comers to the colonial arena, used indirect methods at first (e.g., purchase of land), but later on, when Israel was established, resorted to the standard colonial tactics of force and forced dispossession" (1970, 62). Despite these observations, the classification of the Israeli–Palestinian relationship, whether as colonial or otherwise, remains subject to a high degree of controversy.

The inhabitation of a populated land by immigrant settlers, apart from their identity, draws parallels with classical colonial practices in spite of distinctions such as the absence of a metropolitan centre for the colonial project. Limited to specific

paradigms of colonialism, supervising and backing the immigration and settlement of a group of people by a colonial power – the British mandatory government as the colonial power and Jews as the immigrant settlers in the Palestinian colony – echoes patterns in many instances of historical settler colonialism. The gradual territorial expansion by Jewish settlers and the successive dislocation of the indigenous Palestinian people complies with the expansionist aspects of colonial principles. This expansion is made possible through Israel's implementation of a powerful political system, including a military control, which also corresponds to administrative frameworks observed in historical colonial scenarios.

Besides, the enforcement of the cultural identity of the dominant group (the immigrant Jews), in which they seek to impose their cultural values on the indigenous population, is perceived as a basic facet of colonialism. In line with these premises, Said argues that "both the British imperialist and the Zionist vision are united in playing down and even cancelling out the Arabs in Palestine as somehow secondary and negligible" (1979a, 18). He implies that, based on their own racial and religious standards, the British and the Zionists create a discriminatory dividing line between a superior group that is relocated to occupy the centre and an inferior group that is, in turn, designated to occupy the periphery. This phenomenon of structured exclusion is not, however, circumscribed to the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, as it manifests itself in diverse historical and colonial contexts in which, as Frantz Fanon clarifies, "[t]he governing race is first and foremost those who come from elsewhere, those who are unlike the original inhabitants" (1963, 40). This feature is conspicuous in the case of Palestine, where non-Arab Jews, arriving from different parts of the world as immigrant settlers, attain social, cultural, political, and economic advantages with the support of the imperialist hegemony of the British mandatory government at the expense of their Arab counterparts.

Challenging the prejudiced discourse implied in Balfour's proclamation and criticising how it dominantly contributes to reformulating the internal hierarchies of a colonised setting in a way that serves colonial interests, Said also argues that "Balfour's statements in the declaration take for granted the higher right of a colonial power to dispose of a territory as it saw fit" (1979a, 16). Aligning itself with the Zionist cause, as the declaration implies, the British hegemonic power deems it expedient to designate the Zionists as its beneficiary, positioning them as a replacement for the British authority in governing its mandated colony. In this way, the establishment of Israel as the Zionist enterprise on the Palestinian terrain is – partly if not wholly – a (re)production of Western colonisation in which a colonial space is, in Said's words, "transformed sufficiently so as no longer to appear foreign to the imperial eye" (1994, 226), since from the colonialist viewpoint of the white man "no Oriental was ever allowed to be independent and rule himself. The premise

there was that since the Orientals were ignorant of self-government, they had better be kept that way for their own good" (Said 1979b, 228). Moreover, this colonial endeavour is a fulfilment of Europe's will to maintain control over other territories through representative candidates of its superior dominant power. Joseph Massad sheds light on this perspective by arguing that "French and British colonial officials were explicitly advancing the idea of European Jewish colonisation of Palestine as part of the construction of a permanent imperial order in the region" (2001, 14–15). More precisely, it is a British intervention and a colonial making that takes the form of settler colonialism in which diasporic Jews immigrated to and then settled in a geographical area in the Middle East. As obvious from the arguments above, this particular migratory activity undertaken for permanent habitation is informed by an imperialist ideology that fundamentally targets the unity of Jewish communities as well as geographical expansion.

The imperialist ideological mission of Zionism, akin to a reproduced version of classical imperialism, is thoroughly discussed by the Israeli political critic and activist Israel Shahak in his seminal book *Jewish History, Jewish Religion: The Weight of Three Thousand Years* (1994). Grounding his argument in religious underpinnings, Shahak asserts that Israel is a Jewish state with neo-imperial principles that aim at controlling far-reaching boundaries through conquering all the lands that historically belonged to the Jews from their perspective. According to this religious perspective, the historical (Biblical) borders of the land of Israel include Sinai, a part of northern Egypt, Jordan, a large chunk of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Lebanon, Syria, a portion of Iraq south of the Euphrates, Cyprus, and a huge part of Turkey (1994, 9). This expansionist vision is symbolically represented in the Israeli flag, referenced in Faqir's narrative when Eman accompanies her friend Sammah to Nablus, which is located in occupied Palestine. Upon seeing the Israeli flag displayed on a building, Sammah whispers, "[t]he blue strips are the Nile and the Euphrates. They want their Biblical kingdom back" (1987, 204). The occupation of the land of Canaan (Palestine) is, however, made a primacy and a starting endeavour towards accomplishing the broad Zionist imperial interests of "imposing a hegemony on other Middle Eastern states" (Shahak 1994, 11). It is in this vein that Israel's occupation of Palestine complies with a paradigm of outright colonialism – a manifestation of what Said terms as a "new foreign colonialism" involving "a Jewish movement for colonial settlement in the Orient" (1979a, 8; 69), and Zionism is the imperialist idea or ideology that drives this colonial enterprise for expansive goals.

Overall, one can conclude in accordance with the above-outlined critical views that Zionism coincides with conventional imperial schemes in relying on colonialist principles to accomplish its purposes of Jewish settlement and geographical enlargement. These schemes, in general, entail a colonial encounter in which

colonists claim certain reasons for their colonial activities. However, they do, at the same time, perform a set of actions of domination as colonialist strategies against colonised peoples (discriminating, segregating, expelling, dehumanising, subjugating, and abusing) in the interest of appropriating them and imposing absolute prevalence over the colonised location. This is notably the very feature of the Israeli–Palestinian framework: Jews, who had long lived as an ethnic minority in diaspora, have made their trajectories to Palestine in the name of relocating themselves away from anti-Jewish violation within their countries of residence, but they oppress the Arab Muslim Palestinians as the racial and religious other, denying them their right to national autonomy and self-determination.

In light of the above, this study aims at exploring the contemporary encounter between the Israelis and the Arab Palestinians in Faqir's narrative *Nisanit*, which involves specific colonial, political, cultural, and military strategies of subjugation and methods of native resistance. Drawing upon a range of political views that classify this encounter as a neo-colonial situation of migratory settlement, along with a set of postcolonial critical notions taken from Said, Fanon and Young, among others, the present paper also investigates political, cultural, social, religious, racial, and gendered aspects that essentially fuel this encounter, rendering it an existential conflict for confirming rootedness, fulfilling destinies, and asserting one's identity over the other in Faqir's novel. Thus, the study aims to contribute not only to a deeper understanding of a major novel by Faqir, but also to humanities research focused on the Israeli–Palestinian situation, as it provides multifaceted contexts for analysing the narrative with a stance of academic objectivity which takes into consideration the different standpoints of the two parties in conflict: the Palestinians and the Israelis.

2 Negotiating Occupier Power and Native Resistance

Narrated from various points of view, Faqir's *Nisanit* is a fictional depiction focusing on the victimisation of characters who, despite their distinct identities, endure multiple experiences of loss and suffering.

2.1 Through Eman's Eyes: The Cost of Occupation and Displacement

In a sense, the text narrates the Arab woman protagonist Eman's stages of life from girlhood to womanhood, unveiling various models of social and political oppression in the context of the Arab/Palestinian–Israeli conflict. The story opens with Eman

witnessing the traumatic arrest of her father, Mohammad Saqi, by Israeli soldiers for engaging in nationalist resistance and political activism. Reflecting Eman's experience of hardships and suffering, this incident exhibits an arranged raid on her family house, portraying the violations exercised by the occupying soldiers against her beloved ones.

Her frequent recollection of the soldier setting eyes on her cherished doll, Lulu, and harming it in this scene, mirrors the vulnerability of the disenfranchised girl Eman amidst the unrest of conflict. She describes this incident as follows: "I was looking at Lulu, the first and last doll I ever had, and praying that they wouldn't see it. One officer caught my eyes and very slowly inserted the point edge of his rifle-blade inside its belly. Struck with pain, I started weeping silently" (1987, 10). The mention of Lulu in this scene bears an emotional echo extending in its significance beyond a mere object; it represents Eman's innocence and the inner connection she establishes with her modest possessions in childhood. The idea that Lulu is the only doll Eman ever had can justify the intimate attachment she feels towards her own belongings, making its destruction painful for Eman. The soldier's act of piercing Lulu's body with a weapon evokes a striking rape metaphor. This violent penetration serves as an implicit representation of sexualised aggression, one that resonates with postcolonial readings of sexual violence as a metaphor for colonial control. As Justine Leach argues, "[b]y allegorically substituting colonial violence with sexual violence, postcolonial discourse can efficiently figure concepts of violent penetration, possession, and loss of autonomy" (2018, 95). In this context, the soldier's action not only asserts dominance over Eman's childhood innocence but also enacts a mode of gendered and colonial abuse, sustaining the oppressive power structures between the occupier and the occupied.

Beyond the traumatic arrest of her father in this raid, the armed soldiers violate Eman's sense of self and normal childhood. Here, Eman's anguished reaction of crying silently manifests both the intrinsic value that the doll signifies for her and the emotional and psychological abuse of her subjectivity. In the broad sense, this scene of violation can be read as emblematic of the collective violence prevalent in the Palestinian girl's environment. It reveals the dehumanising impacts of the oppressive force in which ordinary people and their beloved objects are not spared from inhumane brutality. At the end of the arrest scene, Eman's question, "[t]hey killed Lulu. Didn't they?" (1987, 11), encapsulates the profound suffering experienced not only by Eman but also by Palestinian children amidst the relentless practices of the occupier domination which underscore the devastating consequences of oppressive conditions on their subjectivity and self-perception.

As a result of this raid, Eman suffers from the loss of her father, Saqi, who is represented as a leading figure in the National Freedom Party. In the novel, Saqi does

not only rebel against the tyranny of the Israeli occupation but also protests against the unfair policies of the Palestinian government, which administers the Occupied Territories in the West Bank. In the area, most of the Arab Palestinian families are constantly dislocated and compelled to live in isolation, with a limited self-control and a subservient role that aligns with Israel's strategic goals of conserving a physical control of internal and external frontiers, thereby keeping its Jewish community homogenous and secured from any prospective clash with enraged Arabs. It is in this respect that Faqir's narrative is critical of the interlocking system of marginalisation inflicted upon Arab Palestinian citizens by both Israeli hegemony and the local Palestinian government.

The collusion between these entities contributes to the segregation of Palestinian people, confining them within a delimited space, characterised by stringent circumstances that pervade their daily lives. At a certain point, the Israeli interrogator David reminds the Palestinian prisoner Shadeed: "Look, Shadeed, even the head of your Movement met our officials last month in Japan. Can't you see? Can't you see who pays and who gets the profit? Be sensible, my boy" (1987, 60). These words signal a politics of contact among the leaders of the two parties, suggesting that the Palestinian local government is in some way controlled by the Israeli authority for attaining specific benefits. In other words, the quotation unravels a channel of cooperation and a level of manipulation resulting from the economic dependency on the part of the Palestinians. Hence, the ordinary Palestinian people find themselves situated as victims within overlapping structures of subjugation, wherein their local leaders fail to adequately reclaim their rights, instead serving the occupier's purposes of exerting absolute control over the whole region – and for gains for themselves.

The harsh circumstances emerging from this system of conspiracy and complicity are, however, elucidated by Eman through making a distinction between the prosperous village of Nahar, located within the territories incorporated into the State of Israel in 1948, and her impoverished village in the Occupied Territories of the West Bank. Eman's observation of dirty streets, filthy people, and "half-naked children […] playing with their excrement" (1987, 58) reflects not only the deteriorating economic conditions and lack of proper sanitation in the Rahmah neighbourhood but also the symbolic representation of deprivation, loss of dignity, and dehumanisation. The presence of excrement signifies the entrapment of Palestinian residents in a state of poverty and neglect in which their basic needs and human dignity are disregarded by the occupying authorities. This contrast in living conditions highlights the structural inequalities within the whole region, exposing systemic issues such as environmental degradation, pollution, and lack of essential facilities that continue to plague Palestinian communities due to their marginalisation in the larger socio-political context.

The novel shows the reliance of the Palestinian people on aid with their ongoing demand for humanitarian assistance provided by international relief agencies. This dependence is foregrounded through Shadeed's introduction of himself to David, contending that he lives in "Tel Al-Asaker refugee camp" in Nablus. He "went to an UNRWA school" and "ate UNRWA food since [he] was born" (1987, 60). Pointing to these essential human needs being aided by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency proves the worsening of the living circumstances faced by the Palestinians as a result of occupation and dislocation, which, in turn, makes them desperate opponents of the regime. This reliance also underlines their disempowerment, highlighting the failure of global governance in addressing the root causes of their suffering. Instead of enabling Palestinian self-sufficiency, global governance maintains power imbalances, thereby reinforcing Palestinian dependency. On another occasion, when recounting her experiences to her lover Shadeed, Eman spells out the inevitable consequences of the hardships endured by her family and also by the people of Rahmah. She tells him that "education is a luxury" (222) in their disadvantaged village; she also tells him how her baby sister Amal died because her family was economically unable to take the newborn sick baby to any of the distant hospitals, which shows the low level of health care within the Palestinian villages.

Suffering from these hard conditions, especially in the absence of her father, Eman makes the difficult decision to discontinue her education so that she can support her mother and three young brothers by working "as an apprentice to an Armenian tailor" (Faqir 1987, 88), a job arranged for Eman by her kind neighbour Um-Mussad. This prompts reflection on the oppression experienced by individuals in Palestinian villages and internal refugee camps due to their colonial status quo, compelling them to contend for the minimum requirements of their basic human needs. What is more, Eman's employment, being arranged and offered by women, can be interpreted as a mode of solidarity among subordinate women within the Palestinian community. Remarkably, this unity of women serves to oppose not only the gendered subordination inherent in the patriarchal sphere, but also the paradigms of discrimination imported by the occupation enterprise, which undermine the idea of 'living together' within a shared geographical space.

The solidarity, mutual empowerment, and self-empowerment of the inferior Palestinian women in the face of oppression manifest themselves in different events of the novel. Solidarity features in the relationship of Eman, her mother, her aunt Hanin, and her neighbour Um-Mussad in which they support one another within the patriarchal domestic sphere. This solidarity is also evident in facing the discrimination and injustice imposed on them by the occupier soldiers. For instance, when Eman, her mother, and other Palestinian women go to the Prime Ministry to ask for the release of their jailed men, they are violently restrained by Israeli armed

soldiers, even if they present a reasonable cause for their visit. Eman narrates this episode in the following manner:

> Um-Musaad tried to break through the soldiers' line. One of them struck her with his fist. She kicked him. 'You whore,' he shouted and punched her on the jaw. She hit back. Mummy gasped and together with other women attacked the soldiers. They pushed me and I fell down, but Mummy pulled me up. Another woman fell to the ground, winded. The crowd stepped on her, shouting at the soldiers, 'Prostitutes of the-government.' (1987, 34)

The women's individual and collective response in this duel exposes a spirit of women's resilience confronting the oppressive forces. In spite of the looming intimidation of violence, they steadfastly refuse to succumb and instead defy the soldiers, who represent the established structure of power, resorting to violence to keep up their leverage. The reaction of the women reveals women's solidarity and mutual support, displaying the durability derived from steadfastness, unity, and collective action. Moreover, this resistance by the women reflects a broad paradigm of defiance against the hegemonic order of the soldiers. It pertains to a fundamental pattern of the relationship between Palestinians and Israelis, characterised by the dominance performed by a disciplined military apparatus, faced by native rejection and resistance among the Palestinian populace.

2.2 Caught in the System: David's Dilemma and Israel's Unjust Policies

The text suggests that the policies of the system, which the occupying authority implements as part of a dominating framework over the whole region, are formulated with the primary objective of ensuring the security and well-being of the Jewish community. This strategic orientation aims at alleviating the burden on expatriate Jews within the community, who grapple with the formidable desire of transcending a tragic historical backdrop characterised by harrowing experiences of victimisation in the Western context. This burden is evident in David's nightmare which, as the novel states, "started when he was four years old in Auschwitz" (1987, 80) but keeps revisiting him in the present. The nightmare depicts the trauma David has lived as a Holocaust survivor, leaving a deep and lasting impact on his psychological and mental state. The dream arouses a sense of horror, reflecting the anguish and helplessness David witnessed in his past, during the time he spent in Poland. Presented as a surreal, yet realistic image with "thousands of babies shot across the sky like a jet of gas, all on fire" (Faqir 1987, 80), this description seems to emulate horrifying events of the Holocaust in which innocent lives were cruelly extinguished in mass crematoriums and executions. The nightmare's recurrence since David's early life testifies to the inescapability of trauma; despite the passage of time, it refuses

to remain in the past, continually resurfacing in his dreams and psychological distress. Overall, because of the severity of those historical tribulations, the Israeli system, which exhibits a predilection for advancing the interests of Jewish settlers and safeguarding their comfort, necessitates a stringent approach towards other individuals, who do not identify as part of the Jewish community.

This can explain why Faqir represents David as a diasporic Jew and a traumatised Holocaust survivor, who emigrated from his country of citizenship, Poland, and settled down in Israel in quest for a distant and protected sanctuary with aspirations to a prosperous lifestyle. David serves Israel's project of the colonial settlement by engaging actively in the persecution of the Arab Palestinians, but he remains a relatively unprivileged and exploited Israeli citizen, which is depicted through his desire for a job promotion that keeps eluding him during long years of dedicated service in Israel's political body. The quotation, "[t]he dirty job for him and the clean interrogation for them" (Faqir 1987, 53), captures David's pivotal yet underrated position in the Israeli system.

Additionally, his extraordinary expertise in interrogation, which seems to qualify him for the promotion, highlights how he is overlooked by his leaders. As it is pointed out, "David was quite experienced. Because of that, he could see the limits. He hit artistically to cause the least harm and the most pain. Without him in that room they would never get a tiny piece of information. Later, they would blame him if the prisoner didn't confess. It collapsed on the head of the weakest." (Faqir 1987, 65) This passage discloses the acknowledged indispensability of David's role within the interrogation process in prison, his being instrumental to procuring intelligence for the Israeli authorities that satisfies their requisites. Nonetheless, he is subject to liability due to the risks associated with his assigned roles as well as the consequences of any potential minor failure. It implies that the charge of accountability is often thrown on those who are least able to stand it, which uncovers patterns of exploitation and injustice within the Israeli political hierarchy itself, too.

In the course of events, David leaves behind his ambition of having a job promotion within Israel's political system and seriously considers retirement from his duty upon his willing request, once he realises his wife's pregnancy. It is the fulfilment of a personal and familial desire described by David's wife Judith as "something we've waited for all our lives" (Faqir 1987, 200). Upon receiving this news, David resolves to resign, declaring to Judith, "I'm going to hand in my resignation today. We'll start a new life together. A fresh one" (201), signifying his dissatisfaction with his role in the prison system and his desire for a more meaningful future. The prospect of having a child can offer David the promise of happiness and fulfilment, providing him with the chance to rebuild his life based on familial love rather than on power and career ambition in which he probably loses interest.

At various moments, David grapples with conflicting attitudes with regard to his duties of interrogating and torturing Palestinian prisoners. Although he perceives these actions as serving his country's interests from a patriotic angle – "no matter what, he would protect his country at any cost" (1987, 127) – he shows empathy towards individuals like the tormented Shadeed. He recommends the guard to treat Shadeed well in the final scene in which he approves Eman's letter to be given to Shadeed in the cell. This behaviour is particularly significant following David's long-awaited promotion to a staff sergeant (239), highlighting his inclination to distance himself from being engaged with the process of suppressing the Palestinian prisoners, since getting the promotion does not mean that he becomes totally disconnected from such a morally complex activity. David also intervenes on Shadeed's behalf and notifies the guard that Shadeed needs urgent medical treatment, blaming him for not reporting Shadeed's collapse. However, he is still worried "[w]hat would they say about him giving a hand to an Arab? Not just any Arab, but a terrorist too." (126) This contradiction exposes David's inner conflict, caused by his worrying about societal judgement for offering help to an Arab, specifically one labelled as an opponent and a terrorist. Ultimately, David yearns for a peaceful family life, favouring domestic harmony over the fraught involvement of the prisoners' investigation.

Indeed, the transformation of David's individual interests and the inner conflict taking hold of his psyche can clarify how he is exploited. They can also exemplify how Israel's policies lack authentic indices of democracy; these policies involve hierarchal inequalities in which Israeli leaders – though enforcing a political system that endorses the superiority of the Jewish community on the whole – exploit particular segments of ordinary Jews, taking advantage of historical antisemitism and anti-Jewishness. In other words, these leaders make these segments superior to the Arabs, but they manipulate Jewish suffering by employing those ambitious Jews persecuted in the past to project abusive dispossession and structural racism on Palestinian occupied people in exchange for a partial supremacy. David conveys a perspective of the formerly victimised Jews like him towards their existence in Palestine as Israeli relocated citizens by saying that "whatever happened they would never leave it. The Jews had suffered enough. The amount of happiness in this world was limited, fixed. To be happy, you had to wrench some away from another person" (1987, 237–38). From a postcolonial view, this sort of aggression can be interpreted in Young's terms: "indigenous colonised people always seem prone to become the victims of the victims" (2015, 33) in a settler–indigenous contact. This is a definitive feature of the relationship between David and Shadeed in which a victimised Jew of the Holocaust victimises another group of people in a similar manner to preserve his newly acquired supremacy over the other colonised group.

In addition to critiquing the unjust and exploitative policies within the Israeli system through dealing with specific groups of the Jewish migrant population, the novel also brings under scrutiny the lack of democratic principles towards the treatment of Arab Palestinians. In Saqi's, Eman's father's case, the Israeli prosecutor invokes the notion of democracy while calling for a heavy-handed action by declaring, "[a]lthough we are a democratic state, your honour, high treason must be crushed with an iron fist" (Faqir 1987, 110). This juxtaposition highlights an obvious contradiction between the purported democracy of the state and its actual practices, as Saqi's political activism, involving the possession of political leaflets at his house, does not rise to the level of high treason. However, the prosecutor's accusation of high treason against Saqi seems intended to justify a harsh punishment under the guise of shielding his state.

Within this context, Faqir also employs subtitling sections of the novel to challenge Israel's claims of democratic ideals in general. The multi-used subtitle "The Democratic State of Ishmael," the fictive equality of the Occupied Territories of the West Bank, carries a contrast between the democratic principles ostensibly upheld by the state of Israel and their practical application, particularly concerning non-Jewish Arabs. By invoking the name of the prophet Ishmael, revered as the ancestor of Arab peoples in both Jewish and Islamic religious traditions, the author points to the exclusionary facet of Israel's policies towards this demographic group. From a religious viewpoint, Shahak interprets the lack of democracy in the policies of Israel towards non-Jews by asserting that the state of Israel is not a democracy due to the application of a Jewish ideology directed against all non-Jews, who have to be officially excluded from inhabiting Jewish spaces (Shahak 1994, 3). Undermining the democratic principles that the state of Israel claims to elevate, Shahak's observation makes it clear that the absence of just treatment towards non-Jewish others stems from Israel's policies, derived from particular rigorous codes of the Jewish religion.

It is in this sense that structural racism and totalitarian practices permeating the Israeli policies are charged with prejudiced binarities between the settlers and the natives (Arab/settler, Muslim/Jew, Israeli/Palestinian, superior/inferior, and master/servant). Setting them in two opposing fronts on the basis of these conflicting binarities, these policies also craft a heated encounter in which each group fights bluntly to outwit the other, as they both follow a principle of exclusivity. David's wish that "all the Palestinians could disappear from Israel at a single stroke of magic, without his forcing them towards their graves" (1987, 126) indicates his personal desire not to be implicated in this process. In the broad sense, this, however, uncovers the not even hidden meaning of the Israeli alternatives towards Arab Palestinians: either evicting or killing them. This Israeli vision is also referenced through Sammah's remark to Eman, "they don't want us to stay here, so they try

to make life as hard as possible for Palestinians" (226–27), which signifies the Palestinian awareness of one of the motives behind their confrontation with the Israelis. In turn, the Palestinian resistance's pursuit of complete freedom reflects their desire to rid themselves of settlers and achieve an exclusivist existence in Palestine. Echoing Fanon's assertion on the dynamics of colonialism that "the zone where natives live is not complementary to the zone inhabited by the settlers" because "they both follow the principle of reciprocal exclusivity" (1963, 38–39), this encounter, driven by exclusivist aspirations, manifests as a dichotomous conflict of affirmation and denial, with the Israeli occupier and the Palestinian occupied fiercely preserving asymmetrical identities and vying for solitary control over the contested geography. Making Palestine the site of this complex contest, the Israelis and the Palestinians are engaged in a complicated battle constructed on proving the real existence of their own history, the genuine sense of their belonging, and, by extension, the deserved ownership of the contested land.

In the novel, the recurring motif of the title *Nisanit* is used as symbolical of the reciprocal sense of rootedness in the lands of Palestine. The title itself – taken from the name of an Israeli settlement established as a military outpost in 1980 in the Gaza strip – carries the meaning of a desert flower that cannot be easily eradicated. It appears multiple times throughout the text, notably in the name of the daughter of the Israeli family visited by David and his wife in Tel Aviv, during Shadeed and Eman's walk in Nablus, and within David's dream garden. It also appears when David envisions transforming the barren yard of the prison into a fertile area. In this episode, it is stated that "[t]hey would try Nisanit. It would survive the heat since it was a desert flower, and practical too, because it took so deep a hole in the ground that it couldn't be rooted out." (1987, 239) Evoking the tenacity of this desert flower, Faqir's multi-use of the title acquires an emblematic weight, highlighting that both parties in the conflict have deep historical roots in the land, albeit from opposed perspectives.

This metaphorical depiction alludes to the ingrained connection of both Israelis and Palestinians to the land, thereby complicating the ongoing battle between them. Beyond the historical context of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict with their discrepant experiences and histories, their different agendas, and their rooted narratives, this encounter between settlers and indigenous populations, taking the form of settler occupation, revolves around a clash over a geographical area in its essence. This pivotal dynamic is exemplified in an exchange between David and his Jewish friend Yahuda during David's vacation visit to Tel Aviv, where he meets with an old Arab Palestinian man working on Yahuda's plantation. Yahuda tells David that "Hajj is the previous owner of this place. He couldn't prove his ownership, so I paid him some compensation and offered him a job. He said that he'd spent most of his life

digging this soil so he might as well go on doing it." (1987, 180–81) This dialogue accentuates simmering tensions encapsulating land ownership; it mirrors an intricate history of discord over the land. Whereas Yahuda compensates Hajj for taking over the ownership of the plantation, the old man acquiesces to carry on working on it, albeit no longer being its rightful owner.

This dispute underscores a particular way in which Israelis consolidate their occupation objectives by asserting ownership and marginalising Palestinians, if not displacing them entirely, while Palestinians insist on their connection to the land, even when deprived of ownership. The elderly man's decision elucidates Palestinians' rooted affinity to the land as an essential aspect of their identity, imperilled by the growing Jewish settlement construction and the dislocation of Palestinian families. Their attachment to the soil becomes a means of resistance against occupation, of cultural resilience, and the assertion of their right to retrieve usurped lands. Not surprisingly, those conflicts for geography are a central concern within postcolonial theoretical frameworks. Said discusses the perspective of the coloniser by claiming that colonising, populating and depopulating others' territories occur on, about, or because of the land (1994, 78). This view can be applied to understand how Faqir portrays Israel's project in which migrant Jews construct settlements and simultaneously displace Arab populations in relation to the land. In the context of decolonisation, Fanon, in turn, argues that "[f]or a colonised people, the most essential value, because the most concrete, is first and foremost the land: the land which will bring them bread and, above all, dignity" (1963, 44). Linking the colonised land to bread – an essential human need – can assure key reasons behind native struggles and revolutions in general, but in Faqir's text in particular, these reasons are spelt out through Shadeed's perspective: in his view, the Palestinian fighters combat their enemy "[f]or bread, for peace, for real freedom" (92). In these words, Shadeed points to the intrinsic connection between the freedom of the land, the peaceful life of its indigenous inhabitants, and the fundamental human need for survival, which jointly propel resistance against the Israeli occupier.

The novel further represents policies of the Israeli system that exclude Arab Palestinians through exemplifying the restrictive practices of the occupying power, which leave the Palestinians in social and political constraints. Eman's endeavour to attend university in Nablus necessitates taking an uneasy permission from the Israeli authorities. As she laments, "it takes time to get a pass from here. The permission from the occupation authorities arrived last week" (1987, 197). Embarking on her journey to Nablus, Eman encounters a series of checkpoints, undergoing a criminal-like interrogation and an attentive check by Israeli soldiers. Through the obligatory procedures of interrogation, she also experiences a gender-constructed violation when an Israeli policewoman orders her to take off her clothes for inspection:

"Come on. Your underwear" (204). This reveals a form of gender abuse infringing upon Eman's feminine privacy and agency, as her naked body is submitted to invasive surveillance. Eman's description of her feelings towards the situation – "I stood naked and shivering between them. It was the first time I had taken off my clothes in front of a stranger" (204) – reflects her sense of humiliation and vulnerability. Overall, this incident discloses ways of Arab women's oppression from a gendered aspect, but it also unveils the collective marginality of the Palestinian people in the sense that they are excluded, and their freedom of movement is restricted due to the existence of discriminatory separating borders that split them from their Israeli counterpart. Responding to the influence of Israel's policies on the actual conditions of the Palestinians and the Israelis in the aftermath of the Six-Day War (the timeframe of Faqir's narrative), Said points out that Israel's high-handed strength translates into reality in that its military body manages to set up checkpoints and barriers at will, at which Palestinians have to go through endless interrogation and search. In contrast, Israeli settlers wander about with unrestricted freedom (1979a, 123). This glaring disparity can expose mechanisms of power and discriminatory dimensions shaping the lives of Palestinians and Israelis as represented in Faqir's text. From a postcolonial standpoint, this is consistent with Young's explanation of the racial division created between natives and settlers in a variety of colonial situations which, as he describes, requires "some special physical arrangement, a different and distinctive spatial order to maintain the distance between them" (2015, 43). Referring to a group of colonial cases in which such a prejudiced distinction between the coloniser and the colonised is established by the colonial superior power, Young mentions the Palestinian colony: "such juxtaposition of two divided zones is most visible in the Occupied Territories in the West Bank in Palestine, where the Jewish settlements are built onto the landscape with high concrete walls dividing them from overcrowded towns and villages of the Palestinians, accessed by special sealed-off highways to which local Palestinians have no access" (35). Young's account illuminates how colonial hegemonies make use of spatial practices to construct prevalence, marginalise indigenous groups, and keep up systems of oppression, which can correspond to Faqir's presentation of the spatial procedures created by Israeli settlers in an attempt to preserve dominance over Palestinian natives.

2.3 Uneven Grounds: Power Disparities in the Conflict

The narrative delineates the loss suffered by Eman over the fall of her lover Shadeed at the hands of the Israeli forces as well. The Palestinian rebel fighter Shadeed promises to propose to Eman upon the successful execution of a revolutionary operation targeting a guarded settlers' committee in Hebron. This operation underlines

strategic objectives of national resistance organisations and guerrilla warfare, as evidenced in the discussion held amongst Shadeed and his fellow Palestinian fighters while on their way to the operation's location. In their discussion, the fighters distinguish between prospective encounters with Israeli soldiers at checkpoints and targeting members of the Settlers' Committee in Hebron, "killing soldiers at checkpoints was not his idea of guerrilla fighting. It would be less significant than killing members of the Settlers' Committee. The first would be 'an operation,' while the second would be, as Che put it, a means to achieve an end. Settlements were the hottest danger" (1987, 16). This highlights the resistance movements' prioritisation of targets depending on the perceived impact or effectiveness in advancing their causes. Confirming the centrality of Jewish settlements as the target of the attack mirrors the wide geopolitical backdrop of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict in which the dispersal of Jewish settlements is regarded as a symbol of occupation as well as a primary obstacle to the realisation of Palestinian self-determination and statehood.

Days following this operation, Shadeed is captured and placed in one of the Israeli prisons, where he gets brutally tortured at the hands of David and other Israeli officers, until he succumbs to a nervous breakdown. Specifically, Shadeed is taken to Beer Al-Sab'a prison: "the police station of the British, the prison of the Zionists and the administrative centre of the Ottomans" (Faqir 1987, 44–45), where Arab Palestinians used to be subjected, which can be interpreted as a critique of dominant institutions run respectively by the latest colonisers of Palestine. Faqir's critique of contemporary colonisers of Palestine also extends to the biased intervention of the British mandatory government, which facilitated the transition of its colonial legacies (governmental institutions) to Israeli settlers, enabling their dominance over Palestinian lands and people. Among these institutions, the prison stands out as a private space, where the conflicting parties, the Israeli as the jailor and the Palestinian as the jailed, meet and interact with each other. The prison functions as one of the penal policies that the Israeli power uses to isolate, punish, and dominate Palestinian rejectionist individuals. Sharabi highlights that the systematic arrests of guerrillas following the Six-Day War involve "imprisonment for long duration, interrogation and torture. It constitutes a central mechanism of pacification and repression" (1970, 13). He further explains that "systematic arrest, then, aims not only at apprehending the guilty, but also at crushing the will to resist" (1970, 14). In the novel, Shadeed, in particular, undergoes various forms of torture for resisting the occupier, with the intensity escalating, as he continues to defy the jailer's orders throughout the investigation.

Featuring a substantial disparity, the power dynamics within the prison system are further emphasised through the variety of subjugation methods available to the Israeli jailor over the Palestinians inside the tightly confined cells. Attempting to

compel Shadeed to surrender to his decree, the Israeli officer, Shin Beit, intimidates Shadeed, "I have everything at my disposal, dogs, electricity, chemicals, as well as psychologists […]. I have many alternatives: to kill you, to make you crazy or to expel you" (1987, 114). This intimidation illustrates the extent to which the Israeli authorities are prepared to go to maintain control and dominance over Palestinian prisoners, ensuring the powerful options at the Israeli hand and the powerlessness of the Palestinian inmates. Michel Foucault's notions of how power operates within institutions like prisons through a variety of strategies, including intimidation and the manipulation of physical and psychological punishments, can provide a theoretical lens through which to understand this fictional scenario. According to Foucault, power is not only exercised through outright coercion but also through subtle mechanisms of surveillance, normalisation, and the control of the body (1980, 11–12). In the case of the Israeli prison system, the utilisation of intimidation tactics and the projection of authority by the Israeli officers resonates with Foucault's conception of power as being exerted through a range of punishment and disciplinary mechanisms. While the use of such alternatives in dealing with prisoners during interrogation processes is not unique to any specific culture, Shahak asserts that flogging, imprisoning, expelling, and, in threatening circumstances, killing the religious other are main features of the Jewish system to achieve the principle of social closeness and cohesion in Palestine (1994, 14). As represented in Faqir's text, the institute of incarceration can be seen as a mode of oppression and a form of exclusion among a constellation of eliminatory practices, policies, and regimes imposed by the Israeli governance on the indigenous people to maintain a hierarchy of power.

Apart from the hierarchy of power embodied both inside and outside the incarceration system, putting the occupier and the occupied in proximity illuminates certain politics of cultural stereotyping in Israeli–Palestinian perceptions. David refers to Shadeed in prison as "[s]tupid, lazy Arabs. Bare feet. Bare minds. They don't grasp whatever you tell them. How many things did the Jews have to teach these grinning Arabs" (1987, 51). This statement displays how David tries to shape his relationship with Shadeed within a master–slave framework, not only by abusing him but also by demeaning his cultural identity as uncivilised, primitive, and backward. Likewise, Yahuda perceives the old Arab man as someone who "resents the change" (181), stressing his own efforts of modernising the plantation in an attempt to justify his usurpation of this property. He further generalises this perception to all Arabs by saying "they're all lazy and unimaginative" (181). This narrative constructs a framework of Jewish superiority in modernisation and progress, viewing Arab Palestinians as resistant to development from Yahuda's point of view. Additionally, this perspective serves to rationalise and perpetuate entrenched inequalities between

Israelis and Palestinians, sustaining the unequal positions they must occupy in society. The novel exemplifies this inequality through referring to the Palestinian people living or working in "1948 Palestine": they work "for the Jews," and not "with the Jews" (210), which also fits into a superior–inferior relationship grounded in the cultural perception espoused by the Jewish community.

In return, labelling the Israeli settlers as "aggressors, occupiers, colonialists, killers" (Faqir 1987, 21) from the Palestinian perspective challenges the legitimacy of Jewish settlement in the region. It denies or disputes the historical narrative put forth by Jewish settlers regarding the redemption, reclaiming, and governance of land in Palestine. Considering them "aggressors" and "killers" implies a perception of Israeli settlers as operators of conflict and violence, while deeming them as "occupiers" and "colonialists" reflects viewing them as a foreign domination. Overall, the ways the Israelis and Palestinians view each other encompass the deeply entrenched and contrasting narratives that form perceptions on both sides of the conflict, contributing to unceasing tensions and hostilities among them. Within the context of the novel's representation of the cultural dimensions of the conflict, the Israeli people distort the image of the Arab Muslim Palestinians by classifying their national resistance organisations as extremists, whose existence and actions are a growing threat to the domestic and public security. A report announcing the success of an Israeli intelligence operation states that it "was carried out successfully. Two terrorists were killed, and the third [Shadeed] gave himself up" (Faqir 1987, 41). In the same way, the soldier, who arrests Shadeed, also says while pointing his rifle to his face that "he's just an Arab, a terrorist" (44), which reveals an overgeneralised perception taken on by the Israelis to cover and legitimise their exercise of power, violence, and subjection against the revolutionary Arab Palestinians. Though actions like Shadeed's attack on civilians (the members of the Settler Committee in Hebron) are condemned as terrorism, the conflation of "Arab" with "terrorist" reflects patterns of generalisation in Israeli perceptions of Arabs.

In the text, many incidents imply that the Israeli subjugation is based on a thorough knowledge of Arab Palestinians, their history, culture, traditions, religion, race, character, language, society, and possibilities, which they utilise as a dominating apparatus to confront Palestinians and weaken their resistance. One incident exemplifies this when an Israeli soldier, familiar with the language and cultural codes of the occupied, searches for the fighters hiding in Nablus. This soldier deceives an old Palestinian woman by pretending that he is an Arab man from Gaza and "a member of the Resistance Movement." To conceal his identity in a persuasive way, he talks to the woman in a good "Arabic language plus the right social behaviour": these are for him "the keys to his success" in finding out the hiding Palestinian fighters. Since the woman does not fully trust him but still adheres to the cultural

standard of hospitality, she hosts him, then she runs "to their hiding-place to warn them" (Faqir 1987, 30–32), which gives them away, since the soldier follows her. His knowledge of Arabic and behaviour patterns coded in the culture allow him to manipulate the situation with the old woman effectively. He uses deception as a tactic to obtain clues and control over her. His betrayal of trust represents Israelis as willing to exploit vulnerabilities within the Palestinian community and to take advantage of its cultural values. Theoretically, this can arguably resonate with Foucault's account of the relationship between knowledge and power. Foucault asserts that "the exercise of power itself creates and causes to emerge new objects of knowledge and accumulates new bodies of information", elaborating that "[i]t is not possible for power to be exercised without knowledge, it is impossible for knowledge not to engender power" (1980, 51–52). Grounding the analysis of the text's portrayal of Israeli tactics in Foucault's theories, one can posit that the soldier's utilisation of manipulation to extract information from the Palestinian woman demonstrates how power drives the accumulation of knowledge, which, in turn, produces specific forms of power strategies.

Based on their knowledge of the Arab Palestinian culture and the individual tendencies of some of its people, the narrative shows that the Israelis target, exploit, and recruit a particular group of Palestinian people as informers and traitors, who are more or less ready to betray their people for their own personal interests. The expected outcome of using the strategic role of informers is evidenced in this observation: "[a]s long as there was a Palestinian informer, they would never free their country" (1987, 45). While this observation is narrated from the Israeli perspective, it also highlights internal divisions within the Palestinian community. This division asserts the primary role of informers in undermining Palestinian resistance efforts towards liberation and self-determination. The novel presents Captain Abdel-Qader Lafi as a Palestinian informer, who gives clues about Mohammad Saqi's political activism, which ultimately leads to the arrest of seventeen members involved in the local resistance including Saqi. Lafi appears in court to testify to what he proclaims against Saqi and other rebellious Palestinian men in the last session of the case in which Saqi is eventually sentenced to be "hanged by the neck until he is dead in the mosque yard" (111), with a group of Palestinian locals, including his family, witnessing the execution.

This, however, uncovers another strategy of the Israeli regime among the various forms, techniques, and apparatuses of the settler-occupier control, which is the deliberate publicisation of subjugation through acts such as physical punishment and violence against Palestinian dissenters, as well as the dazzling success of its intelligence operations. Eman elucidates the arrest scene of her father by saying that "[a]ll our neighbours were standing by their windows watching Daddy, handcuffed, being dragged to the army vehicle" (1987, 10), which testifies to publicising

violence, with the neighbourhood witnessing the act of authority and oppression. Announcing the arrest via "the loudspeaker of the armed forces headquarters" and "Radio Ishmael broadcasting from Rahmah" (11), the Israeli authority signals approval of the successful execution of the action, which is an indication of the Israeli authority's control and surveillance of institutions in the Occupied Territories of Palestine, providing them with a channel from which they can address the occupied Palestinians. Whether publicising violence or intelligence, this ultimately aims at creating an atmosphere of fear, powerlessness, and disempowerment that can manipulate the collective consciousness of the Palestinian people and occupy their imagination. It is to (re)direct them to a persistent state of submission, but it also functions as a method of disintegrating the unity of the Palestinian community by accusing their resistant individuals of aberration and thereby becoming a forsaken group rejected by some of the locals.

In the novel, Eman becomes a castaway member of her local society because of her father's resistance actions, even though she is not personally responsible for his political engagement. Eman narrates, "My father tried to overthrow the government and was trying to develop Islamic socialism. That's what people told me later" (1987, 222–23). She also tells that as a schoolgirl, she used to sit alone, as her schoolmates were unwilling to socialise with her because her father was a member of the local resistance movement: "people called me the prisoner's daughter and avoided me as if I had alopecia. I didn't know." (150) Eman's local ostracisation reveals her struggle to find acceptance even in her own society; it further shows an aspect of an unfair social judgment over innocent people arising from societal prejudices and also the successful deployment of division as a form of power and control. In another instance, Eman narrates that her uncle refuses to help her family by giving them the money they need to hire a lawyer for her jailed father. Eman's uncle responds to their request for help by saying that "[h]e used to be my brother not after what he did. […] He showed me up. Humiliated me. How dare he put his head next to the ruler's? Ridiculous. […] What he did – no, what he tried to do – affected my business. Nobody wants to make deals with the traitor's brother, of course." (57) His stance highlights a local conflict of interests and divergent approaches, which are the outcome of the institutionalised dismantling of the Palestinian society and its individuals created by the manipulative occupying power. While Eman's father is dedicated to fighting the occupier regime as a means of alien aggression against his country, her uncle consents that the Israeli settlers are the legitimate rulers of the country and resisting them is an unacceptable disobedience since he is, as his words to Eman indicate, submitted to the domination of the occupier, but he is also concerned to maintain his personal interest of promoting his business and not losing his clients.

2.4 Many Faces of Defiance

In Faqir's text, Saqi, Shadeed, and Eman are agents of resistance; they face oppression on different fronts and with vibrant steadfastness. Their exercises of defiance are motivated by different impulses, depending on their gender and also on their lived experiences. The Arab male characters, Saqi and Shadeed, struggle to overthrow the oppressive forces of the Israeli authority. They join the local resistance movements because they are actual victims of the violence of the Israeli occupation. Meanwhile, Eman navigates the challenges of patriarchal standards in her society, contending with unfair gender norms in her struggle for female liberation and autonomy.

Saqi is presented as a participant of the Six-Day War, experiencing the Arab defeat and the dispossession of the Palestinian people from their lands. This experience pushes him to leave behind his personal life, prioritising the sacrifice for his country, as he decides to dedicate himself to resisting the Israeli subjugation until his country gets rid of the strangers. As for Shadeed, he is motivated by a sense of belonging to his homeland which comes out of a personal loss inflicted upon him by the violent actions exercised by the Israeli troops over his family members. Shadeed tells Eman that the hardest loss in his life caused by the Israelis was that "[t]hey killed my father and nine brothers and sisters. I was young then. When I grew older and was able to understand the size of the calamity, you can't imagine the pain that struck me" (1987, 219). He also says that "'Palestine runs in my blood. Even if they expel me, we'll never part because it lives here,' he hits his chest. 'It's like a fungus on my skin.'" (222) As these words indicate, Shadeed participates in revolutionary operations against Israeli soldiers in retaliation for the killing of his family members, but he is also empowered to resist David's torture in his captivity because of his patriotic sense, which because of the harshness of his ordeal becomes much firmer.

Being brutally tortured in prison, Shadeed turns to silence in order not to make confessions, thereby betraying the local liberation movements to which he loyally belongs. He succumbs to a nervous breakdown rather than surrender to the imprisoner's order. According to Faqir, "the Palestinian prisoner resists his interrogators by maintaining silence. But because he can't speak any version of the truth that won't either be exploited or ignored by the Israeli authorities, he goes mad" (Moore 2011, 6). Analysing Shadeed's resistance in prison, Sowmya Srinivasan makes the remark that the Palestinian Fedayee withstands an unbearable and inhumane physical and mental torture by crafting an imaginative space of his own in which "he lives in his self-made world where human beings look like giants and his only companion is a tiny ant" (2017, 68). This shows that when being incapable of resisting his enemy due to confinement, Shadeed rather creates self-empowering tools of withstanding, silence, and contemplation rather than obeying the oppressive order of the Israeli jailor.

Whether being tortured or left in the filthy cell, Shadeed retreats into his imagination to transcend his ordeals. It is narrated that he "remembered other times and places when he sat on the cold floor between his mother and father. The bubbling fountain sprayed his dry face with water. The smell of citrus flowers and the twittering of sparrows seeped through him" (1987, 115). This passage offers insights into Shadeed's adapting mechanism amidst his harrowing conditions in prison. He utilises imagination as a means of psychological escape from the present agony. The physical suffering and discomfort that he endures prompts him to mentally transport himself to a different time and place, when/where he sits between his mother and father, suggesting a sense of comfort and security associated with parental ties. This reminiscence likely portrays a time of emotional warmth and closeness for Shadeed, in contrast with his current isolation and suffering.

Perceiving the cell of the prison as a nest, Shadeed conjures up that he is a six-legged "tiny creature" living with the ant in the desert and would like to stay hiding in the nest so as to escape the "the two-legged giants" (1987, 187), the Israeli jailors. In his self-created world of imagination, Shadeed establishes an intimate relation with the ant, missing it, offering it food, and taking care of it. At a certain point, he talks to the ant, "you are lucky because you have a lot of joints," asking it "how is the weather outside?" (138). This reveals Shadeed's tribulation in imprisonment, as he assumes that the ant has the free will to move, while he is deprived of his freedom in a solitary cell. The ant symbolises freedom and unrestricted movement that Shadeed lacks in his own confinement, highlighting his feelings of entrapment. The idea that an insect – traditionally a symbol of the abject – has more agency than Shadeed reflects the depth of his helplessness. It shows how imprisonment has stripped him of autonomy, leaving even a creature as lowly as an ant with more control over its existence. Shadeed's dialogue with the ant, particularly referring to her as if she were his lover, suggests that he projects his longing for affection onto the small animal. "He gave her his right hand, then picked her up with his thumb and forefinger gently, making sure not to press hard on her tiny body" (138). On another occasion, Shadeed "asked her to stay, but she insisted on going away to sit her exam. He wished that she would come back and hug him." (139) This implies a sense of emotional yearning for companionship in his isolated situation, especially in the absence of his lover, Eman. Shadeed's wish for the ant to stay mirrors his desire for Eman to remain with him, indicating his reluctance to be away from her, further underlining the depth of his emotional attachment to Eman and his struggle to cope with her absence while he is imprisoned. Significantly, although escapism is typically an indicator of disempowerment, it becomes a source of agency for Shadeed. By seeking respite in an imaginative world, where he feels closely connected to his loved people, he gains the strength to cope with his current situation.

In the case of the Arab female character Eman, the methods of resistance are different due to her gender on the one hand and her upbringing in a family house with an absent guardian father, on the other. As Srinivasan puts it, Eman does "devise a mode of resistance in the space provided to her" (2017, 73), as she lives in a conservative and patriarchal society in which feminine roles are restricted. However, Eman goes beyond these limitations and breaks the conventional image of the Arab Palestinian woman as a disempowered individual by crafting unique models of agency. This is portrayed through Eman's continuing rejection of being called a "girl," which can be seen as a gendered offence that degrades her status and autonomy, reducing her to a childlike or inferior role. In many social interactions in which Eman engages, she expresses her feeling of upset when someone – her uncle and one of the tailor's customers – calls her up as "girl," since she prefers her real name, Eman.

The narrative represents Eman's pursuit of educational growth as a means of self-empowerment. At a certain point, she decides to retake the school exams she missed when she was young, then complete her university education because she is willing to fulfil her dreams of becoming an independent and well-educated woman. She also fulfils her mother's will: "I kissed her hand and said, 'I'll be the way you want me to be. A teacher?'" (1987, 37) This indicates the responsibility Eman feels towards her family in lieu of a father. However, she explains the efforts she makes for this uneasy move as follows: "I tried to save every month in order to pay the exam fees. Something inside pushed me toward education" (150), which can be understood as a strong inner motivation, commitment to self-fulfilment, and to resisting her multiple subordination, as well.

The narrative also shows that Eman finds agency through her work as a seamstress. As she tells, "[m]y work introduced me to the touch of silk and the odour of delightful perfumes. I used to see myself flying like birds wearing the colourful dresses I was sewing and ironing. Soaring high in blue silk, orange satin, printed georgette, crepe de chine, chiffon, taffeta, velvet. Yes, velvet." (1987, 89) Eman's work as a seamstress allows her to transcend the rigid constraints of her circumstances, providing her with a sense of empowerment and control over her life. Through her craft, she does not only earn a livelihood, but she also gains a sense of liberation, fulfilment, purpose, and achievement.

Eman's personal traits create the impression that she is a determined and resolute woman. Her narrative reveals that she manages to override the distressing news of Shadeed's arrest and going mad in prison after long years of waiting, as she recovers shortly and goes to school as usual. On that day, the garbage collector Shamma'eh motivates Eman by his wise words, "if you give up they will crush you" (1987, 247). Eman's steadfastness is shown in her response to Shamma'eh, "since the birds flew

over Rahmah, that meant that we existed on the map. I grabbed the folder and walked to the school." (248–49) Eman's decision to continue her journey, symbolised by her action of grabbing her folder and heading to school despite distress, reveals her determination to react with perseverance and resilience to the accumulated hardships of her life: the loss of her father, her baby sister, and her lover Shadeed. Ultimately, it reflects the sense of faith she has in the everlasting existence of the Palestinians in their occupied land, which is also embodied in the Arabic meaning of her name, "faith."

3 Conclusion

The current study explores Faqir's *Nisanit* by analysing it in the context of the territorial conflict between the Jewish settlers, who established a Jewish state in the Middle East, and the Arab Palestinian natives, who reject settler occupation that restrains their right of having an independent statehood. It also focuses on investigating the representation of different strategies of subjugation performed by the Israeli authority to overpower the Palestinian local revolutions and methods of native resistance undertaken by the Palestinian fighters to decolonise the power structure of the occupier domination. On the one hand, the Israeli authority makes use of a range of subjugation methods to achieve their purposes of settler colonialism such as discrimination, violence, arrests, imprisoning, social segregation, and cultural stereotyping in *Nisanit*. On the other hand, the Palestinian characters of the novel respond to Israeli domination by adopting different models of resistance depending on their individual experiences. Saqi and Shadeed participate in guerrilla wars and actions of revolution organised by the local resistance movements, making it a nationalist responsibility that they never give in to until their country gains a state of self-determination. As for Eman, she resists her double subordination by establishing an extraordinary sense of agency through responsibility, self-fulfilment, determination, education, work, empathy, and social solidarity.

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Culture-Specific and Postmodern Literary Devices in Sherman Alexie's *Indian Killer*

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Sherman Alexie's *Indian Killer* (1996) rewrites the traditional framework of crime fiction by using Native American culture-specific and postmodern literary devices such as fragmentation, intertextuality, irony, and dark humour. The story revolves around a series of brutal murders in Seattle attributed to the so-called Indian Killer. The murderer receives the moniker from the media because the victims are scalped, and owl feathers are found at the crime scenes. An omniscient third-person narrator reveals crucial details and leaves readers to play the role of detective, tasked with unravelling the mystery and determining the true identity of the Indian Killer.

Keywords: postmodernism, humour, irony, oral tradition, Indigenous crime fiction

1 Introduction

Among the various subgenres of crime writing that have appeared since the Golden Age of detective fiction – which dominated the interwar era of the two World Wars – such as the thriller and the hard-boiled, one of the most captivating was Indigenous crime fiction, because the incorporation of Native American mythology and traditions gave the themes and narrative of crime fiction a new perspective. Indigenous writers transformed the Western conventions of language and form by the decolonisation of crime narratives; thus, they created a format that reflects Native American viewpoints and expands the previously defined boundaries of the genre (Gulddal and King 2023, 288). Unlike traditional Western sleuths who solve mysteries with limited help from their sidekick – if they have one – or a police officer, the Indigenous community actively participates in the investigation process (Fischer-Hornung and Mueller 2003, 17).

A prime example of Native American innovation in crime fiction is Sherman Alexie's 1996 novel *Indian Killer*; its narrative and the use of postmodern literary devices challenge the established framework of traditional Golden Age crime writing. In a sense, Alexie's novel resembles Renaissance revenge tragedies, where the main character is helped to solve the mystery by the ghost of the murder victim, or by

prophetic dreams (Ascari 2007, 22). The novelty of *Indian Killer* is that the spirit in the story does not help the process of detection, rather it takes vengeance for the historical injustice Native Americans have suffered from since colonisation. It adheres to the characteristics of metaphysical crime fiction, in which – although it follows the narrative structure of detective stories – the detection and the resolution take place in a metaphysical dimension, thus making it impossible to remain within the constraints of traditional crime fiction (Bényei 2000, 12). Alexie's novel has (sub) genre-blending features due to the inclusion of Native American culture-specific elements, thus, its categorisation is ambivalent. Various interpreters use different labels for the book, for example, murder mystery, noir mystery, or psychological thriller, among many others (Ruppert 2005, 184; Moore 2005, 304; Anand and Kaur 2024, 49).

The story is about a mysterious serial killer who terrorises Seattle. The murderer, dubbed Indian Killer by the media, attacks white men at random, scalps them and leaves two owl feathers next to their bodies. Additionally, the culprit also kidnaps a child but later releases him. The first victim, Justin Summers, attracts the Indian Killer's attention with his arrogance: he stands in the middle of the sidewalk, making people walk around him. The murderer brushes past Justin, then follows him and stabs him to death. Having scalped the victim, the murderer leaves the dead body in an abandoned house. The second incident is the premeditated murder of David Rogers, a young university student. David disappears after he is last seen in front of an Indian casino. Killed with a single gunshot to the head, the victim is found by hikers days later in the nearby forest. Disregarding that the modus operandi is completely different from the Indian Killer's other murders, the public is convinced that David is also the serial killer's victim, due to their prejudice about the scene of the crime, the casino.[1] After David's disappearance, a six-year-old boy, Mark Jones, is kidnapped from his bedroom. This time it is obvious that the Indian Killer is the culprit, because owl feathers are left on Mark's pillow. The boy is held in a dark room for days without being hurt, then he is taken back home. The six-year-old is the only victim to survive the encounter with the dangerous criminal, thus, he is able to give a description to the police. When investigators question him, he tells the police that the Indian Killer is neither a man nor a woman, rather a shadowy figure who resembles an owl. The last victim of the serial killer is a businessman, Edward Letterman, who loses his life in the most horrifying manner: not only is he stabbed in the chest numerous times, but also his heart is cut out and eaten.

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[1] Towards the end of the novel, it is revealed that this murder was a red herring all along, it had nothing to do with the Indian Killer, and actually two white men were responsible for David's death.

The main character of the novel is John Smith, a construction worker in his late twenties with a strong physique that enables him to potentially commit violent crimes; thus, both the police and people around him suspect him of being the Indian Killer. He was adopted as a newborn by a white couple, Olivia and Daniel Smith, who do not know what tribe their son is from. They try to educate themselves and John about Native American cultures without realising that it is impossible to make up for the lack of John's genuine connection to his indigeneity, which results in his identity issues. He also suffers from severe mental health issues – most likely schizophrenia; he cuts off all contact with his parents and stops taking his prescribed medication, which makes it increasingly hard for him to differentiate reality from hallucinations. The story ends with his complete descent into madness, which ultimately results in his suicide. The police close their investigation – since John's death makes them believe he was responsible for the murders – which also makes the public convinced that the Indian Killer is gone, although the reader is left with key pieces of information to suggest otherwise. The cliffhanger ending encourages the reader to approach these stories from a critical perspective. As Jeanne C. Ewert contends: "[t]he message for the reader of metaphysical detective fiction is clear: she must learn to read without relying on the detective's interpretations; she must also learn to read in a world that offers conjectures and structuring systems, but no single overriding structure" (1999, 188).

Even though Alexie's book centres around the mystery of the Indian Killer's identity, the novel is a social critique of the long-term effects of settler colonialism due to its underlying themes of issues that urban Indian communities face – such as marginalisation and homelessness (Tatonetti 2010, 17). Furthermore, in a post-colonial setting crime fiction – regardless of their subgenre – can be used to express a minority's resistance towards the "colonizing power of the metropolis" (Knight 2006, 26).

The detective figure and the resolution are completely missing from the plot, as Meredith James contends that "Alexie withholds the pleasure of knowing, unequivocally, the satisfying conclusion that results from reading a standard detective novel where a suspect is singled out by a cunning detective and all the questions are answered and wrapped up neatly" (2010, 172). John's viewpoint, numerous minor characters' thoughts, and even police testimonies are revealed to the reader, but no clear conclusion can be drawn about who the perpetrator is. Alexie's ambiguous portrayal of the killer and the lack of a traditional detective figure makes the reader question preconceived notions about identity, justice, and the resolution of the plot. As this paper demonstrates, by blending the elements of metaphysical crime fiction with postmodern literary devices, Alexie diverges from the framework of the subgenre of classic detective fiction and shifts the focus from the investigation

to the perspective of the Indigenous community. The murders turn into a social critique about the struggles of urban Indian communities, as one of the long-term effects of colonisation. Through the figure of the Indian Killer, the depiction of marginalisation, and the lack of resolution, Alexie directs the reader's attention to the instability of truth both in the murder investigation and in the history of Native Americans in the US.

2 Narrative Techniques and Postmodern Features

Self-reflexivity is crucial in *Indian Killer* in several instances, which showcases how the narrative is an amalgamation of Western conventions and Indigenous traditions. To draw the reader's attention to the creation process, Alexie uses metafiction – one of the most common narrative techniques in postmodern literature (Nicol 2009, 16). As Malcah Effron writes: "self-referential statements indicate chinks in the ideological armor of any narrative frame because, [...] where the system becomes apparent rather than always-already interpolated, problematize the totality of the established definitions, particularly those used to define the nature of reality" (2010, 52). In the case of *Indian Killer*, the established definitions of reality would suggest that the killer is a human being; therefore, the possibility of looking for the perpetrator in the metaphysical realm is excluded by the non-Indigenous characters.

   The first instance of self-referentiality is the title of the novel, which has multiple interpretations. Jack Wilson is writing his new novel based on the ongoing killing spree of the Indian Killer. Wilson is struggling with writing, and the creation of his novel within the novel is described multiple times to obscure the boundaries between fiction and reality. An impersonal narrative voice appears throughout the novel; it cannot be determined whether some of the chapters are segments of Wilson's work, or the authentic descriptions of the events. Periodically the same scene appears in separate chapters, described in slightly different ways, from the killer's perspective and from the prime suspect's – John's – point of view. The same narrative technique appears in Edgar Allan Poe's "The Mystery of Marie Rogêt" (1842) – a forerunner to the true crime genre – which features conflicting accounts of Marie Rogêt's death. In the third chapter, John is walking through the University District when he suddenly feels dizzy, accidentally bumping into a white man who is talking to his friends. The man asks John if he is okay, shows him the peace sign, and says goodbye to his acquaintances. He then walks away while John silently follows him. A similar scene is described from the killer's point of view in the fifth chapter, when he walks through the University District and spots a lonely, arrogant, and

self-absorbed man, Justin. The murderer watches him from afar, sensing that his solitude makes him vulnerable. When they reach a secluded area, the murderer kills him, thus making Justin Summers the Indian Killer's first victim. These scenes are red herrings, since at first glance the killer's and John's point of view are very similar, which can lead the reader to jump to the conclusion that John and the Indian Killer are the same person. Upon closer scrutiny, however, these sections show discrepancies which – even if they do not conclusively rule it out – cast considerable doubt on the possibility that John is the murderer.

The composition of the novel reflects the complexity of both the social problems represented and the decline of John's ability to differentiate reality from hallucinations. Regardless of whether the sections written from John's point of view are the parts of Wilson's novel or not, the book's narrative structure is highly fragmented – a common characteristic feature of postmodern texts. Fragmentation is experienced both on a psychological and social level, internally and externally likewise (Reed 2021, 41). Postmodern storytelling discards the conventional plot structure to dismantle overused master narratives while reconstructing fictional worlds where irony and humour can play a central role, and multiple points of views can prevail (Hoffmann 2005, 5). Fragmentation represents how colonisation disrupted Native American historical continuity, causing generation trauma and the loss of identity for American Indians. The plotlines are linked by repeated allusions to literary texts and Indigenous oral tradition. Alexie also includes references to his literary predecessors; for example, a homeless man named Loney is briefly mentioned, which, although apparently has no significance in the plot, is an homage to James Welch's novel, *The Death of Jim Loney* (1979). A minor character, Truck Schultz – who finds himself in a foggy alleyway while he thinks that someone is following him – compares the eerie and sinister atmosphere of the location to the setting of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (1902). The overall structure of *Indian Killer* evokes traditional elements of Indigenous storytelling, since the narrative is constructed of a string of interrelated stories that reflect on and are connected to one another (Brill de Ramírez 2016, 334). It is the reader's task to find the connections among the sections by focusing on the text as a whole rather than analysing each chapter individually. Native American authors link the text, the Indigenous community, and the reader together in an inclusive space where these participants can interact with the story itself (Porter 2005, 43). In the case of *Indian Killer*, the audience is not only encouraged to be involved in the story and to move away from the spectator position, but the reader is also forced to take on the detective's role by the omission of the detective figure and the story's cliffhanger ending.

The events are described from an authoritative narrator's point of view, instead of a character who is part and witness of the investigation itself. Following each

victim's murder – or in Mark Jones's case, kidnapping – chapters titled "Testimony" are featured, which also increase fragmentation. In these sections, the reader is presented with a dialogue between police investigators and witnesses questioned. For example, the first victim's, Justin's, friend is interrogated by an officer about what he saw on the night of the murder:

> "Mr. Russel, could you please tell us what you saw on the Burke-Gilman Trail that night?"
> "I'm sorry Officer, I was really drunk. I barely remember anything from that night." […]
> "One of your friends said you ran into, how did she say it, a shadow carrying a white guy on his shoulder. That sounds pretty memorable to me. She said you talked to this so-called shadow."
> "I don't remember Officer. I mean I just don't remember."
> "What did this shadow look like?"
> "I don't remember. I remember long hair. But that's it." (1996, 71)

In *Indian Killer*, more information is available to the audience than to any character; consequently, the pressure of discovering who committed the murders is on the reader, similarly to the way jurors are instructed to make decisions about criminal cases in court. The investigation is not included in the story itself, and the character referred to as "the killer" is a mythical, shape-shifting figure who alternately takes the form of a human being and an owl, although its appearance is not described in detail. Shapeshifter figures appear in the legends of several tribes, such as the Ojibwe windigo, described as a spirit that is neither a man nor a woman, or the Navajo (Diné) skinwalker, which takes the form of a shadowy coyote (de Vos 2022, 284; Alford 1992, 119). Most Native American tribes consider the owl as a bad omen associated with selfishness, sickness, and manipulation; thus, when it appears, it foreshadows misfortune or death (Lake-Thom 1997, 117). John witnesses an owl dance ceremony, organised by Native American university students, which he had read books about throughout his childhood to connect with his Indigenous roots. He is asked to join, but he is reluctant, as he knows about the bird's significance. "John knew that for many Indian tribes, the owl was a messenger of death. For those Indians, *the owl was death itself*. […] With Indians, death was always so close anyway. When Indian owls danced, their *shadows were shaped like owls*" (1996, 37, emphasis added). In the same way, witnesses refer to the murderer as a shadowy figure, and none of them can give a clear description of the culprit when police officers interrogate them. Six-year-old Mark Jones, the survivor of the kidnapping, says that he thinks the Indian Killer can fly, since its silhouette resembles an owl with feathers on his/her/their back, which seems impossible to the police officers, hence they dismiss Mark's description. In comparison with the Western worldview, in Indigenous cosmology, there is no hierarchical relationship between the supernatural

and the physical world, as Paula Gunn Allen writes: "Native American thought makes no […] dualistic division, nor does it draw a hard-and-fast line between what is material and what is spiritual, for the two are seen to be two expressions of the same reality" (1976, 148). In the Native American context, it is a viable and logical possibility that a shapeshifter commits the crimes. Alexie's goal with the solution of the story is to make social commentary, as it shows how circumstances paired with prejudice – based on the murderer's methods – make people jump to conclusions that offer a simple and convenient explanation instead of the multi-layered, intricate nature of the true cause of events. Native American stereotypes of owl feathers and scalping also impact people's judgement; they automatically assume that, based on the murderer's methods, it must be an Indigenous person responsible for committing these crimes.

The duality of the killer and investigator is present in Alexie's story, but since there is no sleuth solving the murders, the reflective traits are embodied in the murderer and the prime suspect of both the police and public opinion. Evidence against John is circumstantial at best, because the police have no physical proof that would link him directly to the activity of the Indian Killer, yet he becomes the main suspect due to similarities between him and the culprit. For example, both John and the killer identify blue eyes as an attribute of guilty white men whom they want to hurt. The parallels between John's and the murderer's descriptions of blue-eyed men are hardly distinguishable. In one scene, John walks through the University District of Seattle, attracting attention because he is Indigenous. "John the Indian was walking, and *his audience* was briefly interested because *Indians were briefly interesting*. White people no longer feared Indians. Somehow, in the twentieth century, *Indians had become invisible* and docile. John wanted to change that. He wanted to see fear in every pair of blue eyes" (1996, 30, emphasis added). Referring to people who look at him as an audience indicates that he sees himself as a performer because he feels they glance at him with the colonial gaze, then they ignore him. Native Americans' invisibility from the dominant society's perspective appears in a literal sense in the killer's ability to disappear, while figuratively, it is a social commentary about the neglect of Indigenous peoples in the US. Alexie emphasises depicting every class of society and calls attention to the problems that cause tensions between the top and the bottom of the social hierarchy. John's adoptive parents are the representatives of the richest people in Seattle, while the homeless characters are the most vulnerable in the city. John, the killer, and several minor characters are in an interim position, yet they align themselves with the disadvantaged groups of the society both morally and emotionally. This reflects that they are disenchanted with the ideals of the affluent social classes, and they relate more to the resilience of homeless people.

3 The Role of Social Commentary

Alexie includes some issues in his narrative – such as homelessness – to make social commentary on the struggles of Indigenous people and on how these problems are handled. The reader is presented with two completely different perspectives about homeless people who, in the novel, reside in Occidental Park, a real-life site in Seattle. From John's point of view, character development can be seen as his preconceptions about the most vulnerable people in society change. "[John] was relieved that many of the homeless Indians refused to surrender and drink themselves to death. He was saddened that so many Indians were homeless and had no simple reason to offer for their condition" (1996, 144). John has ambivalent feelings when he discovers that alcohol issues are often not the cause of the problem. On the one hand, he is glad that perseverance and resilience make homeless people strong enough to avoid self-destruction; on the other hand, he realises that the issue is rooted in a complex set of social problems that require a lot of time and effort to be solved. He knows that the main cause of the struggles Native Americans face can be traced back to settler colonialism, and the quote above expresses that Indigenous people "refused to surrender" to white colonisers.

A radically different view on homelessness is represented by Jack Wilson, a retired policeman and crime fiction writer. He describes the park as an unpleasant and filthy place, lacking in vegetation, which would have the potential to become a tourist attraction, but the Native American people who reside there make it less desirable, so their presence embodies the "Indian problem." Contrary to John's stance on the matter, in Wilson's chapter, the issue is the visibility of homelessness rather than the underlying causes of the situation. Wilson reminisces about his career as an officer and the routine set by the police to keep homeless people away from the location for a short period of time when tourists are expected to attend concerts at the park. "So every Thursday morning around ten, the Seattle Police Department quietly drove the homeless out of the park. Around one in the afternoon, the homeless would begin filtering back in. By five, the park would once again belong to the street people" (1996, 228). Wilson uses a metonymy to name those who carry out the removal – the federal Native American policies – and depersonalises homeless people with a collective term, "street people." The choice of words shows how he tries to distance himself from the problem, mentioning only that he recognises some faces, the children of those who lived in the park when he started his career. He realises that the issue of homelessness is hereditary, but quite naturally he lacks the compassion John has for residents of Occidental Park. Just like in his other works, Alexie didactically thematises the struggles Indigenous communities face – this time through Wilson's perspective –, which David Treuer explains as: "The person being

educated is not the main character. The reader is the one receiving instruction. These are not bildungsromans; they are culture manuals." (2006, 163) The procedure of the police chasing homeless people away from the park every day resembles the process of colonisation, when the Indigenous inhabitants of the land – in this case Occidental Park – were driven away by white armed forces. The way homeless people go back to the park to reclaim the space for themselves symbolises the fight for Indigenous rights. Native Americans living in the park, in an open field with vegetation surrounded by Seattle's urban environment with its skyscrapers, concrete buildings and asphalt roads mirrors how the Indigenous population was forced onto reservations. In his comprehensive work about Seattle's Native American history, Coll Thrush explicates on social commentary on homelessness in the city: "Even in *Indian Killer*, otherwise a powerful meditation on what it means to be both modern and Indian, cities are somehow places where Native people cannot belong except as half-fulfilled people or as ciphers for nature. Being a metaphor in Seattle, it would seem, is an Indian fact" (2017, 38). The feeling of alienation is expressed by several Indigenous characters, who give voice to varying levels of frustration in connection with embracing their Native American identity in the urban environment. John is the most troubled by the hardship of his identity construction, due to his lack of connection to indigeneity.

4 Oral Traditions, Identity Construction and Irony

The use of oral traditions in *Indian Killer* showcases one of the most common culture-specific elements of Indigenous literature. The structure of the novel reflects on creation stories, which is apparent from the first chapter titled "A creation story." In this section John imagines his birth in a remote reservation hospital. This segment includes grotesque details, signalling that the narrative employs postmodern metalepsis. John recounts events he could not possibly remember, constructing a story within a story on a metadiegetic level. The book also ends with a metaphorical scene in which the killer is singing and dancing in the cemetery, teaching hundreds of Indigenous people a traditional song. This ceremony, although not specified, resembles the Ghost Dance that aims to reunite Indigenous people, both the living and the dead (Vizenor 1992, 227). One of the characters, Reggie Polatkin, often recounts the massacres of Native Americans. He tells his friends about the Ghost Dance: "It was a dance that was supposed to destroy the white men and bring back the buffalo. Ghost Dancing was thought to be an act of warfare against white people" (1996, 185). Reggie misinterprets

the original purpose of the dance, because he thinks it urges violence. The real aim, however, was to ensure the cultural continuation of Indigenous peoples and the revitalisation of communities (Mohrbacher 1996, 75). The Ghost Dance is a pan-Indian tradition, not directly linked to any specific tribe. Thus, Alexie uses it to comment on the importance of a supra-tribal Indigenous identity. The killer uses the elements of oral tradition the most, for example, by singing an invisibility song, praying, and dancing. Even the abduction of Mark is described in the novel as a part of a ritual meant to initiate the revenge on white people who massacred Native Americans: "The killer knew that the kidnapping of Mark Jones was the true beginning, the first *song*, the first *dance* of a *powerful ceremony* that would change the world" (1996, 192, emphasis added). The quote reflects on the social change the murderer wants to initiate with his crimes.

Oral tradition, ceremonies, and songs are not the only sources that appear in *Indian Killer,* as John also frequently references the Bible. The elements of Christian scriptures were incorporated into Indigenous oral literature with minor changes, or in other cases, completely new narratives were created that contain elements of both sources but are not dominated by either (Ramsey 1994, 136). In the novel, the presence of both tribal cultures and Christianity creates a conflict in John's already unstable sense of identity. It is typical of Alexie's work that the tribal affiliation is not as important as the characters' personal identity (Gamber 2013, 198). Since the story is set in Seattle, most of the characters are Spokane, but not all, which serves as social commentary by emphasising the diversity of urban Indian communities. Although his white parents try to keep John close to his cultural environment by taking him to powwows and helping him to learn about different tribal customs and beliefs, that does not make up for the missing information about John's birthmother or his tribe. When John is still a baby, his adoptive mother, Olivia, decides to get him baptised by a Native American Jesuit, Father Duncan. The priest embodies the duality of representing Catholicism while embracing Indigenous values at the same time, and he teaches John about both worlds from a very young age. When John is six years old, Father Duncan takes him to the Chapel of the North American Martyrs in Seattle, where they gaze at the stained-glass windows depicting Indigenous people killing Jesuits. "John did not have the vocabulary to express what he was feeling. But he understood there was something odd about the contrast between slaughtered Jesuits, Father Duncan, and between the Indian Jesuits and the murderers" (Alexie 1996, 14). John realises that the priest can be connected to both the offenders and the victims, but he is an outsider and does not belong to either group, similarly to how John feels about his own place in society. John asks several questions to try to make sense of the discrepancy between the coexistence of indigeneity and Christianity:

"Was Jesus an Indian?" asked John. Duncan studied the crucifix, then looked down at John.
"He wasn't an Indian," said the Jesuit, "but he should have been."
John seemed to have accepted that answer. (15)

The expression "should have been" in Father Duncan's answer suggests that aspects of Indigenous experiences, such as sacrifice, and a sense of spiritual connectedness, may have profoundly resonated with the teachings of Jesus. John seems to accept the discrepancy, suggesting that he acknowledges the unresolvable differences between Native American and Christian belief systems. Although the underlying meaning of Duncan's remark is not understood by John, the reader is aware of it.

Irony is a key feature in Indigenous literature because it enables the reassessment of currently existing representations of Native Americans (Gruber 2008, 56). Ironic utterances are present throughout *Indian Killer* – such as Duncan's remark that highlights the discrepancy between Christianity and indigeneity – and in most cases, they educate the reader rather than playing an important part in the characters' conversations, or in the story itself. As Gruber argues, "by acknowledging the irony [readers] laughingly recognize the author/ ironist as a kindred spirit whose assessment of who- or whatever is mocked […] they implicitly share – even if they come from a vastly different cultural background" (2008, 56). The ironic undertone of the text challenges the prejudiced representation of Indigenous people, while offering thought-provoking ideas regarding the long-standing relationship between Christianity and Native American tribes. Alexie does not only focus on the historical trauma of colonialism, but also, as Moore and Shanley contend, "through his commanding wit and ironic attitude, [Alexie] takes on the world for its hypocrisy and ignorance. He takes Native literature in new dimensions of self-reflection, as he affirms Native lives and Native personhood" (2016, 445) ironically, through the story of a serial killer. Alexie concentrates on the personal aspects of cultural identity and the everyday ironies of the lives of urban Indians to a greater extent than other Indigenous writers do, but the historical aspects of indigeneity are also represented from one minor character's, Reggie Polatkin's, point of view.

Irony, other than expressed in the characters' utterances, can also appear in the structure of the text (Gruber 2008, 55). Chapters from Reggie's perspective showcase structural irony, because they mirror the sections from another minor character's, Aaron Rogers's point of view, creating two plotlines that are the exact opposite of each other. When Reggie hears about the murders, he immediately suspects that the perpetrator is a white man who poses as an Indigenous person, based on the scalping and the owl feathers the Indian Killer leaves. He thinks that a "pretendian" is responsible for the murders, someone who falsely claims to be Indigenous, and misappropriates Native American traditions and symbols (Kolopenuk 2023, 469).

With two of his friends, Reggie goes out at night to attack white men at random partly because they want to take revenge for the ongoing murder spree, while they also want retaliation for the generational trauma caused by colonisers. After they capture a white man, they record the physical assault of their victim. Reggie's plotline is reversed in the sections from Aaron Rogers's perspective, who is the older brother of David Rogers, the second victim of the Indian Killer. Aaron is also accompanied by two of his friends to "hunt" for the Indigenous people he blames for his brother's death. Reggie and Aaron both have increasingly radical ideas, and they become more ruthless with each incident, that is why their accomplices abandon them. Ironically, the two men are equally wrong about their presuppositions; the murders were not committed by a pretendian, and David's death was a red herring all along, which had nothing to do with the Indian Killer. Reggie and Aaron stand for two starkly opposing views, yet their methods for retaliation, their brutality, and the consequences of their actions are the same, although they are most likely not prosecuted for their crimes – the cliffhanger ending does not contain any detail that would suggest that Reggie or Aaron are held responsible for the assaults. Ultimately, instead of getting revenge, they only perpetuate the problem they claim to fight against, which results in even more violence inflicted upon innocent people and creates further racial tension.

Sarcastic remarks might leave an odd impression in a narrative about a killing spree, but dark humour is an integral part of Alexie's style and Native American literature in general, regardless of the subject matter, and *Indian Killer* is no exception to this rule. Humour is a way to escape, a coping mechanism in the face of struggle Indigenous communities have, whether it is personally experienced, or part of generational trauma caused by colonisation. When John sees a group of men from different tribes and backgrounds at a powwow he attends, he feels jealous over their laughter. "John wanted to own that laughter, never realizing that their laughter was a ceremony used to drive away personal and collective demons" (Alexie 1996, 21). John's lack of genuine connection to his Indigenous roots hurts him so much that he would not even consider the negative consequences that are inseparably and inherently part of Indigenous existence. He suffers from personal trauma due to his placement within a white family as an infant, therefore feeling like an outsider who does not fully belong in either Native American or white society. The source of his mental distress, the circumstances of his upbringing, although they weigh heavily on his character, are depicted in ironic and grotesque ways throughout the novel, starting with his name, John Smith. When his father, Daniel, is looking for him asking around about his son's possible whereabouts, he asks a Native American homeless man if he knows John by any chance:

"Listen, could I ask you something? I'm looking for my son. […] Talks to himself."

"Hey, partner, most everybody down here talks to himself. How'd you get an Indian son anyways? Marry you some dark meat, enit?"

"No, no. He's adopted."

"What's his name?" asked the Indian.

"John. John Smith."

"You adopted an Indian kid and named him John Smith? No wonder he talks to himself." (218)

Although not as obvious as the irony behind John Smith's name, two minor characters, Jack Wilson and Clarence Mather, also have names that carry underlying meaning. Firstly, Jack Wilson was the other name of the Paiute religious leader, who prophesised about the Ghost Dance ritual (Moses 1985, 336). Secondly, the fictional Jack Wilson is an author of crime stories, who claims to have Indigenous background, although is unable to prove it. Wilson's popular book series features a Native American detective figure – called Aristotle Little Hawk – which may also allude to Tony Hillerman, a white author who writes crime stories featuring Navajo characters (Gamber 2013, 196). Clarence Mathers is a professor at the University of Seattle. He is white, but was raised by the Lakota, and because of that he thinks he is entitled to claim Native American culture and traditions just like Indigenous people. It is revealed in chapters from his perspective that he exploits Native Americans for his own advantage. He teaches a literature course that only includes books that are not authentic, because they were written or co-written by white people, for example *The Education of Little Tree*, *Black Elk Speaks*, or *Lame Deer: Seeker of Visions*. He is named after a Puritan minister, Cotton Mather, who disapproved of the abuse of Native Americans in his works, but he believed that the only way to "civilize" the Indigenous population is to make them follow the English lifestyle, while abandoning their Native American language, culture, and beliefs (Smolinski and Minkema 2022, 266). Wilson and Mather, who have no real ties to any Native American culture and who claim to be Indigenous for their own personal gain, are both instances of cultural misappropriation. Ironically, they are the only characters that benefit from – false – Indigenous identity. The underlying meaning behind the names of Jack Wilson and Mathers requires comprehensive knowledge about Native American history that most readers do not necessarily have, but if they do realise the connections, it adds yet another layer to the interpretation of the story. "Decontextualizing historical specifics of characteristics of historical persons from their original background and recontextualizing them in contemporary Native texts […] triggers recognition while simultaneously effecting defamiliarization and reimagining" (Gruber 2008, 91). The additional meaning of the character names serves to rewrite the traditional representation of historical figures and events. The reader does not have to know

about and decode these important details to understand the story, but they do make the social commentary much more obvious and powerful.

Alexie's dark humour is also used when the last and most gruesome murder is described, where the method of the murderer slightly changes. The news of the killing is announced live on air in a popular radio show, in which the host elaborates on how the crime was committed, emphasising that this time the Indian Killer – after stabbing and scalping a businessman named Edward Letterman – proceeded to devour the victim's heart "like a fucking sandwich" (Alexie 1996, 336). The host's grotesque remark at the end of the announcement leaves the reader with ambivalent feelings because the simile is amusing due to its absurdity but also seems highly inappropriate. Following the murder of Edward Letterman, the police try to connect their prime suspect, John, to the killings so that they can close the case as soon as possible. When the police interview Marie Polatkin, John's love interest, about his possible guilt, she clearly states her opinion about John and the murderer: "I know John Smith didn't kill anyone except himself. And if some Indian is killing white guys, then it's a credit to us that it took over five hundred years for it to happen" (418). Marie's sarcastic remark that Native Americans are usually the victims of violence, with white men as the perpetrators, serves as social commentary on the impacts of settler colonialism. She finds the police's suspicion of John absurd, since historical precedent would suggest that a white person is much more likely to be involved in violent crimes. This also highlights that Native Americans endured systematic oppression for centuries without retaliation. Marie is the only character who believes in John's innocence, and she suspects that the real killer might not even be Native American. Her belief does not only expose the deep-rooted prejudice against American Indians but also reframes the investigation as an instance of colonial power dynamics, where Indigenous people are cast as criminals to conveniently close the case. In the end, Marie's perspective underscores a larger truth: the real violence lies not just in the murder, but in the centuries of systemic oppression and misrepresentation.

5 Conclusion

Sherman Alexie's *Indian Killer* is a powerful representation of how traditional crime fiction tropes can be subverted by the incorporation of the characteristics of Indigenous literature. The absence of a detective figure and an authoritative narrative voice makes the readers take on the role of investigator, but rather than offering a resolution, the novel leaves questions unanswered; thus, Alexie follows the conventions of metaphysical

detective fiction. The combination of culture-specific elements – such as the oral tradition and Native American cosmology – with literary devices frequently used in postmodern texts, like fragmentation and metafiction, also challenges the reader to reconsider his/ her presumptions that underlie Western narratives.

The highly fragmented storylines draw attention to the complexities of identity construction and social issues; hence, the narrative moves beyond the depiction of the murder case itself by thematising the long-term effects of colonisation as well as portraying the problems of contemporary Indigenous communities. It also mirrors the diversity of Indigenous communities, because numerous characters' point of view appears in the novel. Alexie emphasises the contrast between empathy and insensitiveness about the topic of homelessness through the perspective of John Smith and Jack Wilson. The multi-layered meanings and several possible interpretations enrich the text, while it also teaches readers about Native American cultures and the effects of settler colonialism on Indigenous communities. Individual stories are interconnected and cannot be understood in isolation; thus, the book's structure resembles the episodic construction of traditional Native American stories. Intertextual references are created by evoking both the literary predecessors of *Indian Killer* and the *Bible*.

The characters in the book are used to showcase cultural (mis)representation. While John is completely isolated and has no authentic connection to his indigeneity, Jack Wilson and Clarence Mathers symbolise the exploitation of Native American identity for financial gain. John's only role model is Father Duncan, who is also torn by the discrepancies between his Indigenous cultural roots and his connection to Christianity as a Jesuit priest. Irony strengthens the contrast between the contradictions and meanwhile it aids the re-evaluation of the traditional representation of Native Americans.

Indian Killer fits into the framework of metaphysical crime fiction, especially with the shapeshifter character as the perpetrator. It sets out to not only reflect on, but also to initiate change in the representation of Indigenous people. With its unique blend of elements from both crime fiction and Native American traditions, it is an outstanding example of Indigenous innovation in contemporary literature.

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Gothic Villains in Three Sherlock Holmes Stories

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The classic detective story emerged with the publication of Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes narratives in the 1890s, which coincided with the resurgence of the Gothic. By drawing comparisons between Gothic genre conventions and Doyle's fiction, this paper argues that there are two Gothic plot devices in "The Speckled Band," "The Creeping Man," and "The Sussex Vampire": the illusion of supernatural interference and the villainous father who destroys his family. The apparently unnatural events occur due to the ominous presence of animals as both instruments of wrongdoing and images of racial degeneration. Thus, these Gothic Holmes stories negotiate anxieties about degeneracy and declining paternal authority.

Keywords: Gothic, detective fiction, evolutionary theories, criminology, degeneration

1 Introduction

The Gothic is an extremely versatile mode of writing that transcends the period – the second half of the eighteenth century – in which it emerged. Its marked characteristics are preposterous and eventful plots, eerie atmospheres, representations of transgressive behaviour and extreme psychological states, the staging of "supernatural or seemingly supernatural phenomena," and an overall effect that excites the readers' emotions (Hurley 2002, 193–94). There is a critical consensus today that the Gothic, far from being the purveyor of self-indulgent or gratuitous titillation, fulfils a useful cultural function: that of processing the social anxieties of the given era (Faber and Münderlein 2024, 4; Zigarovich 2018, 3). According to Kelly Hurley, "[t]he Gothic is […] a cyclical genre that reemerges in times of cultural stress in order to negotiate anxieties for its readership by working through them in displaced (sometimes supernaturalised) form" (2002, 194). The source of these anxieties shifted from time to time. In the second half of the eighteenth century, and parallel with the rise of Romanticism, the Gothic emerged as an imaginative and emotional reaction against the Enlightenment (Botting 2005a, 1), conveying

aversions to feudal excess and tyranny, and asserting the social values of a burgeoning middle class (4). By the 1830s, the Gothic had ceased to be a unified or identifiable mode of writing. Instead, Gothic features were dispersed across many other genres, including realist and historical fiction, which dominated Victorian literature (Killeen 2009, 3). After decades of a "haunting absence" (qtd. in Killeen 2009, 3), the Gothic returned in the 1890s, when fears connected with Britain's position as a colonial power (Hurley 2002, 194), the explosive growth of the metropolis, women's emancipatory movements, political upheavals across Europe, and rapid advances in science generated a need to convey and expel such terrors through fiction (Dryden 2003, 1). Whereas Fred Botting defines the Gothic as a "literary mode" (2005a, 9) rather than a genre, he agrees that the Gothic is diffused across periods. Significantly, Botting stresses the proclivity of the Gothic mode to merge with different genres: "[t]he diffusion of Gothic features across texts and historical periods distinguishes the Gothic as a hybrid form, incorporating and transforming other literary forms as well as developing and changing its own conventions in relation to newer modes of writing" (ibid.). One of the genres that has Gothic inflections is detective fiction, which emerged in its fully-fledged, classic form in the 1890s, thus coinciding with the return of the Gothic. As a result, all nineteenth-century detective fiction can be regarded as inherently Gothic: "There are traces of Gothic in most crime narratives, just as there are crimes in most Gothic novels" (Spooner 2010, 246).

The Gothic had been considered low-brow literature until the late twentieth century, when critics discovered its important sociocultural function: it sets itself the task of enacting and exorcising social anxieties. By the same token, crime fiction, which was also used to be seen as escapist, is now regarded as a genre that is of "intrinsic interest in society" (Thompson 1993, 8). Thompson explains that "[t]oo often crime fiction, especially detective fiction, is regarded as purely escapist, as providing the reader with comfortable and reassuring myths of modernity. […] What this cliché overlooks is the extent to which crime fiction dramatizes the contradictory experience of modernity. In this sense, crime fiction is not escapist but hermeneutic: it explores what it means to be caught up in the maelstrom of modernity" (Thompson 1993, 8). Thus, crime fiction is now seen to stage and negotiate social tensions.

Critical perceptions of crime fiction have changed radically over the last century and, according to Jesper Gulddal and Stewart King, this transformation can be divided into three main stages. The earliest criticism of crime fiction emphasised its ludic quality, constructing it as an intellectual game rather than serious literature (2020, 14). It was especially detective fiction that was considered a game and was therefore treated as escapist. According to Richard Bradford, classic detective fiction offered glimpses into the criminal underworld and delivered the thrills of penny

dreadfuls, while retaining a degree of respectability. This is why it appealed to a male middle-class readership. In the Holmes stories, Dr Watson, as a figure of middle-class propriety, ensures that the presentation of events, which in themselves are dubious or downright disreputable, remain within the bounds of good taste (2015, 16–17). The second stage in the progress of crime fiction criticism constituted an attempt to make the study of crime fiction viable in academic settings by highlighting the formulaic nature of the genre. This wave of criticism, which emerged in the 1970s, identified archetypal plot structures in crime stories. Finally, more recent criticism highlights the mediating function of crime fiction, arguing that the genre "links specific narrative forms to particular sociocultural questions and concerns" (Gulddal and King 2020, 14–15). Since crime fiction is concerned with social issues, these critics contend, it must be taken seriously. Criticism engaging with crime fiction either treats crime fiction and detective fiction as synonymous (Dove 1997, 1) or regards the latter as a subgenre of crime fiction (Messent 2013, 4), which is the position taken by recent criticism (Ascari 2020, 27).

Whereas their cultural functions may differ, detective fiction is, arguably, a descendant of the Gothic mode. Firstly, both Gothic novels and detective stories have fast-paced and sensational plots (Ascari 2020, 27). Their proximity can also be illustrated by the fact that Poe, a master of Gothic horror, was the inventor of the detective story (Cassuto 2017, 158). Devandra Varma mentions both the suspenseful plot and Poe as the originator of the genre when she states that "the methods and technique" of Gothic novelists "inspired the use of suspense in short stories by Poe and his successors, and eventually the mystifications and solutions of the modern detective novels and thrillers" (1923, 213). A third common denominator may be the dichotomy of light and darkness. While reason can "shed light on reality," there is also "an acknowledgement of the constitutive darkness of the human" in both Gothic writing and detective stories (Ascari 2020, 28). However, an important difference lies in detective fiction's foregrounding of "pure reason" and the process of intellectual inquiry, which were Poe's innovative additions to the Gothic, the forerunner of the then new genre (Cook 2011, 3–4).

By identifying distinctive features of the Gothic mode in Arthur Conan Doyle's "The Speckled Band" (1892), "The Creeping Man" (1923), and "The Sussex Vampire" (1924), this paper argues that these Holmes stories have Gothic inflections due to their plot devices of paternal sin and seemingly supernatural events and are therefore the vehicles of negotiating sociocultural anxieties, much like Gothic fiction is. These stories represent fathers who committed criminal or sinful acts in the past and are otherwise despotic, controlling, or unjust; thus, they are Gothic villains, although not necessarily criminal offenders. By shedding light on the father's sins, and, in the case of "The Speckled Band," his criminal transgressions, these stories interrogate

paternal authority and demonstrate its dramatic decline between the late Victorian and the interwar period. Moreover, these villainous father characters demonstrate the transition from aristocratic villains, who dominated classic Gothic texts, to the bourgeois, professional-scientist villains of later Gothic fiction. The other principal Gothic trait of these stories is the depiction of events that – at first sight – cannot be readily explained by reason and therefore seem otherworldly. The apparently supernatural quality of the events is due to non-human agents, namely, toxins and animals. The latter fuse with the protagonist or indicate the wrongdoer's identity or secret actions. As a result, the Gothic villain is represented as a liminal, half-human, half-bestial creature, whose monstrosity reflects Victorian anxieties about moral and racial degeneration.

2 Paternal Crime in "The Speckled Band"

One reason why the events in "The Speckled Band" seem supernatural is that the problem presented by the client seems intimately connected to a "locked-room mystery" that happened some years before. A young woman – the client's twin sister – died, apparently due to "pure fear and nervous shock" (Doyle 1996, 219), which she suffered while sleeping alone in her own room, inaccessible both from outside and inside the house. A locked-room mystery is "the telling of a crime that appears to be impossible" (Penzler 2014, xiii). In this type of story, the murder takes place at a location where the victim is "utterly inaccessible" (ibid.). Owing to a lack of readily available explanations, a locked-room mystery necessarily appears supernatural. Michael Cook contends that the locked-room mystery is more than a plot device that heightens the puzzle-effect. It is also the underlying pattern of all stories of detection as evidenced by Poe's "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" (1841), widely considered to be the first detective story. Moreover, this pioneering story endowed the locked-room mystery with the sociocultural – or even metaphysical – connotations of human isolation "with its accent on enclosures, death and references to sequestered lives" (2011, 1–2).

    Another reason why the occurrences in "The Speckled Band" might be attributed to supernatural phenomena is that there are non-human agents involved, namely, poisons and animals, which also serve to provide a rational explanation to the events. Whereas the use of poison is revealed at the end of the story as the solution to the mystery, the presence of animals is obvious from the beginning. The villain, Dr Grimesby Roylott, keeps Indian animals as mementos of his years spent in Calcutta. A cheetah and a baboon roam freely on the grounds of his estate, signalling to all

potential trespassers – as well as to his family – the owner's dangerous nature. While Roylott's predatory violence is symbolised by the cheetah, his possessiveness and jealously territorial behaviour are embodied by the baboon. The third animal, the venomous snake that he keeps hidden in an iron safe, represents his cunning as well as his secretiveness, and it is the snake's poison that is the undetected but lethal toxin.

Thus, the animals owned by the villain indicate his personality traits and hint at his fundamentally bestial, and therefore regressive and degenerate nature. Of all the unpleasant bestial characteristics, it is the baboon's deformity and obnoxious lack of self-control that terrify Holmes: "out from a clump of laurel bushes there darted what seemed to be a hideous and distorted child, who threw itself on the grass with writhing limbs […]. [Holmes's] hand closed like a vice upon my wrist in his agitation" (Doyle 1996, 226). The sight of the baboon as a deformed child throwing a fit becomes an image of racial degeneration, which was a widespread fear in late Victorian British society: "[d]egeneration theory posited that certain physical and nervous disorders […] could be both spread and inherited by social contact, and might even be passed down to offspring in aggravated form" (Hurley 2002, 196). Jonathan Cranfield defines "degeneration" as "a scientific term used to describe the simplification of complex organisms but which became reactionary shorthand for the cultural decline of Europe and its empires" (2019, 84). Cranfield attributes the preoccupation with degeneration in the 1890s to the work of Galton and Lombroso. Their theories derived from, but significantly simplified, Darwinian science, so that their ideas could be reduced to the easily accessible narrative of a "struggle between the forces of progression and those of regression or degeneration" (ibid.). The baboon as an image of degeneration is reminiscent of the repulsive facial features of the villain: "[a] large face, seared with a thousand wrinkles, burned yellow with the sun, and marked with every evil passion, was turned from one to the other of us, while his deep-set, bile-shot eyes, and his high thin fleshless nose gave him somewhat the resemblance to a fierce old bird of prey" (Doyle 1996, 220). The years spent in India seems to have made Roylott's face resemble the natives. Moreover, by likening Roylott to a bird of prey, Dr Watson draws attention to the man's bestial qualities.

In both instances, there is a disquieting conflation of the human and the animal. The nascent social science, criminology, Botting argues, shaped late nineteenth-century Gothic. Influenced by Darwinian science, Cesare Lombroso found that criminals are "more primitive and bestial in their nature than others" and can be identified by their anatomical, physiological, and psychological characteristics (qtd. in Botting 2005a, 89). This external as well as internal resemblance to animals was called atavism and was closely associated with criminality (ibid.). Criminals were conceived of "as degenerate throwbacks to an earlier stage in humanity's evolutionary

development" and criminal behaviour was seen as evidence of a bestial character (Karschay 2019, 98). Cesare Lombroso sums up his major tenet as follows: "the criminal [is] an atavistic being who reproduces in his person the ferocious instincts of primitive humanity and the inferior animals" (1911, xv). His early criminological works assert that criminals display the characteristics of various animals, including rodents, apes, and birds of prey (Hurley 2002, 197). These theories informed literary works produced in the era. Cranfield contends that there is a causal relationship between the popularisation of criminology and the rise of the iconic figure of the detective (2019, 84). The most salient evidence of criminology's influence on fiction is the prevalence of "marked descriptions of facial features as telling signs of character" (Botting 2005a, 89). Holmes stories also abound in references to the atavistic features of offenders (Karschay 2019, 99). For example, Roylott's nose is a hallmark of the born criminal, based on Cesare Lombroso's work: "the hooked nose, so often imparts to criminals the aspect of birds of prey" (Gina Lombroso 1911, 7). By casting one glance at him, Holmes ascertains that Roylott is a criminal.

Roylott is a curious mixture of the aristocratic villain, descended from Radcliffian Gothic, and the professional–scientist villain, characteristic of the 1890s. Ann Radcliffe created the emblematic aristocratic villain, who is "brutal" and "predatory," in the character of Montoni in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794; Chaplin 2014, 206), whereas the professional rogue and evil scientist of the late Victorian era is epitomised by Dr. Jekyll's character in Stevenson's novel (Botting 2005b, 117). On the one hand, Grimesby Roylott is a descendant of an old aristocratic family of considerable wealth. However, the family became impoverished due to the profligate lifestyle of earlier generations, which is a sign of gradual degeneration, linking Roylott to feudal excess. On the other hand, he also exemplifies the professional hero–villain. In his youth, Roylott attempted to reverse the family's decline by taking a medical degree and establishing a practice in India. His choice of the far-flung colonial location is also indicative of Roylott's determination to disentangle himself of his tainted heritage. He marries a wealthy young widow with two baby daughters, presumably in the hope of starting his own family.

Notwithstanding his efforts to mend the family fortune by dint of industry, entrepreneurship, and professional skill, the strain of degeneracy in his blood manifests itself unexpectedly when, having discovered a robbery in his home, he kills a native servant. This crime, committed in a fit of rage and triggered by an encroachment on his property, reveals his besetting sins: wrath, lack of self-control, and possessiveness. Having served a long prison sentence, he returns to England a changed man: bitter, disappointed, and resentful. To compound his misfortunes, a fatal railway accident deprives him of his wife. Even so, his situation is not desperate as he inherits a considerable sum, which enables him to live modestly. However,

Roylott lacks the resilience to adjust to his circumstances. He renounces his chance to set up medical practice in England and returns to his ancestral home.

In Gothic fiction, the ancient country house is the site of regression and inherited doom. Botting remarks that "the old house, as both building and family line […] became the site where fears and anxieties returned in the present" (2005a, 2). Roylott's inherited violent tendencies are exacerbated by this setting, and his constant quarrelling with neighbours and villagers makes life miserable for his stepdaughters. He grows one with the cursed ancestral house, which is in the last stages of dilapidation. Continual but haphazard attempts at renovation prove ineffectual at transforming the cumbersome old mansion into a modern dwelling; they merely result in a monstrous lopsidedness. Its resemblance to a crab is an indicator of the ancestral home's backwardness. Its two wings, one completely fallen to ruin, the other refurbished, represent Roylott's dual nature: impoverished aristocratic villain and professional man turned rogue. Notwithstanding its relative modernity, the refurbished wing is also unfinished and partly damaged, conveying Roylott's incomplete transformation into a middle-class physician. His return to the family home shows that Roylott has succumbed to his inherited evil nature and grudgingly resigned himself to the doom overshadowing his family.

One feature that makes Roylott a terrifying villain is his refusal to adjust to civilised norms of behaviour. The most obvious sign of this nonconformity is his lack of self-control, which manifests itself in ungovernable rage. His gestures of intimidation and violence are preceded or accompanied by yelling and cursing. Another proof of his antisocial attitude is his habit of travelling with the Gypsies whom he allows to camp on his estate. This indicates a defiance of civilised society, which constructs Gypsies as incompletely human. Bartoş and Hegarty report that in many European countries, "anti-Gypsy prejudice […] is closely tied to dehumanisation and claims of cultural inferiority: Gypsy traditions were construed as 'primitive.'" Gypsies were widely regarded "as being outside the […] nation, both culturally and biologically; participants even suggested that Gypsies may not be fully human" (2014, 196). Similarly, Maass et al. assert that "a regional outgroup was mainly associated with the animal kingdom […]. Some social groups are associated with specific animals, such as Gypsies with wild animals" (2014, 161). A third indicator of Roylott's defiance of social norms is his adoption of Indian animals. His socially transgressive behaviour, in its specific manifestations of uncontrolled outbursts and his habit of associating with Gypsies and wild animals, heightens his resemblance to beasts. Holmes's client, Helen Stoner, implies as much when she remarks that the cheetah and the baboon "are feared by the villagers almost as much as their master" (Doyle 1996, 217).

Notwithstanding his rebellious and undisciplined conduct, Roylott has a sophisticated side that makes him akin to the professional rogue of late Victorian

Gothic and therefore a formidable enemy. In the 1890s, the supernatural monsters and villains belonging to the aristocracy or the Church were increasingly replaced by modern characters such as "scientists, fathers, husbands, madmen, criminals and the monstrous double signifying duplicity and evil nature" (Botting 2005a, 2). These middle-class protagonists assume the monstrosity of their predecessors. Roylott is cunning and secretive: when his stepdaughters become engaged to be married, he ostensibly approves of the arrangement, while conniving at their murder. He also monitors the women's movements and outside contacts; for example, he quickly traces Helen to Holmes's apartment. Roylott's possessiveness is a powerful motive for his crimes: by killing his stepdaughters before they could marry, not only does he retain their share of the inheritance but also prevents them from deserting him for other men. Also, despite his present circumstances, Roylott is still a professional physician, which is highlighted by Holmes's remark: "When a doctor does go wrong, he is the first of criminals. He has nerve and he has knowledge" (Doyle 1996, 226). His professional training enables him, when he must, to retain a degree of self-control necessary to carry out his sinister plans.

Capitalist–bourgeois attitudes have been sufficiently absorbed by this doctor of aristocratic origins to control his stepdaughters by means of Foucauldian disciplinary techniques: the "art of distributions." Roylott applies enclosure, "the protected place of disciplinary monotony" (Foucault 1995, 141), when he isolates the young women from their neighbours and the villagers, confining them to the ancestral house. He also deploys partitioning, an important disciplinary method, according to which "[e]ach individual has his own place; and each place its individual" (143). This technique is brought to bear on Helen when she is forced to sleep in her late sister's room, which was modified in a specified way: "The lady could not move her bed. It must always be in the same relative position to the ventilator and to the rope" (Doyle 1996, 226). Thus, each object is assigned to a place and the individual's position is exactly circumscribed by these fixed objects. Therefore, despite his seemingly disorderly lifestyle, Roylott is an adept technician of discipline.

The character of the evil stepfather introduces the oldest Gothic plot device into this detective story: the sins of the father that destroy the family. Botting points out that this basic plot originated in Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) and that Walpole formulated it as the intended moral of the novel in his preface (2005a, 86): "the sins of fathers are visited on their children to the third and fourth generation" (Walpole 1766, viii). In an attempt to provide his whimsical plot with a moral underpinning, Walpole refers to Deuteronomy 5:9. What makes the motif of paternal sin especially emphatic in this story is that the villain himself is afflicted by his ancestral legacy: "Violence of temper approaching to mania has been hereditary in the men of the family, and in my stepfather's case it had, I believe, been intensified

by his long residence in the tropics" (Doyle 1996, 216). To some extent, therefore, Roylott is also the victim of paternal sin. However, he has forfeited all compassion by his criminal deeds, so that his death can be seen as deserved punishment, as Holmes implies: "I am no doubt indirectly responsible for Dr. Grimesby Roylott's death, and I cannot say that it is likely to weigh very heavily upon my conscience" (229).

Another traditional Gothic plot device is the introduction of a strained father–daughter relationship as this can carry familial tensions and illustrate the unequal power relations between oppressor and oppressed (Botting 2005a, 13). Roylott confines his stepdaughters to the family home by refusing to socialise with his equals, quarrelling with both neighbours and villagers, and discouraging the young women from social visits. Botting highlights that the home was regarded as a sanctuary in Victorian culture as it offered shelter from disquieting external forces and spiritual loss. Nevertheless, this refuge could easily turn into a prison (2005a, 84). Many persecuted heroines, such as Helen Stoner, are also oppressed daughters in Gothic fiction. Botting points out that the "new Victorian hero, the amateur detective" is especially prone to see the oppressed female protagonist "as an image of loss and suffering" (85). Indeed, the description of Helen Stoner is suggestive of prolonged harassment at the hands of a predatory antagonist: "her face [was] all drawn and grey, with restless, frightened eyes, like those of some hunted animal" (Doyle 1996, 214).

Although Roylott bears a close resemblance to formidable Gothic villains, his paternal authority is not absolute, and its weakening results in his downfall. Helen's determination to seek professional assistance despite her stepfather's intimidation and her fiancé's deprecation show that the heroine no longer trusts paternal and masculine authority and knowledge. During her consultation with the detective, Helen unavoidably divulges private family matters and details from Roylott's past. In addition, Holmes intrudes into the carefully sequestered family home without Roylott's knowledge or permission. These interventions effectively infringe on the father's privacy and thereby undermine his authority. Thus, the story illustrates the tendency of Gothic fiction to depict and carefully examine male authority through its villains (Botting 2005a, 13).

3 The Bestial Double in "The Creeping Man"

A more flagrant and less justifiable intrusion into the father's privacy takes place in "The Creeping Man." It is the unusual and therefore unsettling quality of the father's behaviour that causes the client to seek Holmes's assistance. According to Botting, in an increasingly disciplined and well-ordered late Victorian society,

transgressive individuals "became fascinating objects of scrutiny" (2005a, 8), which is why Professor Presbury's strange behaviour requires monitoring and intervention.

In contrast to "The Speckled Band," no crime is committed or planned in this story. However, it still belongs in the larger generic category of crime fiction according to the open definition of this genre provided by Nilsson et al. In their extended though tentative definition, they emphasise "the presence of the detective" as the primary requirement, since the character has a "central function in the genre." Secondly, the crime depends on "its society's legal apparatus and juridical system." Furthermore, "[t]hrough the detective's investigations, power structures, institutions, police procedures, and civil codes are portrayed, as are human behavior and psychology" (2017, 5). Since the story meets the most important of these criteria, namely, the presence of the detective, it qualifies as crime fiction. More specifically, "The Creeping Man" fits the subcategory of detective fiction, in which, according to Murch's definition, "the reader's sympathy is invariably engaged […] on the side of law and order, and the hero is not the criminal, but the detective" (qtd. in Ascari 2020, 24).

Even though the protagonist, Professor Presbury, commits no crime, his atavistic traits indirectly threaten the moral order, and his bestial behaviour, based on Victorian constructions of deviance, makes him resemble a criminal. He can be considered a villain insofar as he transgresses not only the limits of socially acceptable behaviour but also the bounds of human physiology because he refuses to accept the natural course of life that entails ageing.

Holmes's assistance is requested by Presbury's secretary, Bennett, who is worried about his employer's strange behaviour. He has been closely observing the Professor's conduct and keeping a record of unusual occurrences. Bennett is uniquely positioned on the threshold of the public and the private sphere: he is both a professional assistant and a member of the family as he is engaged to the Professor's daughter and lives in his house. Accordingly, Bennett's betrayal is motivated by a mixture of professional curiosity and personal anxiety. The conflict between his various roles as assistant, confidant, disciple, and prospective son-in-son-in-law is apparent from his justification of keeping track of events: "I learned method among other things from my great teacher. From the time that I observed abnormality in his behaviour I felt that it was my duty to study his case" (Doyle 1999a, 55). In addition to monitoring him, Bennett also spies on Professor Presbury actively; for example, he removes a secret address from his blotting paper. Even Holmes acknowledges that the intrusion into Presbury's private life seems unwarranted, while the Professor's anger at being scrutinised is justified: "from his point of view he has something to explode about if detectives are put on his track and he suspects his own household of doing it" (63).

As in the previous story, the unusual occurrences have an air of the supernatural. The previously gentle and affectionate family dog has taken a dislike to his master and attacked him on several occasions. Also, Presbury was seen by his daughter as he was looking in through her second-floor bedroom window. Both phenomena appear inexplicable and strongly connected to the Professor's changed behaviour. However, a supernatural explanation does not even occur to Holmes. Climbing up to the window is instantly deemed possible by Holmes upon inspecting the premises, whereas the dog's sudden hostility merits longer consideration: "A dog reflects the family life. […] And [dogs'] passing moods may reflect the passing moods of others" (Doyle 1999a, 51). The implication is that animals' intuitions must be taken seriously. Animal behaviour becomes the grounds for suspecting human wrongdoing, since beasts might perceive covert passions or intentions imperceptible to civilised human beings.

Holmes also excludes psychological illness as the reason for deviant behaviour. The detective's rejection of psychological explanations, Luc Boltanski argues, is required by the conventions of the genre. Abnormal behaviour is not unlawful if the perpetrator is insane because a mentally ill person does not have legal responsibility. The insane perpetrator has no moral responsibility either. Since detective fiction deals with the criminal, legal, and ethical ramifications of actions, a perpetrator who is exempted from such responsibilities precludes the detective's intervention (2014, 52).

The non-human agents that lend an aura of the supernatural to the occurrences are, as in the previous story, toxins and animals. Also, in a similar fashion to "The Speckled Band," the two are intimately related, since the toxin is produced by, or derived from, animals. In this case, Presbury's changed deportment is due to a rejuvenating serum, extracted from a species of monkey. Although the serum's effectiveness is testified to by Bennett – "he has actually more energy and vitality than I can ever remember, nor was his brain ever clearer" (Doyle 1999a, 65) – there are significant side effects. Essentially, the Professor is turning into a monkey, which is evinced by his nightly excursions in and around the house.

The scene in which Presbury is goading the hostile family dog encapsulates the Gothic horror of the mingling of human and bestial characteristics in one creature. The "still dignified figure" of Presbury is "crouching froglike upon the ground," teasing the wolfhound "by all manner of ingenious and calculated cruelty" into a frenzy of rage (Doyle 1999a, 68). This is an example of the liminal or "abhuman" body, characteristic of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Gothic fiction (Hurley 2002, 190). Hurley argues that the liminal body, which is on the threshold between the traditional cultural dichotomies of human–animal or male–female, had a particular fascination for the literature of the era. The "hybridised and repulsive Gothic body" preserves some remnants of human identity

while exhibiting the characteristics of a non-human other, and this transformation is often described in the literary text (ibid.). Indeed, Holmes and Watson witness the Professor's metamorphosis into a half-simian creature: "an extraordinary change came over him. He sank down into a crouching position, and moved along upon his hands and feet, skipping every now and then as if he were overflowing with energy and vitality" (Doyle 1999a, 67). Presbury's recurring transformation into a monkey-like creature by means of some mysterious drug is in keeping with the Gothic's fascination with doubles and alter egos. The double is considered by Hurley a variety of monstrosity or liminality since it "breaks down the boundary between self and other" (2007, 139).

Presbury's experimentation resonates with deep-set anxieties about the bestial features of human nature and the irrepressible primitive urges lurking within even the most sophisticated individuals. These anxieties, Botting explains, were a reaction to Darwinian science, which "identified the bestial within the human" (2005a, 8). Not only criminology but also medical sciences were informed by Darwinian theories. Consequently, many kinds of deviance, whether mental or physical, were attributed to the resurgence of bestial features and thus were deemed to threaten the human species with degeneration, a term that was used almost synonymously with abnormality (Karschay 2015, 3–4). Darwinian science also affected constructions of humanity in the widest sense. The theory of evolution seriously undermined the cultural premise of mankind's superior position, as it "implicitly posited a closer relationship between humans and animals than many had hitherto been comfortable with" (Cranfield 2019, 82).

Darwin's evolutionary theory claimed that each species has passed through various stages of development, inhabiting "different animal forms" (Hurley 2002, 195). Thus, the implication in *The Origin of Species* (1859) was that humankind evolved from more primitive forms. This was reaffirmed in *The Descent of Man*: "all the races of man are descended from a single primitive stock" (Darwin 1871, 220). Since species are liable to change and extinction, it seemed possible that they may not only evolve or progress, but also "move backwards" or regress (Hurley 2002, 195). Therefore, Presbury's metamorphosis stages the nightmarish scenario of mankind's regression to a more primitive stage of existence. The bestial features of the Professor are revealed one by one. First, his unseemly sexual passion becomes apparent in his infatuation with, and vehement courtship of, a very young woman. Second, his increased vitality finds an outlet in irascible behaviour by day and exuberant scrambling by night. Finally, he manifests a latent streak of sadistic cruelty when he taunts the dog. Nevertheless, not all of these features are represented as morally reprehensible. Presbury's heightened agility and exuberance are shown as innocuous and, perhaps, enviable: "[f]rom branch to branch he sprang, sure of foot and firm

of grasp, climbing apparently in mere joy at his own powers, with no definite object in view" (Doyle 1999a, 67).

Although the Professor causes no harm by any of these passions, his uncontrollable vitality, sexual urges, and outbursts of temper are all equally transgressive. The Gothic depicts desires, passions, and sensations that exceed reason and therefore transgress social proprieties (Botting 2005a, 2). It also represents the consequences of transgression, involving "not only the loss of sanity, honour, property or social standing but the very order which supports and is regulated by the coherence of these terms." Therefore, the representation of transgression serves the useful purpose of reaffirming social norms, values, and limits (5). Presbury's secretary uses the word "excessive" when he gives voice to social disapproval with regards to Presbury's amorous pursuit, but he is even more censorious of his employer's enhanced vigour: "He was never in better health […]. In fact, he is stronger than I have known him for years. But […] we feel in some strange way that we are drifting towards disaster" (Doyle 1999a, 56–57).

This emphatic social disapprobation of individuals' dynamic movement stems from the need to control subjects. This starts with the curbing of excessive individual exuberance, which is not conducive to a disciplined and amenable population. The disciplinary techniques introduced in the eighteenth century ultimately aimed at optimising processes of labour, thus enhancing productivity. Of the methods intended to control activity, as explained by Foucault, the "time-table" and the "temporal elaboration of the act" convey the most precisely the close relationship between purposefulness and efficiency of movement. A precise schedule results in efficiency and productivity: "[t]ime measured and paid must also be a time without impurities or defects; a time of good quality, throughout which the body is constantly applied to its exercise" (1995, 151). Next, the efficient use of time and movement must be interiorised by subjects: "The act is broken down into its elements; the position of the body, limbs, articulations is defined, to each movement are assigned a direction, an aptitude, a duration; their order of succession is prescribed. Time penetrates the body and with it all the meticulous controls of power" (152). Presbury's impetuous, aimless, and gratuitous exercise of climbing trees represents an appalling waste of both potentially productive energy and valuable time in the capitalist social order; therefore, it cannot be tolerated. Both human energy and its expenditure must be regulated by the disciplinary techniques that were first instituted when capitalist modes of production, pervasive by the 1890s, were in their nascent state in the eighteenth century.

The Professor's transgressive simian regression scrutinises the issue of degeneration. Holmes's meditation highlights this anxiety: "There is […] a very real danger to humanity. Consider, Watson, that the material, the sensual, the worldly would all

prolong their worthless lives […]. It would be the survival of the least fit. What sort of cesspool may not our poor world become?" (Doyle 1999a, 70). Cranfield argues that "[t]he story stages a confrontation between the forces of degeneration and those that guard against it" and that Holmes "becomes the watchdog of genetic and moral propriety" (2019, 92). The detective's musing obviously echoes Darwinian theories but also conveys their critique. In this case, the rejuvenating serum is supposed to prolong human life with a view to extending the period when sensual pleasures are afforded by a youthful body. This means that those who will survive, that is, live longer due to this scientific concoction, will be those whose main aim in life is bodily gratification. In Darwinian science, the continued existence of various species is due to their physical adaptability, while the psychic dimension of creatures is not treated. The implication is that the human spirit does not signify. When Holmes declares that "[t]he spiritual would not avoid the call to something higher" (Doyle 1999a, 70), he implies that the late Victorian construction of human existence as a Darwinian struggle for survival projects a godless universe, "a world of moral chaos," in which, like in the realist novels of the age, "[l]ife [is] sordid, desperate and […] pointless" (Dryden 2003, 5).

To counter the perceived degeneration of humanity, which was identified in physical deformations, moral laxness, and unbridled sexual appetites (Dryden 2003, 9), many turned to science as a means of explaining hidden forces and recovering spiritual content. This led to the foundation of the Society for Psychical Research, which investigated paranormal phenomena, in 1882 (Freeman 2012, 105). Doyle himself was devoted to spiritualism, a system of beliefs which conflicted with his fictional detective's rational worldview (Pascal 2000, 9). Perhaps Holmes's deprecation of materialism and sensuality conveys Doyle's own convictions that morally strong individuals may not want to "survive" in a world dominated by brute force and base pleasure-seeking.

It is because he offends against middle-class propriety that Presbury is portrayed as a Gothic villain. He has many characteristics of the Gothic overreacher, such as his transgressive sexual desire and uncontrolled outbursts of rage, even though he is not a perpetrator. He does not commit any criminal act, neither does he mean harm to others: "[c]limbing was a joy to the creature, and it was a mere chance, I take it, that the pastime brought him to the young lady's window" (Doyle 1999a, 71). His unexpected defiance of social proprieties might be due to his long self-denial throughout his respectable life as an academic and widower. The constraints imposed on him caused him to accumulate a great deal of frustration. Botting argues that late Victorian Gothic frequently "articulate[s] disaffections with the reductive and normalising limits of bourgeois morality and modes of production, limits whose repressions produced the divided lifestyles of the middle

classes, respectable by day and pleasure-seeking by night" (2005a, 89). Presbury revolts against social discipline by wresting freedom out of the animal realm, but he must pay a heavy price for this fleeting sense of liberty.

4 Degeneration and Otherness in "The Sussex Vampire"

Whereas in "The Speckled Band" and "The Creeping Man," there are merely unspoken doubts as to the natural origin of the occurrences, the seemingly inexplicable events are explicitly labelled as supernatural in "The Sussex Vampire." However, it is only the client that suspects vampirism; Holmes remains steadfast in his denial of the existence of supernatural monsters: "This agency stands flat-footed upon the ground, and there it must remain. The world is big enough for us. No ghosts need apply" (Doyle 1999b, 73). Boltanski argues that a firm background of reality is essential in order for the mystery to stand out from other "normal" events (2014, 50). Detective work, based on reason and logical inferences, cannot be effective otherwise. Supernatural explanations cannot be "integrated into the inferential network of *ratio*" (52) and therefore must be ruled out.

The story is framed by legal or business correspondence. The partial delegation of narrative tasks to letters by representatives of law firms or commercial agents is a common device in 1890s Gothic fiction. This feature dovetails with detective fiction's reliance on law and reason. The Gothic, too, strives to rectify the narrative and reaffirm the connections between "law, reason and identity" by disentangling "the webs of deceit woven by the villains" (Botting 2005a, 86). Thus, by starting and concluding the narrative with correspondence with a law firm, Doyle grounds the story in a reality structured by the experience and values of a professional middle-class, who take part in capitalist modes of production. Nonetheless, an abundance of documents can also create an atmosphere of uncertainty due to the multiplicity of viewpoints. For example, Stoker's *Dracula* "questions how we can obtain veracity from such a welter of documents with their inevitable lacunae and shifting points of view" (Lenhart and Cordeiro 2024, 27). Consequently, the business correspondence that frames the story serves as much to heighten the atmosphere of Gothic dread as to emphasise the detective's rationality.

The laissez-faire economics of the late nineteenth century gave rise to the image of the "economic vampire," a parasitic but also contagious monster (Ford 2025, Chapter 1). The parasitism of capitalist modes of production affects the private sphere as well. Therefore, instead of being a refuge from the corruption of the larger society, the family reflects and reproduces its parasitic relations. Ferguson made his

fortune through commerce, the exploitative quality of which is indicated by his "fine collection of South American utensils and weapons" (Doyle 1999b, 80), as well as by the fact that he brought home a Peruvian wife, who also leads a parasitic existence. Being a foreigner and a Catholic in Protestant England, she is completely dependent on his husband for social acceptance.

However, the family member whose parasitism is the most conspicuous is Jack, Ferguson's son from his first marriage. His spinal injury, the result of a childhood accident, seems to have feminised him, which is shown in his exaggerated displays of affection towards his father: "He rushed forward and threw his arm round his neck with the abandon of a loving girl. […] Ferguson gently disengaged himself from the embrace with some little show of embarrassment" (Doyle 1999b, 83). The boy's gesture of affection is like a stranglehold over the father, who "disengages himself" from the clinging youth. Jack's parasitism, which takes the form of emotional dependence on his father, also manifests itself in abusing his baby half-brother. By stabbing the baby's neck with a poisoned dart, he leaves marks associated with vampirism. Moreover, the toxin he uses is curare, which paralyses the victim and causes suffocation if the dose is lethal. His choice of weapon and toxin conveys his parasitism, since he tries to drain the baby of its health and beauty by crippling him. Also, by paralysing the child, he would make it resemble himself, similarly to the vampire that turns its victims into parasites like itself.

Non-human factors are also present in this narrative in the form of a particular toxin – the curare – and an animal, the family dog. They both indirectly contribute to creating the impression of supernatural agency. The paralysing poison is first injected into the dog to see its effect. As a result, the spaniel suffers from an ailment resembling Jack's spinal injury. In addition, the word "spaniel" might be a pun on "spinal," reinforcing the parallel between the dog and the boy. Therefore, the spaniel's paralysis both foreshadows the wrongdoing and points at the perpetrator.

The spinal injury is a metaphor for moral degeneration. Jack's jealousy of his baby half-brother's blooming health turns into bitter hatred and a vengeful desire to cause a disfigurement in the child. The degenerate, whose physical deformity is a sign of inner depravity, wants to spread his weakness as an infectious disease, contaminating those more vulnerable than himself: "His very soul is consumed with hatred for this splendid child, whose health and beauty are a contrast to his own weakness" (Doyle 1999a, 87). Physical enervation is closely connected to moral decrepitude in this case. Holmes evidently thinks that physical hardship and exercise strengthens the moral constitution: "I think a year at sea would be my prescription for Master Jacky" (88).

Whereas paternal guilt is obvious in the other two stories, the father's sin is only implicitly represented in "The Sussex Vampire." Jack's maniacal jealousy and parasitism, though essentially stemming from his "spinelessness," are exacerbated by

the invidious familial situation which his father has created. He forces his teenage son to live with a stepmother, who is seen as a usurper of his mother's place, as well as a flawlessly beautiful baby stepbrother, whose presence makes Jack feel his deformity even more keenly. Believing that he is surrounded by enemies, he becomes emotionally dependent on his father and craves his attention. However, the wife's situation is scarcely less fraught with tension. Ferguson evidently married her for her youth and beauty. He soon tires of her, finding her inscrutable and "alien" due to her foreignness and Catholicism. This places the wife in a precarious position, since she has been uprooted from her own culture and family and settled in a foreign land with no one to rely on, except her husband. Therefore, both wife and son are exceptionally vulnerable and dependent on Ferguson's affection and benevolence.

As soon as Ferguson loses interest in his wife, he develops a certain resentment towards her: "after a time his love may have cooled towards her and he may have come to regard their union as a mistake" (Doyle 1999b, 74). As a result, he takes Jack's side in any conflict that may arise between his wife and son. Without any further investigation into the circumstances, Ferguson takes both his wife's culpability and his son's innocence for granted: "Twice the wife was caught in the act of assaulting this poor lad in the most unprovoked way" (74–75). He expresses pity for his crippled son ("poor"), assumes his innocence ("unprovoked") and charges his wife with wrongdoing ("caught in the act"). The father's distrustful attitude undermines the possibility of honest communication between the family members. The wife does not dare to tell Ferguson about Jack's wrongdoing, since she reasonably assumes that her accusation would be turned against her. Husband and wife are essentially strangers to each other, and Jack uses this mutual distrust to his advantage. He hurts the baby with impunity and fawns on his father to secure his indulgence.

Ferguson's self-absorption blinds him to the real nature of the family members. He blames his wife for his own rash decision to marry her, and, in punishment, treats her as a stranger. He purposefully ignores his son's hostility towards his stepmother. When Holmes points out the discrepancy between Jack's supposedly affectionate nature and his dislike for his stepmother, Ferguson replies: "Never in the world could there be so devoted a son. My life is his life. He is absorbed in what I say or do" (Doyle 1999b, 79). Evidently, Jack's sycophantic behaviour flatters Ferguson's self-love and vanity, which is why he condones the teenager's hostility towards other members of the household: "Jacky has very strong likes and dislikes […]. Luckily I am one of his likes" (85).

The revelation of Jack's guilt consists in the discovery of his duplicity. Holmes secretly observes his face while Ferguson engages with the baby: "His face was clearly reflected in the glass of the window where the shutter formed a background. I saw such jealousy, such cruel hatred, as I have seldom seen in a human face" (87). The windowpane functions as a mirror and reveals the boy's distorted facial

expression, exposing his hidden self that is motivated by envy and animosity. The mirror, as Botting remarks, is one of the typical Gothic devices that convey unsettling aspects of the personality (2005a, 7–8).

In this story, too, the father can be considered the villain, even though he is not the perpetrator. The story enacts Walpole's formula of the destructive effect of paternal sin. Ferguson's lust for the young Peruvian woman, his later neglect of both his new wife and disabled son, as well as his excessive adoration of his newborn child, show his egocentrism, which proves to be the root cause of the family's disintegration.

The son's criminal tendencies may have been inherited from the father. Holmes considers heredity an important factor in developing criminal habits, as his mention of an earlier case reveals: "I was able, by watching the mind of the child, to form a deduction as to the criminal habits of the very smug and respectable father" (Doyle 1999a, 51). Stephan Karschay observes that children are likened to animals and savages, and therefore, to criminals, by Lombroso. Children are at an early or primitive stage of ontogenetic development; likewise, adult offenders, resembling animals, represent a previous stage of phylogenetic evolution. Thus, the teenage Jack exemplifies the criminal nature of children (2019, 100–101).

Although the crime is committed by the son and the responsibility ultimately lies with the father, it is the mother who is accused of assaulting the baby. The wife locks herself up in silent protest against her husband's accusations, and her seclusion is reminiscent of the imprisonment suffered by the persecuted Gothic heroine. Mrs Ferguson's self-imprisonment renders her husband's punitive measure – the separation of mother and baby – a visibly Gothic torment inflicted upon the wife. Botting points out that, in later Gothic fiction, the amateur detective is the hero who liberates the persecuted wife, while the monastery or castle as locations of confinement are replaced with the asylum and the country house (2005a, 87).

Being both a woman and a foreigner, Mrs Ferguson finds herself in an extremely insecure position. Hurley explains that late Victorian constructions of women were highly paradoxical. On the one hand, women were regarded as the safeguards of domestic bliss and as ethereal angels. On the other hand, in popularised medical discourse, they were seen as repulsively physical monsters, unable to think rationally, and prone to hysterical outbursts (2002, 200). These exaggerated and conflicting accounts of female nature arose from the premise of Victorian science that women are "imperfectly human," more circumscribed by their physicality, therefore less intelligent and self-controlled than men. Due to their instability, their "disgusting metamorphoses are in some sense not unexpected" (202). The coexistence of the contradictory conceptions of women as both monstrous and angelic is apparent in Ferguson's statement about his wife: "The lady began to show some curious traits, quite alien to her ordinarily sweet and gentle disposition" (74).

Another reason why Mrs Ferguson is particularly vulnerable to accusations of deviance is her foreign extraction. In Sherlock Holmes stories, foreigners, especially female ones, are inherently suspicious due to their inscrutability (Boltanski 2014, 46). This suspicion is heightened to panic when the least sign of deviance from social norms is observed. Although Doyle plays on British readers' fear of the Other and their proclivity to identify the foreign woman as the villain, the *dénouement* surprises by revealing the innocence and loyalty of the South American wife and the guilt and deviousness of the "pale-faced and fair-haired" English boy "with excitable light blue eyes" (Doyle 1999b, 83). In contrast with Watson's offhand description of the "brown-faced" (81) Peruvian maid, Dolores, his depiction of the wife is more tactful, referring only to her "glorious eyes" (82) and omitting any reference to skin or eye colour. Mrs Ferguson's character might be seen as a cautiously progressive ideological gesture on Doyle's part, which may show that he attempted to implement, albeit warily, the implications of Darwin's conclusions regarding the common human ancestor of the various human "races": "[w]hen the races of man diverged at an extremely remote epoch from their common progenitor, they will have differed but little from each other" (Darwin 1871, 221). In defiance of the commonly accepted discourse of British racial superiority as well as the notion that women are incompletely human, "The Sussex Vampire" favourably contrasts a foreign female protagonist with a British male one.

"The Sussex Vampire" displays an unsettling mixture of the familiar and the strange. This can be seen in the title that juxtaposes a quintessentially English county with a supernatural monster associated with Eastern Europe. This hybridity is also apparent in Ferguson's country house, which combines the oldest English traditions with South American curiosities. Christine Berberich argues that, in Holmes stories, the English country house is contaminated by the foreign Other, either through the alien habits acquired abroad by the English proprietors – as is the case in "The Speckled Band" – or through the ancestral house being inhabited by foreigners. The pernicious influence of the Other transforms "homely spaces" into "*unheimlich* (uncanny) spaces," a change that undermines English identity. The task Holmes undertakes in such cases is not only the solution of a mystery but also the restoration of the English identity of places that have been tainted by foreign otherness (2019, 57).

The intrusion of the foreign Other – in this case, the Peruvian wife – results in "Gothicising" the family home (Berberich 2019, 61). The Gothicised, partly unfamiliar home is indicative of the sinister changes in the family: "the family became a place rendered threatening and uncanny" (Botting 2005a, 7). It is no coincidence that Jack uses a South American dart to inject the baby with poison. Even if the foreign wife is innocent, the alien culture that she introduces into the English home aggravates the inherent criminality of the degenerate boy.

Compared with the other two stories, "The Sussex Vampire" shows paternal authority at its lowest point. Both Roylott and Presbury resent and try to prevent the detective's intervention in their family affairs, and in both cases, Holmes's services are requested without their knowledge and approval. In contrast, in "The Sussex Vampire," it is the father himself who turns to the detective for help when he has proven incapable of settling the familial conflict. It demonstrates a dramatic decline in paternal authority that the husband asks an outsider to determine the culpability of his wife, and, indirectly, protect his child. Holmes enquires into, observes, and intervenes in intimate familial relationships between husband and wife, father and son, as well as between siblings. Ferguson needs Holmes's unbiased judgement and perspicacity to restore order in his family, of which he has lost control: "'For God's sake, Holmes,' he said hoarsely, 'if you can see the truth in this matter, do not keep me in suspense. How do I stand? What shall I do?'" (Doyle 1999b, 85). In short, Ferguson surrenders his paternal authority to Holmes completely.

Although Holmes's reply to the law firm that recommended him claims that "the matter has been brought to a satisfactory conclusion" (88), there remains a lingering sense of unease about the integrity and cohesion of the family. In consequence of Holmes's explanation of the events and the true motives of family members, a reconciliation takes place between husband and wife. Nevertheless, the implication of Holmes's advice that Jack be sent away is that the transgressive son cannot be reintegrated into the home. It is also doubtful whether sufficient mutual trust exists between husband and wife to sustain the family. Mrs Ferguson's words, spoken in an apparent delirium, seem to foreshadow the family's future more accurately than Holmes's letter: "It is finished. All is destroyed" (82). By defamiliarising the old house through the intrusion of Otherness and latent moral degeneration, "The Sussex Vampire," like much Gothic fiction, engages with Victorian anxieties about the home and the family.

5 Conclusion

In these three Holmes stories, the distinctly Gothic plot devices of paternal sin and the hint of the supernatural are clearly identifiable. The supernatural atmosphere of the occurrences is created by the presence of toxins and animals, both of which convey anxieties of social, moral, and racial degeneration, prevalent in the late Victorian era. Whereas toxins or drugs are associated with either the modern concoctions of science or Britain's geopolitical situation as a colonial empire, liable to contamination by the otherness of its colonial outposts, animals

are symbolic of fears spawned by Darwinian science. In each of these stories, the animals represent the wrongdoer's degeneracy: his close association or monstrous fusion with the animal conveys the popularised theories of a nascent criminology, which identified regression into primitive, bestial stages of development with criminal propensities.

Concerns about degeneration are closely related to the decline in paternal authority, due to beliefs that moral deficiencies spread like an infection and could be genetically inherited. In Gothic fiction, the father is often the tyrannical Gothic villain, whose masculine authority is staged and scrutinised. Similarly, in these stories, the fathers have many characteristics of the Gothic villain whose transgressions threaten to ruin the life of his family, even though only "The Speckled Band" features paternal crime in the legal sense. The shrinking authority of the father is indicated by the detective's intrusion into the father's home and intimate family affairs. While "The Speckled Band" and "The Creeping Man" depict threatening and unreliable fathers, whose authority is defied with the detective's assistance, "The Sussex Vampire" stages the complete collapse of paternal control. Inasmuch as Doyle's detective stories are hybrids with prominent Gothic features, they, similarly to classic Gothic fiction, negotiate the social anxieties of their period.

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Paying Attention to Attention

The Poetics and Ethics of Attention in Contemporary British Narrative. By Jean-Michel Ganteau. New York: Routledge, 2023. Pp. 191. ISBN 9781003362265.

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The latest monograph by Jean-Michel Ganteau is a valuable contribution to the critical discourse on twenty-first-century British literature. Having dedicated many years to researching contemporary British narratives, Ganteau in this book offers a new angle from which to look at them, and he does so by transforming the concept of attention into a critical and analytical tool. The author starts out from the common understanding of attention as the ability to notice something or someone and explores how this context can be used as a prism for studying a literary text. Attention is understood as the ability of a literary text to provide a singular experience of opening up to the reality of the Other. This book appears as a timely response to the shifting status of subjectivity in the new economy of attention caused by the changes in the media sphere. Applying an interdisciplinary approach, the author examines how the ethics of attention functions in contemporary British narratives, some of them authored by well-established writers.

The framework offered in *The Poetics and Aesthetics of Attention in Contemporary British Narrative* is rooted in ideas stemming from the political philosophy of late capitalism, ordinary language philosophy (OLP) and the ethics of vulnerability in literature. Building on Richard A. Lanham's observation of the contemporary subject's inundation with information and the consequent scarcity of "human attention needed to make sense of it all" (Lanham qtd. in Ganteau 3), Ganteau explores the notion of vulnerability inherent in the present-day experience within a capitalist framework. The author points out that an overabundance of information leads not only to a crisis of attention but also underscores the vulnerability of the contemporary subject, which is defined by an openness to otherness and a recognition of one's external dependencies. This premise sets the stage for Ganteau's exploration of attention as an ethical category within the realm of fiction. Drawing upon the redefinition of ethics proposed by OLP as attention to ordinary life and care for moral expressivity, the author embarks on a journey through contemporary British narratives to illustrate how fiction serves as a crucial platform for rendering the unseen and neglected reality visible.

The author positions fiction as not just a vehicle for storytelling but as a significant ethical and philosophical engagement with the world. This framework challenges the reader to engage more deeply with the text and invites a reconsideration of the prominent role of fiction in highlighting the overlooked aspects of human experience and the inherent vulnerability of living in a saturated information age. However true, the author's statement about the prominence of literature in attending and making the reader attend to the ordinary, nonetheless, does not provide any exact explanation of why this type of narrative art is given preference over other popular ones, such as cinema or video games. Ganteau is aware of this limitation, pointing out that although he views fiction as "allowing telepathic access to the consciousness of characters" and as such making possible the "sharing of perception and attention from singular, incarnated perceptions of characters, which favours the communication of intimacy and experience" (16), he does not see it as a prerogative of fiction only. At the same time, one might wonder if such exclusion of other narrative arts has a limiting effect on the theory of the ethics of attention. A closer look on how attention to the ordinary works in video games or cinema could be considered a valuable extension, opening more possibilities for this book to be further applied in various fields of humanities.

The author explores the multitude of ways in which contemporary British fiction brings the readers' attention to critical and complex issues of contemporaneity, such as social invisibilities, the intricate relationships between nature and humanity, humans and technology, and the representations of cognitive disabilities. The book covers a wide range of themes, dedicated a chapter each, which not only allows for a more thorough and nuanced examination of each theme but also reflects the author's recognition of the unique demands and considerations each subject entails.

Chapter 1, "Social Invisibilities," stands out among the others by paying particular attention to the ordinary realities of those whose visibility is more often than not hidden from the sight of the majority. Ganteau lists the various mechanisms through which the chosen texts shed light on the realities of immigrants and refugees (*The Other Hand*, 2008, by Chris Leaves), minorities (*Skin Lane*, 2007, by Neil Bartlette) and those who find themselves in the grip of social precarity and exclusion (*The Salt Path,* 2018, by Raynor Winn). All three aspects are many-faceted and deserve delicate examination, which the author brilliantly provides by using a wide range of resources on different aspects of biopolitics and linguistics, including Michel Foucault, Giorgio Agamben and Jacques Derrida.

Chapter 2, "Embedded Visibilities," enters into a vivid dialogue with the opening section by further extending the attention to the ordinary: it focuses not only on the realm of the unseen, but also, as one can infer from the chapter's title, on that of the visible. By doing so, it implies that the work of attention also includes "the

capacity to see what is in front of our eyes, waiting to be perceived, described and taken into account" (61). This chapter responds to the ever-growing anxiety about environmental issues and takes a posthuman turn in its investigation of the embedded and related subjectivity of the nature-human continuum, which gets particular attention in Sarah Hall's *Haweswater* (2002), Jon McGregor's *Reservoir 13* (2017) and Cynan Jones's *The Long Dry* (2006). The author carefully explores the mechanisms of attention presented in narratives, creating the so-called "poetics of inventory," referring to the particular means through which the complex network of interrelated subjectivities of humans and nonhuman others is described in the books.

The reimagining of the Anthropocene and the many ways in which humans are dependent on others also becomes prominent in Chapter 3, "Of (Wo)men and Machines," dedicated to the analyses of two "android novels," *Machines Like Me* (2019) by Ian McEwan and Kazuo Ishiguro's *Klara and the Sun* (2021). The author examines the distinction between human and non-human attention, and the two novels seem to be a wise choice for analysis, as they provide two different views of the term: a systematic, automatic, and rigid mode of attention in *Machines Like Me* and a fluid, empathetic type of attention in *Klara and the Sun*. The chapter sheds light on the complexities and implications of human-machine interactions, blurring the lines between the organic and the artificial in the realm of consciousness.

Chapter 4, "Disabled Brains," continues to elaborate on the changing human subjectivity and its embeddedness, while exploring the significance of paying attention to the ordinary in narratives centred around disability. This part of the book relies on Wendy Mitchell's *Somebody I Used to Know* (2018) and Jon McGregor's *Lean Fall Stand* (2021) to showcase how cognitive disability can coexist with intense relationality and attention to others, making it possible for disabled subjects to produce their own accounts and live with their disabilities rather than merely suffering from them. The chapter emphasises the promotion of an ethical approach to the ordinary through a thorough consideration of the details of disabled individuals' everyday lives, fostering a humble vision of mundane activities and situations.

Jean-Michel Ganteau does an impressive job at maintaining the coherent, smooth structure of the book, which is in part achieved by excellent cross-referencing. The relevance of the work is further enforced by the possibility of placing it within the posthuman turn in humanities, allowing it to enter in a constructive dialogue with most recent and topical theoretical frameworks such as the ethics of alterity, affect theory and the ethics of vulnerability. In the meantime, one cannot but notice a certain lack of posthuman approach in Chapter 1, which becomes more visible as one progresses to read the other chapters, which rely heavily on posthuman terminology. This, however, does not prevent the author from achieving his main goal of staying focused on the ethics and poetics of attention in contemporary British

narratives. Ganteau concludes that attention is a fundamental aspect of narrative ethics, which includes an understanding of attention as a disposition, capacity and practice that opens up the subject to alterity.

One could feel that the work lacks a bit more critical approach to attention as the latter is viewed in strictly positive terms. However, the author's mention of *Refugee Tales* (2016), for example, in connection to *The Other Hand,* evokes other modes or types of attention, where it becomes akin to surveillance or xenophobia. Looking into the darker side of attention might contribute to a deeper understanding of the how and why of this term and add another element to the conceptualisation of attention by defining what it is not. The novelty and refreshing optimism of the *Poetics and Ethics of Attention in Contemporary British Narrative* makes it a worthy reading among recent critical works and a must-have for everyone interested in the most up-to--date trends in not only British fiction in particular, but also in the humanities in general.

Nationalism in Eastern and Central Europe through the Eyes of Four British Scholars in the First Half of the Twentieth Century

Four Britons and Nationalism: Henry Wickham Steed, Robert William Seton-Watson, Arnold Joseph Toynbee and Carlile Aylmer Macartney in/on East-Central Europe and Beyond (1903–1978). By Ágnes Beretzky. Reno, Nevada: Helena History Press, 2024. Pp. xiii + 301. ISBN 978-1-943596-41-6.

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The first half of the twentieth century brought on tremendous changes in Central and Eastern Europe whose effects still linger on in the wider region. The liberating forces of nationalism first entered the world stage on a large scale in the mid-nineteenth century and were embodied in a wave of independence fights – Italy, France, the Netherlands, and the Habsburg Empire – that all failed to achieve the coveted freedom. The idea of becoming independent and sovereign at the national level did not disappear and came back with a renewed impulse before, during, and immediately after the First World War. This deeply ingrained sentiment was not only fervent in the Eastern part of the continent but, in sharp contrast, also largely incomprehensible in Western Europe. With the conclusion of the Paris Peace Conference and the various peace treaties in its wake, the former Austro-Hungarian Empire was gone and in its stead new successor states were born: Austria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (Yugoslavia from 1928), and an enlarged Romania. In these countries – to a significant degree thanks to the large ethnic minorities forced to live under the jurisdiction of the majority – nationalism did not dissipate but actually became even more robust. The story is well known: a Germany thinking of itself as a victim of the peace treaties with the rise of Adolf Hitler stepped on the way of rectifying the imagined injustices, and Hungary – to a lesser extent – did the same. The Second World War and the Paris Peace Treaty of 1947 solidified the borders of 1919–1920, after which socialism forced a lid on the never-ending feeling of nationalism in the area.

Ágnes Beretzky's new volume focuses on the question of Central and Eastern European nationalism in the first half of the twentieth century from a special point of view. She sheds a light on four British individuals, scholars and journalists

sometimes working for their government, who knew the region and its peoples intimately, and did everything within their power to disseminate their knowledge to a larger public. Robert William Seton-Watson was a historian of East-Central Europe and a long-time correspondent and later editor-in-chief of *The Times* (London); Henry Wickham Steed was also a world-renowned scholar and Director of the Royal Institute of International Affairs; similarly, the well-known historian Arnold Joseph Toynbee was a voice to reckon with; Carlile Aylmer Macartney, the fourth person in the focus of the study was another expert on the minorities of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire in general, and on Hungary in particular. A common feature of all four men was that they devoted a significant time of their lives to really get to know the peoples living in the larger area, and – even more crucially – to understand them. They visited these countries and even lived there for sometimes extended periods and learned the various languages spoken there. Therefore, they were well-versed in their historical, political and cultural questions, and could convey these and the aspirations of those living here to a wider English-speaking readership. What was also common in the four scholars was that they interpreted the situations that they encountered and formulated possible answers to them in different manners that were often in direct opposition to one another. They carried their biases into their work, which had a spillover effect when political decision makers accepted some of their recommendations.

Steed studied the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy in Vienna and the various provinces of the Dual Monarchy in person from 1903. He came to the conclusion that the Magyar political establishment was forcibly trying to Magyarise the various ethnicities under its jurisdiction. He published a well-received book on the Monarchy and its minorities that made him the go-to expert regarding the problems of the Monarchy. Seton-Watson, for his part, arrived in Hungary in 1906. Similarly to Steed, he admired Lajos Kossuth and his ideas regarding national self-determination, but his time spent with Hungarian politicians and his tours in Slovakia and Transylvania – giving him the nickname *Scotus Viator* – convinced him that the Hungarian government was reactionary and tried to oppress the various ethnicities living on its territory. His soon published book made him a celebrated expert on Hungary, although, as the author comments, his writings contained "several unbalanced conclusions" (26). By the time the First World War started, these two men had an emphatic dislike toward what they judged a chauvinistic Hungary. During the war they were "particularly involved in pro-Serbian activities" (37), and were determined that the Germans and the Hungarians must be punished as instigators for the conflagration, while the Slavic peoples needed their own respective sovereign home countries. Toynbee, as a historian studying the question of nationalism in the wider region, also became a household name in academia

that was often used as aid for governmental propaganda or postwar planning. After the war these historians' voices became influential as to the outcome of the peace treaties. One of the main efforts was to create self-sustaining successor states in the place of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy in the Danube valley.

The second chapter is the main thrust of the book, which covers the period between 1920 and 1947, that is, from signing the Paris peace treaties after the First World War to the Paris Peace Treaty codifying the international landscape after the Second World War. The four Britons had various roles and attitudes to the interwar years and the Second World War concerning the Danubian region. The main problem with the peace treaties after the First World War was that they created nation states that were too weak and could only survive with the backing of France and, to a lesser degree, of Great Britain. By the 1930s it was obvious that changes would and should occur because the status quo was unsustainable in the long run. Still, out of the four protagonists, only Toynbee was willing to reconsider his earlier opinion; Steed and Seton-Watson, however, were never willing to give up the new world order that they helped to create.

Steed and Seton-Watson predictably defended the postwar order and tried to prove that the Monarchy came to an end due to internal processes (as opposed to the Allies' activities), and therefore it was the result of organic development on the part of the formerly oppressed minorities seeking to establish their own sovereign homeland. The two authors welcomed the birth of the Little Entente as a stabilising force against irredentist Hungarian whims. Their grand project – the unification of the northern and southern Slavs in what became Czechoslovakia and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes – did not leave them fully satisfied, mainly because of what was fermenting in Yugoslavia, but they held onto their vision that this configuration of states provided lasting peace. It has to be mentioned to their credit that the minority question in these countries filled them with some despair and they wrote to the various heads of state in order to try to achieve better circumstances. As to Hungary, they had no contact with interwar Hungarians on the inside and talked only to members of the October emigration (those of the Károlyi people), and they vehemently opposed any border rectification. Toynbee was mostly concentrating on Turkey and questions related to that country, so he professed views on Hungary less frequently, but when he did, as in the case of the Romanian-Hungarian Optant Debate, he held a balanced view and stayed on neutral grounds.

In contrast, Macartney became a source of frequent scholarly opinion about Hungary and Hungarian affairs. He was somewhat younger than the aforementioned trio. He arrived in Hungary in 1919, and he was vice consul in Vienna between 1921 and 1925. Therefore, he also gained a thorough first-hand knowledge of the various

peoples populating the former Habsburg lands. His books on the region's history starting with 1926 made him perhaps the number one expert on Hungary, and his views can be said to have been less biased than those of Steed and Seton-Watson.

Both Seton-Watson and Macartney authored books on the question of Hungarian treaty revision. Although neither thought applying changes in the border was beyond the possibility, when it came to "practical revision they held contrasting opinions" (130). Seton-Watson and Steed believed that political and economic cooperation among the Danubian countries was the first step before attempting to revise any of the borders as stated in the peace treaties, while Macartney's argument rested on the principle of ethnic-based frontiers first, collaboration second. But irrespective of their stance on the competing agendas of these countries, they were all firmly resistant to any of the dynamic Hungarian propaganda in the 1930s.

Beretzky also shows the four Britons' views regarding Germany, the successor states, and British policy after Hitler's rise to power and becoming more belligerent from 1936 on. There were noticeable changes. Although Steed remained steadfast in his refusal to consider any territorial corrections, Seton-Watson spoke more critically about the minority question in the member countries of the Little Entente. Toynbee, for his part, started to see ever more critically the postwar settlement, with especially low scores given to Czechoslovakia – the darling of Steed and Seton-Watson. What they all agreed on was the shortsighted policy of Great Britain vis-à-vis Germany. Macartney came out with his seminal book on Hungary in 1937 (*Hungary and Her Successors*), in which work he argued for an alteration of the borderlines as drawn in the Treaty of Trianon, but was against any future Magyarisation, and clearly saw that Transylvania could never again become part of Hungary, but should be a separate sovereign unit between Romania and Hungary. Therefore, it is easy to see that the perennial nationality problem did not offer itself for any easy solutions among either the politicians or the academics.

The events of the late 1930s in quick succession – the Anschluss, the Munich Pact, the First Vienna Award, the occupation and dissipation of Czechoslovakia – paved the way for another world war. But due to their often opposing views as to the solution of the problems in the Central European region, Seton-Watson and Macartney fell out for good with each other, with Steed seconding Seton-Watson's decision. The four historians argued for their respective insights strictly on the planes of academic debate – typically in the form of memoranda –, and three of them were employed by the government during the war. (Macartney, for instance, made as many as 186 broadcasts to Hungarians in fluent Hungarian on the airwaves of the BBC.) Whatever ideas they may have put forward regarding the future borders of Hungary and the surrounding countries, the conclusion of the war with Soviet military presence and political motives made all such planning devoid of interest and possibility.

The closing short chapter deals with the four scholars' ideas on nationalism and related topics in the milieu of the Cold War, but since two of them were old and soon retired, and in addition the dynamic and logic of the East-West antagonism put nationalism on the back burner, this chapter is less relevant that the previous long one.

In her conclusion, Beretzky states that "Steed, Seton-Watson, Toynbee and Macartney all disdained intellectual restrictions and labels of any kind, while at the same time respecting academic or intellectual independence to the utmost" (266). Accordingly, they had their main interests: Seton-Watson favoured the Slovaks, Seed equally was biased toward the southern Slavs, Macartney focused mainly on Hungary, while Toynbee concentrated first on Turkey, Greece, and the Armenians, and only second on Central European questions. All four had their measure of disappointments. Both Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia turned out to be anything but model democracies (and after the Cold War ceased to be individual states and fell prey to nationalism), the Hellenic questions demonstrated that democratic values proved next to nonexistent in the path of fervent nationalism, while Hungary provided a constant unsolvable dilemma, and interestingly a mutual platform to all four authors in the sense that "they all were critical of interwar Hungary, and its Horthy regime" (269).

Beretzky's book remains an engaging read throughout. The author uses a vast amount of archival material in addition to a wide scope of secondary literature. But it is really her focus on the four men and their thinking that brings to light so far hidden patterns regarding British attitudes toward Central and Eastern Europe and the states found there. And perhaps even more importantly, the issues these men engaged with and provided possible solutions for are still relevant to the area and still simmer under the (not always even) seemingly peaceful surface.

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