satura

VOLUME 4 CRUCIBLES OF TRANSITION

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KULTURFONDS
DER WWU

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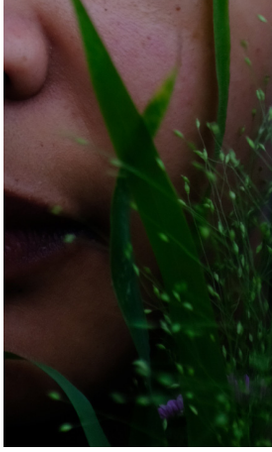

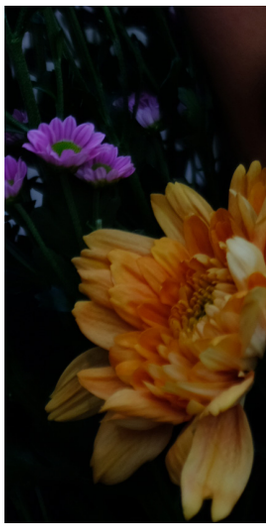

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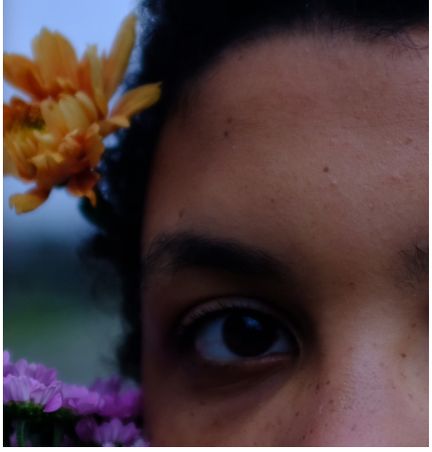
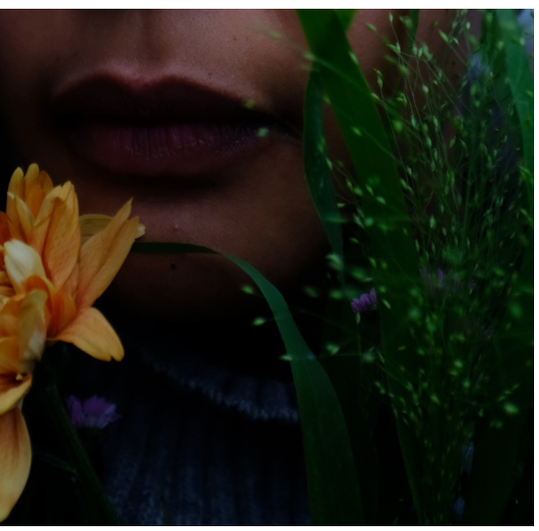




NON-FICTION

Letter From the Editor

Welcome to the fourth edition of *Satura*, the student journal of the English Department at Westfälische Wilhelms Universität in Münster. The theme of issue 4 – Crucibles of Transition – asked students from around the world to explore how identity, war, gender, disease, climate change, sexuality, class, nationality, language and other forms of difference help us connect and disconnect. We wanted to bring together student voices to reflect and give us a sense of the world as they see it.

The effort to bring you this volume with distinct voices from places as different as Accra, Ghana, to hamlets in northern Germany took about 10 months of love, gusto, hard work, and the desire to keep the connection between academia and publishing alive at the grassroots level – a privilege that a university offers its students.

2021 was the first time that *Satura* changed editors since 2018, when it was founded. Laura Ntoumanis and Natalia Tolstopyat, who co-founded Satura and were editors-in-chief for the first three volumes, put my feet on the pedals of this one-of-a-kind vehicle last year, giving me the freedom and support to help grow this literary magazine.

In this issue, we feature 20 contributors who have written seven short stories, eight poems and eight non-fiction pieces. The themes range from financial struggle to the rising voice of 'comfort women' to the perils of religious hatred to the power of language when it comes to the racial structures of society. The writers explore environmental racism and destruction, new directions for museums, the impact of language on self and identity, discrimination in the publishing industry, the construct and notion of home and other relevant themes.

Satura is also printing four short stories translated from German into English in this volume. These stories were submitted as part of a project titled "Eden? Plants between Science and Fiction." These four stories – from Thomas Bilda, Felix Oldenburg, Marco Thunig and Philipp Woschek – won the 2022 contest hosted by WWU's Kulturbüro as part of the Eden project.

Satura also hosted its first short fiction contest in 2022. The two winners – Misbah Ahmad and Jeanette Ruiz – are published in this edition. A submission from Julia Van Der Giet to the contest is also found in this volume.

As *Satura* moves forward to its 5th edition and beyond, we hope we can continue to collaborate with those who see the significance of writing and art in a world where other priorities are taking greater importance. We hope you enjoy all the words in this volume and its look and feel.

Questions, criticisms, queries to work for and submit to *Satura* are always welcome. Please send them to journalsatura@gmail.com or satura.journal@uni-muenster.de.

Regards,
Rajiv Sekhri
Editor in Chief, Volume 4


FIC-
TION

Locked Doors

By Misbah Ahmad

"No one should die near Eid days," I climbed up on the charpoy to sit near her while taking the bowl of hot halwa out of my mother's hands, who, with her stare, told me that I had, yet again, uttered words that I should not have. But ignoring that long and discontented stare, I continued to deliver my thoughts on the funeral announcement just made through the mosque loudspeaker. "It ruins Eid for their loved ones forever. Every year twice, near Eid, their happiness would be overshadowed by the loss."

My mother sighed once again thinking about what went wrong at her end that she could not teach her daughter to stop saying the first thing that came to her mind. I thought it was a very astute observation. And that's how it was around Khala; one could get away by saying anything. The comment got buried in the compliments of the sweetest and most delicious pumpkin halwa prepared by her. But who knew, years later it would come back to me as a strange déjà vu.

***

It has been an hour since I received the call. But the voice of my sister keeps lurking in my ears. "Khala died this morning; one moment she was taking out her Eid clothes, and the next she was gone." I could not hear anything after that. I could not comprehend anything beyond that.

I was just with her yesterday when we both went to visit my sister to celebrate Chand Raat, the night before Eid, and Khala insisted on staying with her. I agreed because she seemed like herself after ages, playing with the kids, helping them with their bangles, and applying henna on their tiny hands. She had a glimmer in her eyes that was lost years ago.

***

Khala was not just a person, she was a place that became a home for so many. She was a woman of few words, yet she was a story that needed to be told. She had the sweetest soft voice and yet was a voice that demanded to be heard. She was the epitome of Wonder Woman.

For me, she was a safe place. I felt the warmth of her arms the night I first saw hate up close. Before that, it was just a word, a feeling I was taught to avoid. But that night it was a person with a brightly burning torch. That night it was a voice, a scream, a shrieking sound that pierced one's heart. I could not understand what was happening around me as it happened too fast. I was dreaming of yet another garden laden with grape vines and mango trees when I felt the sharp shoulders of my father under my head replacing the soft pillow. I opened my heavy eyes and saw my mother handing the locks to my father while balancing my sister on her shoulders. I blinked, turned around, and saw my father placing the locks on the door that were never opened again. I heard voices, I saw the flames, I felt the heat, and I went back to dreaming of the gardens.

When I woke up, I saw more yellow hues following the pick-up we were in with a few other familiar faces, only this time it was the yellow of the dawn. My father gave me a glass of water and told me, with a hesitant nod, that everything will be alright.

After a few more hours of traveling in silence, we reached a place that became our home for the next few years. Khala was the first person to approach the pick-up. She took me into her arms and complimented my mother for the "fashion choice" she had made by putting two different shoes on my

feet. The laughter that followed was the first thing I heard since the voice of hate.

***

No one ever really talked about that night again. I once asked my father about it and all he said was it was not a place for us to make a home. I never understood what he meant. We already had a home there. We were not any different from them. We spoke the same language, we looked the same, we saw the same moon every night, and we woke up to a familiar sun every morning. Then, how were we any different from the people who were ready to burn us alive? No one ever answered that. I don't think anyone ever had any answer for that.

Khala was everyone's Khala. It wasn't until after years of knowing her that I got to know her real name. Before that, she was just Khala – one's maternal aunt. And it suited her well. She had no kids or siblings of her own, but the house where she lived with her husband was always full of people.

It would start early in the morning. Just as she would be folding her prayer mat after the morning prayer, the first knock would come. It would either be Sakeena or her sister Tehmeena with an empty pail. Khala would ask them to sit and wait while her husband would milk the cows. Both sisters were fans of "how, when, where, who and what" talks. Only Khala's husband bringing in the milk pot could stop them.

After that, kids from around the neighborhood would start running up to her door for their daily Quran lessons. They would all line up around the big charpoy facing the lawn. They told Khala they liked to sit there because it could accommodate them all, but Khala knew well that it is the only place from where they could see her dog sitting under the big pipal tree on the lawn. They enjoyed teasing him.

Breakfast at Khala's always tasted different. Just like her, her parathas were distinct. They weren't round – rather they were, unconventionally, square. I had so many parathas at her place, but I still could not figure out how she made them so soft on the

inside and crispy on the outside. I had run, many a morning, from her home to mine with greasy fingers to get ready for school, where I could not wait for those long classes to be over so that I could finally go to her house to play on the long swing in her lawn. It was where I would share with her all my thoughts and observations of the day. We called it the chai talk. She drank her chai and I talked.

That chai was also something out of this world. She took her time to cook it. Putting every ingredient in with great care. Chai leaves, sugar, cardamom, cloves, and a stick of cinnamon boiled in water until it turned black with shades of red, and then she would gradually add the milk turning it to the prettiest shade of brown. She took her time with everything and everyone almost as if she were praying. Evenings in her house were for all sorts of social gatherings. There were days when people brought in their radios to listen together to their favorite verses from Faiz and Ghalib. Some brought in their favorite book to share stories. There were nights when

people gathered to watch dramas in black and white on her small television that a neighbor had brought from Iran.

I sometimes even spent nights at her house. Like her days, her nights were simple too. Charpoys in the corridor with the softest sheets to cover, fireflies flying from the small dark corners of the wooden roof, and her sweet voice humming the lullabies of all the birds going to sleep.

On the days I slept at home, which was just on the other side of her walls, her house was the first place I would run up to after waking up and it became the last place I visited before leaving the country.

Our father had arranged for us all to move to a land far away from the haunting past and a dreaded future. He wanted to make a safe home for his family away from hate. But can you ever really escape hate?

***

I was there, just a few months before our departure, when they came knocking on her door. I saw her standing in front of them, her usual strong posture, while they inquired about her husband. I heard her telling them that they were mistaken, for he had been home since morning; he could not have possibly done that. But they insisted that it was her husband who had killed or at least plotted to kill the Mullah of the local mosque.

The only evidence presented to her was the argument that had occurred between them a few days ago. Her husband had confronted the Mullah about his speech on the people of a different sect. He argued with him that his comments could ignite hate toward the people who were not much different than him. He warned him about the hate that could engulf all forms of peace. The events that unfolded proved him right.

Khala's husband was eventually arrested and put in jail. People chose sides. Hate made home. The same hate that made us leave our homes was now at Khala's doorstep.

Sakeena and Tehmeena no longer came to her for milk. The hate had declared it haram for them. The same milk they had been drinking for years had now become fuel for the fire of hell. There were not any kids now lining up across the big charpoy to tease her dog. Their parents did not want her to teach them the Quran. The verses of Faiz and Ghalib were replaced by hateful curses and chants that people screamed in front of her house, daily, almost like a ritual.

As we packed our bags to leave another home and lock a few more doors, she stood with us smiling, hiding her pain. She told us she is strong; she said she can fight the hate. "I have known these people all my life, they are just angry, they do not really hate me," she said to soothe the burns left on her heart by the people, her people.

I could never really comprehend how one could hate someone. You could dislike them for a habit, or you could detest their choice. But to hate someone simply because they believed in something that you do not agree with must require hate to first possess your body and then your soul. Only then can it become so strong in a person that it destroys everything in its way.

For years she stood in its way. She told us over the phone about her weekly meetings with her husband in jail. He was kept in the death cell, kaal kothri, a room with pitch black darkness. They hated him so much that they did not even want him to see a glimmer of light.

Although she tried to cover it with her usual laughter and light-hearted jokes, one could hear in her voice that she was getting tired. Her conversations on the phone got shorter. They became less about seeing Sakeena and Tehmeena passing her by without greeting her and more about her asking us about our lives. "I do not have anything new to tell you. So, you tell me what is new at your side."

***

It was a Friday. We were not expecting a call from her. That's why when the phone rang, and we saw her number on it we all stared at each other, confused and puzzled. My mother finally answered the call, breathed in a long sigh of relief and tears started flowing from her eyes. The court proved the charges against Khala's husband false. He was finally coming home.

Khala talked to us all for more than an hour, telling us excitedly about her plans of welcoming him. She wanted to make arrangements for more than fifty people. She was certain that others would join too. "I will make pumpkin halwa for everyone. Oh, you all must come soon. You have to come soon." She wanted to make it like "those old days" that now seemed like a dream we all once lived.

But, the hate was too strong for Khala to overcome. The moment her husband stepped into the house, which she had decorated with lights and colorful strips of paper, he was shot in the back. Her husband's smile faded, giving in to sharp pain. A loud chant followed: "We did it, we took our revenge, we sent him to hell!" But wasn't this earth hell for him already? His house was robbed of its peace and happiness. He had to spend years away from his wife who had now gotten old. He had to agree to sell his cows and to part from his dog because it was becoming too much for his wife to take care of. And what was left of everything that he loved or lived for was taken away from him with that one bullet that pierced his body. What else was left in hell for him to feel? He had already lived the hate.

Khala wanted it to be a happy reunion, but we only managed to reach in time to hold her while she let go of her husband's body, one last time. There was not much left for Khala after that. There was not much left of Khala after that. She had to abandon the house, which was a refuge for many unhomed people.

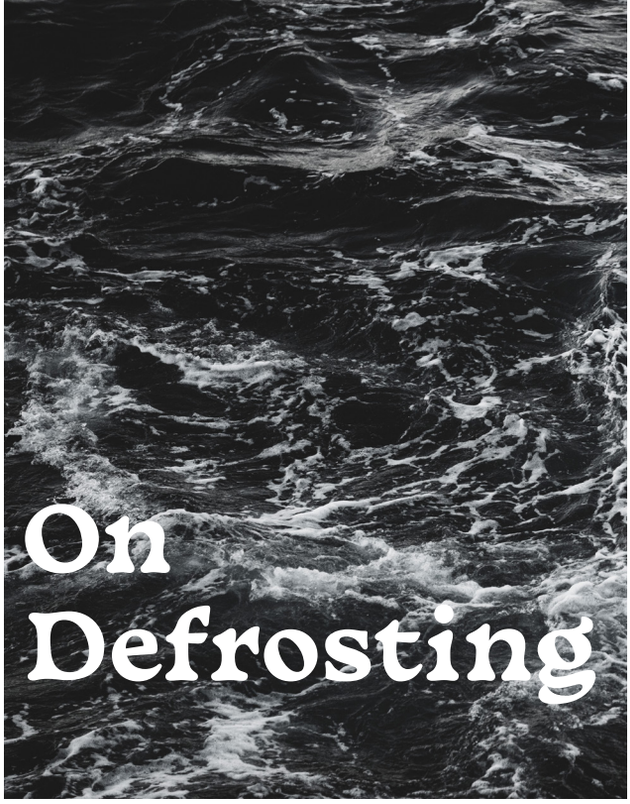
We arranged for her to come live with us in Germany. While her plane flew across the sky in the yellow dusk, almost like an illusion of nostalgia, it was I standing with my arms open for her at the airport, trying to make her laugh at her strange "fashion choice" of pairing bright green socks with her sandals. But this time no one laughed. This time, her body and soul were in separate places.

I was holding her hand, but she was still, in her thoughts, holding onto the locks of the doors that were never opened again. Although her mouth learned to create language, and her brain became acquainted with the change of scenery around her, she still lived in the memories of the courtyard. She could not go back to where she made pumpkin halwa for everyone.

Just a few days before Eid, I asked her what she would like for her Eidi – an Eid present. Instantly, almost with longing, she said, "home."

Death, like a genie, granted her wish.

As I saw people lining up for her funeral after the Eid prayer, I smiled, remembering her reply to my words from all those years ago: "What if that is the only way for them to live."



By Jeanette Ruiz

I was once full. Hands caressed my handles at the very least three times a day. Although they touched only to use, I still enjoyed their warmth. My insides were cold, especially my brain... actually... it was frozen. I suffered from an eternal state of brain freeze, stuck in one place, constantly repeating the tasks of yesterday. The only talent I knew was how to preserve things, how to keep them alive, well, at least until they went bad. At times whole worlds were growing, blooming, evolving within me. Sometimes I'd keep things in for years. The stench wouldn't reveal itself until the lid was lifted, the pressure often threatening to explode the cover. Still, I fed the restless hands that touched me. They were always opening and closing me, putting things in and taking things out. At times, late into the night, hungry eyes gazed deep inside of me longing for something unknown.

For years I gave and gave but my heart remained cold. Until one day, at a Thanksgiving dinner, after being stuffed with too much turkey and dishes meant to express gratitude, I just couldn't keep anything in anymore. Perhaps the silky gravy was melting my frigid walls. Each day I became less and less cold. No longer could I keep cool enough to preserve the rotting contents I contained. It took so much energy to stay frozen, to stay put and to hold so much inside. I defrosted slowly and with every melting drop, I gradually filled with happiness.

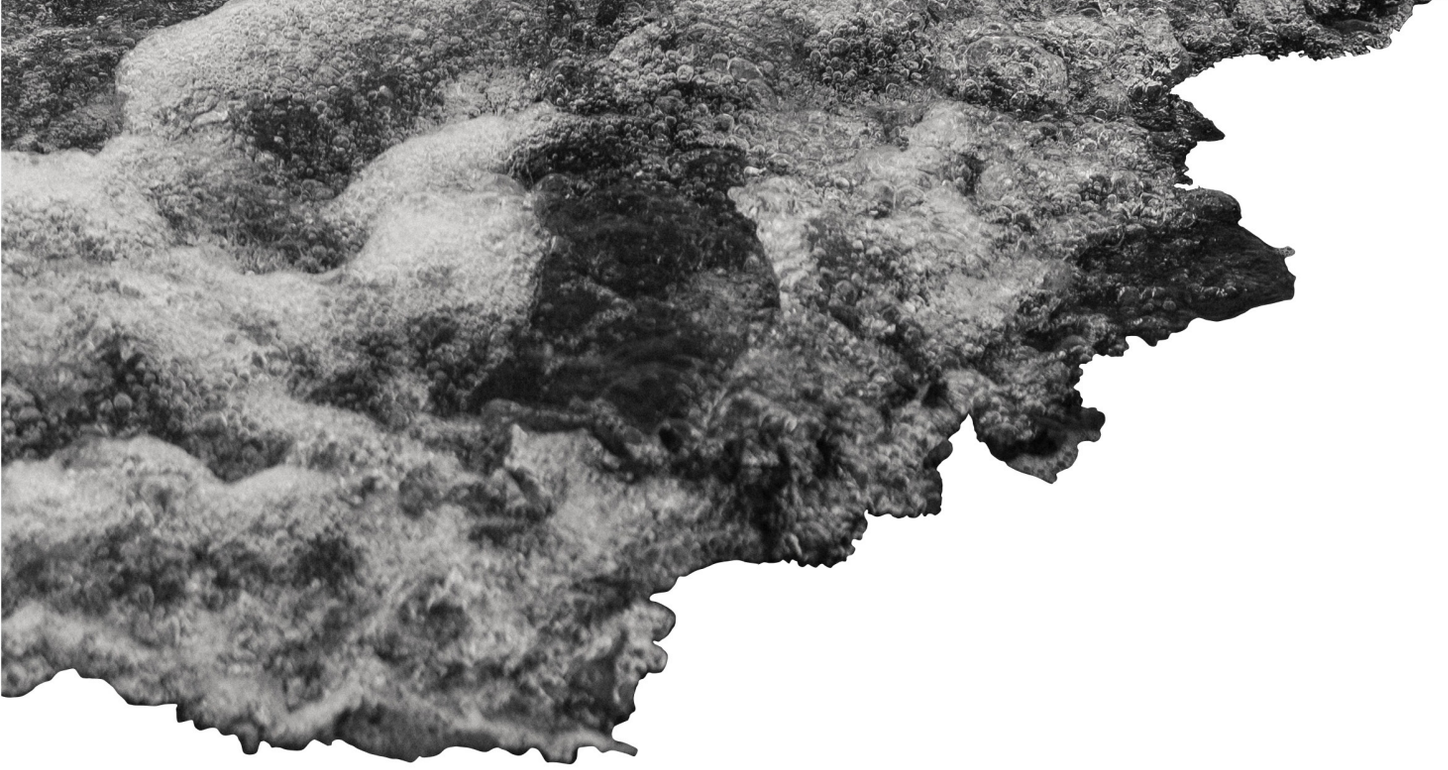
However, the hands that always touched, stuffed and used me, failed to enjoy that I had grown warm. So, they replaced me with another. She was tall, slim and had two vertical doors that stretched out like arms ready for an embrace. She had many more compartments than me and knew how to stay cold. No matter how many times they touched her, opened and closed her, she always played it cool.

The badges I held, the sweet notes, even the photographs were all taken from me and given to her. A dark corner of the basement became my new home. Wine, spirits and beer were given to me but I couldn't handle the alcohol. Eventually, they just got rid of me altogether. They pulled the plug, my insides leaked uncontrollably. The last remnants of all that I had been keeping in, frozen for so many years, finally spilled out. I was free, unattached, unstuck, no longer paralyzed but immensely lonely. Not to say that I wasn't lonely before, it's just that this type of loneliness was foreign to me. No one and no thing ever touched me anymore.

That changed when a shiny, metallic pair of claws scooped me up and placed me on a ship. There I sat tall atop a high pile of trash. Reeking decay, occasionally masked by the scent of salty sea breeze, filled the air. Above me birds circled across open skies, while waves from below gently rocked me. I didn't know where I was headed. Nevertheless, I felt unusually confident. Even if it stank, this was my empire of trash. I titled myself Queen of the Unwanted.

On my voyage, there was a raging storm. Suddenly, as it so often happened in my life, I was removed from my throne. I plunged into the depths of the ocean. Schools of debris surrounded me. The salt corroded my skin. Water filled me until I burst. My entire face came off, my front sank into the darkness underneath. You could see all that was inside of me, which was nothing.

I am a survivor though. The currents purged me faceless yet safe onto the shore of the most beautiful beach that I had ever seen. Although I had always been magnetically drawn to beaches, my only knowledge of them came from postcards. And now here I was laying on my side decorating an actual sandy shore with my foxy, boxy, corroded shape!



From my distorted view, I tried to take in the stunning sight of the seashore, to reflect on the same ocean that nearly buried me with ancient treasures. While distracted by faraway thoughts from the here and now, I felt the touch of a pair of hands on me. Each one gently yet firmly grasped each side of me. The grip of palms seemed like a distant, blurred memory. I couldn't recall the last time someone felt me. At first I shivered, even though the setting sun warmed my rusted skin. Relaxation washed over me. He was merely helping me up. Under the fiery tangerine sky, he stood me up and there I was, a bit out of place but finally no longer cold, no longer frozen.

Bricks

By Julia Van Der Giet

Peter has been happily married for years. It hasn't always been perfect, but he is content. Nowadays he couldn't imagine a life without his wife. Nicole. She is a part of him. Just like his job, his house, his club are parts of him.

All these things make him the man he is.

Peter Brick. A fulfilled man with both feet firmly on the ground.

Here in the village everyone likes him. Why wouldn't they? Peter is outgoing and friendly. He can chat with anyone, and he laughs at all of your jokes. The village is a part of him, like his wife, his job, his house, his club. He has lived here all his life and belongs to the village as much as the village belongs to him.

It's a different story with Nicole. She comes from a different village with different customs. There, too, the people belong to the area, like trees belong to the forest. Nicole thought she would spend her whole life there. But Peter belonged to another village. And she belonged to Peter more than she belonged to her village.

Nicole learned to call two places her home. Every weekend, she and the kids went to visit her brother. At first, anyway. Sometimes she talked about moving somewhere in between. Not soon, of course. Someday. When the kids are older. When circumstances are better. Now the kids had settled into their surroundings. They didn't want to visit relatives every weekend anymore. But that could change again. There might be an opportunity. One day.

Still, she was happy.

Today, Peter and Nicole can look back on more than 20 years of partnership. They are an integral part of each other's lives, though they have few things in common. They complement each other. Are a well-coordinated team. A perfectly oiled machine. Peter can rely on Nicole, he knows that.

She has no manual skills and doesn't understand his profession, so she does the bookkeeping. And although she can't understand his work – and thus can't empathize with his exhaustion after long days – she complements him perfectly here, too. She makes sure he can finally relax in the evenings. After a long day of chatting and laughing at the jokes of customers, he doesn't feel like talking when he comes home. He finds the best distraction in his club with his mates. And even here, she complements him. The members' wives are her friends, and they meet every Wednesday for coffee.

By now, Nicole is a part of the village. Her former village stopped being her home long ago. She belongs to his village. Just like she belongs to his work, the house, and his community.

Peter and Nicole have belonged together for 23 years. Peter is convinced that he can rely on her well into old age. Of course, not everything goes perfectly. Every now and then they argue. That's just part of marriage. Peter is willing to fight for his happiness and, at the same time, keep her happy. When she asks him to work less, drink less, and talk more, he tries. He tries hard. When she asks for it, he finishes work earlier and doesn't leave the house right away to go drinking with his mates. Instead, he tells her about his day and sometimes even asks about the kids. And it works. Every time. The couple stays happy. They haven't fought in a while. Currently, everything is going well.

She no longer asks Peter to drink less or work less. The other day the two went for a long walk and Nicole talked a lot. She wants to go back to her old job. She tried that six years ago but failed. This time, their oldest daughter helped her write her application. Nicole managed to find a suitable job! Peter is happy for her, of course. But since the kids have moved out, she seems... withdrawn. Not to a

worrisome extent. But a little bit. Maybe the new job will bring her somethi—

"I want a divorce."

Nicole belonged to him. To his work, his home, and his community. To their shared life. 23 years! You can't just throw away 23 years! Without any warning? From one day to another?

"Don't worry about the house. You can keep it. I'll find something new."

New?

In Peter's village, people are moving with the times. No one reproaches Nicole for her decision, even though most of their mutual friends assure Peter that she will come back to him. Just a phase, they say.

Their younger daughter, who helps her father with the household chores, is rarely seen at village parties. She has never been much of a party animal. But now the neighbor Anna suspects this could be a sign of depression. And that's not all. Anna's daughter is friends with Nicole's daughter and recently saw her kissing another woman. Anna is genuinely concerned about Nicole and her daughters. Not that there's anything wrong with homosexuality. Her father's neighbor's cousin is gay and very friendly. In general, Anna only knows friendly gays.

In this village people move with the times. Nevertheless, Nicole wants to leave. Maybe she will be lucky enough to move to another, equally progressive village.

Text Twigs

By Thomas Bilda

Translated from German by Max Landwehrjohann

THEOPHRASTUS OF ERESOS
THE NATURAL HISTORY OF PLANTS
VOL. 10: NOTES ON PLANTS DANGEROUS TO MAN
THE YEAR HIPPODAMAS WAS ARCHON

However, it now seems that there are plants on Earth with no other purpose than quiet, unstoppable self-reproduction. I was given an account of a peculiar shrub capable, with the deceptive allure of its Herculean size, of causing fire-like injuries to other living beings upon mere touch. Comparable to a silent army, this plant defends its territory with power and elegance. I would be thrilled to describe its leaves, blossoms, and fruits in more detail. Alas, there appears to be a limitation of unknown reason and constitution, set by nature itself.

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HILDEGARD VON BINGEN
AMENDMENT TO THE BOOK *ON THE NATURE OF CREATURES*
BINGEN AM RHEIN, 1161

Therefore, these plants do not constitute matter, but rather creatures in possession of a will inherently hostile to man. And yet I was shaken to the core tonight, as I, my spirit wide awake, was befallen by the vision of a plant, which, not unlike useless weeds, bore no relationship to man. In diabolical fashion, it harms this creation of God after His own likeness and may, with its monstrous incarnations, symbolize like no other, the eternal conflict between light and dark.

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CARL VON LINNÉ
PLANT SPECIES – SECTION II
SUPPLEMENTARY VOLUME
STOCKHOLM, 1759

My explorations in the Caucasian highlands led me to a weed-like plant, which the locals say is the curse of the ominous forest woman. Surely this is but humbug and can be discarded as a fairytale of the local, less educated folk. Yet, I cannot deny a certain awe as I gaze upon these almost two-men-tall specimens. Their big flower heads are of an enormous circumference and in no other known land have I found anything alike. We still know too little about nature.

***

S. SOMMIER ET E. LEVIER
LIST OF PLANTS OF THE CAUCASUS EXPEDITION REPORTS
FLORENCE, 1900

Heracleum giganteum, belonging to the family of Umbelliferae (Apiaceae), the subfamily of Apioideae, genus: Hogweed (Heracleum). Finally, we can take home specimens of the giant hogweed, as if they're native to our country, and put them on display. First examinations suggest that the giant hogweed may be of great economic use as a nectar source. The shade it can provide thanks to its enormous size and the rapidness with which it grows will hopefully turn out useful for forestry and livestock farming.

***

RESEARCH REPORT "PROJECT HG" BY EXO-PLANT CORP.
FOR INTERNAL, CONFIDENTIAL USE AT THE SUPERVISORY BOARD MEETING
PARIS, 3rd QUARTER, 2019

Test series 24c to 31a with Heracleum giganteum (hg) show promising results regarding its potential for profitable use. Via CRISPR/Cas procedure, its gigantic growth was successfully increased by an additional 147%. Contacting biogas companies is recommended. Will require the acquisition of cultivation areas for monocultural production from Q1/2020 onwards. Revenue projection of Exo-Plant Corp. for "Project hg": 375%.

Addition: Manipulating phototoxic characteristics of hg with gene editing is still not possible. Genome implementation of various mycelia. Single dominant test series show unwanted, as of now unexplainable, increase in phototoxicity.

***

PROTOCOL NOTE FROM THE 4th EU COUNCIL MEETING
COUNCIL: AGRICULTURE AND FISHERY
BRUSSELS, 2024

For the purpose of more effective containment, Heracleum will be added to the list of non-indigenous invasive plants of Union-wide significance. We currently assume that a high potential for continued spread is to be expected. The damage done to sectors, such as biodiversity, health and economy, has been proven and is high. As non-native species, its furocoumarins are particularly dangerous and can be life-threatening. The use of broad-spectrum herbicides is being checked.

***

ANNOUNCEMENT FROM THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION
DEPARTMENT: HEALTH PROTECTION
SUBJECT: HERACLEUM FUNGUS DISEASE (HFD-35)
LINZ, 2038

Avoid any contact with Heracleum Fungus (HF, image overleaf). Should you leave your shelter, wear long clothes, face and hand protection. Heightened risk, esp. for small children, lasts from April to August. After contact, skin may get red, itchy and dry. Other typical signs: burning-like state, symptoms of poisoning. In case of contact with HF, use ampule 2a of the WHO MedKit and visit the nearest Disease-Control-Unit.

***

INTERNET RELAY CHAT RECORDING
USER-ID0V689DE
DE-CIX FRANKFURT a.M., 2072

+++ hey, Olli. honestly, we're bouncing tomorrow. really makes sense to get out of here. fuckin dangerous, all of it. last night the mobs were roaming the streets again. I'm done putting up with the [data lost] +++ lea's crying a lot and dad's at the outskirts burning a path through. our trek arrives at the assembly point 17/FFM at 8 am. hope 2 c u there. kinda hard to leave all our stuff behind but mom says we have to travel fast. will still hide Dr. Watson in my backpack, couldn't take the heartbreak of abandoning him. +++ [data lost] +++ for the disk. I'm gonna watch it in the bunker like a thousand times per day 4 sure. really have no idea how things are gonna be down there. I'm dreading the dark already. +++ [data lost] +++ reach out to me thru ID0v689. we'll find each other.

***

FIELD MANUAL OF THE PREACHERS OF THE PERENNIAL
CHAPTER XI: ON THE PLANT HOMO SAPIENS
ELEVENTH GENERATION OF THE LIGHTLESS ENLIGHTENED

How small and unknowing we had always been. Simple-minded, we deemed ourselves superior to nature and yet were always just a lesser part of it. The world's knowledge forebode the great cycles that would surpass a single lifetime. Underground, we are now gathering strength again and, when the right time comes, will rise from the earth's surface to hopefully humbler greatness. Here's to hoping the

children of the Perennial will once again feel the sunlight, grow, and prosper.

***

SOKURATESU THE SECOND
THE RENEWED NATURAL HISTORY OF HUMAN BEINGS – SKETCHES
THE FIRST YEAR OF LIGHT

After generations of darkness, cold, and deprivation, the digging has finally begun. I can't believe that the Global Council assigned me to the group of first explorers. Already during this cycle, a small number of subterraneans and I will set out to the surface. Our mental scholars have begun negotiations with the Mycelia Network and have been allocated a surface spot where we're allowed to spread out. In the transmitted phantasms, we can make out a green plain with a body of water. I am confident that the learned will teach us what needs to be done under the light of the sun. We will certainly spread out fast and cleverly adjust to some of the adversities. With my insatiable curiosity, I want to understand the world with open eyes. We still know too little about our nature.

***

How to Get Rid of Goutweed

By Felix Oldenburg

Translated from German by Max Landwehrjohann

When his father dies on June 11, 2020, the garden is in immaculate condition. Jasper leans on the garden fence. Wood splinters drill through the thin fabric of his long-sleeve cotton shirt into his forearms. He smells the freshly mown lawn, feels the heat of the stones by the herb bed. He doesn't dare enter the garden. It's too much of a risk, for the garden should never look any other way: groomed, cut and kept in shape by his father, every morning between 6 and 7:15.

Seventeen scars, says the pathologist when they come to the DIAKO hospital for the autopsy results. Seventeen scars, and by the way he repeats the words and strokes the stubble on his chin, they can tell that he is impressed. Seventeen scars they found on the backside of his left ventricle. Seventeen scars meaning seventeen heart attacks, presumably accumulated in the past five to seven years. I'm sorry, says the pathologist, but your father's heart was more punctured than an old sailcloth.

They contact a funeral home, choose a grave on Mill Cemetery, clear out the apartment in Mommenstraße where their father had his practice as a psychoanalyst, hold their ID cards into webcams at a slanted angle to prove that they really are Jasper and Johan Machat, sons and sole heirs of Dr. Helmuth Machat, put the money from the life insurance into a long-term fund at GLS Bank, post an obituary in the *Flensburger Tageblatt*, sell his CHI accreditation to the daughter of one of his college friends, cancel his subscription to the SZ psychology journal, and donate his collection of original editions from the Portuguese Saudosismo to the university library.

His brother brings up the estate several times, but Jasper shrugs. Who would buy a manor house with a plot of five thousand square meters between Flensburg-Waldeshöh and Rüllschau? He doesn't want to tell his brother, who returned to Hamburg long ago, that in a few weeks the garden will run to seed due to neglect. As if their father wasn't dead, but was coming back tomorrow, the day after at the latest, from his vacation in Southern Portugal, and would kneel down between lemon balm and marsh gentian and later call up one of his sons to ask about their week and, at the end of the conversation, in passing, mention his back pain, which they now know was the only sign of his seventeen heart attacks. He doesn't want to tell Johan that as long as the garden awaits the return of their father, he just can't give it up.

So, Jasper comes back, day in and day out. He leans his bicycle against the tree stump next to the garden gate. He rests his arms on the fence and feels the familiar sting of the splinters. He gazes at the garden and the pond, beside which he lay after school, until the tree frogs were no longer scared and leapt into his palms. Their bodies pulsate, even though they're much too small to have a heart, and through expressionless eyes they stare into other dimensions. He presses his forearms into the fence and imagines being a frog. His eyes turn expressionless, in search for the dimension beyond the garden.

But all he sees is the magnolia his father plants on Jasper's first day of school. He sees the goutweed that his father plucks out from between the herbs. His father tosses it in the compost trash, saying that if it grows back, it will prove Frankl's principle of paradoxical intention. He sees the red deckchair, in which his father sits in the morning after garden work, flat cap turned back, sweat beads on his forehead. He caresses the leaves of the shadbush with the back of his index finger like he caresses Jasper's temple when he tells him he wants to be an inventor when he grows up.

He sees his brother stand next to the magnolia. He squints, his forehead wrinkled, his thigh strained, his left foot raised, ready to kick. He scrapes against a bump on the tree, again and again and again. He groans and his upper body tightens up as if his soul was itching but he can't get it. Jasper wants to make fun of him, because he doesn't know what OCD is yet, but his father runs past him. Never has his father run before, one hand on his beige corduroy pants that always slip, the other on his cap. He releases Johan's hand from the magnolia, kneels down beside him and wraps him up in his body. Jasper's chest contracts, then his father waves him over.

He drills the splinters deep into his skin. He wants to see his father smile one more time. That rare flicker in the corner of his eyes that Jasper misses the most. His father comes out of the house and stands with his back to the pile of leaves that Jasper and his brother took hours to rake up. He spreads his arms. *OYE* shouts Johan and their father falls over, the leaves fly up, get caught and carried away by the wind. *OYE*, Johan shouts again, but their father lifts his head and his eyes beam.

Later, they sit on the patio. An eagle owl announces nightfall. His father places his hand on Jasper's head and they look at the silver plate he brought from Serra de Caldeirão whose inscription they can barely read: "A vida é um sonho da qual a mórte nos desperta." Life is a dream from which death wakes us up.

Jasper's forearms bleed. He hears the eagle owl call, feels his father's touch and weeps.

In the spring of 2021, the goutweed comes out. It penetrates the soil in the herb bed, surrounds the pond, spreads across the lawn. First, Jasper is angry. He looks up "How to get rid of goutweed" on Google. He's told to mow it to death, suffocate it with cardboard or take the light away from it with potato plants. There's a lawn mower in the tool shed. He wants to climb the fence.

His father points at the plucked-out goutweed in the compost trash. It'll grow back for sure, he says.

In June 2021, the goutweed celebrates its anniversary. White blossoms spring up across the garden. Jasper breathes in their parsley scent. The blossoms sway in the wind, still sparkling from the night's humidity like the spindrift of a wave that buries the garden beneath it. This space no longer belongs to him. It's time to move on.

The Secret March

By Marco Thunig

Translated from German by Max Landwehrjohann

We're in a cold sweat when we get out of our bunk beds. We brush our teeth with water by Nestlé, walk up to the platoon in the pale morning light, smoke knock-off Marlboros from faded packs. Maharadscha, the Brazilian label says. Christiano, whose actual name is Christian, starts by letting his chainsaw roar, clearing a path through the green as the vanguard for the shovel-mounted vehicles. He once said that he's not going to cut his hair as long as he's here and that he wants everyone to know. Christiano always wears this red bandana over his black curly locks, and sports a mustache and a wooly 70s chest, which, after eleven and a half hours in the weeds, turns into a sticky, brown-grayish pulp. At after-work beers – Corona, for obvious reasons – he always talks of home and his ex-lover and that one time he came home to her lying in bed with a foreigner, or him writing her messages or something else about foreigners, while Gecko, whose actual name is Kovu and who is from Congo, agrees with him along with Wladislav, and they all complain about having had similar experiences. In any case, Christiano has stuck around this whole time and so his mane keeps growing unstoppably, while he masturbates to the lopsided polaroids of his girlfriend stuck to his bed so that he lasts longer when he has sex with the local prostitutes. Pedro, whose actual name is Peter, went home last summer, to Brussels we think, to look after his sick mother because he doesn't care for nursing homes. After God knows how many years here, with broken back and withered lungs, he was sick and tired of toiling. Christiano whines a lot about Pedro being gone, lamenting he was like a brother to him and now has to fend for himself.

After the first cigarette, Erwin, whose actual name is Ralf – and who we jokingly call Bodo from time to time – drives our yellow tank to the front. Since he, like almost all of us, does not understand Portuguese, he's made a playlist for himself which he blasts once his shift has started. Since the engine noise absolutely shreds our ears, we can only make out bits and pieces of his songs, but they keep us on our toes and, since it's always the same playlist, we don't need to look at the time. Erwin's soft spot is socialist anthems. To *Workers, Peasants, Pick Up Those Rifles*, we latch wood and haul gas tanks from the depot and hammer measuring rods into the thin humus crust. To *Annihilate the Fascist Bandit Armies*, saw-teeth bite into tree trunks until thick foliage comes raining down into the thicket and the bucket of Erwin's excavator plucks the weeds.

That morning, as Eislerweinert's music blares from the speakers, a voice comes howling our way from the brushwood. We initially assume that some animal has stumbled onto our path, and Gecko slams his fist against the cab, so Erwin chokes the engine, doffs his helmet. We wait for more screams, which do come, from the veteran, through the peripheral treetops he cleared out for us. Gosh, we all rush there, through the uncombed root maze with flanking leap steps. Shoot. Wladislav falls, a dust-spitting weed wrapped around his ankles, which sends him flying into a hole in the ground. The brush unceremoniously scratches his face bloody. The angry Wolga-German spits out unseemly words in all his mother tongues – slipping through the hazy canopy of leaves ruins the circulation. At over 30 degrees in the steamy

shade, the body bubbles unswervingly and the burning soot from the tank's rear diesels across the brushwood, scorching the nostrils. Gecko catches a shrapnel made of thorn scrub, poisonous at the very least, causing him to hiss like a ricocheting Kalashnikov. In his panic, he throws his arms into the sky, as if that could save him, tumbles backwards and falls beside Wladislav, stuck on the ground this whole time. About twenty lianas bite the dust when the rest of us finally break through, with machetes from Walmart, over to the screams. The Indigenous people used to cut down hectares of land with their knives. Whatever they can do, we can do twice as well. Our work vests are decorated with slain oak leaf clusters. We know each other from Hambach. And Tommy, whose actual name is Thomas, was a security service leader in Iraq.

We see the damned Rambo-like Christiano, hanging in the green hell, colored snares constricting his armpits, deeply entangled with his black curly locks, along with stem-long flowers knotted into his magnificent chest hair, ever more fiercely the harder he resists. The thorns have peeled off his garb, the skin and the blood into the dark of the slanted morning sun, against which the mist breaks up into myriad fluctuating LSD grenades for us. Christiano holds the heavy-as-shit chainsaw in his arm, says the devil may take him, and pinned between his teeth, a half-finished Maharadscha. He screams like a madman. No one has gone this crazy in the rainforest since Kinski against Herzog. The cigarette embers blow a glowing trace into the diesel-fueled, soaking oxygen cinder, as we look up at the chainsaw-man, thunderstruck, seriously wondering what could have possibly made him blow up into the air, how and why he's hanging there now, whether he slipped or jumped down from the treetop.

Doesn't matter, this man needs help. We stumble slapdash through the traversing fire of whipping branches, which we slam into each other's faces. Behind us, Bodo's Bluetooth box is blasting *Friendship!* As we run toward Christiano, we extend our discount bayonets and stab into the twigs, into the underwood and get covered in a buckshot thunderstorm made of brushwood, whose resin gums up our beards. The forest throws thistles onto our heads, like that Facebook emoji puking up green slime, and when we slip, we're surrounded by nettles, which harden the arteries on our throats into red rashes. Some bamboo or reed or whatever flings itself around Christiano's neck and stifles his screams. To the dead-serious sounds of *War Against You, Proletarian* blasting through the bushes, we try to cut down the brush while Deutschmann, whose actual name is Dieter, desperately throws stones at the hedges. All of a sudden, Christiano's chainsaw, the 661 by STIHL, goes flying into the air, drowns out the somber tune, and, moving overhead, cuts his curls out of the noose, removing a major part of his mane. We set Christiano free, soaking with sweat and all brown and bloody, before he decapitates the palm tree and all its kin that scourged him. Tommy builds a Molotov cocktail out of Erwin's emergency ration of Old Spice his aunt sent him for his birthday last week, which we fill up with gasoline, because it initially fails to remove the chopped down traces. The wind carries the ashes into a village whose name I've forgotten, so people don't find it on Google Maps.

The Green Shape, the Rose Shape, the Green Shape, the Rose Shape

By Philipp Woschek

Translated from German by Max Landwehrjohann

Ms. Faßbender was indignant. A grease stain adorned her glasses, her slouch hat losing the battle against the heat, her neck protector stuck to her like a wet shower curtain. And now she was standing before this impossible shrub: a dog rose that had the impudence to blossom and carry fruit at the same time, even though the blooming period was over, and the fruit shouldn't ripen for two months at the earliest. This could not be.

Twenty minutes earlier, Ms. Faßbender had set out from the last parking spot beneath the hilltop. Immediately the forest had indifferently yet definitively admitted and engulfed her. The last kilometer in particular had been outrageously inhumane: too many European beeches and ashes were stuck in the ground, much too thin and much too high. The side of the hill was like the thorny back of a slain giant with knobby spears protruding from its spine, covered in hairy stinging nettles and splintered branches. The closer she got to her destination, the more the swarm of trees turned into scrub and scrub and scrub. Foxglove and blackthorn, elderberry and buckthorn, cornel and lilac embraced each other, crossing their disrespectful arms, sprawling in red leaves and pink blossoms and white calyxes, and Ms. Faßbender thought it ridiculous, found it ridiculous, this potpourri of shrubs, which taunted her, and which had not been documented on her forest map. The wood seemed as if it hadn't seen a forest ranger in years, even though her predecessor had been seen off to retirement only a month ago. The snotty-nosed vegetation simply pretended he had never existed.

And now she was standing before this impossible shrub. She took a step back and her forehead wrinkled. This forbidden dog rose had to be up to five meters high. It had no right to grow so tall. Ms. Faßbender took another angry look at her map, trying to make sense of it all.

First off, the vanilla scent. Faint down in the village, even stronger up here. This couldn't possibly be her imagination. She certainly smelled it, how it burned in her nose, sweet and artificial and repugnant.

Secondly, the fits. Coughing, vertigo, nausea, fainting. Fifteen people hospitalized. The doctors at the local hospital had no idea. The district's environmental agency had done air measurements in the valley. The result: far too much oxygen everywhere in the village and an unknown gas, which the lab couldn't identify. They were waiting for the analysis and suggested preemptive evacuation, but the villagers wouldn't leave their houses if no one could tell them what they were fleeing from and for how long.

And then there was the aerial image. To verify the information of her predecessor, Ms. Faßbender had started the drone and landed it, all confused: such contrasts were impossible. The green. The rose. This could not be.

Snorting, Ms. Faßbender pulled herself away from the dog rose and dug out the GPS tracker. Not much farther until the spot she had arranged for the drone. Defiantly, she trudged on. Her path went up, to the cusp of the hill. Whatever was supposed to be up there was impossible to determine, with the

thicket blocking the view and the way. For the last meters, Ms. Faßbender had to duck beneath the shrub arches. Then, she stumbled into the clear.

Vastness. The clearing had to cover multiple hectares. Silence; no wind whatsoever. A gigantic grass field lay quietly below the cloudless sky. The blades stood straight, disciplined like a lawn precisely cut to waist level. They formed one unit in green, and this green was perfection. She had never seen such a luscious, deep green before. It was hurting her eyes, but Ms. Faßbender couldn't turn away from the motionless plane. Too baffled to be angry, she walked up to the edge of this strange Green Shape and knelt to inspect the grass. The blades had no right to stand this closely together. They were virtually impossible to tell apart from one another, almost seeming like a corrugated wall. This was not supposed to grow, neither naturally nor by human hand. Slowly, Ms. Faßbender lifted her right index finger. With effort, she identified one individual blade. Gave it a nudge.

A rustle and whisper shuddered across the clearing. And like a single three-dimensional parallelogram made of biomass, whose lines were the stiff blades, all of the grass recoiled from her and fell over by its roots. Ms. Faßbender looked up. The grass border had sunk and revealed a rose color underneath it. A perfect, painful rose. Covered by the Green Shape – within the Green Shape – there stood thick stalks just as closely together as the grass blades. A never-before-seen, physically impossible ocean of symmetrically perfect blossoms. There was another rustle and this Rose Shape, the Rose rhombus, started moving slowly towards her, bent down to the ground and flooded her with a vanilla scent. Ms. Faßbender gagged, jumped up and stumbled backwards. The two shapes froze still and flat in an absurd carpet pattern, until all of a sudden, they simultaneously moved back up and down again in the opposite direction. The grass came rushing down in front of Ms. Faßbender. And switched with the blossoms. The shapes began a mechanical dance, to and fro, and ever faster, they swung like two giant, entangled windshield wipers. The rustling turned huge, steady, military. The Green Shape, the Rose Shape, the Green Shape, the Rose Shape. And then a flicker rose from the shapes: thick air, which fractured the light like in an oil puddle. A prismatic gas blend, vapor wafting about in streaks and forming antenna, feelers, lashes, tentacles. Whipped up by the swinging shapes, the gas spread across the clearing and the first tentacles ventured past Ms. Faßbender into the bushes. The vanilla scent became unbearable. A heat wall bubbled toward her. That was when Ms. Faßbender noticed the little blue flame tongues flaring up across the field, reflected in the gas mix. More and more tiny flames popped up, grew bigger, caused clouds and deflagrations, and more and more tentacles crept into the forest. Then, one of those tentacles lit up and a column of fire swooshed past Ms. Faßbender into the thicket, where it dispersed. Stunned, she stared back at it: the bushes were unscathed. Another tentacle lit up, and another, but no soot, nothing charred. In all her bewilderment, Ms. Faßbender didn't even notice one of the gas tentacles penetrate her. Breathing turned to coughing turned to choking. Behind her, the Green Shape, the Rose Shape sizzled. The last thought Ms. Faßbender had was how nice and neat those two shapes were after all.

Six kilometers away, the valley filled up with gas. The villagers heard it before they burned up. The hissing of a fuse, then the chemical reaction erupted from between the trees and came barreling down the slope. A blue-red avalanche swallowed the valley. The town of Angerschlag im Hunsrück burnt at gable level.


POETRY

AQUARIAN KILL, FOLLOWED BY A BRIEF PRAYER

BY: EVRA JORDANA A.

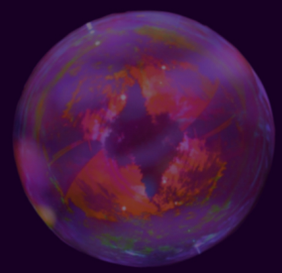
I.
Throw me on like clean laundry
and I will drink you
until we both can't breathe.
A deal between Rahu and Ketu.
Between your hips
and my tongue.
Fucking spit me out.
Stitch my name into the fraying seams
of the prayers you fumble to speak,
as purple cuts this mourning sky.
Use me before God.
Tell him I was dreadfully happy
to undress you
like dessert after dinner.
I want you to come to me. Find me. Don't kiss me.
Possess me. Take my ringing heart in your tired hands
and let's work something out.
But first, we fuck.

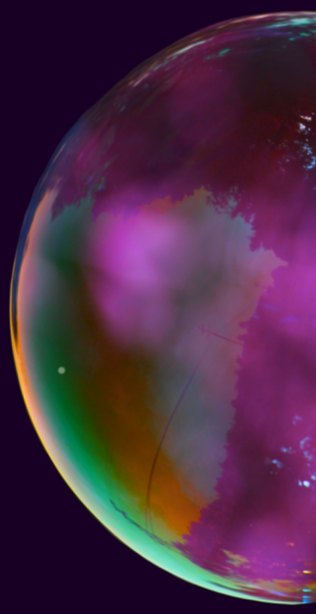
II.
You.

You came
and went
in the way a dream will spasm
before eclipsing consciousness.
Holy fuck,
I can still feel it.
The knots of your hair
pulling through my fingers.
Your back arcing
to my demand
your body seething
at my command,
breath leaving our lips
the way honey brims
at the edge of the spoon
before it spills over
into a single
slow
golden
rope.

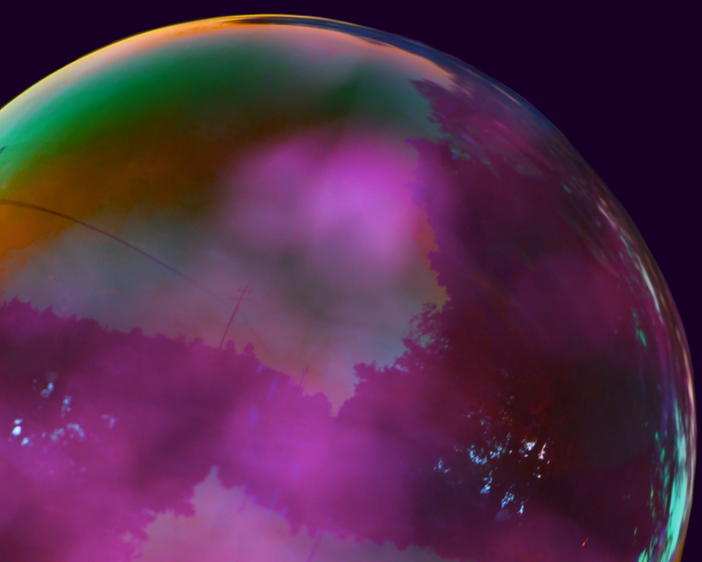
I will admit this much:
A petal on water, she.
And what of that petal, then
when the river begins to course?
Stop.
Please.
Don’t come
any closer.
You will hold my gaze with patience and I will
betray your love by running.
Here, I am.
A woman at times; a child always.
The moon: almost full.
You came
and then

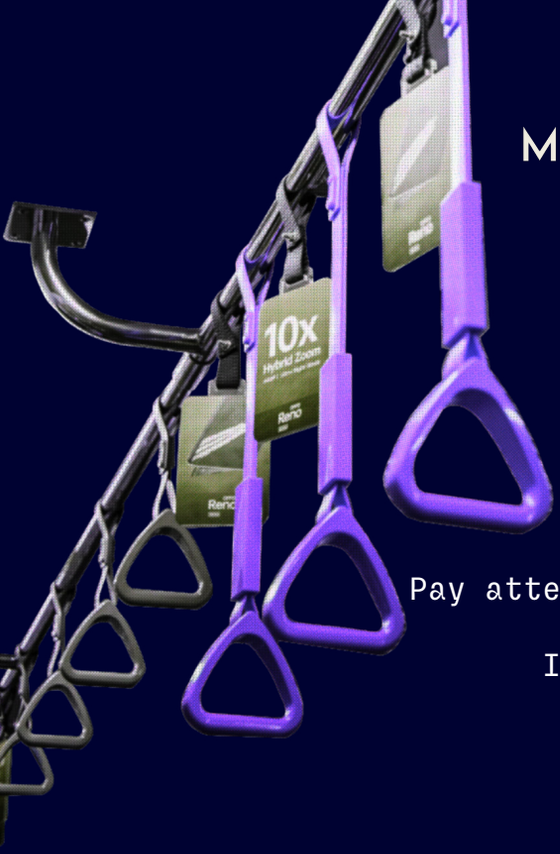
you went.





III.
When the dust settles in this sepulcher, I see it.
I am just a kid in need of cradling. And the truth of my joy
is written in my own blood.
I may die alone, but I will die brilliant.
I will die having tried
to keep up with the moment.
Then I see Love.
And when she holds my gaze, my teeth melt
and I can no longer articulate
what my tongue wants to say.
She speaks to me
and I can see her lipstick
has smeared onto her front tooth
and I am regretfully reminded
that she is not god, but human.
And I am less than even that.





MEDITATIONS FOR THE END OF THE WORLD

Evra Jordana A.

Inhale.
I am anti-empire.
Exhale.
I am pro-tiramisu.

Pay attention to the news.
Pay attention to your community.
Pay attention to your tea as you pour it – don't spill.

I pay attention to the shimmer in people's eyes.

What's inside?

What's inside
you?

You,
with your arms crossed like twisting tree roots.

Where are you going? Where have you been? Have you eaten today? Is your back hurting you? And what about language? Is it important to you? If I told you something, would you listen? Would you care? How can you know if you need affection? Tell me, have you been missing affection? I saw a woman erupt in tears on a bus. People stared, then looked away. I touched her shoulder and asked if she wanted a hug. She cried immediately into my arms, and I embraced this stranger like a month of gentle Sundays. Why are we here, if not for this? Do you know why people look away? Are you afraid of seeing your pain reflected back at you? How much are you willing to confront? Is this why I've been missing my mother? And who is your mother? Who cares for you? When last has someone played with your hair? What are the mechanisms behind handholding? What is the function of a kiss? What are your quiet desires? Is the silence too much?

Are you comfortable right now? Are you bored? When was the last time you played in the dirt? Have you ever hurt somebody? Was it on purpose? Are you disgusted by war? Do you care about the dying? What do you feel, when you are alone? Who are you, when you are alone? Do you write? Do you sing? If I asked you, would you tell me? Can I count on you? If I called, would you come? Where is your home? Do you belong here? In a dying society, whose life matters? Who chose this? Did we really choose this? Who is in charge? May I speak to them? When I go, will you miss me? Do you feel appreciated? Are you tired? What excites you? Is your laugh real? Who really knows you? Can you breathe in here? Is anyone else feeling cramped? Or is it just me?

Hello?

On Being an UNHOMELY OTHER

Misbah Ahmad

I had eyes staring at me for how I chose to dress,
My dress gets stares here too and implies that I am repressed.
I was the “other” back at the place I wanted to call my home,
I am the “other” in the streets I now occasionally roam.

The curious looks that followed me there, were full of hate
The blue and green glances here still hesitate.
That was the place I longed to belong and to call my own.
A place of memories, moments, and all that lies beyond

It gave me people I cherish dearly, and it gave me days
That added hope to my darkest night and the gloomy greys.
But it also locked away my freedom, to say it out loud,
all that I believed in covered it with shrouds.
It pushed me to the margins and threatened me to stay,
in silence, constraining all that I ever had to say.

This is the place I am not sure I want to belong
It promises peace and rhymes of a happy song.
It still shies away from the gleaming-colored clothes
I put on our heads and my strong scents of rose
It lets me speak my mind and it lets me be
Whoever I want to, and sets my tongue free
But a part of it still holds itself and is afraid
It seems like it is protecting itself from getting betrayed

As I now stand under the clouds all so soft and white
I see the trains pushing back scenes with all their might
I smell of *brot* and *kaffee* as I stare deep into the sky
I yearn for the fried delights of home and a cup of hot *chai*
I feel homeless here and maybe that’s what unites
The two worlds I live in now, the two flickering lights

stretching

Yasemin Ertugrul

curvilinear is
what the mass is now,
kept
in line.

every now and then
swallowed by
The Mass, You all purge the fear
of
remembering
and forgetting.

(speaking as marked:
i can't see the mass.
i will remember and
soon again forget.)

we were walking on the lawn. no,
we weren't
to be honest - I will tell the truth.

we were fully fed
and fed
up with the magnetic
topologies
of one another.

home:
geographies of deprivation.

we were walking on the shore.
(i am telling the truth)

my hunger was
reminded by
the dead who had
once been loved.

hunger strikes

would you be so kind to recognize?
curvilinear is our path.
    Quiet.

I'm telling the truth now
that is
,quiet,
is rare nowadays.

Literally Everyone Now

Caleb Morton

I don't find money on the floor anymore,
Even after clearing all the flaws.

I don't find my way to the store door.
I'm trying but it's a tall law.

salt to injury no more, they claw my sore;
Salt held some taste, claws only held prey.

Empty or dry pockets are so 1985.
2021, I don't even have the pockets.

Without finding money on the floor.
It will be me they call poor.

Forgotten Land.

forgotten land

Plants
Roots
Fruits and suits

Pool and purple, bittersweet velvet.

Tables and marbles, royal.

Seven tubes and growing fonds.

thirsty blood in

the hole.

Both poems by Vincenzo Pantó

Empty yourself.

There once was a man out there in motley islands of wilderness.
He found himself in a heavy conspiracy in the eye of the storm of slow time.
He jumped into the ocean, a red, velvet ocean.
A red ocean to swim and to save,

him.

His ship went down.

Forgotten land.

In the hour of the ritual, we shave, we behave,
we speak our last prayer to a mute divinity,

we sink into blood and choke from joy.
We sink into blood,
We sink into blood,
We sink into blood.

The needles of the red ocean are ready to sting.
We made a hymn to let the bees fly out of our throat:

-

Let Me Admit Impediments

Felicitas Sophie Van Laak

The turn-taking touch of sunlight and shade
As I walk beneath these lovers' eyes,
Writing stories on my skin.

Shy crowns are devoid of coronation.
Reaching for each other's hands, tenderly.
Almost tangible, never touching.

Her proposal a whisper, her acceptance a nod.
No witness vouched for rings exchanged
When rings are grown inside.

Writing is bureaucracy
That's being written on a tree
Though trees don't think that fixity
Is a requirement for love.

Enclosed in Garden,
Where all things are named,
Where all paths are smoothed.
Bride and Groomed.


NON
FIC-
TION

The Suffering of Indigenous Communities: Environmental Racism in Cherie Dimaline's *The Marrow Thieves*

By Anahita Mirjam Amanolahi

Climate change and racism, both inextricably intertwined, are two of the biggest challenges of this century. Evidence of heightened exposure to environmental hazards in communities of color and their unreasonable exposure to air pollution is mounting, according to an essay by American emergency medicine physician Renée Salas, published in *The New England Journal of Medicine*. These facts undergird the concept of "environmental racism" – a notion long regarded as a fringe issue that has now clawed its way back into the limelight, thanks to growing awareness of both climate change and racism.

There is scant research exploring the theme of environmental racism in climate fiction novels, despite the fact that Indigenous voices are among the most deafening in the global movement for climate justice – as Kyle Whyte, Professor of Native American Studies at the University of Michigan, stated in his 2018 essay "Is it Déjà Vu? Indigenous Peoples and Climate Injustice." According to Laura Pulido, Professor of Geography at the University of Oregon, who explored the interface of geography and racial inequality in her 2017 essay "Geographies of race and ethnicity II," there is strong evidence that environmental inequality between white and non-white communities has not vanished but worsened.

A pertinent question that arises when exploring Cherie Dimaline's novel *The Marrow Thieves* within the context of climate change and racism is how the Indigenous community's attitude toward the environment differs from the relationship the non-Indigenous population has with nature. The young adult novel is set in a dystopic future in Canada, in a world ravaged by global warming. Non-indigenous people have lost their ability to dream, which is why the Canadian government deploys "Recruiters" to capture Indigenous people to extract their bone marrow to find a cure for the rest of the world. By contrasting the attitude toward the environment of the two different communities, the novel suggests that the relationships are inherently different, aiding the development of environmental racism. This essay provides an overarching theoretical framework by sketching the basic contours of the concept of environmental racism. It illustrates the stark contrast between the attitudes of the two communities toward nature in the novel by broaching the question of how neo-colonial narratives have led to heightened exposure of the protagonist Frenchie's Indigenous community to pollution, disease, and land grabbing.

The genesis of the term environmental racism can be found in the 1980s and traces back to the African-American civil rights leader Benjamin Chavis. Environmental racism serves as an umbrella term that encompasses a form of racism whereby

marginalized and systematically disenfranchised communities are exposed to greater environmental risks and harm than other population groups. The concept is further characterized by government apathy, poor funding and discrimination in environmental policies. Several precedents have indicated that minority groups often bear the brunt of health problems linked to detrimental, life-threatening pollutants because they are more likely to live in hazard-prone areas, often targeted for toxic waste facilities. As Whyte says, it is important to note that Indigenous peoples face climate risks largely because of how colonialism, in conjunction with capitalist economics, shapes the geographic spaces and the socio-economic conditions they live in.

"It Seemed as Though the World had Gone Mad"

From *The Marrow Thieves'* opening pages, the Indigenous community's attitude toward nature is starkly in contrast with how the non-Indigenous population treats the environment. This dichotomy serves as the fundamental framework for the development of environmentally racist policies. While the non-Indigenous population poisons its own drinking water (Dimaline 47) and sparks "Water Wars" (10), which result in a litany of apocalyptic events, Frenchie blisteringly criticizes this practice and says "it seemed as though the world had gone mad. Poisoning your own drinking water […] How could this happen?" (47). Moreover, Frenchie's peaceful encounter with a moose symbolizes the sacred reverence his community has for the environment. This is most ostensibly exemplified by Frenchie's thought process when contemplating killing the moose but then deciding otherwise.

Furthermore, "the freshest lakes and the clearest rivers" (24) have always been on the lands of Indigenous people, which buttresses the notion of them being more respectful toward their surroundings than the non-Indigenous population, which puts the environment through "too much pollution and too much change" (91). The non-Indigenous population is thus responsible for freshwater sources being "too poisoned for use" (24), which jeopardizes the natural world.

Over the course of the novel, the Indigenous community is subjected to more detrimental environmental health hazards than the non-Indigenous population, which is reflected through the exposure of Frenchie and his friends to poisons and pollutants. In this context, it is vital to understand that even though the neo-colonial mentality of the non-Indigenous population is responsible for an environment ravaged by global warming, it is the Indigenous community that suffers the consequences. This is exemplified by the causal nexus between the poisoned environment and Frenchie's "annual bronchitis" (47), as well as by Frenchie and Miig, another character in the novel who is an elder, mentioning that:

> "the Great Lakes were polluted to muck [...], too poisonous for use. [...] The waters were grey and thick like porridge" (24), "the smell from the lake here was nauseating. [...] this lake, like all the industry-plundered Great Lakes, was poison [...] the smell was pungent for us. We breathed into bandanas and built shelter from the stench with plywood and a tarp" (11) and that "[...] people had to move around. Diseases spread like crazy." (29)

Land Inherently Imbued with Racism

The conflict surrounding Frenchie's endeavour to not fall into the hands of "Recruiters" is spurred on by the dire consequences of a polluted landscape due to climate change. This shows that even within the parameters of the severe consequences of climate change, the dominant struggle is still between an imperialist, capitalist system and the colonized. This notion shines through when Frenchie's dad asserts that the colonizers do not think of Indigenous people as humans, "just commodities" (203), demonstrating how this vicious cycle was sparked in the first place.

The theme of land grabbing in the novel illustrates how the non-Indigenous population continues to acquire land and extract nature's resources for the short-term benefit of a few, without the slightest consideration of possible long-term consequences. The vernacular term land grabbing can be defined as "a dynamic of land-use change that can enable especially rapid environmental transformations across vast spatial scales" (Lazarus 74) and "is driven by the increased marketization of 'land' and its potential production" (Gilbert 350). This is crucial within the context of environmental racism in the novel, as it proves that land ownership is inherently imbued with racism and showcases the flagrant disrespect of the non-Indigenous population toward land that belongs to others. Exemplified by the metaphor that Miig includes in his second story: "America reached up and started sipping on our lakes with a great metal straw" (24) and the fact that

the Indigenous communities "were moved off lands that were deemed 'necessary' to that government, same way they took reserve land during wartime [...]" (88) – the novel illustrates the capitalist and imperialist mentality of the non-Indigenous population. The way of life of Frenchie's community is "commoditized" (89), their lands are "filled with water companies and wealthy corporate investors" (89) and they live near the "industry-plundered Great Lakes" (11) and "pipelines in the ground" (87) – showing that long-standing patterns have sealed the community's reputation as a toxic wasteland.

The Marrow Thieves clearly shows that environmental hazards are inequitably distributed. It spotlights how the non-Indigenous population avoids taking responsibility for its destructive actions. The attitude that Frenchie's community has toward the environment is inherently different to how the non-Indigenous population views nature, water, and land.

A decisive shift in government policy is needed, or else the poison of environmental racism will most likely continue to spread in the future.

This difference in perception and values leads the non-Indigenous population to exploit the land and resources of the Indigenous people. The dilemmas that the novel highlights extend to the world we live in today. Whether there will ever be a solution remains to be seen. In the meantime, the fate of Indigenous communities is in limbo as the world is far from quashing environmental racism, and climate change continues to wreak havoc. A decisive shift in government policy is needed, or else the poison of environmental racism will most likely continue to spread in the future. And if precedence is anything to go by, Indigenous communities will likely once again shoulder an overwhelming part of the burden and fall prey to the consequences of years of deprioritizing, normalizing, and trivializing the quandary that is environmental racism.

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The Role of Autobiographies in Activism: How Former 'Comfort Women' Used Testimonies to Fight for Their Rights

By Kathryn Bathgate

Imagine you are in a room of women from different cultures and backgrounds. You may be inclined to think that these women have nothing in common. However, if you were to ask them if they had experienced sexual harassment, four of out five (81%) would raise their hands (Chatterjee). According to the National Sexual Violence Resource Center, one in five women have also been raped. Sexual violence defines the female experience. Female sexuality has always been centered around and dictated by men, their desires, and their sexual urges. Rebecca Solnit says, "sex is an arena of power" (108) and has long been a way to shame, control, and own women. Men have defined when, with whom, and under what circumstances women are allowed to have sex, and through an emphasis on female virginity, have controlled and regulated women and their bodies (Jung, Soh, and Solnit). Sex is one of the most basic components of human existence, and to exert control over someone's sexuality is to take away their most basic freedom and their sense of security.

Because of this power dynamic, which prioritizes male sexual desires, sex has evolved into a tool of war to instill fear in and exert dominance over a population. One does not have to delve deep into history to find examples of this violence: The Rape of Nanking during the Sino-Japanese War in which at least 20,000 women were raped (International Military Tribunal 1012); the Red Army after the fall of the Third Reich in Germany, when an estimated two million women were raped by Russian soldiers (Westervelt); and the modern-day example of the Bosnian conflict, where rape became a tool for ethnic cleansing, and an estimated 12,000 to 50,000 women were raped over the course of the three-year war (Crowe 343). And these examples are just the tip of the iceberg.

This tactic of war works well, because women are historically shamed into silence (Henson, O'Herne, and Solnit). They fear judgment and also retaliation against themselves and their families for something

that is out of their control. Because of this induced shame the victims feel, experiences of sexual violence are frequently shut away, never to be discussed again. This silence allows perpetrators to continue their heinous crimes. However, beginning in the 1980s, attitudes toward sexuality, especially sexual assault, were challenged and began to change, particularly in South Korea (Jung 261). On August 14, 1991, a woman named Kim Hak-sun told her story of sexual assault at the hands of the Japanese Imperial Army during the Asian-Pacific War. Kim revealed she was a former 'comfort woman', a victim of forced prostitution within the system Japan implemented during the war. Under this system, between 50,000-200,000 East and Southeast Asian women, with the majority being of Korean, Chinese, Taiwanese, Filipino, and Indonesian descent, were procured to work as prostitutes during the war and offer 'comfort' to the soldiers (Yoshimi 21).[1] In many instances, the women were coerced into these positions by recruiters who promised them good jobs and opportunities for a better life. Instead, the women, many of them still young girls, were forced to have intercourse with anywhere from a few men to up to sixty men a day (Yoshimi 139). More than forty-five years after the end of World War II, Kim Hak-sun overcame the stigma placed on her by a patriarchal society that traditionally shamed her for her experiences. She decided to speak up. This action challenged society's attitudes toward sex and sex crimes, Japan and Asia's memory of the war, and the understanding of the region's history.

Kim Hak-sun's courage made it possible for other women to come forward and tell their stories, too. "Until Kim Hak-sun spoke out, the issue of the 'comfort women' had been described as no more than a 'matter-of-fact' incident of wartime, collateral damage so to speak" (Muta 622). By breaking her silence, she empowered hundreds of other former 'comfort women' from Korea, the Philippines, China, Taiwan, Indonesia, and the Netherlands to take a stand against Japan's denial of the military comfort system and demand both a formal apology and retribution from the Japanese government, which the few remaining survivors are still waiting and fighting for to this day.

Over the last thirty years, their stories have been told in multiple formats. These include interviews, speeches at protests, testimonies, and autobiographies. Each interview, speech, testimony, and autobiography continues to give the women a platform to raise their voices and fight for the justice they deserve. The testimonies and autobiographies of these women are a form of activism as their stories transcend a mere account of the events to reveal their trauma and the crimes committed against them. Through this activism, they challenge the memory of the comfort system and the patriarchy.

This paper analyzes the role of testimonies and autobiographies in activism through the experiences of two former 'comfort women'. One is Maria Rosa Henson, the first Filipina former 'comfort woman' to come forward and the first Filipina 'comfort woman' to write an autobiography about her experiences after Kim Hak-sun broke her silence. Another is Jan Ruff-O'Herne, a Dutch woman who was born and grew up in the Dutch East Indies, present-day Indonesia. She is the first European former 'comfort woman' to come forward with her story and was inspired to testify after watching Kim Hak-sun's "plea for justice" on television (Son 261).

The Problematic Nature of the Term 'Comfort Women'

One thing that is important to address before delving into the topic is the problematic term 'comfort women'. Former 'comfort woman' Jan Ruff O'Herne explains why using this term is so harmful:

> And how dare the Japanese call these poor abused women 'comfort women', I thought, as I watched them on the television. The euphemism 'comfort women' is an insult and I felt it was a pity that the media were also continually using these words. We were never 'comfort women'. Comfort means something warm and soft, safe and friendly. It means tenderness. We were war rape victims, enslaved and conscripted by the Japanese Imperial Army. (165-166)

O'Herne's statement exposes the problematic nature of this term. It implies something more positive and reflects its roots within a patriarchal society that puts men, and male sexual gratification, above women. The term also suggests a certain amount of willingness from the women to participate in the

1. According to the Special Report from the UN Economic Security Council, countries known to have had comfort stations include: China, Taiwan, Borneo, the Philippines, many of the Pacific Islands, Singapore, Malaya, Burma and Indonesia (6). Therefore, it can be argued that local women from these places became victims of the comfort system as well.

comfort system, which was not the case. The fact that the survivors oppose this term is enough of an argument against using it. The use of the term acknowledges and affirms "men's customary sex-right to seek and enjoy heterosexual entertainment and coitus outside matrimony" (Soh 133), while condemning the women who provide such services as whores, or in much more degrading terms such as pi, which would be translated as 'cunt', or kyōdō benjo, which translates to 'public toilet' (39-40).

Choosing an appropriate term to refer to women abused in this way is very difficult. The terminology poses problems, and there is no consistently-used term among the survivors. However, 'comfort women' is the term most commonly used by scholars and will be the term used in this paper.

For nearly fifty years, the 'comfort women' remained silent. It was not until the 1980s when the feminist movement could truly take shape that the stigma surrounding sexuality began to lessen.

Autobiographies as Activism

Autobiographies move beyond mere testimony by going into greater, more accurate detail and providing corroborating evidence such as historical documents, photos, drawings, etc. Additionally, they allow victims to contextualize their stories, show how the event altered their life, and grant victims the power to reshape their identity beyond that of their traumatic experiences.

Maria Rosa Henson, who initially told her story publicly in 1992, used this format to relay the events of her life and her experiences in *Comfort Woman: A Filipina's Story of Prostitution and Slavery Under the Japanese Military*. She spent nine months in a comfort station after being abducted by Japanese soldiers. Henson's autobiography describes her sexual exploitation in detail. The focus on her experiences presents a counter-history to the long-accepted belief held in Japan, as well as in the western world, that the 'comfort women' willingly volunteered for the military comfort system (Soh 70). By writing her autobiography, Henson challenges the role of the patriarchy. She exposes atrocities committed toward 'comfort women' in the Philippines. She combines the personal and the political. In doing so, Henson is able to fight for justice for herself and other victims of sex crimes. She provides a record of the atrocities committed against women in the comfort system, with the goal of educating and raising awareness to create change, exerting pressure on Japan to apologize, and demanding accountability for what happened. By telling her story, she calls for structural change that will prevent crimes like these from ever happening again. This constitutes an act of activism. While doing this, Henson is also able to transform her identity from that of a victim to a survivor.

Henson also highlights the role of the patriarchy within the comfort system, albeit subtly. She openly condemns the Japanese, but the influence of the feminist movement on her intentions is only acknowledged through her mentioning the Task Force on Filipino Comfort Women and its role in her coming forward. By seeking justice for her and other women, she challenges established structures of the patriarchy that forced her into silence, shamed her for her experiences, and allowed the men to get away with it for so long.

Jan Ruff O'Herne chose to write about her experiences in the war as both a 'comfort woman' and a prisoner-of-war in Indonesia in *Fifty Years of Silence: The Extraordinary Memoir of a War Rape Survivor.* In 1992, she saw Kim Hak-sun and other Korean women on television and was inspired to come forward. "I've got to be with those women. I've got to back them up. And suddenly, I felt that the story I had carried for all those years in my heart, could now be told. The courage of those Korean women gave me courage" (O'Herne 165). Ultimately, she spent three months at a comfort station before it was abruptly closed by the Japanese. O'Herne's autobiography takes on a slightly different framework and tone than Henson's. Because her time in the prisoner-of-war camp was such a defining part of her wartime experience, it becomes a central topic in her autobiography, which provides a counter-history on not just the military comfort system, but also Japanese prisoner-of-war camps.

O'Herne uses her book as a space to record the history of the military comfort system and to provide a voice for the voiceless. She also shares her story with the hope of educating people on the topic and creating change in the legal system. O'Herne focuses almost exclusively on her wartime experiences, and

within these recollections, she continuously weaves in stories of resistance and overcoming. O'Herne conveys that she is a survivor, regardless of what the Japanese did to her. She emphasizes that she fiercely resisted and overcame her suffering. She turns that suffering into activism by speaking out and becoming an emboldened survivor. She used her newfound voice and identity to educate people, seek justice, and make structural change, thereby supporting her personal goals and those of the movement. As a result of her efforts, the 'comfort women' issue gained international attention and led to the passing of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1820, which condemns the use of sexual violence as a tool of war (O'Herne 205). Through this resolution, "rape and other forms of sexual violence can constitute war crimes, crimes against humanity or a constitutive act with respect to genocide" (United Nations Security Council 3).

Like Henson's account, O'Herne's story gives insight into what the women and girls faced at comfort stations and reveals the attitudes the soldiers had toward the encounters. However, O'Herne's account underscores the patriarchal structures and attitudes more than Henson's account. Through her emphasis on consent and resistance, O'Herne reveals the attitudes the men had toward them. They were objects to control and use for their own sexual purposes. Despite hiding, fighting, saying no, the soldiers did everything in their power, including violence, to get their way. If the women had been seen as anything beyond objects for sexual gratification that they felt entitled to, the soldiers would have stopped.

For nearly fifty years, these survivors remained silent. It was not until the 1980s when the feminist movement could truly take shape that the stigma surrounding sexuality began to lessen. With these developments, victims of sexual violence were finally heard and believed. When Kim Hak-sun made the first step toward justice, other former 'comfort women' realized that attitudes were evolving, and now was the time to break their silence. It was still a risk to reveal their pasts, but by sharing their experiences they helped create change and seek justice.

Both Henson and O'Herne played a critical role in bringing about change. Their bravery in coming forward and sharing their experiences publicly was an act of resistance against the power of the patriarchy that had long kept them silent. Their written accounts took their activism one step further. Through their narratives, the women had greater authority and a public platform. Both women were able to educate a wider audience and challenge the patriarchy with their autobiographies. They were able to raise awareness on the 'comfort women' issue and sex crimes, change attitudes toward the use of rape in war, and alter the discourse around sexuality. The women told their stories so others could learn and their memories would remain alive. Researching and remembering their stories ensures they are not forgotten and that the activism they began continues long after they are gone. It is only through such efforts that crimes like these can be prevented from happening again.

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Preserving Protest: Collecting Contemporaneously

By Aline Franzus

In the social media age we find ourselves in, great ambivalences of relevance reveal themselves daily: one moment our timelines are flooded with impressions of protest, while the next they are filled with plant care videos, recipe posts, or any other content an algorithm has neatly selected for us. In recent years, there has been a surge in protest marches and demonstrations globally[1], voicing demands and making public "memories excluded from national history books and mainstream media audiences" (Doerr 206). During a time when many people take to the streets for reasons as varied as German weather in April, the images of protest seem ubiquitous, yet fleeting. They do not stay – at least not on our social media timelines.

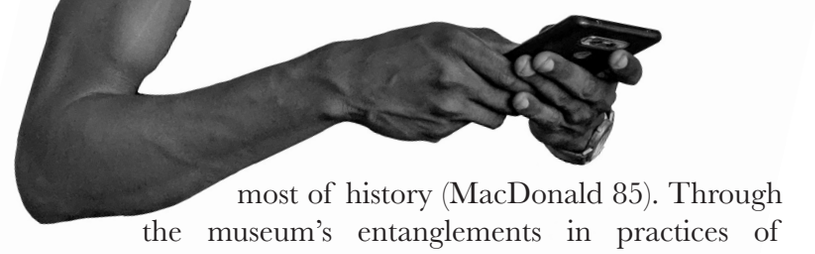
However, as museums all over the globe begin to take an interest in preserving these fleeting moments of protest by collecting, among other things, protest signs during and shortly after demonstrations, they can potentially counteract this ephemerality. This practice of collecting artifacts as history unfolds has come to be known as Rapid Response Collecting (RRC). Developed in recent years and implemented in a growing number of museal institutions, the Smithsonian – a group of museums, libraries, and numerous research centers in the US – is currently at its forefront. In 2015, the Smithsonian founded its own "rapid-response task force" dedicated to collecting traces of history "in real time" (Bowley, "Museums Collect"). By collecting artifacts of protest, museums not only preserve historical moments now, but they also validate the histories told through those objects and allow for the polyphonic realities of (contemporary) history to be heard and made accessible for future scholars, archivists, curators, and the public.

To understand why RRC poses such a powerful tool in breaking with museal traditions and in how far it resists the canon of museal artifacts, we first have to take a glance at the mechanisms and the history of the museum. As a storehouse of the past, a site of knowledge production, cultural authority, and hegemonial structures, the museum shapes the ways in which we think about and see the world. Alongside other public institutions, such as archives and libraries, the museum constructs and forms cultural memory, thus, influencing how societies commemorate the past (Cook 611). Museums, like archives, are "active sites where social power is negotiated, contested, confirmed" (Cook and Schwarz 1), ultimately shaping ideas of what is deemed valuable and important within societies (Pearce 89). Museums are neither static nor neutral; they are carefully curated, with each artifact on display and in the archive neatly categorized, labeled, and positioned.

Looking at the history of the museum, we do not have to dig deep to realize that it is a history inextricably linked to discourses of power, imperialism, and colonial exploitation. As colonial powers began to systematically "collect,"[2] curate, and display material objects from the countries and communities they colonized, they formed and established narratives around those objects that would confirm their own sense of their nation, affirm the supposed natural status of their hegemony, and, thus, the museum came to reflect the status quo of power throughout

1. The year 2020 alone has seen worldwide protest marches on behalf of #BlackLivesMatter, #FridaysforFuture, and anti-vaxxer demands, to name a few (McVeigh).

2. Collecting in a colonial context very often equaled looting or acquiring artifacts under unfair conditions for the economic benefit of the colonizer (Kiwara-Wilson 376).



most of history (MacDonald 85). Through the museum's entanglements in practices of colonialism and imperialism, it has had, and continues to have, an enormous impact on what kinds of histories are voiced, and how those histories are remembered and commemorated today. Since these incomplete and "selective narratives can very easily start to look like definitive histories" (Procter 18), the museum inevitably shapes our sense of historical memory and national identity (Smith 437) and validates our perceptions and narratives of the world. It is therefore crucial to create more diverse and inclusive museum spaces that reflect the heterogeneity of nations and cultures – as opposed to homogenized and essentialized versions – to allow sidelined narratives to eventually enter cultural memory.

Looking at the history of the museum, we do not have to dig deep to realize that it is a history inextricably linked to discourses of power, imperialism, and colonial exploitation.

Decolonizing the museum demands massive re-thinking and re-structuring and must be understood as an ongoing process. There is no single recipe for decolonizing the museum; rather a range of approaches and methods is needed to arrive at a more equitable state. Since the museum, like the archive, operates through processes of inclusion and exclusion, it has "the power to privilege and to marginalize" (Cook and Schwarz 13). What is often perceived as a tool of hegemony, can as well be used as a tool of resistance by including narratives that would otherwise remain untold. By attempting to collect ephemeral artifacts and stories in immediate response to what appears to be a historically relevant moment now, RRC can potentially help make the museum a more diverse and democratic space. Collecting contemporaneously, then, differs significantly from traditional collecting practices in that it entails "fast, emotional, gut-instinctive decision-making" (Seidler-Ramirez qtd. in Bowley, "Era of Strife"), which ultimately influences what is collected. When the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC) established its RRC task force following the social unrest in Baltimore, Maryland, after Freddie Gray's murder in 2015 (Salahu-Din 104), it took precautions to prevent significant historical artifacts, such as #BlackLivesMatter protest signs, from being discarded and lost.

Collecting, Exhibiting, Contextualizing Artifacts to Preserve History

At the NMAAHC, RRC follows a strategy to "collect artifacts, testimony and footage" (Bowley, "Era of Strife") by gathering donations of protest signs, flyers, posters, buttons, and clothing as well as digital footage such as smartphone recordings either during protests or shortly after. This also emphasizes the museum's importance of donations over purchases (Salahu-Din 105), breaking with traditional museum perceptions of (monetary) value. With their collection on the #BlackLivesMatter protest movement, the museum ascribes cultural capital and value not only to those objects collected but also to the stories they tell and the values the larger movement stands for, allowing it to become a significant part of the nation's history. Their #BlackLivesMatter collection includes, among other things, various protest signs – either handwritten or mass-produced – a gas mask worn by Dr. Jelani Cobb, several print shirts, and a dark blue suit and black leather shoes worn by pastor Dr. Jamal Harrison Bryant during a protest in Ferguson after Michael Brown's murder.[3] Other examples of RRC include the History Responds initiative that was launched by the New-York Historical Society following the 9/11 attacks ("History Responds"), the collecting of items to record the tragedy of the Pulse nightclub shooting in Orlando, Florida by the Orange County Regional History Center in 2016 (Bowley, "Museums Collect"), or the phenomenon of museums across the globe starting to collect objects that capture the lived realities of the Covid-19 pandemic (Abend). By collecting, exhibiting, and contextualizing those artifacts, museums engage in preserving historical moments and movements now as well as in preventing historical omissions that minority groups are too often subjected to.

RRC thus constitutes an immensely powerful tool in the fight for a more just representation of histories

3. Part of their collection is visually accessible online through the Smithsonian's Open Access at www.si.edu/openaccess.

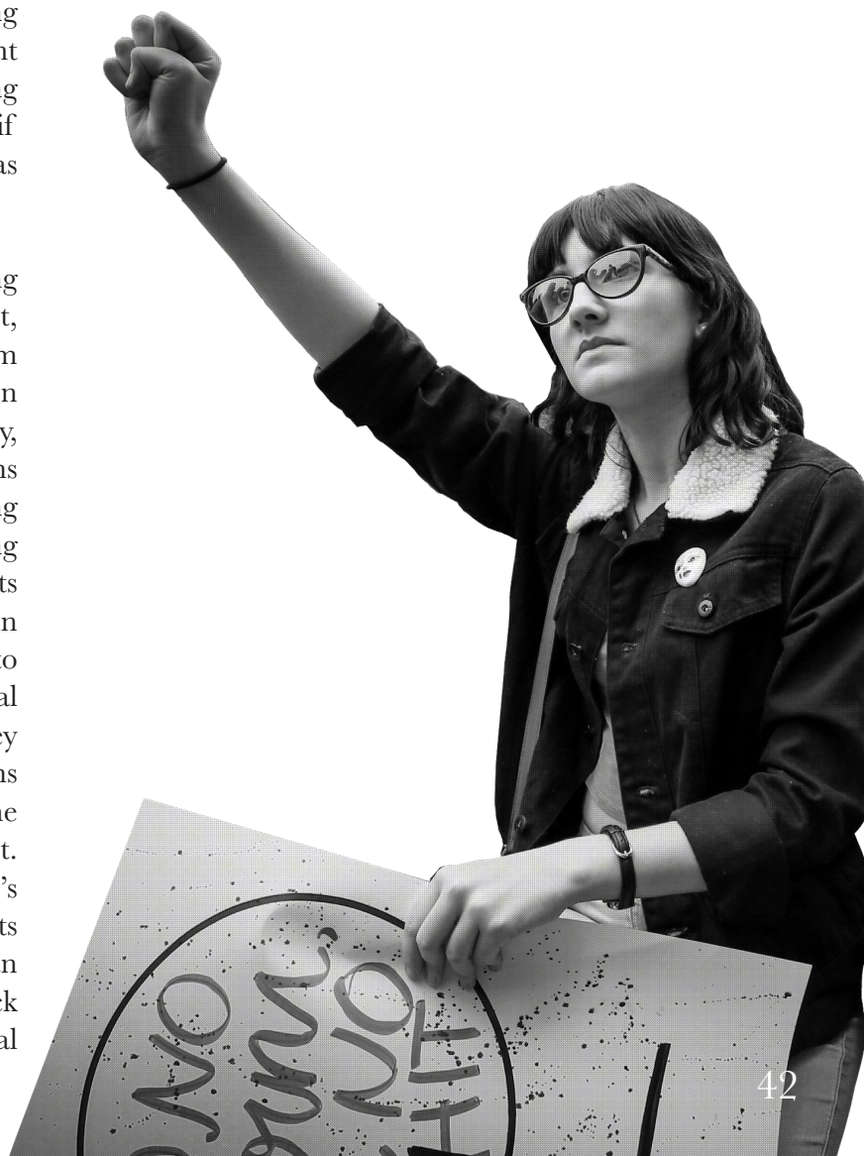
by creating more inclusive and democratic museum spaces in the present as well as in the future. It has the power to subvert traditional notions of collecting and assigning value to artifacts. Through collecting objects and footage from events that appear to be historically relevant in the respective moment, the (hi)stories of events such as protests are validated and archives for future scholars and curators created. With multiple perspectives recorded, those archives can be researched in the future with a certain historical distance while nevertheless preventing gaps in historical recordings and documentation.

Since "[p]rotest movements are a key function of democracy" (McGarry et al. 15), a democratic museum should naturally also engage with protest movements. Protesters perform their "existence through resistance," they demand recognition and embody visibility (McGarry et al. 16). Because at the very core of protests lies the attempt to disrupt, incorporating the narratives of protest can in itself be understood as potentially disrupting institutional structures and existing hierarchies. Through entering a museum exhibition and therefore, the recurrent occupation of public (museum) space after having taken up public space in the streets, the leitmotif of the respected movement could be thought of as performing a form of dual protest.

While the initial intention of protest signs is, among other things, to define and progress a movement, collecting, archiving and/or displaying them facilitates defining and shaping the commemoration of a movement in retrospect. Simultaneously, contemporary protest movement exhibitions can challenge the museum's tale of continuing progress and historical completeness by pointing to the ongoing formation of a movement and its demonstration of the precarious states we live in today. As history museums in particular tend to structure their exhibitions in linear and chronological timelines and, thus, also depict history linearly, they suggest a certain completeness of their exhibitions and of the histories presented, which neglects the effects and ramifications of the past on the present. The recent nature of, for instance, the NMAAHC's RRC exhibition on #BlackLivesMatter points to the incompleteness of that part of American national history and the ongoing struggle for Black freedom. In doing so, it challenges the conventional boundaries of temporal museal constructions. By disrupting the chronology and completeness of museum narratives, RRC can make visible the ongoing colonial entanglements of past and present in and outside the museum.

In doing so, it challenges the conventional boundaries of temporal museal constructions.

Yet, as "[a]ll collecting is subjective" (Procter 26), it also must be acknowledged that RRC is neither an exception to that, nor to other mechanisms inherent to the museum, such as the inevitable contextualization of objects and the forming of narratives around them. Although acquired through RRC, artifacts still go through selection processes before entering a stage of preservation in the archive or display in the exhibition. The collection and curation process of RRC is, of course, one that is still orchestrated by curators. However, by inviting citizens to share their objects and stories, RRC allows active participation of citizens and collaboration with protestors in forming the narratives the museum will tell, thus, breaking with traditional hierarchies of the museum.



During a time of constant performance on digital and social media and with discourses on optical allyship and performative activism increasing, the performance of protest appears to be transforming too. In this light, collecting protest signs allows us not only to preserve historical moments and allow future generations to access those artifacts and histories, but it also enables us to make observations about the changing dynamics of protest. By collecting, curating, and exhibiting objects and stories collected on #BlackLivesMatter protests, RRC can compensate for the impermanent presence of social movements on social media timelines, as well as the ambivalence of relevance inherent to social media. In doing so, RRC provides an additional layer of contextualization that might be missing from posts that consist of only a few words. It constitutes a powerful tool in changing museum mechanisms and hierarchies, thereby contributing to the democratization and decolonization of the museum. Ultimately, RRC can make permanent the acts of rebellion, civil disobedience, and moments in which we stand together – connected.

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REFRAMING THE MONOLINGUAL 'FAMILY ROMANCE': METAPHORS AND LINGUISTIC KINSHIPS IN JHUMPA LAHIRI'S *IN OTHER WORDS*

By Maya Hillebrand

The faculty of language – expressing, reading, and understanding complex sentences and words – is one of the key features of humanity and human culture. Paradoxically, languages do not just unite humans in this ability, but can also set us apart from one another or even create divisions within us if we speak more than one language.

Such is the case for American novelist and short story writer Jhumpa Lahiri, who grew up bilingually with English and Bengali. In her autobiographical work, *In Other Words*, she describes her relationship with the two languages and the changes in her linguistic identity when she adopts a third language and moves to Rome to learn Italian. Even though she had established herself as an Anglophone writer, Lahiri began to write exclusively in this new and foreign tongue during her time in Italy. With *In altre parole (In Other Words)*, she published her first Italian book which was not just a documentation of her linguistic journey but, first and foremost, a testament of her love for Italian. In an interview with *Mondiaal Nieuws*, Lahiri explained the value of multilingualism, saying that "someone who speaks more than one language […] knows that there is more than a single way to be human" while "[someone] who lives in a monolingual universe, looks at the world through one eye only. You lack perspective" (Goris).

The importance of being proficient in several languages is widely recognized in our globalized world and it is through globalization that we are constantly surrounded by a multitude of languages. Considering these linguistic developments, monolingual concepts of "self-contained national languages and exclusive mother-tongues" are questioned (Guldin 1). Can I as an individual or part of a "social formation" still possess only "one 'true' language," a 'mother tongue' (Yildiz 2)? Does this possession still form an organic link "to an exclusive, clearly demarcated ethnicity, culture, and nation" (2) as the monolingual paradigm dictates it?

According to Yasemin Yildiz, profound changes in European politics, philosophy, society, and culture in the 18th century led to the displacement "of previously unquestioned practices of living and writing in multiple languages" and, consequently, to the emergence of monolingualism (6). Along with these thought processes, the notion of the 'mother tongue' gained significance as it became "a vital element in the imagination and production of the homogenous nation-state" (7). The word 'mother' within the expression alludes to "a unique, irreplaceable, unchangeable biological origin that situates the individual automatically in a kinship network and by extension in the nation" (9). The mother tongue thus "constitutes a condensed *narrative* about origin and identity" (12). Drawing on Freud's description of origin fantasies as "family romances," Yildiz introduces the term "linguistic family romance" for these imagined narratives about languages (12).

Multilingualism Gains More Visibility

She argues further that the monolingual paradigm "has functioned to obscure from view the widespread nature of multilingualism" and that multilingualism is therefore not a recent development but has existed all along and has only failed to be acknowledged (Yildiz 2). As "monolingualizing pressure" is easing due to globalization, multilingualism has gained a "new *visibility*" (3). However, it is still perceived through a monolingual framework. Monolingualism and multilingualism are thus inextricably linked. This ostensible paradox of the two coinciding paradigms is described as the "postmonolingual" condition by Yildiz (4). On the one hand, this term has a temporal meaning in the sense that it "signifies the period since the emergence of monolingualism as dominant paradigm" (4). But postmonolingualism can also express criticism as it "refers to the opposition to the term that it qualifies and to the potential break with it" (4). In this way, it points out the "struggle *against* the monolingual paradigm" (4).

This struggle does not only occur in society but has to be considered on the individual level. Where in this "field of tension" (Yildiz 5) between the paradigms are multilingual people located? Rainer Guldin argues that "[multilingual] speakers […] are seen as multiple monolingual speakers reunited in one and the same person" (2). But what does that mean for their linguistic family romance?

In Other Words captures the divisions of Lahiri's multilingual identity, the contradictions of language, and her personal struggle with the monolingual paradigm while embarking on an Italian language journey. The chapter "The Triangle" is an attempt at reconciling the different linguistic sides of her identity using the titular shape. Lahiri writes: "I think that this triangle is a kind of frame. And that the frame contains my self-portrait. The frame defines me, but what does it contain?" (157). Along with the triangle, she introduces concepts of kinship that go beyond the mother tongue. Because of her parents' migration to England and later to the United States, English is established as a stepmother language next to her mother tongue, Bengali.

With Italian, Lahiri experiences an unfathomable connection that resembles maternal affection. At the same time, the process of acquiring a foreign language makes her feel childlike. These metaphors of kinship are connected within the shape of the triangle. It establishes relations between them and thus serves as a linguistic family tree.

However, it deviates from the traditional form and questions monolingual notions that languages belong to one specific region, that they are organically linked to us and our nationality, or that there is an exclusive mother tongue for each of us.

For this reason, Lahiri's triangle metaphor functions as a reframing of the linguistic family romance which qualifies her writing as postmonolingual criticism.

Without a True Mother Tongue

Looking at each of the three sides of the shape, Bengali establishes the first. Jhumpa Lahiri grew up as a daughter of Indian immigrants in London and Rhode Island, speaking only the Indo-Aryan language for the first four years of her life. While Bengali may be classified as her mother tongue, Lahiri claims to "wander the world […] without a homeland or without a true mother tongue" (133). At the same time, she does refer to it as such and explains that she "wanted to go home, to the language in which [she] was known, and loved," when she first encounters English as a student in America (147). At this time, Bengali was still her "locus of affection" and she maintains a strong paternal association with it (Guldin 91). She draws this first line of the triangle only with pencil, fearing it might be erased when her parents, the embodiment of Bengali, are no longer with her (Lahiri 157).

In fact, it seems to already start fading as English takes the role of stepmother in her life and teaches her to read and write in school (147). The new metaphor of kinship, the stepmother, implies a conflicting relationship like it is often found in European fairy tales (Guldin 160). This holds true for Lahiri's first experiences with English in nursery school, which she found to be "harsh and unpleasant" and even traumatizing (Lahiri 147).

Her parents, too, face "the consequences of not speaking English perfectly, of speaking with a foreign accent" (151) and therefore form a difficult relationship with the language. In contrast to their daughter, they distance themselves from English. They "didn't want to give in" (149) to English, deciding to restrict the language use to Bengali at home.

For Lahiri, however, it is not necessarily her relationship to English that is difficult, but the apparent incompatibility of her English side with her Bengali side, which leaves her "torn between the two" and "like a contradiction in terms [herself]" (149). Despite this feeling of inner disunity, she forms a relationship of affection to English because "it has given [her] a clear, correct voice […]" and ignited the passion for literature in her (157). Interestingly, this newfound voice that she uses to mediate for her mother and father lets her feel "as if [she] were the parent" (151). In consequence, the emotional and familial bond to Bengali is loosened. Lahiri seems to find trust and comfort in the permanence of her 'stepmother' and knows that she "won't abandon [her]" (157). It is now "the base, the most stable, fixed side" of her triangle (157).

Ultimately, it is also the language in which she has established herself as an award-winning writer and author. She completely identifies herself with English – the language of her writing – but because of her outward appearance and Indian name, she is forced to justify her linguistic identity and is faced with a "wall [that] keeps [her] at a distance" (143). This wall is upheld by outdated but tenacious stereotypes that disregard reality. "English […] is readily associated with whiteness and the United States or Great Britain. This notion ignores that there are People of Color living in these countries […]" (Von Rath par. 4). Before her success as an Anglophone writer unveiled the association of her name and skin color with her work, Lahiri was able to remain invisible behind her words. "When I write, my appearance, my name have nothing to do with it. I am heard without being seen, without prejudices, without filter" (Lahiri 145). To free herself from the pressure to conform to a linguistic ideal (Von Rath), but also in a "flight from the […] clash between English and Bengali" and as "[a] rejection of both the mother and stepmother," she finally adopts a whole new language: Italian (Lahiri 1-2, 153).

This wall is upheld by outdated but tenacious stereotypes that disregard reality.

Italian and her move to Rome complete the linguistic triangle, but at the same time, complicate Lahiri's narrative of a linguistic family romance even more. In Italian, she is a child and a mother at the same time. On the one hand, she feels protective of her Italian like a mother of her newborn (Lahiri 117-18). She emphasizes that "[it] comes from [her]", not from her other linguistic sides. Thinking further about the distances between them, however, she acknowledges that all three have Indo-European roots. Additionally, English and Italian share "many words of Latin origin" and while the Bengali and Italian vocabulary strongly differ, they are phonetically similar (Lahiri 155). Hence, the triangle starts to resemble a family tree. On the other hand, her Italian motherhood will never be an organic one, not in the way Bengali holds the status of a mother tongue. "Italian belongs mainly to Italy," Lahiri writes, reaffirming the monolingual concept of the mother tongue in which "[every] language belongs to a specific place" (Lahiri 19). For this reason, "[it] remains [an] external language" in which she feels "like a child, a little clumsy" (Lahiri 157). Nonetheless, ever since she first encountered Italian on vacation, she has felt a yearning, as if in a linguistic exile, which suggests a sense of belonging after all (Lahiri 21).

Eventually, "her love for [Italian] evolves into a kind of literary self-liberation: she allows herself to acknowledge that there is room in her life for multiple languages […] and that languages can take on different roles in her life at different times" (Von Rath). In her acceptance of the contradictions, the changing roles, and the challenges of her multilingual identity, Lahiri reframes the monolingual family romance and the descent from one true mother tongue. The triangle is not a family tree with clear lines, but a rough shape that holds together familial ties. It is an unstable form because of the possibility that two sides, the Bengali and the Italian, could be erased. The void that remains within the triangular frame is not definite either, but is what inspires and liberates her in the end as "[her] origin and also [her] destiny" (Lahiri 159). Some monolingual concepts remain in her writing, and her notions of language offer a glimpse of the persisting framework and locate Lahiri within the postmonolingual condition. The contradictions and changes of linguistic roles, however, imply a reconsideration of monolingual notions. The fact that she chose to write *In Other Words* in Italian and to have it translated into English by Ann Goldstein – despite her own ability – also speaks of a new take on the concept. Therefore, Jhumpa Lahiri's *In Other Words* is also postmonolingual in the critical sense as it attempts to overcome the monolingual paradigm.

Finally, it proves the value that lies in multilingualism and the multiple ways to be human by showing the connections that we can establish between languages and our own identity.

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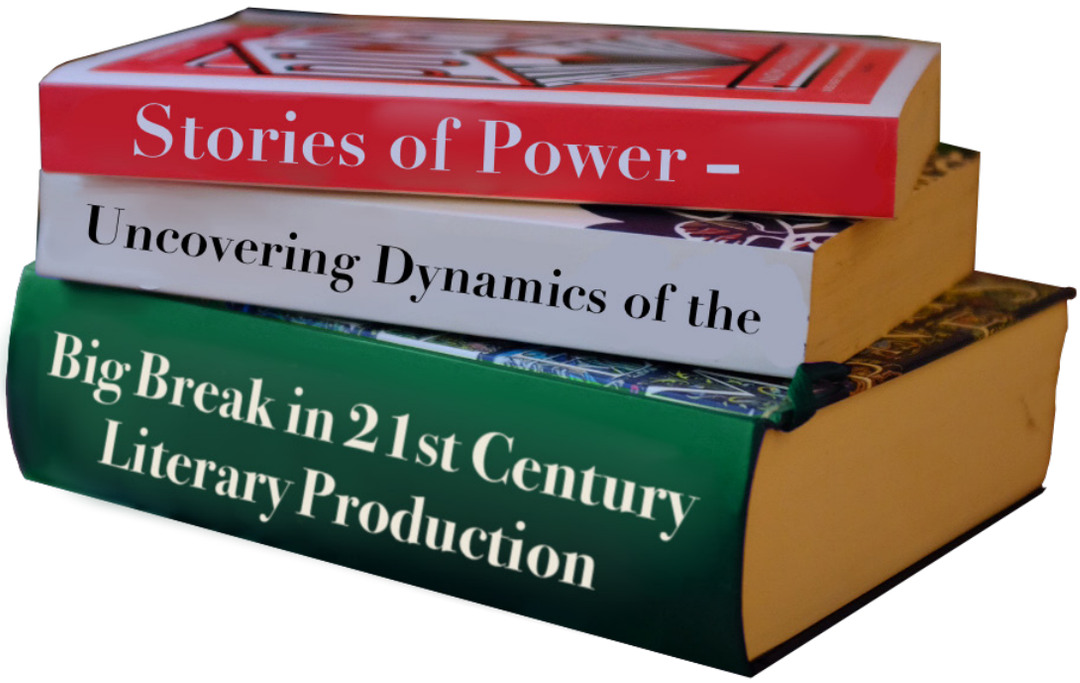

By Annika Klempel

In a world of transparency and unlimited access to information, it is irritating that the key to becoming a literary author still seems like an unfathomable riddle, a mythical process almost, refusing to adapt to modern-day rules. YouTube sports hundreds of videos on how to become a writer and how to publish a manuscript at a traditional publishing house. Semi-professionals and professionals try to provide knowledge to increase the "slim and uncertain" chance of a 'big break' in the literary market to the oversupply of creative laborers (Fürst 53-54).

Big breaks, namely breakthroughs in literary production, should not be underestimated in the academic context. An examination of the phenomenon can be vital for book studies research, as it might give insight into the dynamics of the 21st century literary market as well as bring to light the role of its essential agents and gatekeeping practices. There is still no superordinate theory for analyzing these dynamics (Norrick-Rühl and Vogel 20), but there may be fruitful approaches to lead to a closer examination of big breaks in literary production.

Pierre Bourdieu's concept of field and position-taking through accumulation of capital holds the potential to provide a basis for the dynamics and interrelations in the market which lead to or facilitate the big break of an author. Of course, this determination is highly individual, which is why all further analysis should be tied to a specific example. This paper aims to build a foundation to these analyses by investigating whether a big break in the literary market can be defined as a legitimization of an author's position within the literary field through accumulation of social, economic, and cultural capital.

To do so, firstly, the theoretical foundation for analyzing a big break in the literary market will be provided, including relevant extensions and adaptations of Bourdieu's field theory. Based on this, the term big break will be negotiated and determined for an academic context. The results will be discussed, focusing on how an analysis of big breaks in the literary market in an academic context can be used as a tool to uncover power relations and underlying discrimination within a highly limited field of cultural production.

On Pierre Bourdieu's *Concept of the Literary Field and Authorship in The Rules of Art* (1999)

To construct the theoretical concept of this paper, Pierre Bourdieu's field theory (1999) was chosen. Originally outlining the dynamics of cultural production in the French literary landscape in the late 19th century, Bourdieu provided a complex concept of art production as a system (Joch and Wolf 9), the so-called literary field. His approach focused on the mutual influencing of positions and positioning taking place within the relatively autonomous space of cultural production (Bourdieu).

In his *Les Régles d'Art* from 1999, Bourdieu developed

a concept for analyzing cultural production, focusing on "the social conditions of production of literary works" (Sapiro 31). In his approach, Bourdieu considers how production, the texts themselves, and reception are interrelated (Dörner and Vogt 125). Art in its varied forms can be seen as part of the process of gaining power and building hierarchy within a society (136). This process unfolds in two different spheres, namely the field of power and the literary field. The field of power is a space in which different agents and institutions join in relations of force, their main goal being to occupy dominant positions in the different fields within the field of power. They do so through accumulation of social, economic, and cultural capital (Bourdieu 342).

The literary field can be understood as a society within society (Joch and Wolf 2), where agents of cultural production (e.g., authors, publishers, literary agents) compete for power and legitimacy by accumulating different sorts of capital to secure a desired position in the field. The literary field continuously strives for autonomy and has already evolved into a "relatively autonomous space" (Sapiro 31). Nevertheless, it remains susceptible to the influences of external forces, especially those of politics and economy (Bourdieu 343).

The literary field is further divided into two subfields – restricted production and mass production. The tension between these two emerges through a differing understanding of what an author and what art is, even though there are areas of production that merge both subfields (Dörner and Vogt 162). The subfield of restricted production is based on symbolic capital, accumulated by producers who only produce for their peers and who are relatively independent from external demands (Bourdieu 345). In mass production on the contrary, success depends more on money and popularity. Therefore, this subfield often finds itself excluded and criticized by those following the principle *l'art pour l'art* (344).

In both subfields, authors are particularly interesting agents as they provide the cultural product. Bourdieu says that an author can only take effect in the open positions in the field through a specific amount of social, cultural, and economic capital as well as through taking on a specific habitus. As indicated above, the literary field and its subfield create sets of rules, a "modus operandi" (Sapiro 37) that authors need to follow to enter the field. The literary field is defined by a low amount of institutionalization which makes personal relations and interactions more important for authors wanting to gain position. "Reactions, feedback, and sanctions […], orient the choices of newcomers and lead them to readjust their strategies" (39). Although, it is possible that innovative works, which often result in scandal, redefine the space once and for all (40).

Authorship as a profession is clearly highly diverse and highly unpredictable (Bourdieu 358), which makes it even more important to use habitus and capital to secure one's position as much as possible. Whether the decision of taking on a certain habitus is conscious or not remains to be discussed.

Accumulation of Capital

If we equate the term big break with the term "breakthrough" as a specific point in time when an author becomes known and successful in the literary field, looking at the accumulation of capital is an essential step in understanding the dynamics that lead to this point. Of course, no direct causality can be claimed between the big break and the accumulation of capital. Assessing capital is rather a tool to evaluate to what extent an author might have met the existing presuppositions to enter the field at a given point in time. In Bourdieu's theory of capital, there are three types of capital which still apply to 21st century market circumstances: cultural, economic, and social capital.

Cultural capital in Bourdieu's theory is divided into three subcategories. The first is objectified cultural capital, which means the possession of cultural objects that have not yet been acquired when it comes to their contents but project identity through their possession and presentation (Pressman 12). This type of cultural capital is related to economic capital as money is needed to buy many cultural objects. Incorporated cultural capital, or the process of acquisition, is the second sub-category. It can, for example, take place through private reading of books, formal education at school and university, apprenticeships, leading to the third sub-category – institutionalized cultural capital in the form of degrees, certificates, or titles.

Social capital is defined by membership in certain groups, relationships to other agents who potentially have access to capital that might be helpful for others, as well as institutionalized relations of knowing and acknowledging each other (Berlemann 26).

(Re-) Defining Literary Spaces

Bourdieu's theory of the literary field can be adapted for different spheres of cultural production. This has already been done by other scholars (Speller 74), yet an exclusive focus on the career of authors is still lacking. Bourdieu's theory holds the potential to make the definition of the big break phenomenon and its intertwining with the processes of production, distribution, and reception in the literary market accessible for academic research. Though to unearth this very potential, the theory must be supplemented and expanded to apply to modern conditions and dynamics of the sphere. Especially for future case studies, it is vital to address three issues arising from Bourdieu's approach and to give possible solutions.

First is the definition and connotation of subfields within the literary field. Bourdieu's subdivision is helpful to depict different foci in literary production, but it might be too one-sided and normative for academic discourse. Simply subdividing literary production into whether it depends on external forces would not meet the demands for research in the 21st century. Hence, it would be more fruitful to presume more subfields around the two poles existing in Bourdieu's theory and to further subdivide them. Following John B. Thompson, "publishing is not one world but many worlds" (Thompson, "Trade Publishing" 245) and therefore needs to be analyzed according to the specific rules of each world or subfield as well as in relation to the world around it. It might be sensible to choose more neutral language to talk about commercial literary production in academic research, because what is relevant here are its dynamics rather than the question if we consider it "true" art or not. Thompson's concept of the field of trade publishing can be a suitable replacement for Bourdieu's term of mass production. Trade publishing accurately depicts a space of literary production which "is the public face of publishing, the world of bestsellers and celebrity authors, of literary prizes and accolades, of books turned into movies … the books that form an indispensable part of the public conversation and of our public culture" (Thompson, "Trade Publishing " 245). Thompson's term is more neutral and more successful in outlining 21st century book market structures.

Second is the criterion "nation" for defining the literary field. As already mentioned, Bourdieu's concept of the literary field is not limited to French literary production and has been "used to analyse writers in different national fields and traditions" (Speller 74). However, it is questionable whether the category "nation" is even adequate to depict the transnational cultural production that takes place and always has to some extent (Norrick-Rühl 5). To understand how an author, such as children's book author Cornelia Funke, positions herself in the market while not only having her books translated into various languages but also writing in different languages, it is not adequate to stop at national borders. Following Pascale Casanova, French literary critic and professor of Romance Studies at Duke University, and her construction of a "world literary space" (Speller 71), there is not one literary field, but a transnational literary sphere that contains many interrelating fields.

Third and last is the process of position-taking between different subfields. There might be author agents who do not enter the literary field from the outside but have already been part of it in a different function. Some might start as illustrators or literary agents before they switch to writing. It would be important to not only examine the dynamics of entering the field for the first time but also those of switching subfields. Prior positions in the field may provide the agent in question with distinct knowledge of the subfields nearby or of how to initiate a change in habitus and the accumulation of capital. Considering the various possibilities of becoming an agent in the literary field allows a more nuanced perspective on an author's successful career as well as examples of those inhibited from being successful in the market.

Narrowing Down the Big Break

Defining a literary field with various subfields makes spaces of literary production visible. It also gives way to research on the mechanisms and dynamics driving these autonomous spaces of cultural work. A big break can be seen as one of those dynamics. As shown by Norrick-Rühl and Vogel, the literary field is always influenced by external forces like politics (24), though it has its very own "modus operandi" (Sapiro 37) that agents need to follow to change positions within subfields or to position themselves at all. Following Bourdieu, the term big break can therefore be defined as those moments of change in a subfield, when a position is taken by someone new. This allows for a closer look at economic and

cultural dynamics and interrelations from a more scientific perspective, which could also shift focus toward power relations, processes of gatekeeping and even discrimination within a relatively closed field.

In an environment of rising extremism and social injustice, it is crucial to uncover problematic choices in the stories that are told – or not told. Furthermore, an analysis of careers of young minority authors on a large scale may shed light on common difficulties they face in positioning themselves within the literary field and in accumulating capital to the point of a big break. The cultural sphere of literary production is relatively closed and still controlled by agents who, with implicit or explicit bias, "control the circulation of cultural goods and experiences" (Crips 88). Of course, it is impossible to assume direct causality, but a closer look at clusters might already provide helpful insight on general tendencies in career making in the literary market.

In an environment of rising extremism and social injustice, it is crucial to uncover problematic choices in the stories that are told – or not told.

Despite the possible benefits, using the term big break in book studies research can be problematic. It is crucial to differentiate between the term as a tool for analyzing position-taking and a definition of success in the literary market. Big breaks can easily be misunderstood and thereby feed into the narrative of overnight success. It might be tempting to relate the introduction of an author to the literary field to automatic financial success and recognition by the public. This can be misleading as the financial and social outcome of a literary product depends on reception and current trends in the field. A big break in the sense of a breakthrough or turning point in position-taking does not guarantee income or an ongoing career. On the contrary, debut authors who receive bad reception or sell poorly are a risk for publishing houses if they try to publish another book (Thompson, *Merchants of Culture* 199). Moreover, success in certain subfields, such as academic literature or poetry, is not tied to money or publicity. In Bourdieu's theory this would be the pole of restricted production (Dörner and Vogt 162).

A productive take on the link of the term big break and financial success and recognition could be its use in the context of author marketing. In the sector of children's and young adult literature, for example, research remains to be done on how an author and their brand is displayed and marketed. The big break might be an approach to examine how the emergence and success of an author is narrated to readers and the public by marketing professionals.

Another problem that comes with the term big break is its focus on just one point in time in an author's career. Gaining legitimacy in the literary field is not one fixed event that guarantees future success but a constant process. Even when positioned in the target field, an author constantly accumulates more capital which allows a reinforcement of their position. The capital is, for instance, accumulated through literary prizes, reception and through adapting to the changing demands of the field. On this basis it could be hypothesized that there is not one big break but many smaller breakthroughs during the long career of an author which constantly ensure legitimacy in one subfield or even extend the legitimacy to further subfields.

Conclusion

This paper has shown how merging a redefined version of Bourdieu's theory of the literary field and the process of accumulating capital results in a fruitful theoretical approach to analyze the dynamics of position-taking and position-changing on the literary field. The big break in literary production can be seen as one of those dynamics, namely the moments of change in a subfield, when a position is taken by someone new. The theoretical approach constructed in this paper is applicable to any case study of interest and allows an academic depiction of an author's career in relation to the rules of their space of agency.

Redefining Bourdieu's theory implies a shift from a less dichotomic, normative depiction of the literary field toward a transnational understanding of the sphere with the subfield of trade publishing as an established and valid sector included. Within this sphere, the process of accumulating capital, established by Bourdieu, is an essential process in achieving a big break as an author. The accumulation

of money, cultural goods, and knowledge as well as social relations can be analyzed in the context of the redefined field and thereby map out structures, interrelations, and dynamics authors face in 21st century literary production. However, it is more suitable to presume several big breaks, instead of just one, during an author-career, which constantly confirm the author's legitimization and thereby their position within the literary field.

Though the theoretical approach proposed in this paper cannot be used as a key to success in the literary market, it is not meant to be a blueprint for becoming an author nor an indicator for financial success in cultural production. Rather it aims to approach the field of literary production from an academic perspective with a potential to focus on problematic power relations resulting in gatekeeping and discrimination. For further research it would therefore be of interest to apply the theoretical approach to relevant case studies. It could be interesting to investigate careers and big breaks of different author groups – especially minorities with the intention of uncovering difficulties in positioning – and authors from different subfields of the literary field, such as the area of children's and young adult writing.

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The Power of Language and the Language of Power: The Blue-Eyes, Brown-Eyes Workshop

By Tanne Stephens

Oppression takes many forms, but language may be one of the most pervasive and allusive tools people use to exert their power. I was struck by this fact the day I was introduced to Jane Elliott and her famous Blue-eyes/Brown-eyes exercise in a psychology course. As an educator in the US, Elliott strove to teach her third-grade students about racism, and in 1968, she conducted an exercise in her classroom to do just that. Separating students by eye color, she created a situation where they could experience firsthand the consequences of separation and oppression – a lesson Elliott became widely known for in the United States and globally.

Elliott went on to become a renowned diversity educator, and she repeated her Blue-eyes/Brown-eyes exercise many times with adult participants. In one of the filmed exercises, participants, who are all volunteers, line up behind a table, sign their names on a list, and are categorized based on eye color. What seems like an innocuous workshop quickly turns into a nightmare for some, as Elliott immediately begins creating and orchestrating an oppressive system.

Brown-eyed participants are treated to coffee and breakfast; blue-eyed participants are given a collar to wear and ushered into a room with no chairs, no food, and no water to wait for the workshop to begin. When it is time to start, Elliott assumes the role of workshop leader and begins with a lesson on "listening skills," all the while giving the brown-eyed participants preferential treatment and the blue-eyed participants verbal instances of indirect, subtle discrimination, i.e., microaggressions. First coined by Dr. Chester Pierce in 1970, a microaggression is defined in the Oxford dictionary as "an instance of indirect, subtle, or unintentional discrimination against members of a marginalized group such as a racial or ethnic minority." The precariousness of microaggressions makes them particularly difficult to confront – especially when they are carried out unconsciously. Regardless of intention, microaggressions have an impact. Elliott uses them in abundance and while some try to laugh off the discomfort of the situation, others burst into tears.

Elliott does not inflict any physical violence to generate the emotionally intense responses from blue-eyed participants – she simply talks. So, what exactly is happening in this seemingly simple verbal interaction to bring an adult stranger to tears within minutes? More specifically, how does Elliott use conversation and discourse to exert power and authority, and model oppressive microaggressions in the workshop? Turning to linguistics gives an interesting perspective on how power works and is wielded through the symbolic tool of language. To take a closer look at how Elliott uses language and power, I analyzed certain sections from *The Angry Eye*, a documentary about one of Elliott's workshops conducted with young adult students at Bard College in 2001.

Discourse and conversation analysis has been influenced by many disciplines, including linguistics, sociology, psychology, philosophy, and anthropology. My analysis examines the dialogue Elliot uses in her workshop. I will explain three theoretical levels of analysis and provide examples from Elliott's speech in *The Angry Eye*. My aim is to use these examples to not only illustrate how the theory looks in real life, but also to demonstrate how we all can and do use language in oppressive ways toward others.

Speech Act Theory

Central to a Speech Act Theory approach to analyzing discourse is the concept of illocutionary force, i.e. what the speaker is intending to accomplish with their utterance (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1969, 1976). Speech acts can be classified into five categories according to the speaker's intention: declarations, representatives, commissives, directives, and expressives (Searle, 1976). Intention can additionally be garnered from how a speaker adheres to or violates Grice's (1975) four maxims of conversation. According to Grice, verbal communication is governed by four implicitly understood maxims that enable mutual understanding and encompass the cooperative principle of interaction:

quantity
speakers should give the right amount of information, not too little or too much.
quality
speakers should give accurate and sincere portrayals of reality.
relation
speakers should say something that is relevant and related to what was said before.
manner
speakers should be speaking in an organized way with little ambiguity or obscurity.

Using speech acts to flout or violate these maxims happens often, but a meaning can typically be deduced from the violation. These maxims directly relate to issues of politeness and "face" as further explained by Brown and Levinson (1987). According to them, every person has two socio-psychological faces – a negative face and a positive face. The negative face describes our need to be autonomous and have the freedom of our own actions, and the positive face describes our need to be desired, accepted, and wanted by others (Brown and Levinson, 1987; Goffman, 1967). Speech acts that threaten either of these two faces are called face threatening acts (FTA) and are compensated for in cooperative situations by redressing face needs with politeness strategies. When an FTA is committed and no redress occurs, it can be interpreted as uncooperative and even antagonistic.

Jane Elliott's Speech Acts

One of the first observations I made in watching *The Angry Eye* is Elliott's frequent use of the imperative directive as a speech act when speaking to the blue-eyed participants. These acts are directly explicit (e.g. "Sit here"; "Get up"; "Read the next sign"), with an obvious illocutionary force stated. Using these speech acts, Elliott can be observed flouting the maxims of quantity and manner. For example, when the blue-eyed participants enter the room, one of the participants poses the question "Should we sit anywhere?" (Mukuka 10:19). Elliott's response to the question is another question, which violates the cooperative maxim of manner, since a question is meant to be answered. Elliott then follows up with an imperative directive: "Get in the blue-eyed section." (Mukuka 10:41). This flouts the maxim of quantity since she has answered a yes or no question with much more speech than required. Since maxim violations are not done without meaning, it seems that Elliott is using the violations to establish authority starting with this first interaction.

Once the lesson begins, Elliott asks if the blue-eyed participants have paper and pencils with them in a

tone suggesting that they should. That they needed paper and pencils was not communicated, which was a violation of the quantity maxim (not saying enough) – thus putting the onus on the blue-eyed participants to implicitly understand what Elliott is not explicitly stating. In repeatedly violating maxims without any face redress, Elliott makes it nearly impossible for the blue-eyed participants to position themselves in a cooperative relation toward her. Furthermore, Elliott's directives threaten the blue-eyed students' negative faces, and she uses no politeness to redress the threat. She also threatens the positive face of the blue-eyed participants by making them sit physically separate from the brown-eyed participants and by categorizing them verbally as "bluey" (Mukuka 10:52). Elliott uses imperative directives to commit FTAs and to violate maxims causing emotional responses from the blue-eyed participants.

Discourse Structure

While speech acts are vital for conversation analysis, the larger structures and patterns found within discourse can particularly illuminate how meaning and power relations take shape in verbal interaction. Two of these structures are adjacency pairs and recipient design. Adjacency pairs are expected utterance pairings. For example, a question is expected to result in an answer, hence the question/answer pairing. Others include complaint/denial, compliment/rejection, request/grant, and offer/acceptance, etc. (Sacks et al. 717). Recipient design refers to the dynamic process by which speakers adapt to the expected response on the part of the interlocutor. The underlying idea is that interaction is an interpretive process, meaning what one *expects* as a response impacts how one *decides* to respond.

In other words, as Taylor and Cameron explain, "my behavior is designed in light of what I expect your reaction to it will be: i.e., you will react to it as conforming to the relevant rule or as in violation of it, thereby leading you to draw certain conclusions as to why I violated the rule" (1987, 103). Every culture and society has certain structural expectations or scripts that are used in verbal interactions. Whether you follow the expected structure or not, the words you say and how you choose to say them carry a particular meaning to the person you are talking to.

Jane Elliott's Discourse Structure

When examining longer pieces of dialogue in the workshop, structural patterns become more obvious. Elliott uses adjacency pairs often including numerous question/answer pairings. For example:

Question
Elliott: You came to a learning experience, right?
Answer
Blue-eyed participant: Yes.
Question
Elliott: D'ya ever go to a learning experience before?
Answer
Blue-eyed participant: Yes.
Question
Elliott: D'ya ever take notes?
Answer
Blue-eyed participant: Yes.
Question
Elliott: What did you use?
Answer
Blue-eyed participant: I used paper and pencil.

(Mukuka, 16:57)

This question/answer run of adjacency pairs occurs numerous times throughout the workshop. The first part of the act has a preferred and a dispreferred response which creates a preference structure. Dispreferred responses are more unusual and may be interpreted as meaningful or rude (Eggins and Slade 1997, 28). In using adjacency pairs, Elliott can control the preference structure; participants must give a preferred or dispreferred response, situating themselves either in line with Elliott or in opposition to her. In one instance, a participant does not follow the adjacency preferred response:

Yes/No Question
Elliott: You have paper and pencil with you?
Yes/No Answer
Blue-eyed participant 1: No.
Yes/No Question
Elliott: [making eye contact with another participant] Do you?
Declarative
Blue-eyed participant 2: Over in my bag // I do.

(Mukuka, 16:39)

In this instance there is a violation of the quantity maxim because Elliott did not tell the participants that they needed paper and pencil. Elliott then initiates an adjacency pairing with a yes-or-no question where the preferred response is a yes. Given the context of the setting (a learning environment), and the lack of positive feedback to the no response of Blue-eyed participant 1, it is made clear that the answer should be yes; however, the participant must answer no, giving a potentially negatively meaningful response. To avoid this unsatisfactory response and the disagreeable way it may frame her, Blue-eyed participant 2 answers differently with "Over in my bag // I do" – an answer closer to yes than no. This strategy seems to be used by the student to subvert the preferred/dispreferred structure Elliott has set up. However, in subsequent dialogue, Elliott regains control by asserting a string of structural strategies that ultimately results in Blue-eyed participant 2 admitting to being at fault for her behavior.

The Context of Elliott's Workshop

As it is for many oppressive systems, Elliott's speech alone is not entirely responsible for the success of the oppression. The environmental context is key to subliminally supporting the microaggressions used. For the workshop, Elliott intentionally creates a social culture and context using both her speech and visual cues in the room, including signs that read: "Only brown eyes need apply", "Blue eyes shouldn't hold political office", "Why can't a blue eye be more like a brown", "I'm not prejudiced. Some of my best friends are blue eyed" (Mukuka 12:30).

These signs are symbols used to define the social context and hierarchy of the environment. An additional symbol used is the collar Elliott places around the necks of the blue-eyed participants, providing a visual cue to the social and cultural arrangement of power. Lastly, because the workshop is held in a classroom-like setting, participants are already prepared to be in a situation where Elliott, as the teacher, has more power and authority. The context Elliott creates and her language choices are used to bolster ideas, contexts and messages that best fit her agenda. Table 2 shows how Elliott's language choices – especially pronoun usage – reinforce new layers of meaning reflected in the symbolism of the environment.

Table 2: Pronoun Comparison
(Pascal Mukuka, 2015)

Elliott's statements made to blue-eyed participants	• Sit here. • Go in that room • Move your leg. • Get there. • Next. Stand up and read the next sign. • Get it right this time.
Elliott's statements made to brown-eyed participants	• We are going to accuse them of not being as smart as we are. • We are going to give them no respect. • In order to get them into their adult ego state, we are going to try to teach them the listening skills. • We are going to call these males "boy" to keep them in their child ego state, or bluey or fool.

Elliott neglects pronouns when speaking to blue-eyed participants and uses we when speaking to brown-eyed participants. This grammatical choice denotes in-group and out-group membership as allocated by Elliott's position of authority. Each visual cue along with each utterance within the discourse structures are tools used to perform and sustain the social hierarchy of the workshop and to wield power.

Power of Language – Language of Power

After briefly considering various perspectives on analyzing conversation and discourse, there seem to be some main strategies Elliott uses to express and maintain power in the workshop. She commits FTAs toward the blue-eyed participants; she violates maxims, making it difficult for the blue-eyed participants to follow the cooperative principle; she poses imperative directives and question/answer adjacency pairs which allow her to predict and funnel preferred responses; and she uses visual cues, grammar, and discourse to connect to her larger contextual ideation of the workshop's social context and interpersonal power dynamics.

Committing FTAs is common in daily interactions and is not necessarily an act of intimidation, except when not redressed. Politeness strategies can make a request non-intimidating: "Sorry to bother you, could you, if you have a moment, help me find a book?" Phrases and features are added in this example to create a non-intimidating FTA. A directive lacking any politeness features, on the other hand, is the most threatening FTA (Cutting 2002, 46): "Help me find a book." When face is not redressed in a request, the addressee has the option of doing as they are told (feeling controlled) or being interpreted as uncooperative. In using direct FTAs toward the blue-eyed participants, Elliott ignores all their face needs, likely resulting in intimidation. This intimidation strategy becomes more pronounced when coupled with the intentional flouting of Grice's maxims, creating interactions where participants are forced into an uncooperative role.

Repeatedly using adjacency pairs could be seen as a highly offensive tactic in conversation. Remaining the initiator in such pairings allows a person to better control the flow and direction of discourse, which seems to be a strategy Elliott uses during the workshop. At certain points, Elliott answers a participant's question with a question, successfully reversing the attempt of a participant to initiate and gain some control. Additionally, Elliott seems to use many question/answer adjacency pairs, often of a yes/no structure, which again limits participants' ability to expound or expand easily in a more casual way. The preferred responses remain limited and so are the social options within the staged hierarchy.

Conclusion

> I, for one, believe that if you give people a thorough understanding of what confronts them and the basic causes that produce it, they'll create their own program, and when the people create a program, you get action.
>
> -Excerpt from Malcolm X's speech at Queen's Court Audubon Ballroom, December 20, 1964

On first viewing, Elliott's workshops can seem perplexing in how she brings an adult to tears within minutes simply using words. Using theories of conversation and discourse analysis, one can begin to identify that the only perplexing thing is the use of the word 'simply'. Strategies for wielding power and oppressing others operate on several levels – from speech acts to broader sociocultural cues and underpinnings. Through the analysis of each level, the workings of oppression, microaggressions, and racism become more apparent. More investigation is needed to begin to unveil how different types of perceived power influence verbal interactions and potentially how verbal interactions could in some ways even subvert and influence broader systems of power. Although power may not stem entirely from speech acts, daily performative functions certainly perpetuate and strengthen ideas and prejudices already existing in the public realm.

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A Mask to be Visible? - Language and Authenticity in Ocean Vuong's Novel *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous*

By Betty Waselowsky

A mask is an object that covers up what's underneath and gives the person who wears it a different appearance to the outside world. If we approach language as a mask, does it merely serve to help the speaker assimilate into a culture, or is it more than that? Language in Ocean Vuong's novel *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous* is particularly relevant, as the novel is written in English, not the Vietnamese passed down to the protagonist Little Dog by his mother Rose.

The novel is written in the form of a letter from Little Dog to his illiterate mother. It explores their family history as immigrants from Vietnam living in the US, and centers around Little Dog's relationship to his mother, their new surroundings, and what it means to love. The contrast between Little Dog's inherited language and adopted English runs throughout the novel, serving as a central theme on how he not only identifies himself, but is also identified by others. Key to this is the concept of English as a mask that is brought up at one point in the novel, raising questions about Little Dog's identity and authenticity in using the English language.

In this essay I will argue that Little Dog makes use of and adapts English as the language of his self-representation beyond the point where the language serves purely for his daily communication as the "family's official interpreter" (Vuong 32). I will limit my scope to investigate the image of the mask and its ability to be the medium that represents Little Dog's own reality and values. Firstly, I will refer to Fanon's book *Black Skin, White Masks* (1986) in which he discusses language as a mask – a form of assimilation and conformity. Secondly, I will continue to discuss the topic of self-representation and visibility in connection to the seemingly contradictory notion of a mask.

Lastly, I will refer to the language of the novel as a representation of Little Dog's English to reiterate my argument that English to him is a way to express himself as an artist.

The role of Little Dog as a translator, primarily for his mother Rose, is introduced when they are grocery shopping and Rose is unable to communicate what she wants to buy. Little Dog is deeply ashamed of his own inability to help his mother in the situation and makes a promise to himself:

> That night I promised myself I'd never be wordless when you needed me to speak for you. So began my career as our family's official interpreter. From then on, I would fill in our blanks, our silences, stutters, whenever I could. I code switched. I took off our language and wore my English, like a mask, so that others would see my face, and therefore yours. (Vuong 32)

In this passage, English is treated as an object that one can wear "like a mask." In the literal sense, a mask suggests that reality is hidden underneath, and as Neumann proposes in her article on the mother-tongue and translation in Vuong's novel, this comes with a lack of authenticity (290). She sees that Little Dog's decision to use English in this passage is for practical reasons and that it does not show his 'real self'. Language here can be seen as something that can give the speaker a different identity and, just like a mask, a different appearance to the outside world. For Little Dog, the decision to 'wear the mask' in this situation emerges from his feeling of shame and insecurity, of being wordless next to a mother who has to rely on gestures to try and make herself understood.

Mask Makes Little Dog Visible

The notion of a mask as a tool for social assimilation is not a new one, and can be linked to the ideas of Franz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks*. Fanon critically observes how colonized people sometimes copy the colonizer's behavior by adopting their language to gain a sense of superiority. He states that a person "betrays himself in his speech" (24) when abandoning his mother tongue to speak and act in a different language, thus suggesting that the true self of the speaker is invisible behind the mask of the colonizer's language. Taking Fanon's view, using English as an adopted language is to betray oneself, and to bury your true identity for social assimilation. But a reading of *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous* provides a contrasting perspective on the use of language as a mask. Little Dog says that he wants to wear English "so that others would see my face, and therefore yours" (Vuong 32). This idea may appear surprising and thought provoking to the reader as a mask in the literal sense, and as Fanon indicates, would hide and not show a person's face. For Little Dog, English is a way to exist and be visible in the English-speaking world. It may have been put on like a mask, but it enables him to have a voice in a surrounding where he once could only silently stand next to his mother, as if he were invisible.

The theme of visibility is addressed for the first time when Little Dog talks about the origin of his name. His Grandmother Lan gave him an insignificant name on purpose so that he would be protected from evil spirits. It is underlined in the passage that Lan is acting out of love for her grandson on the assumption that being invisible may serve as a strategy for survival: "To love something, then, is to name it after something so worthless it might be left untouched – and alive" (Vuong 18). Ocean Vuong talks about this in an interview on *PBS*, where he refers to a line in the novel that he himself heard in his childhood: "You're already Vietnamese" (Vuong 224). The word 'already' suggests a sense of shame that is connected to the family's Vietnamese origin. Reading the novel against the backdrop of Vuong's words from the interview can give an interesting perspective, knowing that the novel is semi-autobiographical. Little Dog too seems to grow up with a lack of confidence and a sense of shame which is partially encouraged by his family. Ocean Vuong believes that exactly this question of visibility is something that distinguishes himself as a second-generation immigrant from the generation of his mother and grandmother.

In making the same distinction between generations as Vuong does, Little Dog's and Rose's perspectives address the concept of English as a mask quite differently. Using English as a tool to handle everyday situations and to stay out of trouble is something that Rose asks of Little Dog very directly. She enforces his use of English as a way to assimilate in the US, along with other rituals such as drinking "American milk" to make him stronger (Vuong 27). But while Little Dog is diligently carrying out the role of his mother's representative and the family's translator, the novel also suggests that the English language holds more meaning for Little Dog than that. He writes to his mother: "They say nothing lasts forever and I'm writing you in the voice of an endangered species. The truth is I'm worried they will get us before they get us" (Vuong 176). Little Dog wants to be heard and makes the decision to write, in order to be heard, understood, and appreciated for who he is. According to Vuong, becoming an artist can serve as a strategy to be visible and recognized: "It is so easy for a small, yellow child to vanish that the hard work, the real work that requires innovation is to be known. And one of the most perennial, powerful ways to be known is to be an artist" (Vuong 5:15). English as the language of Vuong's and Little Dog's writing ultimately appears to be a medium of self-representation rather than one of assimilation.

Being written in the form of a letter from Little Dog to Rose, the novel itself can serve as a representation of the language that Little Dog is using as a writer. As Neumann points out, the novel connects American English to the language of toxic masculinity and violence (291). Little Dog notices how many English phrases that describe success are rooted in destruction: "You killed that poem, we say. You're a killer. You came into that novel guns blazing" (Vuong 179). He ponders over the question whether this destruction is necessary, but comes to the conclusion that to him writing is "getting down so low the world offers a merciful new angle, a larger vision made of small things" (Vuong 189). This 'new angle' creates an atmosphere that provokes and encourages emotion and is non-conforming with the language of toxic masculinity. In that way, the adaptation of the English language by Little Dog transgresses the notion of a mere copy of a language as described by Fanon in *Black Skin, White Masks.* In an article on Vietnamese American Literature, Viet Thanh Nguyen concludes that

"sometimes the impulses toward collaboration and betrayal are found in the same works" (61). This interplay between two seemingly opposing sides is emphasized in *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous*. Vuong writes in English but makes the language his own and perhaps 'betrays' the notion of what American Literature is. By adapting language to illustrate Little Dog's own reality and system of values, Vuong demonstrates the fluidity and heterogeneity of language in his novel.

To sum up, the novel's experimental form, frequent poetic digressions, and manipulation of English in order to create a beautiful and personal letter, reinforce Little Dog's 'mask' as one of expression and self-representation, not of conformity under Fanon's definition. In this yearning for visibility, we can draw parallels to Ocean Vuong's own history as a writer. On the relationship between language and visibility, Little Dog sees that "sometimes you are erased before you are given the choice of stating who you are" (Vuong 63). He not only chooses to speak for his mother, but also becomes a writer who touches the hearts of others through his words.

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Inner Migrations - the private and collective in transit and relation

By Anna Westhofen

For a long time, I imagined a place. A place in space and time that I could not map but felt strangely connected to; that called me with a far-away cry.

Do you have that one place that retrieves you time and again? I do, by now. Recently, I dwelled on the likely or unlikely setting of this imagined place. A location I do not name but provide a sense of; a place to be crafted by the mind's eye. Place-consciousness starts with the feeling we have about a place. In some places, we immediately feel at home. See, *home* is not necessarily a place of birth or where the family lives. The idea of *home* translates to the question *where do we belong*. Take it: the sweet coalescence of being in tune with your surroundings, others, and – most importantly – self. Now, can home equal displacement, too?

If you ask me, I believe the moments before you embark on a journey are the most interesting. Compose numerous versions of the place you'll travel to in your head, and then, slowly, realize for how long this place has been inhabiting your mind. In transit, you complete one of the pictures of the place that you've started painting in your head.

I recently transited through the place that I carved out of my stretch of imagination – it's a beautiful idea. With fresh ground beneath my feet, I was hoping to find new headspace. Transiting the country by foot, car, and train, I did not just hope to remind myself of the place's heady mountains but relied on putting a whole body of thought on its solid bedrock. I've done it before. I have.

But this time, I was not a wandering visitor. *Sojourn*. I was an observer – pausing, I saw the country's unrest. Only then I realised just as I moved through the country, the state was in transition too.

I talked. I talked to the people; the foreign yet familiar sound of their language gave me comfort but in the bleakness of the winter landscape, their words were unquiet. "This is –, after all," they said. *This is* –, and through language, I identified the reality of a nation. Divided. What followed these revelations was a great silence eating up at the presence. We waited for a winter bird's far cry outside to cut through the disappointment.

I could not discern answers to the preconceived questions that I had in mind. But I looked at the windswept landscape, and then I looked at their faces – I found fierceness in both. This is still the bright of their home.

A sense of place is yet to be imagined anew. I couldn't outstay but the pull is still strong. *Abide with me*. Perhaps, it is a sentimental story – and it is not just mine – but transition is also renewal.

Painting by Anna Westhofen

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Contributors

Misbah Ahmad, originally from Pakistan, came to Germany in 2021 in the midst of a pandemic to pursue her master's in Anglophone Literature and Culture Studies at the University of Göttingen. Her writings are usually her personal experiences in an attempt to try and make sense of the world.

Anahita Mirjam Amanolahi is a third-year BA student of English, History and French in Münster. Her research interests include environmental racism, White saviourism, Eurocentrism and decolonization. She is primarily concerned with the convergence of history, politics, and international relations and has written several articles on said topics as a contributor for the journalistic blog a-global-perspective.com.

Kathryn Bathgate is an MA student at the University of Münster. After receiving a Fulbright grant, she landed in Münster and remained to study education. Her research has enabled her to speak at an international conference on the 'comfort women'. In her spare time, she is active in Democrats Abroad, reads, and bakes.

Thomas Bilda, born in 1983, studied Modern German Literature and Modern and Contemporary History at the Eberhard Karls University of Tübingen. As a scholarship holder of the Landesgraduiertenförderung Baden-Württemberg, he completed his PhD in German Literary Studies on the topic of 'Doppelgängerfigurationen' in 2014. He lives with his wife and two daughters near Münster, NRW.

Yasemin Ertugrul lives and works in Erlangen with a forest inside her home and a dog who chose her as his human. She often thinks about ethics and life beyond the Human.

Aline Franzus is an MA student in the British, American and Postcolonial Studies program at the University of Münster, where she also pursues a teaching degree in German and English Studies. Her research interests lie at the intersection of literary, cultural, and book studies, including gender studies, critical race theory, archival, museum, and memory studies.

Maya Hillebrand is a bachelor's student of German and English at the University of Münster. She is currently spending a semester at the University of Agder in Norway. Her research interests include but are not limited to multilingualism and translation studies, of which she hopes to gain a deeper understanding during her studies abroad.

Annika Klempel, 26, is currently completing her MA in Education at the University of Münster in German Studies and English. Her research interests are education sciences and book studies, in particular child-giftedness as well as the children's and young adult literary market.

Caleb Karim Morton is a poet from Accra, Ghana. He is a final year first degree student of mass communication at the University of Cape Coast, Cape Coast. He was one of five winners of Stream Lyric's Black Writers on Democracy in 2020, an international, political life-writing competition launched as a response to the BLM protests in the US and UK in July/August 2020.

Max Landwehrjohann is a second-year student in the MA program in National and Transnational Studies at WWU. Hailing from Germany, he also works for a company that helps refugees learn German and enter the job market. In his free time he loves writing and producing music and creating music-related videos on YouTube.

Felix Oldenburg

Past:

1997 – born
2001 – first stunning football goal (kindergarten league)
2015 – start of law study
2015 – fed up with law study
2021 – completion of law degree

Present:

Literally right now – nearly run over by a bus in Dublin (don't write your biography in traffic)

Future (tentative):

Next Tuesday – spiritual enlightenment

Vincenzo Pantó studies Philosophy and Art. My interest was always in Italian pornographic literature, and I wanted to become an astronaut or a plumber, but I chose to be free in the end. My interests are love, love, love. I am 20 years old but feel like 100 or 0.

Jeanette Ruiz is a high-strung hippie, professional philomath and author of adventures. Being a lover of leaving, I've been traveling the world for over two decades. Currently, Münster is home before embarking on a new expedition. For future short stories that may never come, follow me on Instagram at ZenHen86.

Tanne Stephens completed her MA in National and Transnational Studies at University of Münster with a pragmatics focus. Growing up in a bicultural household, she has long been fascinated by the science of human interaction and the ways sociocultural realms impact an individual's psychology and how they connect with people around them. She will begin a PhD position in education and multilingualism at the University of Münster in the fall.

Marco Thunig studies cultural poetics and has been working as a freelancer in online marketing since 2016. He is head of the writing workshop 'Literarische Schreibwerkstatt' at the University of Münster. In addition to Critical Theory, he has a weakness for the works of Thomas Mann, Kafka, Murakami, and Tarantino. When he is not reading or pursuing novel projects, he is painting miniatures. He can also be found at https://www.patreon.com/orodaro.

Julia van der Giet (she/they) comes from a small village in the progressive west of the Niederrhein and is therefore an expert on small villages. She is 21 years old and is studying English and German for their Bachelor's degree in Münster. When they are not reading or writing, they are occupied with the really important things in life. Like cheese.

Felicitas Sophie van Laak recently graduated from the University of Münster with a master's thesis on queer science fiction. She is currently indulging in post-uni reminiscences, which is why she attended Sylee Gore's Poetry Writing Workshop. With this poem, Felicitas hopes to maintain her academic street credit, since she just sold her soul to a digital agency, working as a content marketing manager.

Betty Waselowsky is in her third year of undergraduate study at the University of Münster. She is studying English and Biology to become a secondary school teacher. Reading has always been something that gave her great comfort and pleasure. She hopes to share her excitement and love for literature with many students in the future.

Anna Westhofen is currently studying for a Master of Education in English and German studies as well as a Master of Arts in British, American and Postcolonial Studies at the University of Münster. She specializes in literature and culture with an interest in gender, postcolonial, and diaspora studies. Both in- and outside university, she reads and writes a lot, sometimes paints and likes to hear about the stories of people and places.

Philipp Woschek is a law student at the University of Münster. In 2020, he started composing prose and poetry on an irregular basis, most of which can be found in the small literature magazine Literarische Blätter at literarische-blaetter.de.

Volume 4 Staff

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Laura Ntoumanis is a poet, editor and book studies enthusiast. She recently co-authored a chapter in *Bookshelves in the Age of the Covid-19 Pandemic* and is diligently working on her research on the intersection of EuroAmerican and Indigenous North American book history. She has presented on her research at SHARP 2019 and SHARP 2022.

Natalia Tolstopyat has an MA degree in British, American and Postcolonial Studies from the University of Münster. She published articles "BookTube, Book Clubs and the Brave New World of Publishing" and "Close Listening: Bookish Podcasts during the COVID-19 Pandemic." She is a co-author of an article in *Bookshelves in the Age of the COVID-19 Pandemic* (2022).

VOLUME 4 STAFF

Rajiv Sekhri - Editor in Chief
Rajiv has more than 25 years of experience in journalism, editing and communications in five countries. Currently, he is getting an MA in British, American and Postcolonial Studies at the University of Münster.

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Laura, whose bio is above, steered the editing of all poems in this volume.

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Lena is a third-semester student in the MA program in British, American and Postcolonial Studies at the University of Münster. Having always loved books, she decided to turn her passion into a career during her first internship in a small bookstore and pursued a bachelor's degree in Book Studies. She's integrating both historical and contemporary subjects into her studies and aspires to a career in publishing.

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Ryan is an MA student in British, American and Postcolonial Studies at the University of Münster. On any given Tuesday you can find him rapt by coffee and a book. He is passionate about travel, literature, and languages.

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Evra is an MA student in British, American and Postcolonial Studies at the University of Münster. Gentleman by day and fool by night, she enjoys long walks on the beach and eating spinatbörek. She contributed two poems for this edition of *Satura*.

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Neele is an MA student in National and Transnational studies at the University of Münster. If you need to find her, just follow the sound of bickering with the chief editor about whether or not it's really necessary to have titles at the tops of pages.