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edited by

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'Full characterd with lasting memory'
For Alessandro Serpieri, in memoriam

Donatella Pallotti and Paola Pugliatti

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Editorial

In this issue of the *Journal of Early Modern Studies*, we explore the different ways in which time was culturally constructed in the early modern period. How was time experienced, conceptualized and organized? What were the temporal practices that structured early modern lives, either individually or collectively? How did one measure time and acknowledge its effects on people, and what were the cultural imaginaries, sensory settings or discursive frames through which time became lived reality? Time could be experienced as an embodied aspect of human existence, but was also represented and mediated in various ways. In this journal issue, we are looking for the ways in which people managed and conceptualized both time and temporality and incorporated them into their understanding of the specific cultural context(s) in which they lived.

The idea that time is culturally constructed has its own history, of course, and so has the interest in exploring its development. Peter Burke has traced these developments and suggests that the most significant turning point may have occurred around 1900, with the social theory of Émile Durkheim and his circle, later followed by the *Annales* historians.

> The basic binary opposition underlying these studies was the one between self and other, presented as a contrast between traditional and modern, between what Febvre called *le temps vécu* and *le temps-mesuré*. Time in traditional societies, according to the model used by these scholars, is qualitative, concrete, local, imprecise, or in a word, organic. Time in modern societies, on the other hand, is quantitative, abstract, uniform, and exact, as mechanical as the clocks and watches used to measure it … Traditional time is the time of experience, organized and measured by tasks, especially agricultural tasks … Modern time, by contrast, according to these scholars, was exact time, measured by the clock, a sense of time appropriate to commercial and industrial societies, with a different work rhythm from pastoral or agricultural communities. (2004, 619-620)

Burke comments on this opposition being in need of qualification, by noticing both the reciprocal implications between the two sorts of time, and an increasing awareness of the multiplicity of forms of time reckoning that can already be recorded in the experience of early modern people (see also Gurvitch 1963). We hope that the present collection of essays can bring more food for thought in the same direction. If the powerful turn from organic and task-oriented time towards measured and mechanical time took place in the early modern period, we need to think about how these changes were understood by the early modern people themselves. In order to do this,

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we provide case studies from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries, discussing in different ways how the two views of time were in fact intertwined with one another, and indeed with various everyday practices that allowed early modern people to develop both complex and personal understanding and experience of temporality.

Anthropological research on the cultural relativity of time experiences has exercised a major influence on the most recent generation of historical studies, and displayed a characteristic attention for the way objects shape temporality (Birth 2012). Consequently, the growing field of material culture studies represents the framework within which a significant amount of work on temporality has found and is likely to find place and encouragement in the foreseeable future (Appadurai 1986; Harvey 2009; Gerritsen and Riello 2015). Linked with an interest in the material culture of time is its close connection with technology: time has been both measured and understood by means of various technological tools, the innovation of which has also introduced changes in experiencing time. Whether portable watches or pendulum clocks, early modern innovations in the technology of time marked a modernisation process that gave rise to temporal management as an ever more powerful vehicle of control and discipline.

But the early modern period also saw new vocabularies develop for discussing experiences related to time, bringing with them new forms of affect. For some people, time was secularized, but for others, it grew even more intensely religious, demanding an enhanced personal investment in temporal management. Time was also gendered, particularly if we look at it from the perspective of everyday life.

There is also, inevitably and intriguingly, a reflexive, meta-historical dimension in any consideration of time: history as a discipline is practised in a given time set, and applies to culturally specific past time frames and flows (on periodization within a pragmatic reflection on doing history, see Jordanova 2006, 105-125). No wonder then that historians, like literary scholars and anthropologists, have increasingly seized upon time as a subject that is not only constitutive of historical subjectivities but also a foundational ingredient of the disciplines themselves (Hunt 2008, 16-24).

JEMS is, programmatically, an interdisciplinary humanities journal. It is therefore noteworthy, and yet entirely in line with the publication agenda, that Donatella Pallotti and Paola Pugliatti have kindly invited two cultural historians to guest edit this year's issue. We accepted their invitation with enthusiasm. The International Society for Cultural History (ISCH – incidentally, the environment within which the two of us met, began and have continued to collaborate) had chosen for its 2015 yearly conference, which was held in Bucharest, the topic of 'Time and Culture'. It was a natural choice, therefore, for us, to invite some of the conference speakers, who both for the chronology and methodology of their research were consistent with the

horizon of our interests, to develop their conference papers into contributions for the present volume.[1] Consequently, five of the articles that follow (Ashcroft, Bourdon, Kaartinen, Korhonen, and Ylivuori) are the result of a re-elaboration of texts first presented before audiences in Bucharest. Another (Eriksen) had been planned for the conference but could not be delivered, because in the end the panel for which it had been intended did not materialize. Cope's article has been written especially for this journal issue. Arcangeli's was first delivered as a plenary lecture at the 2016 yearly conference of the Italian Association of Shakespearean and Early Modern Studies (IASEMS), which was held in Catania. As is always the case, feedback from their respective audiences, as well as from the anonymous referees who generously volunteered to review the present collection, greatly helped the texts to reach the form in which they are now offered to the reader.

Given that cultural history intrinsically eschews definition and standardization, it will not come as a surprise if the contents of the present issue present the reader with a variety of research objects and approaches.

Material culture, and the way in which the design, manufacturing and uses of objects expressed and channelled time experiences and perceptions, a dimension which we have reviewed among the most characteristic and promising recent developments of research in the field, is represented in Sophie Cope's essay. The 'things' whose social life she investigates are gifts exchanged on the occasion of the New Year in early modern England – dated objects that may both reflect and have encouraged the perception of that cyclical moment as significant in people's lives, and represent a symbolically charged material component of the shared celebration of the ritual year.

History writing (therefore, in a sense, fragments towards a history of historiography) is the object of two distinct analyses, which differ for the chronology, geography and genre of the texts examined. In the first, Étienne Bourdon explores a variety of genres of Renaissance history writing in order to investigate the multiplicity of temporal conceptions which they express. While some continuity of the Christian reading of time as a divine order is clearly perceivable, historical narratives testify to a relative secularization of time, witnessing the emergence of the notion of heritage and an increasing focus on the present. In the other essay, Anne Eriksen proposes a close cross-examination of two textbook collections of historical *exempla* from early modern Scandinavia. The principle of *historia* as *magistra vitae* is still dominating to such an extent that the narratives are not ordered chronologically, but rather in the form of a lexicon of virtues that the pupils are expected to learn from the knowledge of the past.

[1] A wider selection of papers from the same conference is going to be published in Lung *et al*.

Other forms of cultural practice are the focus of the remaining contributions. Anu Korhonen challenges the received idea that early modern time keeping was vague and primarily task-oriented, in particular among women, and finds a variety of contexts and ways in which sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English women already adopted clock-time as a matter of fact, both in their experience and conceptualizing, albeit (still) mixing it with the circadian rhythm and an understanding of task-oriented temporality.

Time management is at stake in Soile Ylivuori's contribution. With focus on an individual and her ego documents, we are here invited to appreciate the highly specific context in which an eighteenth-century Englishwoman, whose life circle was strictly dependent on the Archbishop of Canterbury, adopted a painstakingly accurate monitoring of her own daily activity. This consisted of an exercise of self-discipline which, however, the author does not imagine as devoid of autonomous agency and self-satisfaction.

With Marjo Kaartinen we explore *ennui* – therefore also making a contribution to the growing field of study of the affective life of past generations. By means of a systematic search of the available literature via a digital resource, the author revisits the precise timing and contexts of the English borrowing of the French word, and finds a strong correlation of its usage with social rank and lifestyles, while a surprisingly limited role seems to be played in the story by gender.

Rachel Ashcroft analyses the writings of Giordano Bruno and Michel de Montaigne from the perspective of their understanding of time, as a complex dimension in which the human mind and body interplay, and finds a significant correspondence between their two approaches.

Finally, reading is the cultural practice considered by Alessandro Arcangeli from two different, complementary perspectives: the time conditions in which the act of reading was practiced in a period of the early modern era affected by the introduction of the printing press and much else, but also the time experience readers may have had while absorbed in their texts, according to genre and other conditions.

As this brief summary may already suggest, some of the themes and dimensions of the historical analysis of temporality as cultural history has developed it can be seen applied in practice in the eight contributions, which could also be read transversally as exemplifying fields, in which given research categories and tools can be fruitfully adopted. Gender is central in Korhonen and Ylivuori, while also being considered by Arcangeli and Kaartinen; class or social hierarchy are meaningful in Cope, Eriksen, Korhonen and Ylivuori. Emotions are relevant for Ashcroft, Eriksen, Kaartinen and Korhonen. Korhonen and Ylivuori share as well an emphasis on clocks and clock-time, duration, time-keeping and time management. Temporality figures among the concepts used and areas explored by Bourdon, Eriksen, Kaartinen and Korhonen. Arcangeli and Bourdon speak, to various extents, of historicity;

Arcangeli, Bourdon and Korhonen, also, of rhythms. Calendars are discussed by Ashcroft, Bourdon and Cope; and chronology by Bourdon and Eriksen.

Undoubtedly, the topic we have chosen would allow many more enquiries, and there was no attempt, in assembling the present collection, to be systematic in any respect. Nevertheless, we hope that we are offering to the reader interesting enough topics and approaches; as well, perhaps, as some encouragement to pursue further investigation of still uncharted territories.

Alessandro Arcangeli and Anu Korhonen

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Part One

Reading Temporalities in History

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Reading Time: The Act of Reading and Early Modern Time Perceptions

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Abstract

The early modern transformations of the realm of the written word also added a new dimension to the relationship between the act of reading and the experience of time. On the material culture front there is the time set for reading, affected by literacy, the availability of reading material, the lighting conditions or the supply of reading glasses, as well as by conventions that may suggest more or less appropriate occasions for this activity. In the age of the printing press, various modes and rhythms of writing and reading were also affected by the changes and by the coexistence of plural communication media. On the other hand, reading opens a window on a reality that has its own timeline – or rather, that can be experienced as belonging to another time dimension: from the remote past of Antiquity to the newly developing synchronicity that characterised the world of news. A new sensitivity for the present was being born out of a major metamorphosis in communication, transport and cultural exchange.

Keywords: News, Reading, Renaissance, Time Perception

1. *Time to Read?*

It may seem overambitious to attempt a historical anthropology of the act of reading that proposes to discuss its relationship with the experience of time, particularly as it comes from a non-specialist in many of the areas of expertise involved. I would more humbly suggest taking what follows as a thought experiment, or else as a cluster of ideas towards future research.

In choosing a title for my contribution, I deliberately sought ambiguity between the time set for the practice of reading and the time perception one may experience while reading, with the intention of exploring both (and any connection between the two). The early modern transformation of the whole business of writing, circulating written texts, and reading, also added a new dimension to the relationship between the act of reading and the perception and experience of time – on a variety of accounts.

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On the practical, material culture front there is the time set for reading – this quantitative and qualitative phenomenon is affected by such variables as the extent and social distribution of literacy, the availability of reading material as expanded and modified by the advent of the printing press, the lighting conditions, the supply of reading glasses that may affect the extent to which (daily, seasonally, or in one's lifetime) willing readers may be able to satisfy their wish, as well as social conventions or medical advice that may suggest more or less appropriate occasions for this activity. Such variables inevitably interact with varying modes and rhythms of writing and reading, also affected both by the shift (or rather pluralism) of media and by the many social and cultural contexts in which all this occurs.

On the other hand, reading opens a window on a reality that has its own timeline – or rather, that can be experienced, interpreted, appropriated as belonging to one or another time dimension: from the remote past of Antiquity (as perceived by Renaissance readers with a passion for the classical world, even if this emotional revisiting allowed them to maintain a distance from it) to the newly developing synchronicity that characterised the world of news. Whether or not different readers were doing it at the same time, a new sensitivity for the present and simultaneousness was being born out of a major metamorphosis in communication, transport and cultural exchange.

1.1 *When to Read*

This is not the place to attempt to engage in matters of literacy in any systematic way, so let us merely hint at them rhapsodically. The level of literacy existing in Western societies at the end of the Middle Ages is hard to measure: as well as total estimated numbers of readers, one has to take into account inequality between men and women, between different occupations and estates, between town and country, as well as between different parts of Europe (Chartier 2002). The early modern period is regarded as a turning point, with figures progressively improving from its beginning to its end. Witnesses give us lively accounts of the situation in particular urban contexts. For instance Gregorio Leti, a seventeenth-century writer from Milan whose work regularly featured in the Index of prohibited books, wrote the following portrait of the city of Bologna:

> Not only does one very frequently see tailors, cobblers, and other artisans leave their manual work, by which they earn their daily bread, to read some book of history or poetry, but even the peasants in the provinces around the city mainly talk about poetry and history, and frequently with some intelligence. (Quoted in Dooley 2002, 215)

Reading time (as well as the reading public) would appear from this description to have expanded even at the expense of working time. Similar encouraging evaluations are offered in the case of England.

Pleasure and utility (a duo of purposes of literature that we will encounter again later, in the tradition of Horace) also combined or alternated as widespread occasions and reasons for which to engage in reading:

> people who did not read for pleasure read for necessity. While their relations with government were mediated more and more by printed proclamations, broadsheets, and even newspapers, their work and home lives were informed by the various trade manuals and books of secrets offering everything from cooking recipes to miracle cures. (Raven, Small and Tadmor 1996, 215)[1]

The impact of the printing press on this story is undeniable. Nevertheless, Marshall McLuhan's thesis of a radical revolution as the product of the material layout of the printed page – even in its moderate reformulation by Elizabeth Eisenstein (McLuhan 1962; Eisenstein 1993) – proves less convincing in the light of the recently growing research on the multimediality of the early modern communication system. With the coexistence and interplay between oral, manuscript and printed culture, no specific 'typographic man' could easily be detected (Barbierato 2014).

A variable whose influence should never be underestimated is the religious factor: the gap between book ownership by Protestants and Catholics within the same city, seventeenth-century Metz, and among the same social groups, is striking (Benedict 1985; Chartier 2002, 127-128). It must also have involved their different uses. Time is an element of this divide, from the basic fact that the amount of time spent on reading may be regarded as a clue to individuals' religious affiliation. In sixteenth-century Venice, a silk-worker could be denounced to the Inquisition because 'he reads all the time', while a swordsmith 'stays up all night reading' (MacKenney 1987, 182; Burke 2016, 148). Needless to say, the approach to religious texts can engage individuals or groups in participating in some not entirely sensorial experience. The same goes for the magical book, which in fact does not even need to be read to sort its effects: it just needs to be there, as a material object (Chartier 2014, 20-21).

Spaces used for reading, including the reader's posture, have recently been investigated, either under some influence of a more general spatial turn or bodily turn, or due to the increased attention that material culture has gained over the past generation of study. Positions and places have been studied with reference to iconographic sources, among others, and for instance a gender divide has been suggested as marking the more traditional and rigid, sitting up straight, standard position of the male reader versus the more relaxed,

[1] Naturally, the traditional distinction of two purposes is a simplification. I mention below reading in religious context and, as one of my anonymous readers helpfully pointed out, reading for salvation and inspiration does not easily fit into either category. Nor does the reason or the mood in which a lover reads a love letter.

typically female reclining position (Plebani 2001; Chartier 2002, 134-135).[2] Perhaps time has so far received less attention – that is, with the exception of the major role the modes and speed of reading was given in the reference accounts of reading revolutions (to which we will briefly return).

Any consideration of historical reading practices should be careful to avoid anachronism and the risk of simply projecting into the past modes and habits of reading that may be culturally specific to our own world: from the conventions of reading individually and silently to the modern library prohibition of marking books or eating and drinking while reading. That reading aloud continued well into modern times – and we should never forget or underestimate how many people were always read to, regardless of their own level of literacy – is one of the most enduring rediscoveries of the last generation or two of the historiography of the book and of reading. Nor, when considering the act of reading before a public, should one forget the gesture that would accompany the pronunciation of a text: from the tone of voice and the use of pregnant pauses, to facial expression, posture and hand language. The message transmitted and decoded by the audience could therefore be significantly modified by adding emphasis, or a variety of possible nuances, or indeed an ironic challenge and complete reversal – and the public's reaction would be audible and visible too. As a type of performance, oratorical delivery is typically an art that unravels over time.

Silent reading is thought to have been introduced in monastic scriptoria and then adopted, from the twelfth century, in the milieu of university scholars. By the fifteenth century, it had expanded to become the predominant reading mode even among an increasing lay public. This does not mean that it had replaced reading aloud completely. Besides reading to someone else, reading to oneself while pronouncing the words has remained until modern times the practice of learners and the less able, silence being rather the marker of the most fluent in the skill (Chartier 1994; 2002). Such a divide cannot possibly exist without implications for the ways different categories of people engage in it. Being virtually inaudible – apart from potential minor sounds that depend on particular reading practices and on the text's medium, such as turning pages – silent readers can perform their activity in places and at times in which the audible sound of their voice would not be allowed (hence the obvious connection with monastic rules) or otherwise easily accepted. Thus, if visual and other sensory conditions permit, these readers can be in places where they are not easily detected, or where they do not disturb or interfere

[2] Since the writing and reading of this article is a reflexive act, a metadiscourse on such practices, although in historical perspective, I may as well declare that it was written by regular use of reading glasses, mostly at night time thanks to artificial light and, contrary to gender stereotypes (though perhaps these are considerably fading in postmodernity), rarely sitting at my desk.

with the activities of others. All these circumstances may prove quite relevant, for instance, if reading of prohibited material is one's objective. However, in the same way in which reading aloud not only has implications for others' ears but may affect and help the reader's own understanding of the script, reading silently is an activity that must to some extent shape one's experience of the text, by allowing deeper abstraction from the material context and conditions of the reading, and concentration on the reasoning, the narrative, or the content of the text.

In fact, Paul Saenger, to whom we owe the definitive study of the medieval introduction of the space between words and of its role as material support for silent reading, distinguishes between two forms of competence that are too often confused under the umbrella term 'literacy': phonetic literacy versus comprehension literacy. While the latter achieves understanding by the simple gaze, the former consists in decoding texts syllable by syllable by pronouncing them orally, without necessarily understanding their precise meaning. It is connected with rote memorization, and has parallels in the reciting of Christian prayers in Latin (by the faithful who are unfamiliar with the language), on the one hand, and, on the other, in the ongoing use today of Arabic as the language of prayer in Islamic countries where the everyday language is different. Not only do the two types of literacy exist side by side and in the same subjects – as is the obvious case for people who may have phonetic literacy in Latin and comprehension in the vernacular – they could also be implied within the same texts, which might for this precise reason circulate in some bilingual versions (Saenger 1989 and 1997).

As for the interaction between reading and writing, marginalia nowadays represent a dynamic area of historical enquiry, emphasising the interactive – and far from passive – role of early modern readers, who were always equipped with their writing materials. On this front, H.J. Jackson has found, at least in the English case, a shift that is datable to the eighteenth century, when annotation became simultaneously more personal and more public (2001). The *ancien régime* of marginalia saw the tradition of adding glosses, scholia and rubrics to manuscripts continuing to flourish in the age of the printed book. In the early stages of the printing press and as evidence of the hybridity characteristic of a transitional period, this apparently included some books issuing from printers' workshops already endowed with partly handwritten annotations (Saenger and Heinlen 1991). The skill of annotating while reading was taught and so some extant notes were dictated to pupils by their teachers. There were various steps in the ladder of acquiring annotating skills and, before being able to make original contributions aiming at improving the given texts, learners were simply expected to mark them with educational and mnemonic aids. In his highly influential 'De ratione studii' (1511), Erasmus recommended adopting a variety of marks, easily distinguishable from one another in order to be retrievable based on their typology. Progressively, the

press moved to provide the reader with all sorts of ready-made annotations, and no fewer than fifteen different functions of printed marginalia have been identified within English Renaissance books (Slights 1989). That some practices of reading are accompanied by the erasing, rather than the highlighting or annotating, of a text is testified typically (although not solely) by the Inquisition's expurgating instructions.

At the crossroads between spaces and times for reading, we find the material characteristics of the supports of texts, as is evident from the portability of some books and papers. The fact that they can be carried around facilitates reading elsewhere (than where reading material is ordinarily kept) and at a time of one's choice and encourages forms of privatization of the act of reading (as well as the contrary, as when a book is brought before an audience). A variety of specific, deliberately portable types of reading material have been introduced at given points in history and have significantly affected the experience of their worlds, whether literary or religious. Two clear examples are the late medieval book of hours and Aldo Manuzio's classics in octavo (Saenger 1989; Richardson 1999). The typology of *libri da bisaccia* and *libretti da mano* explored by Armando Petrucci – a testimony to the practice of reading while travelling – provide another indication of the time, as well as the conditions, of the experience (Petrucci 1969; Chartier 2002, 136-137).

Other spatial information indirectly alluding to particular times is offered by household inventories that indicate the rooms in which books were kept. Their presence in bedrooms is a direct pointer to bedtime reading – a practice that we know from egodocuments was not necessarily a solitary one, but could feature partners reading aloud to one another, or assistants reading to their employers (Chartier 2002, 132-133, 137).

Reading alone or in company may have had implications on the genre and mode of execution. Of late medieval England, we learn that 'of the various ways of reading, that which would seem most dependent on isolation is meditative devotional reading, a specialised mode of apprehension involving the ability to dwell in sustained reverie on a text. This is reading in slow time, reading as a form of prayer' (Taylor 1996, 43).

1.2 *Reading as Physical Exercise*

My earlier reference to medical discourse may have sounded slightly surprising as, from a modern viewpoint, it is not immediately obvious how reading could affect or relate to health. The discussion of this point can be helpfully introduced by a quick look at the founding text in the Western tradition of writing health advice, the Hippocratic *Regimen* (tentatively datable to the first half of the 4th century BCE). It distinguished natural from violent exercises: sight, hearing, the voice and thought are presented as the properly speaking natural. This labelling depends on a distinction between what is spontaneous for humans and what instead requires an effort. All four are regarded as

movements of the soul; however, they do affect the body, considering that in order to perform them the soul moves and heats, thus consuming part of the body's humidity (Ippocrate 1976, 543-544; Jouanna 1999, 167).

We find a developed paragraph on reading as exercise within the sixteenth-century founding oeuvre of medical gymnastics, the well-known book by Girolamo Mercuriale, first published in 1569. As largely a work of medical antiquarianism, it also details the sources, ancient and medieval, which had most significantly intervened on the matter previously. In a chapter of his sixth and last book, the Italian physician discusses 'The qualities of reading, speaking, laughing and crying'. At the opening, we find a distinction: 'I have found two types of reading mentioned in medical authors, intense and fast as opposed to relaxed'. Expanding on this typology, the author evokes a cluster of classical sources defining and medically assessing the given practice:

> Intense reading – what Cornelius Celsus called 'reading aloud' – moves the breath in a way that is neither soft nor superficial, as Plutarch says, but rising up from its point of origin, as it were, in the inner parts of the body, it increases the warmth, makes the blood thin, purges all veins, opens all arteries, does not allow the humours to become thick or dense, or to become stuck in the cavities responsible for the reception and digestion of food; that is why Celsus placed it first among the exercises which can be performed at one's convenience. (Mercuriale 2008, 641)

It should be clear from the context that the distinction does not coincide with intensive versus extensive reading as defined by modern critics, nor does the occurrence of the specification 'aloud' oppose it to silent: it rather appears as a differentiation of modes of reading, more versus less energetic, however always audible. Its prescription can be either preventive or curative:

> Seneca and Caelius Aurelianus confirm that it is not detrimental to the head, but rather beneficial, and Caelius recommends a similar type of reading to cure headache and insanity, while Seneca used it frequently to prevent a flux from the head. (641)

Here a further distinction is made wherein the reading matter becomes relevant, with respect to a specific category of patient:

> In this case, one has to be cautious not to give anything difficult to understand to someone suffering from insanity or headache, for such subject matter, as Caelius says, has a similar effect to being transported inappropriately. (641)

Further recommendations include:

> Reading aloud also helps the inner parts of the chest and the stomach, and corrects their faults, as Celsus says, since thick residues are made thin and easy to pass, and the innate heat is stimulated and increased, but not excessively. (641-643)

After a few more examples and specifications, a citation from the medieval tradition intervenes by pointing the attention to degrees of effort in reading, with a particular recommendation:

> Avicenna says that one should start reading with a soft voice, then proceed to the normal level, then loudly, a crescendo and a deep breath and a moderate duration, because then it is most beneficial. (643)

Having dealt with intense and vigorous reading, Mercuriale proceeds to comment more cursorily on the other form:

> Moreover, reading practiced rather gently and without strain is useful for the same purpose, except that its effects are less marked, and therefore we can use it safely after a meal, as was recommended by Plutarch. (643)

Here we encounter the first explicit reference to *when*. The indication that gentle reading is safe after a meal casts doubt, retrospectively, on whether intense reading may be similarly so. Humoral medicine was seriously concerned with digestion and the most common time recommendation on the matter of physical exercise was to avoid it immediately after meals. At this point, we discover, however, that a natural inclination to sleepiness after a meal is the terrain of a divide between two groups. If Caelius' concern for the comparative difficulty of texts referred to a particular category of sufferers, the next distinction evoked is mostly cultural:

> That was also what Aristotle was talking about when he wrote that ignorant and melancholic people are sent to sleep when they start to read, because they are unable to focus their understanding, and this triggers thick and cold fumes that make the brain sleepy. Intelligent men, however, rarely fall asleep when they read, because the inner heat is increased when they activate their intellect, and hence they tend to be more alert than sleepy. (643)

Once Mercuriale has finished with the subject of reading, he goes on to speaking or talking, 'which in itself is again a type of vocal exercise, but it is inferior to the aforementioned types [i.e., vociferation and singing, as well as reading] in vehemence and strength, and for this reason it is a weak type of exercise' (643).

A few years after Mercuriale, the distinction between 'loude and soft reading', examined among the forms of exercise for the voice, is also found in a chapter dedicated to reading within the educational treatise of the Elizabethan schoolmaster Richard Mulcaster, who relies on the same set of traditional sources (1994, chap. 12). At about the same time, however, the literature on hygiene began to enfranchise itself from slavery to ancient models and examples, and to say slightly more on current social and medical practice.

In a treatise published both in Latin and in Italian, Rodrigo da Fonseca, a Portuguese professor of medicine at Pisa and Padua for nearly half a century between the 1570s and the 1620s and a prolific writer, among others, returned to the matter of reading aloud as an example of exercise of a part of the body. His observations and distinctions enable us to eavesdrop a little more on reading practices and their contemporary conceptualization. He introduces the subject of the voice as affecting the head and the chest. He adds that when reading is performed loudly and uninterruptedly, as in a sermon, it may be seriously detrimental, particularly for subjects with feeble chests and lungs. However, a clear and moderate voice warms the chest and helps digestion. Reading aloud for an audience ('il legger pubblicamente') harms those who speak loudly and continuously; in particular, if someone is feeble in their chest, and does it for a whole hour. Here an example is given that quite possibly specifies the context of Plutarch's recommendation, cited above by Mercuriale: it is particularly detrimental for those who read publicly after dinner ('che doppo desinare publicamente leggono') – a suggestion of a form of literary entertainment. Conversely, the practice that is beneficial is reading aloud with pauses, as performed by those who dictate a text to scribes (Fonseca 1603, 27).

The contemporary medical discourse was also developing an initial interest in occupational diseases, which found its first systematization in Bernardino Ramazzini's *Diseases of Workers* (*De morbis artificum diatriba*), first published in 1700 and later enlarged. Here the Italian physician summarised, among other things, an older tradition of writing on the health issues of the literati which predictably included their professional dedication to reading as one of their key lifestyle factors. A general recommendation is towards moderation, and a classic concern is to avoid an overly sedentary life (though Ramazzini suggests that those who think they can avoid its harms by extensive reading while standing, do themselves worse harm). As well as commenting on posture and sites, the chapter develops the recommendation of the appropriate time of the day for study. On the authority of Marsilio Ficino, the author suggests that 'the morning is the best, not so the night, and even less so just after dinner'. The Renaissance philosopher thus intended to correct a frequent mistake on the part of learned men, and proved his point on various grounds, from the astrological and the humoral to the general order of the universe: 'the day is intended for work and the night for rest, which means that scholars who study by candlelight are going against these natural laws' (2012, 225-236, 234). Ramazzini continues:

> Nevertheless, some scholars prefer to study at night rather than during the day, because the most secret recesses and friendly silence of the night are a greater aid to study … When scholars do carry out nocturnal studies, they should not do so in cramped rooms or studies, but rather in spacious quarters, as long as they are well wrapped-up, in winter in particular, so they are not bothered by the cold. (235)

The last point, however, goes beyond the question of choosing the appropriate time, by addressing that of space and a healthy environment.

1.3 *Reading Aids*

A significant role in the extension of reading opportunities was afforded by the invention and widespread adoption of eyeglasses. Earlier societies were well aware of such phenomena as the magnifying property of some stones. Nevertheless, the late Middle Ages witnessed successful efforts to improve optical accuracy. As for many technical and other novelties, primacy is contested. By the last quarter of the thirteenth century, we find references to them in Pisa and in Venice, and early in the fourteenth century a Dominican friar preaching in Florence – who appears to be personally acquainted with an inventor and early manufacturer – referred to them by introducing the word *occhiali*. As well as to much else, the story testifies to the influence of commercial and military power over the turn of events: Venetian glassmakers were able to produce better quality glass than their counterparts elsewhere in Europe, including Italy, thanks to the monopoly Venice held on trade with quality salt mines in Egypt; and while glass was made north of the Alps by using potash, the Venetians could produce crystal by using sodium. The earlier technique involved the blowing of glass balls, subsequently broken into pieces. From the mid-fifteenth century, glassmakers in Nuremberg and Regensburg, among other places, began to make lenses by using moulds. If one sits and reads, an eyeglass can be held against one's nose. Frames of various materials were soon introduced, however: from bone and wood to leather, horn and rolled copper wire. The key advantage of the most commonly produced, convex type of lenses was to facilitate reading and writing for the long-sighted, a very common condition from about the age of forty (Ilardi 2007; Willach 2008). This development has also been connected to the characteristics of the highly abbreviated, cursive script (*mercantesca*) which merchants and artisans used in their account books and correspondence and to their consequent need for optical aids (Ilardi 2007, 48). The innovation that caused a surge in the demand and supply of spectacles was, understandably, the introduction of the printing press. A product that until the mid-fifteenth century may have remained within a niche market was soon required in much larger quantities to respond to the enhanced availability of reading material, to the advance of literacy and to the expansion of the reading public. Different centres specialised in producing either cheaper or better quality eyeglasses to serve the requirements and purchasing power of different social groups.

Incidentally, one should never lose sight, so to speak, of the important role played by optics in natural philosophy, from the age of Roger Bacon to that of Galileo, nor of its implications for the construction of the pictorial

space and viewpoint in the epoch of the introduction of linear perspective and of the seeming adoption of such instruments as the camera obscura. All this has lately provided crucial matter for visual and sensory studies.

Lighting conditions form another highly relevant factor in the material culture of reading. Both the daily and seasonal alternation between light and darkness, with their connection with latitude and interaction with the varying atmospheric circumstances, affect the opportunity to look at a written text by creating more or less favourable conditions. To these material conditions one should add cultural conventions that may encourage or discourage given activities by associating them with varying degrees of social respectability according to the time and light conditions in which they are performed. Such cultural context is a historical variable and Craig Koslofsky, for instance, has spoken of an early modern European 'nocturnalization', that is, a process of 'expansion of the legitimate social and symbolic uses of the night' (2011, 2).

Anyone who has tried to read by candlelight during power cuts is familiar with the irksomeness of flickering light (a catchy title that has been given to books concerning not only candlelight but also neon). The technology of artificial light hardly changed for millennia, mostly relying on candles, torches, lamps and lanterns – with variation mainly occurring in matter of accessories (O'Dea 1958; Thwing 1959; Brox 2012). Domestic lighting was also strictly linked to the control of warmth, a fire traditionally working as the main source for both. Therefore, we ultimately owe significant improvement in lighting conditions to a general development in living conditions, one not quick to come in modern times, rather than to a specific technological advance in the field, which was not available before the nineteenth century (Roche 2000, 106-123).[3]

However, late medieval improvements had already taken that route, and established conditions which, at least for the English case, have been interpreted as making a difference:

> The chamber, a realm of private solace in which dreaming and reading intermingle, is both a symbol and a material condition of a certain kind of leisure reading we now take very much for granted … The threefold combination of fireplace, flue and chimney stack, a technological innovation necessary for the comfortable heating of small rooms, was in use by the early twelfth century and became increasingly common in the thirteenth and fourteenth. In these warm and well-lit chambers one could read in bed, read and eat or drink, read oneself asleep, read and fantasize.

[3] Roche also offers a comparatively rare and insightful passing reference to the implications of light for reading, and its social context: 'Ability to control lighting techniques created a greater possibility for organizing specialised and separate ways of life. It allowed for greater mobility, a different style of privacy, other forms of leisure and sociability, for reading (whether shared or not), for conversation, while inability to control these techniques contributed to confusion between public and private space' (2000, 115).

Retreating from the public *praelectio* of the hall, one could read to oneself in peace and quiet; one could read silently. (Taylor 1996, 42-43)

Eventually, the nineteenth-century revolution came with 'the invention of gaslight, followed at the end of the century by that of electric light. Installed on city streets and within buildings and homes, gaslight blurred the age-old sensory divide between the visuality of daytime and the tactility of nighttime' (Classen 2014, 8).

Both magnifying the script and improving light conditions can be considered from the perspective of the empowerment of the senses, a category that has gained currency in recent trends in sensory history. On the whole, the relation such developments entertain with the time dimension is one of expansion and differentiation of the conditions in which readers came to have the opportunity to satisfy their wishes.

2. *Time while Reading*

As I said at the beginning, the flip side of the relationship between time and reading, besides the actual time in which reading occurs, is the reader's own time perception. By reading we can experience our own time but also be projected backwards into a personal or shared past (it may prompt our own memory and recollection of people, situations and events) or forwards into an imagined future.

Here the anthropology of reading practices meets the poetics and rhetoric of the texts, their forms of emplotment and narrative strategies: depending on the intensity of their experience, readers may be transported away from their own space, time, and other aspects of their ordinary perception and experience, into some kind of imaginary 'elsewhere', into some other time, or indeed into being *someone* or *something* else. Here it is not so much the visuality of the reading that generates the effect, since listening to texts being read, recited, or sung aloud may have the same effect or be even more likely to succeed in transporting the audience. We only need to recall Eric Havelock's suggestion of the pre-Platonic experience of the oral transmission of Greek epic to imagine similar processes of identification with a narrative context and its agents (1963).

My suggestion that the quality of such a temporal (and/or spatial or identity) transportation or transformation of the reader may depend on the intensity of the activity calls into question the historiography of the modes of reading. This has been dominated by Rolf Engelsing's distinction between intensive versus extensive reading: the former is characterised by insistent rumination on a limited number of texts (including, typically, the Bible), often also read to others, to the extent that they could be virtually learnt by heart, while the latter exhibits a craving for a large number of books, often read in solitude and not necessarily entirely nor repeatedly – with a

reading revolution jumping from one to the other in the eighteenth century (Engelsing 1974). One of the attractions of the model for our purpose here is to hint at the diversity in the speed of reading in different cultural contexts. However, as with all models, it is obviously a simplification, and different modes of reading are likely to have always been practised, including by the same readers.

Renaissance rules, expectations, or phantasies as to how reading was or should have been performed can be gathered from a variety of contemporary sources, ranging from textbooks teaching pupils how to read to sophisticated pieces of literary criticism discussing matters of textual interpretation. The anthropology of reading practices – and this has an obvious relevance for any attempt at a historical anthropology, and in fact it explicitly inspired research in the cultural history of such practices – owes much to the original insights offered by Michel de Certeau, which are commonly summarised under his alluring comparison of reading to some kind of poaching. While acknowledging the role of social institutions trying to determine the correct meaning of texts as an unquestionable orthodoxy, Certeau incorporates the results of the literary criticism inspired by an attention to reader response to suggest that reading practices have never excluded freedom and transgression; in fact, the liberation from the need to pronounce the text offers the body a special freedom which Certeau repeatedly describes with the metaphor of the dance – once to suggest the movement of the eyes upon the page and another time as the interpretative relationship between readers and texts. He has also reminded us how the learning of reading skills does not take place in a vacuum: it is preceded by oral communication which defines the strategies in the deciphering of texts (1988, 165-176).[4]

Our modern theory of reader response clearly engages in dialectic contrast with a classical emphasis on the dominance of the author's intentions. Renaissance literary criticism depended heavily on the Horatian combination of *dulce et utile* as the purposes of poetry; it had also just discovered Aristotle's *Poetics* and began to wonder about the exact dynamics of tragic *catharsis*. Nevertheless, it has been argued that obtaining all these effects required an ability to move the audience, a task well-known to the rhetorical tradition, and via this route an awareness of the reader's role as other than passive and receptive took its first steps (Cronk 1999).

If for a fuller appreciation of the sensorial dimension of the historical act of reading one should never isolate the visual experience from a variety of vocal forms, in the latter case we do not only find reading from the standpoint of varying degrees of competence, from the stammering of syllables to the fluent reciting before an audience: we also find music. Individual or choral

[4] In passing, Certeau suggests considering 'all sort of "reading rooms" (including lavatories)' (1988, 175) – surely a place and time for reading with its own peculiarities.

singing is a way of performing a script with tremendous resonances in the time experience (of singers and listeners alike), considering how music has by definition a temporal dimension, and rhythm may strongly affect people's lives. Jean-Claude Schmitt is currently exploring rhythms as wide underlying anthropological structures of medieval society, in the form of periodicities and fluxes permeating language and prayer, gesture and images (Formarier and Schmitt 2014; Schmitt 2016).

2.1 *Narrative Time*

To some extent, the form of a text – a complex of details that may to some degree at least have been deliberately chosen by an author to sort a particular effect – directs the reader's time experience of potentially time travelling, experiencing acceleration and deceleration, up to the limit of a suspension of the running of time.

In the second of the *Six Memos for the Next Millennium*, which Italo Calvino was not able to deliver at Harvard, 'Quickness', the Italian writer praised the economy of details characteristic of some storytelling, including folktales and fairy tales (1988, 31-54). He did not mean to value quickness in itself: 'a story is an operation carried out on the length of time involved, an enchantment that acts on the passing of time, either contracting or dilating it' (35). In one example, a novella from the *Decameron* (VI.1) devoted to the art of storytelling, 'the novella is a horse, a means of transport with its own pace, a trot or a gallop according to the distance and the ground it has to travel over; but the speed Boccaccio is talking about is a mental speed' (39). The metaphor of the horse for the speed of thought also occurred in Galileo, punning in *Il Saggiatore* on the similarity between 'il discorrere' and 'il correre' (42-43).

As for the opposite value, 'the pleasures of lingering', Calvino explored such slowing techniques as repetition and digression:

> In practical life, time is a form of wealth with which we are stingy. In literature, time is a form of wealth to be spent at leisure and with detachment. We do not have to be first past a predetermined finishing line. On the contrary, saving time is a good thing because the more time we save, the more we can afford to lose. Quickness of time and thought means above all agility, mobility, and ease, all qualities that go with writing where it is natural to digress, to jump from one subject to another, to lose the thread a hundred times and find it again after a hundred more twists and turns. (46)

In the course of the twentieth century, our awareness of the complex relationship between time and historical narrative has benefited, on the one hand, from the subtle phenomenological comparative examination of time in historiographical and fictional narrative conducted by Paul Ricoeur; on the

other, from the metahistorical perspective inaugurated by Hayden White. As a result, narrativity has turned into a line of enquiry of its own. It is not a novelty in the Western tradition, though, and *Temps et récit* is anchored in an analysis of Aristotle's view of the matter (White 1973; Ricoeur 1983-1985).

2.2 *Time Reborn: A New Sense of the Past?*

What perception may have developed within such a context as Renaissance humanism, with its peculiar passion for everything ancient, has been the subject of a line of historiographical reflection, under the label of a 'Renaissance sense of the past'. This was the title of an early book by cultural historian Peter Burke; it was also a topic he chose to return to with subsequent essays published over the space of more than thirty years, responding to critics and adjusting his own assessment of the matter as time went by. In its original formulation, it suggested that the humanists' love for antiquity did not impede distancing; in fact, with the attention for detail, it helped develop a more acute ability to perceive change, thus resulting in the emergence – first in Italy, later also elsewhere – of a new sensitivity for anachronism (as testified, for instance, by the attempt to adopt period dress in historical painting as well as on stage). To this point Burke added the humanists' critical attitude to documents and their interest in problems of explanation (1968; 1969). One can imagine that all this had an impact on the way humanists read, and how they experienced time while reading.

Returning to the subject on subsequent occasions, the British historian further developed the idea of a Renaissance sense of cultural distance from the past, which presented two obviously distinguished modes – that is, a 'nostalgic distance' from Antiquity versus an 'ironic distance' from the Middle Ages. Reference to such a sense as a time perspective has the advantage of rekindling the connection established many years ago by Erwin Panofsky between the Renaissance perception of the past and the invention of linear perspective (1930). The new qualifications Burke added to this historiographical reconstruction comprised, among others:

- a more explicit socio-cultural definition of the specific group which developed such an attitude;
- the recognition of a widespread tension between the sense of distance and the desire to annul it by reviving the admired past;
- and the suggestion that in this respect the Renaissance differed from other periods at both ends only by degrees. The Middle Ages witnessed cultural orientations towards the perception of that distance, except that an assumption of continuity still prevailed. By the late eighteenth century, the new sense had become much more common than before – the French Revolution marking a watershed even on this front (Burke 1994; 2001).

2.3 *Sensing the Present, in Good Company*

As a particular type of oral and written communication, news – a characteristic genre in reading practices – has played a fundamental role in the historical metamorphoses of the perception of time, by helping to develop a sense of contemporaneity (Infelise 2002; Dooley 2010a; Pettegree 2014). The fact that it is a type of information, circulating by diverse media, which did not encourage the solitary experience of newspaper reading typical of our own time, but rather a shared and often primarily aural activity, may help to correct a potential fallacy arising from our own standpoint and appreciate the multi-sensorial nature of early modern communication (pace McLuhan). One of the key specialists in this area, Brendan Dooley, defines contemporaneity in this context as

> the perception, shared by a number of human beings, of experiencing a particular event at more or less the same time. It is not simply a crowd phenomenon, since the observers in question may be out of sight or earshot of one another and still imagine themselves as a group. Depending on the scale of the event and the size of the group, it may have important consequences from a social, cultural and political standpoint. At the very least, it may add to a notion of participating in a shared present, of existing in a length of time called 'now'. Distributed over a certain geographical space or spaces, it may contribute to individuals' sense of community, or their identification with one another. With good reason, anthropologists and historians have identified it as a hallmark of modernity. (2010b, xiii)

A development of this sort was identified by Benedict Anderson, implicitly on McLuhan's tail, as central to the formation, in the Age of Enlightenment, of 'imagined communities' that led to the emergence of nation states (Anderson 2006).[5] Nevertheless, it can be traced further back than the eighteenth century. For the English case, where the Civil War had a dramatic impact on this sphere, and conversely was influenced in its course of events by the dynamics of contemporary communication,

> over the course of the seventeenth century, the news had also generated an extended present of duration, not instant. Or, to put it another way, it had carved out a 'detemporalized zone' between past and future, a zone that offered a space for the discussion of current events. (Woolf 2001, 108)

Daniel Woolf, whose remarks I have just quoted, concludes his analysis of news and the construction of the present in early modern England with significant implications for the conception and practice of history:

> By focusing public attention on the present, and on the hinge whereby present became past, the news also occasioned interest in the converse: how the past

[5] Cf. McLuhan 1962 and, for the suggestion of Anderson's dependence, Rath 2014, 216.

evolved into or 'caused' the present … One further by-product of this attention to the contemporary was the restructuring of temporal connections between past and present. In medieval and humanist historical thought, these had been founded on similarity, comparison and metaphor rather than, as in the modern historical tradition, proximity, continuity, and metonymy. (108)

Moreover, the circulation of news is another area for which we should bear in mind the combination of the visible and the aural, which characterised the advertisement of written *avvisi*, in shops as in public squares, with an apotheosis in the charlatan's performance (De Vivo 2007; Barbierato 2012; Welch 2014, 75-78). Thus, we should infer that both the personal and shared act of reading and the aural experience of listening to the announcement of news must have significantly affected the way events and their contexts were positioned on a timeline.

Having said something about the sense of the past and of the present, one would naturally feel inclined to comment on how the future may have been expected and imagined. Astrology and prophecy still played a significant part in Renaissance and early modern time perceptions, with peaks at particular times of crisis or high expectations, and consequent conflicts between dominant institutions and orthodoxies and fringe experiences. Such phenomena could even cross religious and cultural barriers, and a millenarian conjuncture connected to the Islamic calendar has been identified as sweeping across Asia and the Mediterranean during the sixteenth century (Subrahmanyam 2001). We tend to connect the notion of utopia to the imagination of temporal other worlds, but in fact the original conception, as is obvious from etymology, is spatial, and a 'temporalization of utopia' has been dated by Reinhart Koselleck at the second half of the eighteenth century (2002, 84-99). The German scholar ascribes the advent of modernity in time perception, with acceleration towards an unknown future to the same period (1985). One should expect this new attitude to have also affected the specific time perception of a reader (of utopian literature, as well as of other fiction or type of writing). The attention for such developments has recently required the coinage of the expression 'regimes of historicity', to identify culturally posited time conceptions (Hartog 2015). In addition to this awareness, we must not forget that, if the past is a foreign country, we should exercise on our relationship to it the same cautious critique which Johannes Fabian proposed some time ago for the construction of the object in anthropology (2002). Scholars have begun to emphasise the need to go beyond teleological history and to assess the implications for global history (Hunt 2008).

An emphasis on some Western monopoly of the linear conception of time, as well as of its mechanical calculation, was convincingly deconstructed as a myth fifty years ago by Joseph Needham's analysis of the Chinese experience (1988).[6] Nevertheless, the cultural specificity of time perception can be taken for

[6] For the case of the Ottoman Empire, see Georgeon and Hitzel 2012.

granted and, with curiosities inevitably encouraged by the social processes of our own time, one may legitimately wonder what happened with travel and cultural encounters: when individuals and groups, for whatever reason, migrated to an environment characterised by time frames different from their own, including calendars and accepted chronologies, how did they tend to negotiate between the systems? And how did entire societies do so when coming into new or more intense contact with one another? However intriguing, this perspective would form the subject of a different study, and we will have to leave it there.

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Temporalities and History in the Renaissance

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Abstract

The article aims at showing the complexity and diversity of the perception of time during the Renaissance in numerous sources, mainly from France. More than a simple rediscovery of the Antiquity we should consider it a multiplicity of temporal conceptions. Since the question of time in the Renaissance is entirely embedded in the complex Christian order of the world, we need to consider this historical question through both theological and philosophical approaches. I contend that time is apprehended through various scales, from the one-time event to the eternity of the hereafter, with a combination of a cyclical and a linear conception, a divine periodicity and an earthly time of the rhythms of the world, an expectation of a brilliant future in an eschatological perception combined with a deep interest for the past in order to understand the present. The peculiarity of the Renaissance is essentially in the affirmation of the pre-eminence of the present. I will analyse these issues by studying the relationship between the time of God and the time of the world, then the question of the disenchantment of the world, and finally the question of a new regime of historicity**,** gradually built around a present emerging from the past.

Keywords: History, Regime of Historicity, Renaissance, Temporality, Time

1. *Introduction*

The fifteenth and sixteenth centuries represent a great change in the writing of history and the perception of time. Various cultural changes affecting this period, especially in the field of knowledge, reveal a new relationship between man, the world and its past. Numerous sources help us tackle these aspects: universal histories, histories of France, regional histories or histories of cities, thriving at the time; works of historical methodology such as Jean Bodin's start to appear, but also the imposing cosmographies from Sebastian Münster, André Thevet and most of all, in this article, François de Belleforest. These cosmographies aimed at describing the world in the most accurate and complete manner possible, show its infinite diversity, past and present. Through their encyclopedic aspirations, they aim at gathering the entire

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knowledge available in each region of the world. For the Renaissance reader, these various sources express and build up a vision of the world in which time, temporalities, rhythms, regimes of historicity, the order of time, history and memories overlap significantly to narrate the past and the multiplicity of its approaches. Beyond the simple question of a reassertion of the ancient past, I want to show the complexity and diversity of the Renaissance relationship to time. Incidentally, I contend that, rather than an idea of Time, we need to consider a multiplicity of temporal conceptions, highlight the rhythms of the world at various scales, from the one-time event to the eternity of the hereafter, from a cyclical to a linear time, from divine periodicity to earthly time. The issue of time in the Renaissance is entirely imbedded in a Christian order of the world and can therefore only be thought of both theologically and philosophically. These multiple conceptions of time in the Renaissance are far from the linear and biased reorganization of absolute and physical time, developed later. This took place in parallel with the process of the disenchantment of the world when human history stops telling the religious meaning of the world. I will discuss this concept below. Through the separation of the celestial and earthly spheres, divine and human realms, it contributes to the assertion of a more autonomous knowledge with respect to religion. However, the time of God does not disappear. It unfolds next into other temporalities, inscribing the world from this point forward in complex, multiscalar interactions, with an increased consciousness of the resurgent present, reorganizing to its benefit the relationship to the past. I will therefore address some of the major questions on the relationship between temporalities and history in the Renaissance: first the question of the relationship between the time of God and the time of the world, then the question of the disenchantment of the world, and finally the question of a new regime of historicity**,** gradually built around a present emerging from the past.

2. *The Time of God and the Time of the World*

The first temporality encountered in the history of the world narratives during the Renaissance is of course the time of God. From the first verses of Genesis, God appears like the creator of time at the precise moment when He separates light from darkness to create day and night, evening and morning, defining the first day. However, His Creation also leads to the temporal theatre of the history of the world: Jean Mansel's *La fleur des histoires*, written between 1459 and 1463, considers human history from the Creation to Charles VI, king of France (1380-1422). Sebastian Münster's *Cosmographia*, first published in 1544, also starts with a chapter called 'On the Creation of the World' ('De la Création du monde'). Yet, rather than a single time of God, I argue that multiple temporalities can be inferred from narratives about the relationship of man to the divine, and that a single time of God can be diffracted into a

plurality of times of the divine, succeeding one another from the Creation to Salvation to the Last Judgment. Human history presents itself through different ages of the world following each other, as we can already see in Jacobus de Voragine's remarkable *Golden Legend,* a thirteenth-century book printed in forty-nine versions between 1470 and 1500 in Europe (Le Goff 2014, ix). As a result, men went through a first 'time of deviation or turning from the right way' (from Adam to Moses), to a 'time of renewal or of being called back' (from Moses to Christ's nativity), to a 'time of reconciliation' with God (from the Incarnation to the Pentecost), to a 'time of pilgrimage' followed by a fifth period defined by the end of time into eternity, after the Last Judgment (Duffy 2012, 3). The time of God is not only this long linear course towards the end of times. It is also the cyclical time in a pastoral year through which man can live biblical history again, or the cyclical time of the week going through the chronology of Creation. Therefore, the time of God is not only a theological temporality but also a socially defined time.

We can see that the history of mankind is inscribed in a divine plan, highlighting strong links between theology and history up to the beginning of the sixteenth century, yet to a lesser proportion and in a different way than the relationship between theology and geography. From the point of view of natural theology, whose goal is to know God using mainly ordinary means of knowledge through science and philosophy, cosmography and history both aim at knowing the work of God and therefore His Power and Greatness. This is why François de Belleforest's dedication to the future Henry III (king of Poland from1573 to 1575 and king of France from 1574 to 1589), opening his *Grandes Annales* in 1579, describes human history as only one aspect of History with a capital H:

> My Lord, it appears that History, which is the true image and master of men's lives, and the truthful secretary of past events, possesses and includes three parts. One relates to man, and to the preservative actions of human society; the other pertains to nature, unfolding its origins and evolution. The third one, having its aim and ambition in heaven, strives to discuss celestial matters, and the order established in this world by God Author of the entire universe.[1]

François de Belleforest clearly distinguishes three dimensions of History: human history, natural history and divine history. Any believer must be

[1] 'Sire, comme ainsi soit que l'Histoire, qui est la vray image & maistresse de la vie des hommes, & le veritable secretaire des choses passees, ait & comprenne en soy trois especes, l'une desquelles se rapporte à l'homme, & aux actions conseruatrices de la societé humaine: l'autre qui comtemplant la nature, declaire les causes & le progrez d'icelle: & la troisiesme ayant sa visee & son but au Ciel, s'efforce aussi de discourir des causes celestes, & de l'ordre mis en ce monde par Dieu Autheur de tout cest univers' (Belleforest 1579, I, aij). Unless otherwise specified, translations are mine.

able to acknowledge divine power and can do so thanks to the virtue of 'cosmographic panopticism' (*panoptisme cosmographique*; Lestringant 1991, 201), encompassing the historical dimension or, more specifically, universal history. As a result, through the pretence of saying everything about the world, about what it was (history) and to whom it belongs (geography), cosmography makes the knowledge of God's work possible. Through countless biblical passages and the works of the Christian apologetics, the invitation to believers of God's work is in itself an introduction to a temporal consideration of the world. *The Book of Wisdom*, for instance, reminds the reader that 'For he hath given me certain knowledge of the things that are, namely, to know how the world was made, and the operation of the elements' (Wis 7:17-21).[2] For Saint Bonaventura, God has created all things 'in order to show and communicate this glory' to men.[3] Saint Bonaventura was made Doctor of the Church by Pope Sixtus V in 1587. Through their shared ambition to describe the work of God and its visible parts, geography and history act as representations or narratives of men's course from Genesis to the end of times, structuring the Christian thought of the world.

Beyond natural theology, revealed theology seeks to know God through study of the Revelation, namely the way God chose to manifest Himself to men (history of Israel, especially in its relation to Christ), thus allowing a strong link between history and theology. God's extra-worldly nature is what appears fundamental, as defined in the theology on the Incarnation. From the temporal dimension of earthly existence, the Christian God predates the time of man and is external to his temporality. In order to enter mankind's historical time, God had to make himself human, to be Jesus, the 'God made man'. There are therefore two worlds and two 'meta-temporalities' (Milet 2006, 261):[4] the world and the earthly temporality on the one hand, heavens and divine temporality on the other, kept apart from the very first day of Creation.[5] With this in mind, telling the history of the world is also telling the work of God and God's will, as well as approaching an understanding of the divine. This conception of time is based on a Christian temporality stated by Augustine, geared towards the hope for salvation and eliciting a decisive tension towards the future (Augustine, *Confessions*, XI). This Christian realm

[2] Quotations from the Bible are from *The Bible, Authorized King James Version with Apocrypha* (1997), Oxford, Oxford University Press.

[3] 'propter gloriam manifestandam et propter gloriam suam communicandam' (Sent. lib. 2, distinct. 1, pars 2, art. 2, quaest. 1).

[4] On the question of the Christian 'metatemporality', see Stan 2009, 251.

[5] Clearly stated from the beginning of Genesis, on the first day of Creation: 'In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth … And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven' (Gen 1:1-8).

of historicity is founded on the principles of memory and expectation. The Incarnation of Christ creates a gap in the time of the world, which, henceforth, appears to be a course, geared towards the Last Judgment. As sixteenth-century Europe is torn apart by denominational tensions, this dialectical concept of time is central to the Renaissance culture, where human events are seen as signs of the divine (Crouzet 2005 and 2008).

The different levels of reading of historical events reinforce this Christian conception of time. Moving from natural to revealed theology, textual exegesis gives historical events a universal value. The thoughts of Augustine and Thomas Aquinas have largely structured medieval teaching; they still influence fifteenth- and sixteenth-century thought as we can see in the anonymous *Rudimentum Novitiorum*, first published in 1475. Its French translation, published in 1488-1489 under the title *La mer des hystoires* presents the four levels of reading necessary to the study of the time of the world and the time of men:

> In his comment to the first chapter of Genesis, Saint Augustine says that the Holy Scripture has two meanings. Namely, the literal meaning and the spiritual meaning. From which the spiritual one is divided into three others. Where the first one is the allegorical meaning and shows the mysteries which we must understand and believe through the Scripture. The second one is tropological, namely moral, through which we are taught what we must do to behave and govern ourselves as we should. And the third one in anagogical, that is to say divine. And the Scripture is revealed through this meaning, touching on celestial and divine matters. Whereas the literal or historical meaning shows only history according to the word, without any commentary or development.[6]

The Renaissance draws from Augustine the fact that a literal reading permits understanding historical events in their factual dimension, while spiritual reading only reveals the spiritual meaning, which entails three levels of reading: the interpretation of the mysteries of the Holy Scripture (allegorical), moral (tropological) and divine (anagogical) readings. These various levels introduce a temporal game between human actions, historical facts and the meaning of the world, where the actions of men unfold in a linear time, always in motion and

[6] 'Et pour avoir clerement la saincte escriture, dit Saint Augustin sur le premier chapitre de Genese que en icelle y a deux sens. C'est assavoir le sens litteral et le sens espirituel. Desquels lung qui est espirituel est divise en trois autres. Dont le premier est le sens allegorique lequel monstre les misteres quon doit entendre et croire par lescriture. Le second est tropologique cest adire moral par lequel nous est enseigne quelle chose nous devons faire pour bien nous conduire et gouverner. Et le tiers est anagogique cest a dire divin. Et selond tel sens est lescriture exposee touchant les choses celestielles et divines. Mais le sens litteral ou historique montre tant seulement listoire selond la lettre sans glose ne quelque exposition' (Anonymous 1488-1489, I, fol. ar).

framed by an eschatological discourse, where meaning is shaped by a timeless, unalterable revelation of an eternal (perpetual) God, with no beginning and no end. A good example is François de Belleforest's description of the Gauls in his *Histoire des neuf Charles*:

When will we finally value the fate of the Gauls, their glorious destiny and success? We will then be able to realize that God was the first driving force who extended, enriched and made this people invincible under the conduct of their sacred and fateful Kings, for the sake of Its glory, the preservation of religion and the spreading of the Christian seed.[7]

Further in his description, François de Belleforest refines his conception of history in which he sees the possibility to reveal divine mysteries in human actions:

A good historian offers the truth, condemns and loathes vice and vicious people, praises virtue, justice and the faithfulness of righteous people. Now, the holy mysteries of things become patent to whoever dedicates himself to contemplating the actions of the Ancients, which become obvious in the same way priests were granted the sight of the most holy and sacred things. Therefore, he is awarded the highest benefit since such reading disseminates true science on the spirit, whence all happiness in life lies.[8]

This idea of a divine direction given to human actions fits into a theology of history, such as the one presented in Augustine's *City of God* (Lettieri 1988). In his wake, theologians and historians interpret Clovis' coronation as a divine will to favour France and make her the 'eldest daughter of the Church'. The divine intentionality mentioned by François de Belleforest implicitly draws on Gilbert de Nogent's *Dei gesta per Francos* (1107-1108), where it is identified with the First Crusade (1096-1099), and where the four levels of reading identified by Augustine are intertwined. The same conception prevails in the understanding of the battle of Lepanto in October 1571 in the Greek Gulf of Patras, where the Ottoman army was defeated by the Holy League led by Pius

[7] 'Quand donc nous mettrons en avant la fortune Gauloise, le destin de leur succez & grandeur: l'on jugera incontinent que c'est la volonté de ce premier moteur qui pour sa gloire, pour l'établissement de sa foy, entretien de la religion, propagation de la semence Chrestienne' (Belleforest 1568, 2).

[8] 'Un bon Historien propose la verité, accusant, & detestant, & le vice, & les vicieux, & louant la vertu, justice & fidelité des gens de bien. Or tant plus clairement y veoit celuy qui s'addonne à la contemplation des faicts des anciens, de tant les haults mysteres des choses luy sont manifestes, & mis à descouvert, tout ainsi qu'aux seuls sacrificateurs, ausquels estoit permis de veoir les choses plus sacres & sainctes, & de là il cognoist purement le profit plus grand, & plus à priser que telle lecture espand, & comme distille sur les esprits desireux de la vraye science, en laquelle gist la felicité de nostre vie' (1568, aiij v).

V, with a coalition including the Papal States, the Spanish Empire, the Duchy of Savoy, the Republic of Venice, the Republic of Genoa, and Malta. François de Belleforest celebrates this Christian victory which is an 'honour awarded by God the day of the battle when He granted them victory'.[9] Even more so, the cosmographer regrets that the troops of the Holy League did not pursue the Turks further to potentially fulfil the 'Prophecy of the Twelve' and their final submission since: 'several people thought it would be the end of the Turkish Empire; had our troops pushed further, the Prophecy of the Twelve ruling over the Turks would have been fulfilled'.[10] More generally, God's power is revealed through the entire history of kingdoms and empires. This is why Sebastian Münster titled the last introductory chapter of his *Cosmographia* (1544) 'How Monarchies have risen to the World, & have since been destroyed' by divine will. François de Belleforest took over this title for his own chapter. All Münster and Belleforest do is update Daniel's words to King Nebuchadnezzar, reminding him that wisdom and power belong to God, 'for wisdom and might are his. And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings' (Dan 2:20-21). Because divine will and intention would predate any human action, it explains how such a prophecy could have become a type of war weapon used in political and geopolitical discourses (Redondo 2000).[11] Indeed, history contributes not only to an understanding of human and earthly realities, but also to the sense of events and their purpose, the ultimate understanding of what lies behind life and the world. The reality of the world is told and established through discourse by this very semantic crossing, establishing the Christian temporal order.

3. *The Secularization of Time*

However, this inherently Christian reading of time gradually disappears from historical narratives in the Renaissance, giving way to a true secularization of time and focusing on the earthly temporalities of human facts.[12] The shift is wide-ranging and has been studied in philosophical, literary and artistic sources (Quinones 1972; Bellenger 1986, 2002; Heck and Lippincott 2002; Mooij 2005; Madelpuech-Toucheron 2012; Cohen 2014). Throughout the sixteenth century, religious discourse becomes less visible within the discourse about the past. A history of mankind more independent from the divine

[9] 'honneur que Dieu leur donna le jour de la bataille, lors qu'il leur en octroya la victoire' (1575, t. 2, 581).

[10] 'plusieurs pensoyent que ce fut la fin de l'Empire Turcquesque : & peut estre que si les nostres eussent poursuivy leur pointe, que la prophetie des douze qui doivent commander sur les Turcs, eut eu alors son accomplissement' (1568, 580).

[11] Regarding the Battle of Lepanto more specifically, see Redondo 2000, 117.

[12] See in particular Jones-Davies 1995.

comes to the surface during the Renaissance, corresponding to a greater autonomy for the time of man. For history is not only sacred but also profane or, according to François de Belleforest in his *Histoire universelle,* it is the description of human facts. It is a history of the high politics and deeds of war, of great princes as well as of the assertion of the States. This process appears clearly in the comparison between the works of two historians writing half a century apart from each other. The first one is Robert Gaguin's *Les croniques de France*, published in 1520. The references to Christian temporality are pervasive, mentioning the 'most Christian kings & princes', especially the 'most Christian, virtuous & Magnanimus king Francis the First' to whom 'God gave a very good life', and again 'may Louis the Twelfth ... be welcome and kept by God in His kingdom of paradise'. Incidentally, the work aims 'to praise God and His glory and honour all noble Christian princes'. It is a history dotted with miracles and divine interventions. For the Merovingian period, Robert Gaguin lists the victory of Tolbiac, 'how the holy flask or *Sainte Ampoule* ... was sent from heaven' to Clovis, 'the erection of the so-called church St-Genevieve on the mount in Paris', as well as the 'royal coat of arms of the French kings sent from heaven, and their pennon'. We can also see the 'stag who showed the way to Clovis' soldiers', Chilperic's cruelty provoking the divine wrath and the 'flood of water sent from the sky on the Limagne [Auvergne region], a storm in the Touraine region and an earthquake in Bordeaux, fire, hail, windstorm in Orleans and in the Berry region' in addition to the 'persecutions sent to the house of King Chilperic'. In return, Robert Gaguin evokes the 'wonderful signs that occurred in the cities of Soissons, Paris and Senlis' at the time of 'the birth of the second Chlothar', and finally the 'canonization of Dagobert'.[13] Contrary to Gaguin's edifying list, François de Belleforest does not refer much to Christian temporality in his *Les Grandes Annales et histoire générale de France*, published in 1579. The functions of Robert Gaguin, Doctor in Theology and General Minister of the Trinitarian Order, contribute to impose an essentially providential reading of temporality and historical events, even if Pierre Desray defines him as a 'supreme orator and scientific historiographer'.[14] Conversely, François de

[13] 'treschrestiens roys & princes'; 'treschrestien vertueux & magnanime roy Francoys premier'; 'dieu doint tresbonne vie'; 'Loys douziesme ... lequel dieu vueille mettre & colloquer en son royaulme de paradis'; 'A la louenge et gloire de dieu et a lhonneur de tous nobles princes chrestiens'; 'comment la saincte ampoule ... fut du ciel envoyee'; 'lediffication de leglise saincte geneviesve au mont de Paris'; 'armes royalles des roys françoys envoyees du ciel et de loriflamme'; 'cerf qui enseigna le chemin aux gens darmes du roy Clovys'; 'déluge deaue envoyee du ciel sur la limaigne dauvergne, tempeste tombee en touraine et mouvement de terre à Bordeaulx, feu gresle, flux de ventre a Orleans et en Berry'; 'persecutions envoyees en la maison du roy chilperic'; 'signes merveilleux advenuz a Soissons, Paris et Senlis'; 'la nativité du second clotaire [Clotaire II]'; 'canonization ou sainctete dicelluy dagobert' (xii-xxix).

[14] 'souverain orateur et scientifique historiographe' (Gaguin 1520, 1).

Belleforest is a secular cosmographer and introduces himself as the 'Chronicler of His Most Christian Majesty' ('Annaliste de la Majesté tres-Chrestienne', 1579, title page) Henri III. Once in the description of the events, and beyond the Christian background previously described, François de Belleforest insists on the political and public dimension of human affairs. An explicit discourse has the organized State succeed divine determination. Points found in the paratext are also symptomatic since Robert Gaguin, on the other hand, includes kings Dagobert, Charlemagne and Saint Louis, for they all fought to defend the papacy, extend Christianity and drive away the Infidels. All three were canonized and are depicted in their holiness on the frontispiece.

In contrast, the frontispiece of François de Belleforest's *Great Annals* bears the following motto: *Mecum porto omnia mea* or, 'I carry everything within me'. It refers back to the usefulness of knowledge as a source of spiritual wealth and wisdom, as shown by the portrayal of an elderly man. Buildings also appear on the engraving, which is a double reference to ancient authors. According to Cicero, this sentence was uttered by Bias, one of the seven wise men from ancient Greece, when he had to escape hurriedly from the city of Priene, just seized by enemies: 'What is, then, good, somebody might ask. If anything is done rightly, honestly and virtuously, that we think and say to be good; and I believe to be good only what is rightful, honest and virtuously done'. As all citizens were fleeing, carrying their most precious belongings, it is believed that he was carrying with himself everything he possessed and all that was valuable. Cicero then concluded that the only things worth anything were what is honourable, virtuous and righteous.[15] In the same manner, Seneca attributes to the Greek philosopher Stilpo the following words, right after he had lost all relatives and personal belongings in the attack of Poliorcetes: ' "I have lost nothing, ... all my belongings are with me": justice, rigor, caution'.[16] Through this selection of *exempla*, Belleforest turns history into a tool of moral elevation rather than a sign of divine determination. The references to ancient wisdom are chosen over that of Christian providence. Therefore, and contrary to a number of medieval chronicles, history is no longer just a mere succession of events performed by princes fulfilling a divine design. What is at stake here is the surfacing of the temporality of the State instead of a mere succession of

[15] 'Quid est igitur, quaeret aliquis, bonum? si quid recte fit, et honeste, et cum virtute, id bene fieri, vere dicitur: et, quod rectum, et honestum, et cum virtute est, id solum opinor bonum' (Cicero 1946, I, 1, 8).

[16] ' "Nihil" inquit "perdidi" … "Omnia mea mecum sunt": iustitia, virtus, prudentia' (Seneca 1475, IX, 19). Seneca uses the same scene in 'On the Constancy of the Wise Man': 'After he took Megara, Demetrius, known as Poliorcetes, asked Stilpo the philosopher if he had not lost anything: "Nothing, he said, for all my possessions are with me" ' ('Megaram Demetrius ceperat, cui cognonem Poliorcetes fuit: ab-hoc Stilpon philosophus interrogatus, num quid perdidisset, "Nihil, inquit; omnia namque mea mecum sunt" '), *De constantia sapientis*, VI, 6.

the king's deeds. The same goes for the miracles and other divine interventions that are bound to disappear from the works of geography in the seventeenth century. Even great events such as the collapse of the Granier mountain in 1248 are not mentioned as divine sanction but as mere geological events, in this instance, as a rock slide. This return to the time of God in the works of history also materialises through a progressive disappearance of the first chapters dedicated to Biblical history. Even if Creation is still mentioned in the cosmographies by Sebastian Münster (1544) and François de Belleforest (1575), it is absent from the one by André Thevet (1575). Biblical history tends to limit itself to the field of religious and theological discourse.

These trends contribute to set aside a biblical and, more generally, Christian reading, from the historical field. In the long run, some sociologists and historians identify this as a true disenchantment of the world. This concept was first expressed by German sociologist Max Weber in his *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1905) and in 'Science as a Vocation' (1922). More recently, the concept was revisited by French philosopher and historian Marcel Gauchet in two milestone books: *The Disenchantment of the World: A Political History of Religion* (1997) and in *Un Monde désenchanté*? published in 2004. These two works define the disenchantment of the world as a general process of the decline of religions against modernism, leading the world to a total loss of spiritual meaning and therefore reduced to a material knowledge. According to Gauchet, this shift applies to both nature and mankind. The disenchantment happens at the very core of the Christian religion and culture. It is a long process, stretching over several centuries; set off in the eleventh century, it becomes visible in the sixteenth century due to the double crisis of mediation both religious (the Reformation) and political. History unavoidably holds a very important place in this process since time as a constructed concept, claimed by a human community, constitutes one of the fundamental elements of any society. As a result, the historical discourse contributes to the assertion of the State and to the building of political, social, and religious identities but revolves also, from a more philosophical point of view, around questions of Time and temporality (Conche 1992, 2014). Eventually, as clearly shown by Michel Foucault, the link between knowledge and power is particularly strong in the realm of history. Like any constituted knowledge, for a long time, history played an important role as mediator between God and mankind. Through the human gaze on the history of the world, at one time, this discipline contributed to the implication of man in the Creation. History therefore fell within the interlocking of the divine and earthly worlds, asserting the unity and hierarchy between the human world and the divine realm (Gauchet 2004, 57). It offered a cognitive support to the mediation between men and God, thus contributing to a 'sacral economy of the world' (64). It is precisely because of this strong hierarchy between Heaven and Earth, carried by an 'ontological dissociation of the orders of reality' (50)

that man was able to take hold more easily of the world here below, which is not sacred in itself. It is the meaning of Gauchet's expression 'Christianity is the religion of the end of religion' (1997, 103). A deconfessionalised history surfaces within the very Christian vision and order of time, providing the frame within which to engage its emancipation process. From the Renaissance on, the historical discourse is also in line with the humanist discourse granting man a high human dignity (Pico Della Mirandola, Erasmus and Montaigne especially) as well as – and as a result of – the promotion of a historical knowledge. History therefore becomes a way to reduce the 'extreme metaphysical devaluation at the lowest degree of being' and to recover 'the ontological economy of the One' (58). It allows the emancipation of the discourse on reality, or the tangible world, in relation to meaning, or the realm of the invisible. Human history, like geography, permits to move from a religious interpretative paradigm to a political paradigm, which accounts more accurately for the complexity of the reality of the world, made of a torn Christianity, split up states, and political rivalries sometimes transcending religious and confessional divisions. Eventually, what is really happening here is a secularisation of history, a partial emancipation from the religious sphere and not, strictly speaking, a disenchantment of the world. For it all depends on temporal scales and paradigmatic analysis. Just as during any other period, men in the Renaissance do not use the same analytical grid in all given circumstances. If divine temporality remains an essential and decisive element in the theological field or confessional argumentations in a context of religious wars, it fades away and appears only implicitly in the historical discourse. Yet, whether implicitly or explicitly, the time of God does not disappear from the perception of the temporalities of the world. The same goes with the religious, or even theological, meaning of human actions. Secular history cannot narrate or elucidate that other history. The religious vision of the world remains in a number of works (life of the saints, sermons, orations ...), personal writings (travel diaries ...), pamphlets, especially during the wars of religion, but tends to disappear in the history of human actions.

4. *Present of the Past and Celebrating the Present*

However, the conception of time in the Renaissance is not limited to a linear plane, starting from the origins and leading to the 'horizon of expectation' (Koselleck 1985) of the New Jerusalem. Philosophical or theological debates (Mooij 2005, 121-129) are not exactly the places to look for this new relationship to time, but rather in the everyday experience of time, its social, political and intellectual applications, the passing of the days and hours. A multitude of experiences and relationships to time filters not only from the historical and cosmographical descriptions of the world (Forero-Mendoza 2002; Bohler and Magnien-Simonin 2005). There is also a renewed interest

in chronology, the classifying of facts within 'the true order of times' as stated by Nicolas Vignier (1579) in the introduction of his *Sommaire de l'histoire des François*; and there is renewed interest also 'in the order of time' so 'nothing can be altered or mistaken', assures François de Belleforest.[17] There is also a more acute and demanding sense of time expressed through the spread of calendars, urban and table clocks (Landes 2000), the desire to set the beginning of the year on January 1st (1564 in France; Giry 1925, 103-129; Guyotjeannin and Tock 1999), the understanding of errors in the calculation of the passing of time and the need to reform the Julian calendar and substitute it with the Gregorian calendar (1582; Delatour 1999). The need for punctuality emerges, next to the ancient fear of wasting time, particularly in Protestant practices, humanist writings and works from the Reformers (Engammare 2010). Some aspects of this new relationship to time in the Renaissance have already been studied. A new order of time, a new regime of historicity, rhythm and temporality are put into place. There is of course a promotion of Antiquity encouraging a retrospective gaze and valuing of the actors and their work in this founding period, eliciting a desire of imitation. Ancient times are seen as prestigious and their authors benefit from a status of *Auctoritas*, thus becoming major intellectual and educational references. Consequently, the transitional time of the 'Middle Ages' is contained, named and defined as a transition, a parenthesis, interrupting the temporal continuity within which the previous centuries were inscribed (Hartog 2003, 227-228). The *renovatio* also implies the objectivation of Antiquity, organized into a whole concept with a clearly limited beginning, not ignored entirely but obscured by the following centuries. Antiquity is defined temporarily, identified and described with wonder, but at the same time it is also limited and covered up. As such, it constitutes a breach in the linearity of historical time. For the Renaissance historian, the goal is to rediscover Antiquity in its original purity, to rid it from what it is not and find what it may have been. In this context, we see the beginning of the interest in monument preservation in fifteenth-century Italy, reaching the literary circles and humanist scholars. Ancient ruins are seen as relics of the past, witnesses of the glory of past centuries. Numerous men of letters such as Gabriel Simeoni went to Italy in order to discover ancient ruins and bring back home their descriptions and other lists of medals and epitaphs (1558). Incidentally, this interest in preserving the past corresponds to the rearranging of the ancient Maison Carrée (1533) and its surroundings in Nîmes, ordered by Francis I, right after the king ordered the destruction of Philip Augustus' medieval dungeon at the Louvre (1528; Hartog 2003, 218).

[17] 'en l'ordre du temps ... rien changer ny confondre' (1579, II, 1185r, see also and in particular 1552r).

Nevertheless, even though the desire to exhume the facts, to find an interest in ancient ruins, and to go back to the linguistic roots of Latin and Greek are all driven by historical interest, what is left from the past can only celebrate the supremacy of Antiquity over the renascent present for a limited time. Nostalgic evocations of ancient times in literature are not to be taken as a definitive judgment, such as Montaigne's expressed regret not to live in Antiquity, or Ronsard's celebration of ancient Greece, 'which never had nor will it ever have anything like it' in *Le bocage royal*.[18] Mistakes or obvious lack of knowledge from ancient authors in some fields appeared quickly. Even though these authors are still celebrated, their works were rapidly edited, challenged and surpassed. It is the case in numerous fields: in *Le vite de' piu eccellenti pittori, scultori, e architettori* (1550), Giorgio Vasari considers that Michelangelo exceeded ancient artists; in 1507 Martin Waldseemüller is able to map a new continent named *America*, which so-called discovery during Antiquity could only come from a false and biased line of argumentation. Entire regions at the heart of Europe, such as the Alps, appear in cosmographies and in map making, while they were still poorly known by ancient authors (Bourdon 2011); in 1578, Jean de Léry offers ethnographical descriptions of the Tupi native tribes of Brazil, completely unknown to Ptolemy; in 1570 Abraham Ortelius publishes the first entirely modern atlas *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*, deprived of any ancient maps. Through mere observation, between 1551 and 1558, Conrad Gessner and Pierre Belon describe animals unknown during Antiquity. In 1547, Andreas Vesalius is able to detect over two hundred errors in Galen's work; in his *De re metallica* (1556), Georgius Agricola highlights that Pliny's *Historia naturalis* left out numerous minerals. The list could go on and consider astronomy and military or nautical technology. If the rediscovery of Antiquity exhumes the past, it also brings forth the realisation of man's ability to uncover the past, discover the world and produce new knowledge, correcting or embracing the past, never mastered before. Therefore, not only does the Renaissance temporality cast an admiring look towards the past, it is also a realisation of the indisputable superiority, in the field of knowledge, of the present time. The Renaissance period can therefore settle in a 'fullness of the present', to quote Alphonse Dupront (2001, 49; see also Hermann de Franceschi 2014). This conception of time in terms of interruption rather than continuity also appears in the context of the Reformation, questioning the meaning of history (Dubois 1977, 26-68).

The progressive surfacing of the concept of heritage or *patrimoine* in the Renaissance should be understood through this desire to enhance the past. Rather than anchoring the works of art in the past, their cultural uses connect them to the present. Incidentally, even if the concept already exists,

[18] 'qui n'eut jamais, ny aura de semblables' (1554, III. 11).

the preferred term is 'monument', for 'heritage' (*patrimoine*) remains linked to family possessions.[19] The term 'monument' goes back to its original Latin meaning *monumentum* or *monimentum* and offers a semantic richness referring back to this new relationship to time. It describes at the same time a building, a funeral monument and more generally anything evocative of a memory, a proof, a testimony, a mark as seen by La Popelinière in his *Histoire de France* (1581), or in Nicolas Vignier's *Sommaire de l'histoire des François* (1579).[20] Guillaume Paradin uses the expression 'monument of honour' to refer to an ancient inscription in the memory of a great man (1573, 421). By extension, the word 'monument' also refers to works of history, the 'monuments of ancient historians'[21] according to Pierre Boaistuau, or to Émile Piguerre, who evokes the high deeds 'recorded in writing on monuments, in order to preserve the memory for posterity'.[22] In other words, as stated by Roberto Valturio in his 1472 *De re militari*, 'Monvmenta, from the mutation of the I into V, are sepulchres, statues, titles, books & other things commanding us to remember the past'.[23] In his *Discours sur les antiquitez,* Gabriel de Lurbe, on the other hand, reminds the reader that the work of the historian brings him glory for 'each will admire the ancient monuments, and learning from you their author & the time, your glory will not wander and disappear'.[24] The term 'monument' refers to the concept of 'heritage' or *patrimoine* until the end of the eighteenth century.[25] The monuments thus indicate much more than an imprint left in the past. They send us back to the historical presence and remembrance of the past (mausoleum, building), to whatever makes it possible for the present to know the past (clue, memory, testimony, history book) and finally to the intergenerational link through which the living are

[19] See for instance Estienne 1539.

[20] La Popelinière 1581, for instance 84v or 276r; Vignier 1579, 105. See also Belleforest 1575, I, 350, 18, and II, 925.

[21] 'monuments des anciens historiens' (Boaistuau 1564, 106v).

[22] 'rédigez par escrit és monumens, pour en conserver la mémoire à toute la postérité' (Piguerre 1581, 136).

[23] 'Monumenta par mutation de l'I, en, V, sont les sépulcres, statuës, tiltre, livres & autres choses qui nous amonnestent nous souvenir du temps passé' (Valturio 1555, 121v).

[24] 'chacun admirera les anciens monumens, et apprenant de vous leur autheur & le temps, votre gloire ne peut se perdre vagabonde' (Lurbe 1594, 2).

[25] In the seventeenth century, these various meanings of 'monument' are clearly formulated in Furetière's *Dictionary* (1690): 'MONUMENT. sub. Evidence from some great powerful nation or of the greatness of past centuries. The Pyramids of Egypt, the Coliseum, are fine monuments of greatness, of the kings of Egypt, or the Roman Republic. MONUMENT, can also refer to surviving records in Histories and authors of past actions. Many great bastions have perished, of which we still have some monumental records in books. Writers have handed down to posterity eternal monuments of the glory of great men. MONUMENT, also means a tomb, especially in Poetry'. The word 'monument' is still used in this way in Bernard de Montfaucon (1729-1733) and in the entries of Alexandre Lenoir's *Musée des monuments français* in 1791.

the heirs of their elders and custodians of an inheritance to be transmitted to the generations to come. The word 'monument' therefore does not limit itself to tell what the past was but the way the present time meets part of its identity. Patrimonial discourse is a discourse in the present tense. This can be seen in the engraving representing the ancient Roman aqueduct Pont du Gard, which François de Belleforest comments in his *Cosmographie universelle* (1575). The structure is not depicted according to its ancient appearance but in its present state, partially worn and filled with weeds. Besides, Jean Nicot, 'the King's Counsellor, & Master of the Ordinary Requests in his house' who provided the cosmographer with this engraving, is described as a man 'of great research, and rare erudition, & mindful of the well-being of the future generations'.[26]

Moreover, there is a deep feeling in the Renaissance of an ontological permanent feature which defines man. This is the reason why the historian can see a *Historia magistra vitae*, in the past. François de Belleforest says it very clearly regarding sacred and secular histories alike in his *Histoire des neuf Charles*:

> If we consider what touches upon and belongs to true devotion, resting on the fear of God, nothing could touch us & allude more to the divine punishment of our unhappy life than the examples of either God's mercy or wrath, His patience, or punishment of men's misdeeds and transgressions, which are plentiful and well-illustrated in the holy histories. And by history, I mean both the sacred & so-called profane one, which are both the representation from life of both the punishment of the evil doers, & the reward for those who followed the virtuous track, and embraced justice.[27]

The study of the past is significant in the present. This is the reason why François de Belleforest draws on the past so often to justify some contemporary events in the context of the wars of religion. His limited rendering of the slaughter of the Protestants in Wassy, on March 1st, 1562, is a good example of this process, where the cosmographer compares Duke Francis of Guise's action to that of Theodosius the Great to defend the power in place. Belleforest's take of history leads to a levelling of the interlocked temporalities, organizing therefore the speaker's present and moral awareness. This consciousness of

[26] 'Conseillier du Roy, & maistre des requestes ordinaires de sa maison'; 'de grandes recerches, & de rare erudition, & soigneux du bien, & proffit de la posterité' (I, 354).

[27] 'Car si nous prenons esgard à ce qui touche & appartient à la vraye piété, laquelle est assise & appuyée sur la crainte de Dieu, on ne sçauroit rien trouver qui tant nous esmeuve, & induise au chastiment de nostre vie mal'heureuse, que les exemples qui nous sont proposez soit de la misericorde au courroux de Dieu, de sa patience, ou punition sur les forfaits & transgressions des hommes, desquelles choses toutes les sainctes histoires sont pleines & illustres. Et parlant de l'histoire j'y comprens, & celle qui est sacre, & l'autre que nous appellons profane, lesquels sont la vive painture, & de la punition des mauvais, & du salaire de ceux qui ont suyvy le trac de vertu, & embrassé la justice' (Belleforest 1568, aiij r).

history is not new, for it can already be seen in the centuries before and it goes on until the seventeenth century (Guion 2008). But, in the Renaissance, it contributes to assert the prevalence of present time, the legitimacy of judgment beyond knowledge. It also implies a kind of submittal of past events to a useful and meaningful reading of the present. It is, to a certain extent, Augustine's 'present of past things'. Present, namely the temporality of consciousness and study, is therefore inscribed into a timeless realm where great principles transcend the passing of time and give human actions an axiological power. This is the reason why Jean Bodin clearly states that:

> If we refer to historians' conclusions, rather than poets', we realize that human revolutions are similar to the ones in the universe and we go back to the precepts from the old master of wisdom, that there is nothing new under the sun.[28]

Jean Bodin goes back over the very words from the Book of Ecclesiastes, which notices that 'What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again', to conclude: 'there is nothing new under the sun' (Eccl. 1:9; see also 3:15). What matters here is not so much a cyclical time than the timelessness of certain aspects of life in general, and therefore life in the past, which is the very object of history. It is also in alignment with Jean Bodin's idea of 'the people's nature' according to which there is a principle of stability in the people's identity regardless of the era considered. It is what allows François de Belleforest to identify permanent features in people already described by Herodotus, Strabo or Pliny the Elder, and seemingly confirmed by observation. One of the crucial goals of history also lies here since, as Jean Bodin reminds us, 'the present time can be easily explained thanks to history, just like the future can be uncovered, so it is possible to obtain very dependable indications on what needs to be searched for or avoided'.[29] Since history can uncover the past, the past allows us to see into the present more clearly (Couzinet 1996, 66). Pierre Droict de Gaillard pushes the idea even further when he organizes his *La méthode qu'on doit tenir en la lecture de l'histoire*, published in 1579, into a thematic outline revolving around moral values illustrated by historical facts presented as a 'true and exemplary mirror of our life'.[30] Therefore, we can talk about a permanent present time during

[28] 'Si l'on s'en rapporte aux conclusions des historiens et non des poètes, l'on s'aperçoit que les révolutions humaines sont semblables à celles de l'univers et l'on en revient aux préceptes du vieux maître de la sagesse, qu'il n'y a rien de nouveau sous le soleil' (Bodin 1951, 427).

[29] 'c'est grâce à l'histoire que le présent s'explique aisément, que le futur se pénètre et que l'on acquiert des indications très certaines sur ce qu'il convient de chercher ou de fuir' (1951, 13).

[30] 'vray miroir et exemplaire de nostre vie' (Droict de Gaillard 1579, titlepage; see Dubois 2005).

the Renaissance, which is that of Christian consciousness of Heidegger's 'Being-in-the-World'. This conception of temporality, anchored in the present, is also echoed in the writing of history. But it builds on a long philosophical tradition predating Augustine. As noticed by Michel de Montaigne, drawing upon the Stoic heritage, the past is no longer; the future has not yet come and is only in the making. All that remains is a history to be written today, thanks to the work of erudition, especially philological, in order to say what the past was, to uncover it through the current thought, in an ever-present present time. In the third century BCE, Chrysippus maintains indeed that 'only the present exists; the past and future remain, but they do not exist at all' (Chrysippus, quoted by Arius Didymus, *Epitome*, 26). According to the Stoics, past and future belong to the category of the intangible, they only exist through present discourse as it is uttered (Bréhier 1951, 24-25). Sextus Empiricus uses this idea when he considers that the past only exists according to the imprints left behind which are uncovered in the present time, like 'a sign of the past' (1569, VIII, 254-256). Drawing on Plato and Lucretius, Montaigne adds that the world is always moving, that it is but 'a perennial movement', and that 'all things in it are in a constant flow, movement and constant variation'.[31] Montaigne further observes that we are always in an in-between state. He depicts it as the passage from one state to another, what is now, not what was or will be. It is a life flow between two different states, but happening now. This is Montaigne's essential vision on time. It is also what Ronsard expresses when he states that: 'Time flies, time flies, madame! / Alas, time? No, we it is, rather'.[32] Beyond Montaigne's introspection, his reflection leads to the assertion of a legitimate priority of the speaker and his own time, therefore an assertion of the self, the here and the present time. In this selective choice of past elements, we can easily grasp how the writing of history is both prospective, since the present time was built upon the past, and retrospective, since all history has been written in the present time.[33]

5. *Conclusion*

The relationship to time appears to have shifted at the Renaissance. It is centred on present time, which organises to its own benefit the subordination and submission of the past to the present. The Last Judgment is of course

[31] 'une branloire perenne'; 'toutes choses sont en fluxion, muance et variation perpetuelle' (Montaigne, *Essais* III, 2, 398).

[32] 'Le temps s'en va, le temps s'en va, ma Dame, / Las! le temps non, mais nous, nous en allons' (1555).

[33] Regarding this topic, see the particular case of traditions. (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983; Chittolini 2003; Simay 2009).

still looming over the horizon to end the experience of earthly existence, but it does not prevent the rearranging of temporality in the Renaissance. Therefore, we can see the combination of an oriented time, purposeful and tensed toward the future and the New Jerusalem, with a retrospective look on Antiquity, marvellous yet to be surpassed, on the chronological time of human history, on the cyclical time of the liturgical calendar, each of them being brilliantly orchestrated by the polarization of the present time. The religious celebration in itself is a realization rooted in the present of the past Alliance. It is a human time within a divine time, a transcending temporality, exterior and superior to the world, and – from a scholastic and transcendent point of view, sending back to the attributes of the Absolute One and the Being – a time of the self, of the being-to-the-world, of the present consciousness of the Christian being and of the Renaissance man of letters, infused with humanist principles. In the books of history and cosmographies, it appears clearly that the new relationship to time emerges from a present consciousness, which interrogates the past in order to make sense of itself. From this point on, the Renaissance man is equipped with a renewed and enhanced dignity. The past is submitted to the present through a flow, linking the 'now' to what used to be, for the Renaissance reads the past through its present significance. This is the reason why talking about the past is talking about the present. Escaping this submission is only possible through a time exterior to the experience of the world, developed in physics in later centuries. But for the time being, the display of temporalities and the spreading of the various conceptions of time happen within the realm of the disenchantment of the world, with the emergence of a time of man, the only one used by historians and cosmographers, leaving the rest to theologians and men of the cloth. The Renaissance is only a step, but certainly a decisive one, in the very slow process of exiting the Christian order of time. Even if human history emancipates itself gradually from sacred history, there are still an articulation and a fusion of the frontiers between the time of God and the time of men. Indeed, the process of the disenchantment of time in the field of history happens in the realm of the Christian order of time.

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'the several hours of the day had variety of employments assigned to them': Women's Timekeeping in Early Modern England

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Abstract

The article examines early modern Englishwomen's notions and experiences of time in their daily lives. In contrast to what has been assumed, sixteenth- and seventeenth-century women's everyday life often involved standard use of clock-time. Women's activities tended to form habitual schedules that contributed to their experience of temporal order, and increasingly demanded accurate measurement of duration, often overlooked in deliberations of early modern temporal organisation. In more recent discussions, women emerge as both time-aware and time-literate, conceptualising their activities through temporal measurements and metaphors where mechanical time and the circadian rhythm were intertwined with an episodic understanding of task-oriented temporality. Women's experience of time was governed by practical social and economic constraints, practices and tasks dictated by patriarchal gender divisions, and their quest for Christian salvation.

Keywords: Clock-time, Gender, Time, Timekeeping, Women

1. *Introduction*

In research on early modern conceptions of time, it has traditionally been suggested that everyday time awareness was tied to cyclical rhythms of nature until the invention, in the late seventeenth century, of accurate pendulum clocks and watches with spiral springs. Even then, both these items were expensive luxury objects, out of reach of most ordinary people. A 'horological revolution', a profound change in people's awareness of time, would only be completed during the industrial revolution, with its enhanced demands of time-discipline. Furthermore, women have been especially closely associated with natural rhythms and cyclical conceptions of time, because of their bodily peculiarities, the nature of their work and status in society, and their relationship to costly technology. Recently, however, these

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notions – particularly the timing and pace of change in time awareness – have been forcefully contested (Dohrn-van Rossum 1996; Glennie and Thrift 2009; Engammare 2010; Blondé and Verhoeven 2013). In this essay, I will continue the work of the latter camp and focus especially on the somewhat neglected subject of women's sense of time: sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Englishwomen were, in fact, much more aware of time, including clock-time, than has been assumed. They often discussed their own use and management of time and were loath to waste any of it on unworthy tasks. Their days were often characterised by clock-timed activities, which formed habitual schedules as responses to the demands of status, employment, and beliefs. Women's activities also seem to have demanded increasingly accurate measurement of duration, often overlooked in discussions of early modern temporal organisation.

In what follows, I will investigate the practices and conceptions that shaped early modern Englishwomen's use and understanding of time in their everyday lives, focusing especially on the century between the 1550s and 1650s. Looking at material produced by women and for women, I will show that women's use of time was governed by very practical social and economic constraints, by practices and tasks dictated by patriarchal gender divisions and by their quest for Christian salvation. Time was essential for early modern women, and it was understood in several different ways, all indicating that their understanding and experience of temporality was complex and detailed.

Amy Boesky (2000) has argued that men and women 'were understood to occupy, to record and to experience time' in different ways. In Boesky's discussion, focusing mainly on the question of ageing, many of these ways were linked to female bodies, characterised as they were by menstruation and much quicker ageing than men's bodies. In Christian thinking, as Boesky points out, the whole fact of human mortality was brought about by the actions of a woman, Eve, and thus the effects of mortal time could be at least partly blamed on women (132-136; see also Jacquart and Thomasset 1985, 6; Yandell 2000, 23). While these conceptions undoubtedly shaped early modern experiences of time, I would like to position my discussion differently. Temporality also permeated the rhythms of quotidian practice. After first discussing how women made use of clock-time in their daily activities and schedules, I will think about the temporal implications of the moral condemnation of idleness and finish with a look at how questions of time converged in women's intellectual pursuits.

2. *Women and Clock-Time*

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, most women, or indeed their family members, would not have owned clocks and watches. In Lorna Weatherill's sample of English probate inventories of the late seventeenth

and early eighteenth centuries, a somewhat later period than mine, only 16% of (the mostly middle-class) women seem to have owned clocks, while a somewhat higher 20% of men were recorded as owning them. Fewer women than men owned clocks, then, and for both sexes, the percentage must have been significantly lower in the sixteenth or early seventeenth centuries (1988, 139).[1] According to Moira Donald's estimate, based on early modern wills, only about 10% of seventeenth-century men and 5% of women owned timepieces at the time of their death (2000, 66).

Despite this, women mentioned time or duration quite often and in much detail, and sometimes in surprising connections. For example, Anne Askew, arrested for heresy and interrogated and tortured in the Tower of London in 1546, stated with certainty that she 'sate ij. longe houres reasonynge with my lorde Chauncellour vpon the bare floore' (1996, f. 47r). About a hundred years later, in the summer of 1653, Dorothy Osborne described her life in a letter to her fiancé using very specific clock-times: she spent time in the garden until it grew too hot at ten o'clock in the morning, and she went out again for a walk at about six o'clock (1928, 51-52).

In personal records such as diaries and memoirs, we first see standard use of clock-times in accounts of exceptional events, such as natural disasters – earthquakes, for instance, were recorded as happening at specific times of the clock even in the early sixteenth century. Many diarists of the early modern era recorded exact times of their children's births, often also for the purposes of astrological prediction. Illnesses and deaths of loved ones could also be meticulously documented, marking their personal and emotional significance. Gradually, as the seventeenth century progressed, recording even the mundane events of one's own life according to clock-time became ever more frequent.[2]

To have a closer look, we can consider Lady Margaret Hoby's diary of 1599-1605, where many entries on daily activities, particularly at the start of the diary, refer to clock-time. On Monday the 20th of August in 1599, for example, she recorded all her tasks by the hour:

[1] Moira Donald rightly points out that Weatherill's selection of artefacts did not include watches, which necessarily makes it difficult to generalise about time awareness on the basis of these figures. Her own evidence shows that watches were more popular than clocks in the seventeenth century, although still relatively rare (2000, 60-61).

[2] For births, illnesses and deaths, see for instance Fanshawe 1829, 122; D'Ewes 1845, II, 44-45, 146-147; Kingsford 1934, II, 193; Twysden 1939, 117; Wigglesworth 1946, 96; Anthony Ashley Cooper in Houlbrooke 1988, 69; Archer 1994, 120, 125-126, 139. For events related to everyday life, see for instance Fanshawe 1829, 84-86 recording a time at night when she saw a ghost; Heywood 1882, I, 340 recording sleeplessness between midnight and 2 o'clock; Knyvett 1949, 90-93 recording arrival time on a journey.

After I was readie I praied priuately: then I walked with Mr Hoby tell 8: a clock, at which time I brake my fast, and so to worke, and, at 11: of the Clock, I took a Lector of Mr Rhodes, and went to dinner: after dinner I wound yearn tell: 3, and then walked with Mr Hoby about the toune to spye out the best places where Cotiges might be builded: after I came home I wrought tell: 6: and gaue order for supper, and then I betook me to priuat praier and examination, in which I found my selfe a lacking for pardon: then went to supper, after which I walked a whill. (1998, 8)

In the evening, Lady Hoby again prayed, helped her husband to look at some papers, and then went to bed, but did not record exact times for her undertakings. On the 28th of August, again, clock-times emerge to regulate the progression of her day:

In the morning, after priuat praier, I Reed of the bible, and then wrought tell 8: a clock, and then I eate my breakfast: after which done, I walked in the feeldes tell: 10 a clock, then I praied, and, not long after, I went to dinner: and about one a clock I geathered my Apeles tell: 4:, then I Cam home, and wrought tell almost: 6:, and then I went to priuat praier and examination, in which it pleased the lord to blesse me. (11)

Margaret Hoby was, of course, in many ways a special case. Contemporary Englishwomen did not typically write diaries, and her tasks reveal her elite position – even if needlework and gathering of apples were common activities for women lower down on the social scale too. Nevertheless, her insistence on clock-time is striking. Most of her activities were organised by reference to either clock-times or meals, which also functioned as temporal signals subdividing the diurnal pattern. Clock-times emerge especially frequently in between mealtimes to position periods of household or textile work, physical activity, intellectual pursuits or religious contemplation.

Towards the autumn, however, Margaret Hoby's markings of clock-time grow much rarer, and the entries themselves gradually become less detailed. Morning and evening hours – usually 8 or 9 o'clock in the morning and 5 or 6 o'clock in the evening – are still sometimes mentioned, but very irregularly, and daily tasks appear as a steady progression rather than as periods pinned down with external reference to clock-time. Every now and then, a day with several clock-times emerges, such as the next 4th of February (79). Her sustained attention to clock-time does not resume the following summer – the frequency of the 1599 markings does not seem to be sparked by easy availability of sundial readings in fair weather. Perhaps there was a new clock in the Hoby household at that time, or she was just more attentive to detail, time included, when first starting her diary.

Lady Anne Clifford begins her diary, in turn, by recording the death of Queen Elizabeth in 1603, noting that she passed away at 2.30 at night while at about 10 the next morning James was proclaimed king (1990, 21). Clock-times are mentioned from the very start, then, but in the traditional context of

important events. Later in the diary, clock-times are entered infrequently, but with a clear sense of their usefulness. For instance, when Clifford reluctantly parted with her daughter Margaret, she mentions 'the Child' leaving for London 'between 11 and 12' (34). Her own and her husband's travel and arrival times elicit precise clock-time markings, sometimes coinciding with disagreements with her husband. Such was the case on the 8th of June 1616, when she was abruptly sent from London to their country home at Knole:

> Then my Lord told me I should go presently to Knole, & so I was sent away upon half an hour's warning, leaving my Coz. Cecily Neville & Willoughby behind me in London, & so went down alone with Kath. Buxton about 8 a clock at night, so as it was 12 before we came to Knole. (39)

Anne Clifford's use of clock-time often seems to be linked with a need to coordinate with others: when travel arrangements or momentous events, such as her mother's death, demand precise organisation from several people, her diary entries, too, display more temporal detail. Furthermore, emotional incidents, such as illness of a child, provoke her to mark down exact timings (41, 49). It is also notable that Anne Clifford's clock-time markings are not restricted to one place – in fact, they are often related precisely to a change of location.

Hoby and Clifford are examples of a much wider pattern of emerging prevalence of mechanical time. If clocks and watches were rare, how are we to explain this widespread use of clock-time in early modern source material? Scholars of temporal practices have recently shown that in the Middle Ages and the early modern period, clock-time was mostly judged not on the basis of privately owned clocks but public ones. In England, many churches had been equipped with a wall clock already in the fifteenth century, and the ringing of bells made hours audible even to those who had no visible access to a public clock.[3]

This public dimension remained the most important facet of mechanical timekeeping until the late seventeenth century, but the number of clocks in private houses, too, grew slowly through the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Landes 1983, 85-87). Obviously, one did not always have to own a domestic clock oneself to have access to it. Portable novelty clocks of the sixteenth century could be moved from room to room, and weight-driven wall clocks were visible to all those moving in and out of the house in which

[3] The earliest mechanical clock escapement was recorded in England at the Dunstable Priory in 1283, and the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries saw many such clocks being installed in public buildings (Glennie and Thrift 2009, 75-76; see also Landes 1983, 53; Engammare 2010, 5). For time embedded in the urban soundscape, see Dohrn-van Rossum 1996, 202-209, 212-215; Blondé and Verhoeven 2013, 224.

it was located. As a visual example, a weight-driven clock on the wall links the family of Sir Thomas More with mechanical time in Rowland Lockey's portrait of 1592, now at Nostell Priory.[4] The portrait was painted after a Holbein original long after Sir Thomas More himself was dead, and we have no knowledge of whether More actually owned such a clock. Its inclusion in a late sixteenth-century portrait nevertheless suggests that, at that time at least, it would have looked entirely credible in a learned elite household. If indeed More had such a clock on his wall, his wife and daughters, pictured in the portrait, as well as servants would have been able to see it.

Personal watches too were available to men and sometimes even to women, if only one had sufficient means to acquire them, and they may have contributed to a more personal experience of clock-time.[5] Considering the common opinion that only the elite could afford watches, it is perhaps surprising that even the wealthy yeoman William Honeywell recorded the purchase of a watch, and a purse to keep it in, in his accounts of 1596 (Snell 1907, 162). Timepieces designed especially for women resembled jewellery rather than objects of practical use, and were often worn hanging from the waist, although Elizabeth I famously had a tiny watch set in a ring. Ornamental watches were also circulated as gifts from the sixteenth century onwards (Landes 1983, 87; Sherman 1996, 84; Boesky 2000, 132-136; Donald 2000, 55, 67). We can see a small watch like this in the hand of Frances Earle in a 1630s portrait by Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger.[6] As many scholars have suggested, however, early modern personal timepieces should perhaps be seen as sophisticated toys rather than practical tools for tracking, or indeed changing the overall perception of time (see Sherman 1996, 83-84; Blondé and Verhoeven 2013, 232).

We should also remember that sundials, the oldest method of determining time, were not rare in early modern England, producing an altogether different frame for measuring time: while public and private mechanical clocks provided a steady length for hours, sundials measured time with unequal hours, dividing the day into temporal segments of different lengths at different times of the year (Dohrn-van Rossum 1996, 19; Glennie and Thrift 2009, 25-26). For early modern people, these two different frames existed simultaneously, and it is often difficult to determine which system they are referring to.

[4] See image at <http://www.nationaltrustcollections.org.uk/object/960059>, accessed 15 February 2017.

[5] This is a key argument in David Landes' classic *Revolution in Time* (1983, 7). In the light of more recent scholarship on the scarcity of private clocks, however, our view of the causes of the evolution of early modern time-consciousness needs to be refined.

[6] See image at <http://www.wga.hu/html_m/g/gheeraer/f_earle.html>, accessed 15 February 2017.

All in all, as Paul Glennie and Nigel Thrift have pointed out, early modern England 'was a much more clock-time-literate environment than has generally been assumed' (2009, 235). Almost all early modern diarists, whether men or women, seem to have been quite comfortable with using clock-time. At the same time, they only very rarely tell us how they knew what time it was – it was taken for granted that one would know (221). We should not underestimate, then, the power that clock-time offered for early modern people looking for ways to organise their lives and practices, whether they gathered their knowledge from church clocks, sundials or mechanical clocks in their own use. With or without watches, early modern Englishwomen seem to have been very time-conscious even in their everyday lives.

3. *Daily Schedules*

How then did women conceptualise the temporal progression of their days? Let us start by looking at how women came to order their time around their various tasks and activities. If, as Glennie and Thrift suggest, timekeeping should be thought of as a set of practices rather than as something that is essentially 'there' (2009, 12), we should not just consider the ownership of clocks but rather the actions through which time and timing were called into being. Englishwomen's daily schedules of household and family duties, social responsibilities and a certain amount of recreation expose just such sets of practices.

Scholars have tended to stress the repetitiveness of women's work, particularly textile work which women of all classes were involved with, although in different ways. Recurring tasks such as spinning and weaving, cooking and baking, and caring for both humans and animals evoked rhythms that contributed to a temporal *habitus*, a disposition that structured the experience of time (Jones and Stallybrass 2000, 105-110). This temporal structuring established women's understanding and experience of time as episodic – governed by habitual segmentation of time to specific periodic tasks – and its uses as loaded with moral and religious meaning.[7] In my view, calling this episodic understanding cyclical or natural time, however, oversimplifies an extremely complex picture.

Let us look at how John Fitzherbert describes the daily rhythm of women's household work in *The Boke of Husbandrye* (1552), in a section entitled 'What

[7] In his classic article, Edward Thompson described preindustrial time sense as task-oriented (1967, 60). Lorna Weatherill, in turn, has suggested that women's timekeeping may have been more task-oriented than men's, as men carried their watches with them and checked them to synchronise their time with others (1988, 141). Here I attempt to show, however, that early modern task-orientation was not as divorced from clock-time as is sometimes assumed.

workes a wyfe shuld do in generall'. Following the circadian rhythm, he starts with the first moments after waking up:

> First in the mornyng when thou art waken and purpose to ryse, lift vp thy hand & blys the & make a signe of the holy crosse. In nomine patris et filii & spiritus sancti. Amen. In the name of the father the sonne, & the holy gooste. And yf ye saye a Pater noster, an Aue & a Crede. (ff. 45v-46r)

Here we do not have to rely on advice literature only: that women routinely started their day with prayer is testified to by women's diaries, as we will soon see. Fitzherbert then advises women to start their housewifely duties:

> when thou arte vp and redye, then fyrste swepe thy house: dresse vp thy dysheborde and sette all thynges in good order in thy house mylke thy kye, sode thy calues, fyle vp thy mylke take vp thy chyldren and aray them and prouyde for thy husbandes breake faste, dyner, souper, and for thy children and seruauntes and take thy part with them. And to ordeyne corne and malte to the myll, to bake and brue withall when nede is. (ff. 45v-46r)

After cleaning the house, women should milk the cows, wake their children and prepare the husband's breakfast. Providing meals for the household – and the household animals – at regular intervals took up a major part of a housewife's day, and she was also supposed to be present at the meals, sometimes together with children and servants. Baking and brewing, making butter and cheese, gathering eggs and growing necessary provisions, such as herbs or flax and hemp, in the kitchen garden were also counted among the housewife's routine employments by Fitzherbert. By continuously spinning and sewing, she would make the household's textiles, including sheets, tablecloths, towels and clothes. Helping her husband with filling the dung cart or ploughing and making hay was often necessary, and any products that the household would not consume themselves were to be sold at the market, whether 'butter, chese, mylke, egges, chekens, kapons, hennes, pygges, gees', or 'al maner of corne' (f. 47r). At the same time, she could also 'bye all maner of necessary thynges belonging to a household', and then make account to her husband of everything that she had purchased.[8]

It is worth pointing out that while Fitzherbert's book is prescriptive, the tasks it describes were necessary in any agricultural community and counted as women's work all over Europe. Not all women were housewives, of course, and not everybody baked, milked or cleaned the house, but the

[8] Such scheduling could also have a health-oriented purpose, as in the directions offered by Andrew Borde (1540, sigs C3v-D3r). Borde's advice on the correct temporal organisation of bodily activities is directed primarily to men, but some of it could be taken to apply to women too.

way in which Fitzherbert presents these tasks as rhythmically reiterated is suggestive of larger patterns of episodic task-orientation. Without talking of clock-time, Fitzherbert points towards different duties for morning, daytime and evening, stressing the wife's need to care for family members, servants and livestock in an orderly manner and at the right times. Seasonal duties related to planting and harvesting or rearing and butchering animals provided a wider yearly rhythm that complemented the rhythms of daily life. As we have seen, mealtimes were important points dividing the day into different sections and activities not just in Fitzherbert but in women's letters and diaries too.

In Thomas Tusser's household manual, we also get precise instructions regarding clock-time for these duties: while many of the tasks seem quite similar to those in Fitzherbert, Tusser adds prescriptions for rising at 4am in summer and 5am in winter, and going to bed at 10pm in summer and 9pm in winter (1570, f. 35r; see also Glennie and Thrift 2009, 193). With such precise instructions, Tusser must have been referring to the mecanical time of church clocks, not the unequal hours of sundials. However, Tusser advises housewives to pay heed to cocks as also telling time 'as true as a clock' by crowing at midnight, three o'clock and an hour before daybreak in winter (f. 28v). As natural time-pieces, cocks marked a diurnal progression that Tusser interpreted as a universal moral lesson about timing and household work. In the early modern understanding, there was no elemental break between natural and mechanical time; rather, it was the interplay between the temporal systems that informed timekeeping in daily life.

We may want to surmise that just fitting all these activities into one's waking hours must have been quite an undertaking. Many housewives of course had servants to help with their duties, but that introduced an extra element of management into one's days. For maidservants, the rhythms and tasks of everyday life were dictated by their masters and mistresses, but their days were naturally no less busy. In urban environments, women could also take part in the artisanal production of the family or sell wares in a family shop, and these, in turn, followed the temporal structures of urban living where time was also managed by authorities demanding that shops open and close at regular times and that people stay out of the streets during curfew (see Landes 1983, 77-78).

As the early modern period progressed and the lifestyles of the elite and the working people grew increasingly apart, however, time could seem to slow down for some elite women. Dorothy Osborne described her life in such a way in a letter to her fiancé William Temple in the summer of 1653, but here too everyday temporality is seen in terms of schedules that hark back to time kept by nature and household animals. This young woman's time was not governed by constant prayer, as it was for Puritan women, but by meals and clock-time, and she also hinted at the tedium that sometimes characterised elite women's days in the absence of obligatory housework and pressing Christian concerns:

You aske mee how I passe my time heer, I can give you a perfect accounte not only of what I doe for the present, but what I am likely to doe this seven yeare if I stay heer soe long. I rise in the morning reasonably Early, and before I am redy I goerounde the house till I am weary of that, and then into the garden till it grows to hott for mee. [A]bout ten a clock I think of makeing mee redy, and when that's don I goe into my fathers Chamber, from thence to dinner, where my Cousin Molle and I sitt in great State, in a Roome and at a table that would hold a great many more. After dinner wee sitt and talk. [T]he heat of the day is spent in reading or working and about sixe or seven a Clock, I walke out into a Common that lyes hard by the house where a great many young wenches keep Sheep and Cow's and sitt in the shade singing of Ballads. [W]hen I see them driveing home theire Cattle I think tis time for mee to retyre too. [W]hen I have supped I goe into the Garden and soe to the syde of a small River that runs by it where I sitt downe and wish you with mee. (1928, 51-52)

Dorothy Osborne's humorous ways of expressing herself should not cloud the fact that she felt keenly the futility of her current existence, and looked forward to a married life that would give her more responsibilities. Her religious carelessness also seemed to trouble her: 'twill not bee for your advantage that I should stay heer longe for in Earnest I shall bee good for nothing if I doe', she writes to William the year after while visiting her friends, 'wee goe abroade all day and Play all night, and say our Prayers when wee have time' (174-175). Christian timekeeping still informed the moral content of daily temporality even for those not religiously observant. Women's time management, however, was primarily thought about in terms of repetitive and steady schedules. Order and diligence were key components of women's task-oriented temporality.

4. *Measuring Duration*

Many of the duties mentioned above seem to imply an awareness of rather small intervals and periods of time. Just think about cooking and baking, for instance: both are very much dependent on a sense of time and duration, even if one can also manage them by looking, feeling and tasting (see also Donald 2000, 71).

If the accounts above are somewhat vague about duration, we may get some idea of how closely women needed to pay attention to intervals of time if we look at recipe collections that offered guidance for preparing food, medicines, and cosmetics. Some of these recipes are quite simple, but many are complicated and require precise procedures and exotic or laboriously prepared ingredients. In early printed books of household recipes, such as *The Treasure of Pore Men*, published in the 1520s (Anonymous 1526?), exact timing is rare. Directions for preparing medicines are not timed, but application of them sometimes is, although in rather general terms: ointments for headache are to be applied early in the morning and late in the evening, for example, or left on for the night and removed in the morning. For more complicated

timing comparisons, rather than clock-times, are used: a pill for toothache should be placed between one's cheek and the sore tooth 'by the space that one may go a myle' (ff. x^{v}-xi^{r}, xvi^{r}). However, after the mid-sixteenth century, express advice on duration becomes much more frequent. For instance, in John Partridge's cookbook of 1573, *The Huswifes Closet*, a chicken pie needs to be baked for 'one howre and a halfe' (sig. B1v).

Most sixteenth-century advice on duration in the recipe books indeed cited the number of hours needed for preparing and applying household products. 'Half-hours' and even 'quarter-hours' were sometimes mentioned as well, but minutes were not yet in use.[9] Gervase Markham's *The English Hus-wife*, for instance, provided a recipe for a sleep-inducing ointment that was to be rubbed on the temples and left there for up to four hours (1615, 10). Sometimes timed preparation of household products was quite laborious. Following a 1558 recipe for scented water 'fit for a queen', for perfuming linen or whitening one's face, one needed to wash, burn, boil and distil, and stir some of the ingredients together for 'the space of. vi. houres' (Alexis 1975, ff. 67r-67v). In Hugh Platt's *Delightes for Ladies*, published in 1602, a face cream demands painstaking attention: 'Incorporate with a woodden pestle and in a woodden mortar with great labour foure ounces of sublimate, and one ounce of crude Mercury at the least sixe or eight houres (you cannot bestowe too much labor herein)' (sig. G11v).

In another of Platt's recipes, a pimple salve needed to be applied on the face for one hour, and a hair colourant left in the hair to dry for a quarter of an hour, before it was washed away with soap and water (sig. H2r, sig. H10 v - H11r). Thomas Raynalde's *The Byrth of Mankynde* of 1560 advised women about raising their hairlines to fashionable heights by applying a mixture of burnt lye, arsenic and water to their forehead for a quarter of an hour, to make plucking of the hairs easy (ff. 127r-128v). During the latter half of the sixteenth century, clock-time indeed became a primary temporal frame of reference for many kinds of household work.

References to duration in household books of recipes do not automatically mean that women would have made use of such instruction. Despite this limitation, they are suggestive of a widely shared sense of specifically timed duration, which can be strengthened by reference to other instances of timing in everyday life. Although my material in this article comes from personal documents and printed books, such precise measurements of duration can also be found in court testimony and public punishments, revealing the highly developed sense of clock-time of early modern English people more generally.

[9] In sixteenth-century conceptions of clock-time, hour was still the basic unit, and while it could be divided into smaller parts, it was not yet understood as a period of sixty minutes. The word 'minute', at this time, was taken to mean an instant or a moment in time (Dohrn-van Rossum 1996, 282; Sherman 1996, 40, 93).

Taking a few examples from previous research, one couple in Essex were seen dallying and kissing for two or three hours in 1576 by a witness trying to sleep in the same bed, while Margaret Knowsley, whose case has been made familiar through Steve Hindle's work, was publicly shamed by making her stand in a cage in the market place for two hours (Macfarlane 1987, 298; Hindle 1994, 405). In court testimony, witnesses also described events with specific references to clock-time already in the sixteenth century (Glennie and Thrift 2009, 193; see also Blondé and Verhoven 2013, 222-224). It is indeed quite probable that the law courts were among the first contexts in which exact timing became a practical necessity and thus regularly recorded. But despite the apparent easiness with which the English resorted to the law, appearing or being punished in court were still exceptional circumstances compared to household work. Instructions in recipe collections and records of depositions both testify to early modern men and women having highly defined timing skills and a sense of duration related to clock-time even in the sixteenth century.

As Gerhard Dohrn-van Rossum has reminded us, it is easy to overlook the fact that early modern timepieces, not yet equipped with minute hands, did not record both clock-time and exact duration (1996, 117-118); instead, two different instruments, clocks and sandglasses, were needed to indicate continuous time and set limits to time, respectively. Early modern women must have made extensive use of hourglasses to measure the precise durations indicated in household recipes. Sandglasses were common objects in the sixteenth century, used to measure all kinds of intervals, from cooking times to sermons and university lectures.[10] They were also associated with women and their work. We can see one on the table in the panel depicting Lady Anne Clifford as a young girl in her *Great Picture*[11] of 1646 – although hourglasses were typically depicted in art as symbols of passing time and mortality, they were also material objects that women habitually owned and used. Inventories, too, can be helpful here. I will cite only one: Sir William More collected a private account book of all the possessions he and his wife Margaret kept in their own closets in 1556. Margaret's room contained a table, a cupboard, several jugs, jars and barrels, a grater, a pastry-mould, some knives, some brushes, a pair of shears and snuffers, five books, and a sandglass (Stewart 1995, 82-83). Perhaps we should pay attention to the fact that most artefacts Margaret kept to accompany her hourglass were kitchen appliances, suggesting that the hourglass may have been most useful for cooking and preparing medicines – and for warning her of passing time when reading

[10] Sandglasses were a late medieval innovation that had found their way to household use by the sixteenth century. In some household manuals there were even recipes for manufacturing hourglass sand at home (Dohrn-van Rossum 1996, 117-118; Pope 2016).

[11] *The Great Picture Triptych*, attributed to Jan van Belcamp, is at the Abbot Hall Art Gallery; see image at <https://www.abbothall.org.uk/great-picture>, accessed 15 February 2017.

her books. Relatively inexpensive and accurate objects, sandglasses were of practical use in many household tasks. They were most often calibrated to measure hours and quarter-hours, and consequently account for the easiness with which small time units were spoken of in the absence of clocks with minute-hands (see Dohrn-van Rossum 1996, 272-273).

Household work was, then, much more dependent on timekeeping than we may have supposed. If one could measure hours by public clocks and bells, smaller units of time were harder to grasp without extra implements. Clocks with a separate minute hand only started to appear in the late seventeenth century, after the invention of the more accurate pendulum clocks and spiral spring watches (Glennie and Thrift 2009, 12; Engammare 2010, 41-42). Sandglasses, on the other hand, were cheap and common objects, and probably contributed to early modern notions and experiences of daily temporality more than has been acknowledged so far. They served the purposes of both busy housewives and noblewomen, who had need of measuring time not only for their domestic duties but also for their devotions.

5. *Pious Timekeeping*

While household manuals and recipe collections reflect a prescriptive approach to timekeeping, information about lived experiences of daily temporality must be sought in early modern women's own writing or in texts describing their personal lives. Writing women of the early modern period almost always came from an elite background, and this is of course reflected in their ideas about temporality. And yet, many of them also stressed strict scheduling. The most important task to be programmed into the day was periodic prayer, especially important in the morning and in the evening but sometimes worked into the daily programme in between too. Services in the church or chapel could also be used for this purpose, and some elite women prayed regularly with clerical help, be it Catholic or Protestant.

My first example of how women's conceptions of daily time were organised by Christian worship is related to Lady Cecily Neville, the Duchess of York. Around 1490, her household ordinances show remarkable attention to well-defined and spiritual timetables:

> She is accustomed to rise at seven o'clock and her chaplain is ready to say with her matins of the day and matins of Our Lady. When she is fully ready, she hears a Low Mass in her chamber and after Mass she takes some breakfast. She goes to the chapel to hear the divine service and two Low Masses, and from there to dinner. During dinner, she hears a reading on a holy subject … After dinner she gives audience for an hour to all who have any business with her. She then sleeps for a quarter of an hour. After sleeping she continues in prayer until the first bell rings for Evensong. Then she enjoys a drink of wine or ale. Without delay her chaplain is ready to say both evensongs with her, and after the bell has rung, she goes to chapel and hears Evensong sung. From there she goes

to supper where she repeats the reading which was heard at dinner to those who are in her presence. After supper she spends time with her gentlewomen in the enjoyment of honest mirth. One hour before going to bed she takes a cup of wine, and then goes to her private closet where she takes her leave of God for the night, bringing to an end her prayers of the day. By eight o'clock she is in bed. (Quoted in Glennie and Thrift 2009, 185)

Only a member of the highest aristocracy could spend her days in such relentless piety, and it played a part too that she was, at this time, rather an old lady. Nevertheless, we can see here how medieval monastic ideals of canonical hours were carried over to aristocratic female practice, and how daily time could be organised into a regular rhythm of devotion.

Although the ladies of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries tended to be much more moderate in their practices of prayer, the centrality of such temporal ordering within their daily routines did not diminish. Regularity of prayer was also felt as a yardstick for women's morality and honour.

Lady Margaret Hoby, we will remember, had time for private prayer and reading of the Bible, followed by some needlework, before she took her breakfast at 8 in the morning (1998, 11-12; see also Glennie and Thrift 2009, 206). Lady Grace Mildmay, in turn, imitated the devotional practices of her mother, whose prayer schedule was not only regular but highly emotional:

Mine own mother gave me a good example herein, for every morning she would withdraw herself alone and spend an hour in meditation and prayers to God, with her face all blubbered with tears. And she counselled me never to weep but for my sins, saying that those tears did never break the beauty of a woman. (Pollock 1995, 29)

Following her example, Lady Grace saw her own morning prayers as especially important. Elizabeth Joceline, writing in the 1620s, organised her morning in much the same way: 'The morning I haue dedicated to meditation, praier, good studies, and honest recreation' (1894, 51-52). And for Anne Halkett, born in 1623, the most important part of daily time management was the regular devotion learned as a young child: 'even from our infancy, wee were instructed never to neglect to begin and end the day with prayer, and orderly every morning to read the Bible, and ever to keepe the church as offten as there was occation to meet there, either for prayers or preaching' (1875, 2).

Time set aside for prayer every morning and evening, and reading the Bible daily, were clearly a central part of everyday temporal experience for early modern Englishwomen. Daily prayer not only worked as glorification of God, however, but also served as an intense opportunity for self-reflection and self-improvement, especially for Protestant women, whose awareness of sin and piety arose from the requirement of a very personal connection with God. Max Engammare (2010, 7-9, 245-247), looking at Calvinist notions of temporality, has indeed seen the obsession with accurate timekeeping as first and foremost a Protestant trend, and as closely linked with the idea

that each individual was personally accountable to God for spending each passing moment wisely. In his view, the Reformation also signalled a shift from Catholic spirituality's focus on space to a Protestant spirituality of time.

These ideas may have informed early modern Englishwomen's experience of temporality too. They seem to have enjoyed their schedule of prayer and good works, especially when combined with religious reading habits. Prayer was not felt as tedious or as a hardship. Christian morality in fact offered early modern women their most important notion of time: that time was given by God, and thus every moment of every day was a gift that should be spent to the glory of God. This deep religiosity governed all temporal organisation, but it also governed the affective charge of any task that a woman undertook.

Lady Lettice Cary, Viscountess Falkland, who died at the age of thirty-five in 1647, illustrated this affective energy that control of time provided in her schedule. In the words of her chaplain and biographer:

> That her time might not be mis-spent, nor her employments tedious to her, the several hours of the day had variety of employments assigned to them; and the intermixing of prayer, reding, writing, working, and walking, brought a pleasure to each of them, in their courses; so that the day was carried about faster, than she would, and she begins in this her youth, to abridge herself of her sleep, and was ofttimes at a book in her Closet, when she was thought to be in bed. (Duncon 1908, 35)

Honouring God through pious employments and religious self-improvement could sometimes lead to extending the God-given hours of the day at the expense of rest and sleep. The most important thing about godly timekeeping, however, was an absolute need to avoid idleness – none of the precious moments provided by God should go to waste.

6. *Enemies of Idleness*

Early modern Englishwomen seem convinced that the personified devil would indeed find work for idle hands, and not being continually at work immediately suggested sloth and pride. The moral charge of idleness reveals how important it was to *use* time wisely. Time was to be filled and managed by persistent labour, not just allowed to pass. Lady Elizabeth Capell, for instance, was described in her funeral sermon of 1661 in these terms, actively resisting the 'spiritual enemy' by constant godly employment:

> she was carefull to be continually busying her self about some good employment or other, either in her Closet, at her devotions, or in her Family, about her houshold affairs, or among her neighbours, in friendly and charitable visits, that so in case her spirituall enemy should come suddenly thrusting upon her at any time with his temptations, she might have her answer ready. (Barker 1661, 37-38)

Being busy was a godly attribute, signalling careful accounting of one's mortal hours. Not being busy, in turn, showed a sinful alienation from God. According to Elizabeth Joceline, 'Thou art no sooner broke out of the armes of sloth, but pride steps in diligently' (1894, 30). Dorothy Leigh, in turn, believed that 'who so is truly chaste, is free from idlenesse and from all vaine delights, full of humility, and all good Christian vertues', and 'she which is vnchaste, is giuen to be idle; or if she do any thing, it is for vaine glory, and for the prayse of men' (1616, 30-31).

Joceline and Leigh, writing primarily for their own children if also for other mothers, were especially interested in the upbringing of children, and their stress on the harmful effects of idleness should be read in this context. Idleness was particularly dangerous for children, and for two reasons: first, childhood was a time when life-long habits were formed, and using time wisely was self-evidently counted among these habits. Secondly, childhood was the time of life especially suited for learning, and so children were to be guided towards diligent study and preparation for a busy and pious adulthood (Pollock 1995, 236). Learning to shun idleness in childhood would lead to a moral aversion towards it in adulthood as well.

The stress on productive work could indeed be counted among the guiding principles of Englishwomen's habits of organising time. Their absolute certainty of the morally corrupting influence of idleness is evident in all their writing, and one could only avoid idleness by being constantly busy in good works – being busy in something less valuable would still be counted as idleness. The strength of this view is of course related to the fact that the purpose of most first-person narratives written by women of this period was religious, and mostly Puritan, self-examination. Still, the urgency with which time-wasting was condemned in all forms of early modern writing shows how deeply it permeated early modern society even outside the strictly religious sphere. We cannot overlook its enormous significance for notions of time either. At the very core of early modern temporal experience was the question of how to use time wisely.

We should of course take into account that the fear of idleness was in no way restricted to women. Moralist male writers stressed it just as much. Leonard Wright, for instance, advised his readers to look at other creatures, as the animal sphere would put man in mind of the importance of labour. Idleness was degrading: 'hee that spendes his time in idlenesse, without trauaile of bodie or exercise of mind: is to his enemies a mocking stocke: to his friends a shame: and to the common wealth a burthen: and therefore vnworthy to liue vpon the earth' (1589, 6). In Wright's biblically informed opinion, those who did not work did not deserve to live either, whatever their gender. However, it was easier for male writers to gender idleness feminine.

Anxieties about women's use of time in men's writing stand in stark contrast to women's own views. Male writers often characterised both women

and female activities as idle, and had a completely different idea about women's relationship to time, which is where we will turn next. Nevertheless, men's criticism of female temporal practices still reinforces the contention that idleness was commonly viewed both as a moral threat and as a central element in the early modern experience of temporality.

Where the idealised picture of household manuals, all written by men, centres on the manifold duties of housewives and gives the impression that even in well-to-do households they were involved even in the most menial of tasks, some authors believed that such instruction had by no means reached all women. In line with many accounts by foreign travellers stressing the relative independence of Englishwomen, the Antwerp merchant Emanuel van Meteren testified in 1614 that the lazy women of English towns were spoiled by their freedom: they left all drudgery to their servants, sitting by their doors dressed in fine clothes, walking, riding and playing cards, or visiting their friends and feasting at child-births, christenings and churchings (Rye 1865, 72). Men typically counted all forms of female sociability as time-wasting, and even women's standard duties could be interpreted as idleness as soon as women were not conducting them alone and in silence. Looked at from the women's perspective, it seems that their time for recreation was often indistinguishable from their work: female sociability centred on places where women visited because of their duties, and their textile work often allowed for sociable conversation, whether performed outside their front doors or inside their houses (Capp 2003, 321, 330). But women, too, would have seen the corrupting influence of idleness in objectionable behaviours such as over-eating, drinking, gambling, lascivious dancing and the singing of filthy songs (Barnarde 1570, ff. 5v-6r, 10v).

Van Meteren also gestured toward a sphere that emerged particularly often in male condemnation of female idleness. For male writers of popular literature, it seemed self-evident that one activity governed women's use of time more than any other: making themselves look their best. Already in the early modern period, men seem to have thought that one always had to wait for women to get ready. According to men, women spent ages sitting in front of the mirror: they sacrificed 'more houres to their Looking-glasse, than they reserue minutes to lament their defects' in a moral or a religious sense (Brathwaite 1631, 11). Women's habit of wasting time beautifying themselves even gave rise to a well-known cautionary tale recorded in 1484: a lady who dwelled next to a church took so long every day to get ready that everybody around her grew weary and angry, so much so that one Sunday, when they could not get the service started because of her, they cursed her. The next time she looked into her mirror, it was not her own face that looked back at her but the backside of the devil, so foul and horrible that it scared her out of her wits. When at last she recovered, she was never late for church again (La Tour Landry 1906, 45).

This image of the time-consuming, God-forsaking toilette is repeated in male writing through the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Brathwaite 1631, 11; see also Greene 1881-1883, 26-27; Nashe 1958a, 137-138, 150-151; Nashe 1958b, 18). In male imaginaries, women were consummate time-wasters, but some of this censure should perhaps be seen as belonging to a set of gendered tools for negotiating questions of male diligence and laziness, rather than as wholesale denunciation of women's habits and tasks. The same attitude is, in fact, evident in women's writing, too, although expressed through a condemnation of fashion rather than discussing cosmetics. Elizabeth Joceline thought that one of the principal reasons for women's stooping to idleness was that her age revered fashionably dressed women more than it did wise, honest or religious women, and she warned her unborn daughter not to make this mistake (1894, 31-32, 37-38).

For both women and men, then, avoidance of idleness was key to moral temporal management. But we can also see glimpses of women who did not take the warnings against idleness seriously, even when others may have disapproved of their easy habits. Thomas Whythorne thought it worth mentioning, in his autobiography written in the 1570s, that a widow of his acquaintance was in the habit of staying in bed in the morning until ten o'clock, and was reluctant to get up for breakfast even when her brother, with whom she was living at the time, expressly told her to do so (1961, 157). Whythorne did not feel the need to explain his stance further than mere description of the situation; he clearly believed disapproval of such behaviour to be automatic. Indeed all the women who themselves described their daily routines, as we have seen already, stressed the moral virtues of rising and praying early in the morning, making sure at the start of each day that idleness had no chance to govern their temporal existence.

7. *Time for Learning*

Instead of daily practices such as beautifying, women themselves seem to have pinpointed intellectual pursuits as producing temporal tensions in special need of negotiation. Learning, reading, and writing were sometimes seen as dangerous and idle pastimes, but often also described as pious and edifying activities especially well in accordance with elite women's time management. The women whose own comments on the issue were recorded in our historical sources were, of course, themselves readers and writers, and understandably declared in unison that reading and writing were not idle pursuits but rather the opposite, ways into learning and piety and suitable for women too.

Avoidance of idleness was indeed connected to a good education, as education allowed women ways to counter the temptations of laziness. Lady Anne Halkett commended her mother for having her daughters well taught so that they would not be in danger of falling into idleness. In the 1620s and 1630s, her mother 'paid masters for teaching my sister and mee to write, speake

French, play on the lute and virginalls, and dance, and kept a gentlewoman to teach us all kinds of needleworke, which shews I was not brought up in an idle life' (1875, 2). It is striking, of course, how different elite women's definitions of valuable uses of time were from those propounded in sermons and household manuals. While both stress the threat of idleness, definitions of what idleness entailed were inextricably class-bound. Education and wealth allowed idleness to be redefined as an absence of intellectual effort. Honing one's musical and dancing skills were not understood as a pleasurable pastime but as a way of acquiring necessary life skills, and needlework was often simply termed 'work'.

Much of elite women's time, particularly in their youth, was devoted to learning languages, sometimes with tutors, sometimes with family members. Conversation and reading in foreign languages were thus important means to defy idleness, if also ways to spend time intelligently with one's friends. Mary Basset, for instance, wrote to her sister Philippa Basset in French as early as 1538 and wished that she could spend more time with her, teaching her the language regularly, an hour at a time: 'If wishes availed anything I should be an hour with you every day, to teach you to speak French' (Everett Wood 1846, III, 27). The great example for early modern women's learned interests was Queen Elizabeth herself, who, according to her tutor Roger Ascham, spent more time in her youth in learning languages, perusing classical literature and perfecting both her handwriting and her thinking skills than anybody else in the whole country, including the professional scholars of universities. Elizabeth's daily learning routine, as described by Ascham, was extremely orderly and ambitious, and involved strict programming and timetabling (Ascham 1968, f. 21).

For elite women, enjoyment of the activities they were engaged in also seems to have been an issue. Many of the writing women commented on what their favourite activities were, particularly in girlhood when they were being schooled in accordance with the standards of their class, and also learning their habits of temporal organisation. However, it is typical that those favourite pastimes were seen as taking too much time.

Anne Fanshawe, in her memoir written in 1676, also praised her mother for forcing her to do needlework, French, and music even though she was 'a hoyting girl' and mostly interested in sports: 'yet was I wild to that degree, that the hours of my beloved recreation took up too much of my time, for I loved riding in the first place, running, and all active pastimes' (1829, 32-33). Lucy Hutchinson, in turn, learned to read at the age of four in 1624, and while she had a whole host of tutors teaching her all the necessary accomplishments – languages, dancing, writing, and needlework – she herself was only interested in reading books, so much so that her mother thought it dangerous for her health and strictly moderated her reading. As a child, Lucy's days too were scheduled around going to sermons and periods of learning and play, even though she tried to steal away to read her books in private as often as she could (1973, 288-289).

Both Anne Fanshawe and Lucy Hutchinson seem to remember their earlier selves with a certain fondness, and while they may have later looked at their childhood pastimes as a misuse of time better devoted to pious pursuits, they did not condemn their passions as pure time-wasting. Rather, both saw time spent in beloved activities as a negotiation between prescribed restraint and cherished recreation that may have proved in many ways valuable in later life.

Mary Rich, on the other hand, took a rather dim view of her youthful reading self, and particularly regretted the time, just before her marriage in 1641, that she spent with her flighty sister-in-law, who taught her to be 'very vain and foolish, inticing me to spend (as she did) her time in seeing and reading plays and romances, and in exquisite and curious dressing' (1848, IV, 21). Here it was rather the quality of the reading, combined with a similarly foolish concentration on fashion, that coloured her use of time with such a dark brush. Elizabeth Delaval, at the ripe age of 16 in 1665, also condemned her younger self on the same grounds:

> nothing seem'd to me so griveous as to spend time in the learning of my duty in reading thy holy word and in praying to thee, nothing so pleasant as the waisting of my houer's in foleish devertisement's and in reading unprofitable romances. (1978, 62)

While the reading of godly books was a useful way to employ one's time, reading popular literature was counted as time wasted, even by those who had themselves displayed an appetite for it. It was up to the moral content of the reading matter whether time spent with books was useful study or a form of idleness.

In contrast, Elizabeth Cary, Lady Falkland, according to the memoir written by her daughter Lucy, seems to have felt no shame at all about her love of reading, even though those around her may have seen it differently. Born in 1585, Elizabeth soon displayed a precocious talent for reading and foreign languages and organised her time accordingly:

> She, having neither brother nor sister, nor other companion of her age, spent her whole time in reading, to which she gave herself so much that she frequently read all night; so as her mother was fain to forbid her servants to let her have candles. (Simpson 1861, 6)

Later, when Lady Falkland's mother-in-law, with whom she was not on good terms, punished her by confining her to her chamber, Elizabeth was not fazed: she entertained herself by reading until her mother-in-law took away her books, after which she set about writing poetry of her own. She is also one of the few women of the seventeenth century who confessed to doubting their religion because of their extensive reading into the subject (8-9).

But even in the very late seventeenth century, women could doubt whether their writerly undertakings were pure time-wasting whatever their topic.[12] Mrs

[12] On women's negotiation of writing and idleness, see Yandell 2000, 111-112, 127.

Elizabeth Walker, described as holy by her husband, the rector Anthony Walker, used to write secretly in her chamber and slide her book or papers out of sight, into a drawer, as soon as anybody entered. Her husband caught her thus employed several times, and lamented after her death that she did not understand how godly a woman she was: 'So tender was she rather to improve her time well, than to have it known, even to my self, how well she spent it' (Walker 1690, 5). Even if writing women themselves saw their activities as worthwhile, within their patriarchal culture they still had to juggle the meanings of reading and writing as edifying and pious activities on the one hand, and as a waste of time on the other.

While both Elizabeth Cary and Elizabeth Walker were seen as exceptional women, their reading habits, combined with the intellectual schedules, kept by other writing women, reveal how important time management was to early modern women, especially the question of how time was to be spent wisely and according to a properly gendered and class-bound programme. Learning and book reading needed to be scheduled into one's days and attention paid to how long the study periods were, in order to reach efficient 'learning outcomes', as we would say today.

This is of course not to argue that all or even most women had the luxury to evaluate their use of time on the moral scales and choose whether to engage in intellectual work. Rather, by looking at time spent in reading, writing, and learning, I want to suggest that early modern women experienced intense pressures about their use of time, and the practices that they engaged in to structure their time were a way of negotiating daily temporality through performative action. Time was not a neutral mechanical entity, but neither was it wholly natural or cyclical. Early modern women were both time-aware and time-literate, conceptualising their activities through temporal metaphors and measurements and referring to Christian values in their timekeeping. Idleness was recognised as an enemy by all early modern women, and according to their memoirs and biographies, they combated it successfully, although ways to defy idleness were various and linked to women's status in early modern social and gender hierarchies.

8. *Conclusion*

We must conclude, then, that women's conceptions of temporal organisation were both complex and specific. Early modern time-sense was at the same time diurnal and mechanical, relying on the circadian rhythm as well as a clock-timed episodic schedule of activities. While many of women's temporal practices were probably taken for granted and not expressly described in available sources, seemingly casual mentions of both clock-time and exact duration abound in texts describing women's daily lives and tasks.

It has been convincingly argued that technological innovations, clocks and watches among them, were an especially male interest in early modern Europe (Donald 2000, 55).[13] But we should perhaps consider whether women

[13] On women's relationship with technology and the masculine meanings of machines in the early modern period, see Sawday 2007, 148-149.

had just as much need for specific timekeeping as men – and in some cases, maybe more. Early modern women's timekeeping did not unquestionably follow the natural patterns assumed to govern temporality in pre-industrial societies, but neither was it strictly mechanical in the sense of the industrial, modern time-awareness that relies almost exclusively on clock-time. Early modern culture may not have been as time-governed as modern culture is, but women governed and controlled the temporal organisation of their daily life in a precise and elaborate manner, and often did this by reference to clock-time.

As scholars have recently shown, early modern people did not necessarily have to own clocks and watches themselves to become increasingly aware of the value of clock-time in social interaction. Rather, early modern Englishwomen's timekeeping seems to suggest a slow evolution towards increasing use of clock-time, relatively independent of innovations in horological technology. The many references to clock-time in my sources seem to corroborate Blondé's and Verhoeven's argument that while there were significant gender and class differences in the ownership of clocks and watches, early modern women's time awareness was no less developed than men's (2013, 236).

Englishwomen's experience of time may well have been task-oriented. Whether a sharp dichotomy between task-oriented time and clock-time is after all helpful when considering the early modern period is another question: it is necessary to ask whether task-oriented timekeeping also typically referred to clock-time already in the sixteenth century (see also Donald 2000, 72). Englishwomen managed their households according to detailed schedules and measured durations carefully. They were dedicated to devotional practices and appraised their times of prayer minutely. For women's social interaction too, organised timekeeping was a necessary resource, even if it has often depended on public clocks rather than personal timepieces. Early modern women thought about and organised their lives through many different temporal layers and techniques, and could also reflect upon how time impinged on their lives not just in the form of Christian mortality but also as an everyday measurable dimension that both governed them and was governed by them.

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Part Two

Case Studies

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Marking the New Year: Dated Objects and the Materiality of Time in Early Modern England

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Abstract

The article examines how people experienced time by looking at the material culture of New Year as a significant temporal passage in early modern England. It asks what material culture can tell us about how people experienced and gave meaning to the passage of time through an analysis of New Year's gifts and associated objects inscribed with dates from this period. It begins by exploring the cultural context of New Year's celebrations and gift-giving, and the conceptual framework of the gift. A case study of dated tin-glazed earthenware bottles, largely neglected by historians although thought by curators to have been given as New Year's gifts, provides the focus of the remainder of the article, which explores the various ways the dates on these bottles can be interpreted. In sum, the article argues that dated objects were fundamental in both responding to and shaping people's experience of time. Far from being passive tokens, they could actively influence social bonds and were thought to have a real impact on the coming year. Moreover, the exchange of dated New Year's gifts allowed people to give meaning to the passage of time collectively, and this was a key to their role within the wider rituals surrounding New Year.

Keywords: Dated Objects, Gift Exchange, Materiality, New Year, Time

1. *Marking the New Year*

In the last week of December 1621, Nehemiah Wallington made a decision many of us annually make at the close of the year – he decided on a New Year's resolution to reform himself entirely. In his notebook, begun in 1619, which he entitles *A Record of Gods Marcys, or a Thankfull Remembrance*, Wallington records: 'As I lay in my bed I did purpus on New yers day, to begine a new life' (2007, 32). Yet again like many of us, Wallington's earnest endeavours at self-betterment seem to have gone awry, as he records some eight years later that on 1 January again 'I begane to take another corsee with myselfe to overcome my corrupt nature and that was to write down my sinnes

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in a booke' (2007, 49-50). For Wallington, as others, 1 January marked a significant turning point in time – not only did it mark the changing of the year (although not in all calendars, as will be discussed later), but the date had great symbolic meaning, which Wallington perceived as empowering him to make a real change in his life. Wallington's notebooks, and indeed the changes he desired, were motivated by an almost compulsive urge for godly self-examination which was not necessarily widespread. Yet the popular perception of New Year's Day as an important turning point in time and in one's life is evident in the counselling texts that appeared at this point in year, and which offered spiritual and moral advice. *The New-years-Gift complete in Six Parts* (Anonymous 1696) offered prayers and meditations for each day of the week, whilst *A New-Years-Gift for Youth* (Anonymous 1685) offered spiritual guidance to young men. Less overtly religious, *The Lady's New-Year's Gift: Or, Advice to a daughter* was composed by George Savile, Marquess of Halifax, and offered advice to his own daughter under various categories including 'Husband', 'Behaviour', 'Friendship' and 'Diversion' (1692).

The beginning of a new year evidently had powerful connotations in the early modern mentality. That this moment in time, in which the calendar underwent a marked shift, was seen to be appropriate above all others to engender change demonstrates how conceptions of time had real meaning in people's lives. This is certainly evident in the extensive rituals and festivities which took place to celebrate New Year, reflected in the literary descriptions found in journals, plays, poems, and broadsides, and in the material culture that gave a physical presence to the passing of time. It is this materiality of New Year in particular that is to be the focus of this article, examining dated objects which have become enduring material markers of fleeting moments in time. These objects, inscribed in some way with the date, often just the year, were owned across middling to elite levels and present an as yet unexamined body of sources with which to explore perceptions of time in this period. This article will focus specifically on objects which may have been used to mark or welcome in the coming year and explore the wider cultural context of this materiality. In doing so, it asks what material culture can tell us about how people experienced and perceived the passage of time in early modern England, and what methods we can employ to examine the role these objects had in celebrating and commemorating this transition. It will argue that dated objects allowed people to respond to and give meaning to this passage of time communally, through collective rituals and the furthering of social connections and obligations, and will also show that these items were not passive tokens, but could actively alter the course of the coming year.

Marking the end of one year whilst welcoming in another, New Year customs can tell us a great deal about the relationship people had with time. When exactly the year began, however, varied according to which calendar was adopted, and thus multiple New Year's Days coexisted for different purposes.

In *An Historicall Description of the Islande of Britayne*, first published in 1577, William Harrison offered an 'Account of Time and Her Parts', in which he lamented the confusing nature of the British calendar. He wrote: 'Herein one lie I find a scruple, that the beginning [of the year] is not uniforme and certeine, for most of our records beare date the 25 of March, and our calenders the first of Januarie; so that with us Christ is borne before he be conceived'. He goes on to complain that the different start dates of the various calendars 'bréedeth great confusion' (1587, 243), and if only all could agree on 1st January as the start of the year, 'I doo not thinke but that there would be more certeintie, and lesse trouble for our historiographers, notaries, & other officers in their account of the yere' (243-244). Lady day on 25 March, also known as the Annunciation, was adopted as the start of the year for legal, financial, and other civic purposes, and was thus the day when officially the year changed (Pollard 1940, 178). However, even the briefest examination of extant diaries, literature, and accounts shows that, despite this, 1 January was held by most as New Year's Day, following Roman tradition. So on Saturday 1 January 1652-1653, Ralph Josselin recorded in his diary, 'Jan: 1: This we call new years day' (1991, 292). Likewise Anne Clifford, in her entry for 1 January 1616 wrote, 'upon New Years day I kept to my chamber all the day' whilst her husband 'and all the Company at Dorset House went to see the Mask at the Court' (1995, 39). That this date was chosen emphasises that New Year celebrations were seen as a purely social ritual of the festive season, the date itself holding no specific legal, religious, or financial meaning.

One of the most prominent social customs to mark this change of year was the giving of a New Year's gift. On 1 January 1602 Sir Robert Dudley emphasised that this practice was widespread in a letter to Sir Robert Cecil in which he wrote that he was 'bold to observe this compliment of fashionable custom, and present your Honour this New Year's Day with an ambling gelding of reasonable shape and, I hope, of no less goodness' (Roberts 1910, 1-22). Similar examples abound in diaries – Anne Clifford, for instance, remarked in December 1616 how 'upon the 31st this night I sent Thomas Woodyatt with a sweet Bagge to the Queen for a new years gift, & a standish to Mrs Hanno' (1995, 63). Gifts were not just given at court – Ralph Josselin recorded on 1 January 1677-1678: 'I gave above 20s. to my tenants and poor in meat, I received in gifts several monies, etc. lord bless my store' (1991, 606). Similarly, in January 1682-1683 he wrote that he had 'received good presents' from friends in London (641). Indeed, gift-giving took place across the social spectrum. In the mid-sixteenth century Thomas Tusser noted that New Year was a time during which 'the rich with the poor … give many gifts' (1580, 29). Likewise, at the end of the period, Henry Bourne, in his survey of popular customs, *Antiquitates Vulgares*, recorded that giving a gift at New Year was very common among the populace, beginning the year 'with the Sending of Presents, which are termed New-Year's-Gifts, to their Friends and Acquaintances' (1725, 142).

Although it was part of the goodwill and merriment of the season, the giving of a gift at New Year may not have been entirely lacking self-interest. Conceptually, the nature of the gift has been the focus of sociologists and anthropologists, who have been particularly interested in reciprocity. The foundations for the theory of reciprocity were first set down by the French sociologist Marcel Mauss in his ground-breaking essay, *The Gift,* in which he argued that the impetus to get something in return was the 'spirit of the gift' (1954). Since then it has been constantly debated by scholars arguing whether the gift should be seen from an anti-utilitarian perspective, in which the gift having been given freely is paramount, or from a utilitarian view, in which getting something in return is key (Komter 2007, 93). In 'The Principle of Reciprocity', Claude Lévi-Strauss, who was greatly influenced by Mauss, wrote that, 'the skillful game of [gift] exchange consists of a complex totality of manoeuvres, conscious or unconscious, in order to gain security and to fortify one's self against risks' (1996, 19). Reciprocity provides an important basis for thinking about the New Year's gift – it could cement social bonds and hierarchies. However, this issue has also been explored in detail by sociologist Aafke Komter, who has argued that the gift must be seen as more complex than such essentialist constructions allow. For Komter, '*the* gift does not exist, in the sense that there is not one general, unequivocal and non-ambiguous sense in which to understand the gift' (2007, 104). The complexity of the gift has also been discussed by Felicity Heal who has analysed the gift and gift-exchange in early modern England, particularly in the Tudor courts. Heal asserts that an object itself is not inherently a gift, but that specific contexts transform it into a gift. She therefore emphasises the importance of analysing the context and language of the gift to uncover the messages about social and political obligations with which contemporary audiences would have already been familiar (2008, 42-43; 2014).

The specific codes of New Year's gift exchange and their possible reliance on reciprocity have been discussed in depth in various studies. The art historian Brigitte Buettner has argued that the *étrennes*, the ceremonial exchange of gifts on New Year's Day in the medieval Valois courts, involved a reciprocal arrangement. In this way the nobility could 'renew their riches', whilst at the same time they were able to reaffirm social and familial bonds, as well as emphasise ideas of obligation and hierarchy. Buettner sees these ideas as becoming more prevalent between the fifth and the ninth centuries as a gift economy took hold. In this period, Buettner argues, Germanic law blurred the line between what the Romans had seen as a free gift and a contractual form of exchange. The necessity of making a counter-gift became both a moral and legal obligation (2001, 600). Similarly, Lisa M. Klein, in her study of the exchange of embroidery in Elizabeth I's court, has argued that gift exchange could 'assert hierarchy and incur mutual obligations'. Moreover, she argues that, whilst in theory presenting a gift in the Elizabethan court

was voluntary and spontaneous, in reality the offering was both obligatory and interested. For Klein, this sense of obligation is closely tied to social position – she compares gift-giving at New Year's and other occasions to the ceremonial potlatch that the anthropologist Mauss had observed in the North American Indians, in which the presentation of a gift is used by individuals to 'determine their position in the hierarchy' (Klein 1997, 463-465). Using these ideas we can infer that the objects exchanged themselves would thus become tangible records of this obligation, and if they were inscribed with a date they were constant reminders of the exact moment such an obligation was incurred. Likely displayed in the home thereafter, these objects were a physical, daily reminder of the exchange as well as the wider social networks of family, kin, and community they represented.

Yet the meaning of the New Year's gift was not restricted to the politics of gift-exchange. Giving a gift at this time was also a fundamental part of the wider social rituals and festivities which together served to celebrate the passage of the year and importantly sought to influence the course of the next, and in which a member of the community would have necessarily engaged. Indeed, Buettner's work is particularly important as it reflects the approach adopted by Heal and explores the wider symbolic and cultural meanings of the New Year's gift specifically. According to Buettner, gifts exchanged at New Year were a seasonal rite – they were seen as tangible good omens without which the coming year would not be bountiful (2001, 598-600). Indeed, this may have been the reason why, when on 1 January 1673 Bulstrode Whitelocke received no New Year's gifts, he felt it noteworthy enough to include in his diary (1990, 820). Outside of the courts this is also exemplified in the practice of soliciting gifts in exchange for good wishes. The term 'hogmanay' was an ambivalent one, meaning both a present or a blessing, and popular songs attest to the idea that children from Scotland to Richmond would go door-to-door requesting small gifts, often of food and, if granted, the house would be blessed (Hutton 2001, 64-65). Likewise, the 'Feast of Fools' that took place in many French cities on 1 January and involved crowds of poor people going begging for small gifts or *aguilaneuf* in return for good wishes for the New Year can be compared to the Welsh tradition of going door to door on New Year's morning asking for the *calennig*, or New Year's gift (Buettner 2001, 602). Thus, marking the changing year by giving a gift was not just a friendly gesture, or even an exercise in political or social gain – for some the act of giving a gift in and of itself was seen to have the power to actively impact upon the following year.

The important social role of the New Year's gift in early modern England is exemplified by the debate and defence of the practice in the seventeenth century, as it became caught up in the religious and political movements of the century. Since the Christian calendar began on 25 March, the more popular practice of celebrating New Year's Day on 1 January had long been seen by

some to have pagan undertones. Indeed, the custom was certainly influenced by the Roman celebration of the *kalends* which took place around 1 January, and in which the change of year was in part marked by the exchange of gifts. In Republican Rome the *kalends* was originally celebrated in spring time to mark the start of the Roman year on 15 March, and involved the exchange of simple presents, such as laurel branches, honey, and nuts (Buettner 2001, 599). In 153 BCE, the start of the year was moved back to 1 January for military reasons, after which the *kalends* developed into a major festival, when gifts were presented to the emperor. Yet both official and private ceremonies took place in which all levels of Roman society took part (Blackburn and Holford-Strevens 1999, 6-7; Buettner 2001, 599). The festivities that took place at New Year in early modern England still contained many of these features, notably the presentation of gifts to the monarch, as well as more widely throughout society.[1]

However, the development of the New Year's gift exchange undoubtedly had Christian influences as well. At first, the early Christian Church sought to eradicate the 'pagan' celebration of the *kalends* and prescribed against material gifts, instead advocating the channelling of money into almsgiving (Blackburn and Holford-Strevens 1999, 7). Yet the festival proved resilient, and eventually, as with many other Roman festivals, the *kalends* was re-appropriated by the Church. The Council of Tours in 567 incorporated 1 January into the Christmas celebrations, which were prolonged into a twelve-day festive cycle. New Year's Day became the Feast of the Circumcision, yet the customs associated with the pagan *kalends*, and notably gift exchange, persisted (Lawson 2013, 3). These could, however, be reinterpreted to give them Christian meaning. Some viewed this annual day of gift exchange as taking place as an act of remembrance to the Biblical gift-giving which took place at Epiphany (Cressy 1989, 16). Similarly, the Church of England clergyman and scholar John Day defended the practice in his collection of twelve sermons, published in 1615, each of which focused on a religious festival. In his sermon on the nativity Day, he compared the giving of a New Year's gift to the ultimate gift of Jesus' sacrifice. He wrote:

> The very time of sending Gifts from one Friend to another drawing now neere at hand, I meane of Newyeares Gifts, may call to minde the presiousnesse of this Gift given unto us, whether wee respect the Gift itselfe, or the Giver of it, the Father of lights. (1615, 12)

Gift-exchange alongside the wider rituals associated with New Year came under further attack during the Civil War and Interregnum. It was the celebration of Christmas in particular that was targeted by some Puritans; yet

[1] For example, see detailed descriptions of court ceremonies in Lawson 2013, 3-25, and Hayward 2005, 125-175.

since New Year was part of the larger festive period, it too came under attack (Durston 1985, 7-14). These writers denounced the pagan origins of New Year's customs in particular. In his *Histrio-Mastix*, the Puritan writer William Prynne argued that the exchange of gifts on New Year's Day was a heathen relic, quoting the twelfth-century work by Gratian who had condemned

> The observation of Newyeeres-day, and the sending of New-yeeres-gifts, as a sinne ... because they were but the Reliques, and Observations of Pagans, who Consecrated this day, to the honour of Janus their Devill-God, and sent receiprocall Newyeeres-gifts to their friends upon it. (1633, 20)

Likewise, the antiquary Ralph Thoresby drew upon the language of the New Year's gift in his diary entry for 1 January 1680, in which he complained of how 'many present themselves as a new year's gift to Satan by their vain mirth and jollity upon this day, which custom was derived from the Heathens, who then sacrificed to their idol Janus' (1830, 34).

Whilst gift-giving at New Year was therefore not without controversy, the puritan assault on Christmas, and by extension New Year, was largely unsuccessful. On the one hand, maintaining these traditions was used as a sign of royalist resistance. Pro-Christmas royalist texts fought back against Puritan criticism. In 1644, for example, the royalist clergyman Edward Fisher published a tract entitled *The Feast of Feasts* which drew on scriptural and historical arguments in defence of Christmas. Additions were made to the tract and it was re-published in January 1649 under the title *A Christian Caveat to the Old and New Sabbatarians* in which he denounced those who condemned it as superstitious 'to give money to servants or apprentices box, or to send a couple of capons or any other presents to a friend in the twelve days' (63-64). The print-run of *A Christian Caveat* demonstrates that Fisher's ideas had purchase – some 6,000 copies were sold in the early 1660s, and it was reissued five times by the end of the decade (Durston 1985, 10-11). In reality, however, whilst New Year evidently sparked the wrath of Puritan writers like William Prynne, there were few attempts by the new republican government to eradicate New Year's festivities specifically. It was largely ignored in those ordinances that proscribed against the celebration of Christmas, whilst 1 January as the Feast of the Circumcision still appeared in the 1662 *Book of Common Prayer*.[2] Indeed, there is evidence that Cromwell himself took part in New Year celebrations – in 1656 musicians were sent to play for foreign embassies on New Year's Day, whilst Cromwell participated in the gift-exchange, sending gifts to ambassadors and ministers (Pimlott 1960, 832-839).

[2] <http://justus.anglican.org/resources/bcp/1662/baskerville.htm>, accessed 15 February 2017.

2. *Types of New Year's Gift*

That New Year's gift-exchange persevered in the seventeenth century despite the ongoing debate surrounding it demonstrates the significant role these gifts had not just in commemorating the year but in actively influencing the fortunes of those involved. Despite their importance, however, there was no fixed rule on what ought to be exchanged, and a variety of different gifts could be given. Some gifts were fairly abstract, offering advice or demonstrating the skills of the donor. As mentioned earlier, many texts were written and presented under the title of New Year's gift, often giving moral or religious advice. Other literary gifts might be an offering of skills: as a child the future Elizabeth I presented Katherine Parr with a translation she had done of Queen Marguerite of Navarre's *Le miroir de l'âme pécheresse*. In an accompanying letter, Elizabeth emphasised that the gift was the effort itself that she had undertaken, as she had 'translated this little book out of French rhyme into English prose, joining the sentences together as well as the capacity of my simple wit and small learning could extend themselves'.[3] At the other end of the spectrum, another common gift was money. Mrs Elizabeth Freke records in her diary for January 1683-1684, 'My Deer Father sentt mee over to Ireland A hundred pounds for A New Years gift', and notes another monetary gift some twenty years later, writing on 1 January 1705, 'I begged of Mr Freke to give my son Freke A New years Guiftt, which he most kindly did, of fifty pounds' (1913, 31, 57).

A range of material goods, meanwhile, are also known to have been given as New Year's gifts. The best documented are those given at court. Amongst monarchs and courtiers, coin, plate, and jewellery were most common. The New Year's Gift Rolls that survive for Queen Elizabeth's reign record twenty-five years of exchanges, with 4000 gifts given and some 4800 received. Earls and Countesses largely gave the Queen coin, and in return they received gifts of plate. However, a great variety of other gifts are recorded in these lists, including clothing, globes, musical instruments, medicines, spices, and even in one case a two-year-old lion that Elizabeth received in 1559 (Lawson 2013, v). Most interesting is the social diversity represented in the lists. A third of the participants were women, and amongst women textile gifts figured prominently. In her article on Elizabethan gifts of needlework, Lisa M. Klein has argued that such gifts allowed women to become 'active participants in cultural exchange', since they themselves made the embroidered gifts they were presenting. In this way, New Year's gifts of needlework were 'empowering as well as expressive' (1997, 462). Meanwhile, alongside courtiers, minor gentry,

[3] Elizabeth I, 'Letter to Katherine Parr, 1544', transcribed by Anniina Jokinen, *Luminarium*, <http://www.luminarium.org/renlit/elizlet1544.htm>, accessed 15 February 2017.

London merchants, as well as household servants are represented in the lists. Gifts were not necessarily expensive. Whilst she was still a princess, the future Queen Mary received and gave costly New Year gifts, but her privy purse expenses also record rewards to the servants of great men who brought her venison, the poor bringing apples to the gate, and the countess of Hertford's servant bringing quince pies (Heal 2008, 66).

Indeed, gifts of food and drink in particular appear to have been popular New Year's offerings, and provide some of our best evidence for gift exchange outside of court. The nature of the food gift has been analysed in detail by Felicity Heal in her masterful article on the politics of exchange in early modern English households. Heal's article is important in emphasising how, as the most basic form of offering, food gifts differ from other forms of exchange. According to Heal, food gifts are distinctive because of their role in commensality and hospitality, as well as in the more fundamental relief of need. This is particularly interesting because Heal suggests that this bond is partly due to the implication that the gift will be shared. If we consider that the giving of gifts at New Year was part of wider communal rituals, including the sharing of food and drink, Heal's work reminds us of how even the most basic of offerings at New Year served to forge and reinforce social bonds (2008, 42-44).

Moreover, Heal's work is particularly important for this study since she emphasises how the exchange of food gifts was seasonal, peaking at New Year. This was the time of year when, in almost every household account, the clerks of the kitchen recorded an increase in giving, particularly of capons, turkeys, and geese (49). The Tawstock accounts for the week beginning 31 December 1643, for example, include money given 'to Mr Smiths servant that brought a gammon of Spanish bacon', whilst the accounts for the week beginning 28 December 1650 include money given to 'a boy that bought two capons' (Gray 1996, 33, 85). Similarly, the dominance of food gifts in the festive celebrations at New Year is evident in the book of Sir John Francklyn's household expenses, in which the following items related to the New Year are recorded for the year 1624:

Item to the musicians on New Year's Day in the morning ... 1s. 6d.
Item to the woman which brought the apple stuck with nuts ... 1s. 0d.
Item to the boy who brought two capons ..... 1s. 0d.
(Musgrave 1806, 159)

Capons above all appear to be a customary gift from a tenant to their landlord. In his collection of satires, *Virgidemiarum*, bishop Joseph Hall observed as such when he wrote: 'Yet must he haunt his greedy Land-lords hall, / with often presents at ech Festiuall; / With crammed Capons euery New-yeares morne' (1597, v, 57).

3. *Dated Wine Bottles*

As a result of the popularity of ephemeral gifts like food and drink, very few extant objects can be clearly identified as New Year's gifts. Some medieval rings survive inscribed '*en bon an*' (Happy New Year), many of which are thought to be English, and can be said with some certainty to have been given in this capacity. It is possible that a number of the large amount of objects inscribed with dates that were made in early modern England may have been intended as New Year's gifts, with their inscribed years referring to the year they welcomed in, but there is no documentary evidence to confirm this.[4] It has however been suggested that a number of dated tin-glazed earthenware wine bottles that were produced during the seventeenth century, and which survive in large numbers, were intended to be given as New Year's gifts. In his catalogue of English delftware, the curator Michael Archer argued as such, outlining that 'It was customary to give gifts at New Year, frequently of wine, and it is highly likely that this would have been sent in bottles with painted inscriptions identifying the contents and the year in which the gift was given' (Lipski and Archer 1984, 307-308; Archer 1997, 266). Yet Archer made the suggestion based on little evidence, pointing mainly to the large number that had survived which suggests they were given a higher status as gifts, and the fact that they had been inscribed with a year. There is very little documentary evidence which can be decisively connected to these bottles, and nothing to confirm that they were given at New Year. However, this article will now explore the various contexts of these bottles to determine the significance of their dates, and whether they may have been gifted at New Year.

[4] Dated objects, or objects inscribed with a date, survive in large numbers and encompass a whole range of public and private wares. Within the home, table wares, textiles, furniture, and jewellery are among those objects most frequently dated. Dates, often just the year, could be engraved, painted, or moulded onto an object, and were sometimes re-inscribed at later dates as they were re-appropriated by new owners. These objects provide a unique, although as yet unstudied, body of material with which to examine ideas of time. They are the focus of my doctoral research which will clarify and quantify these groupings for the range of objects associated with the household.

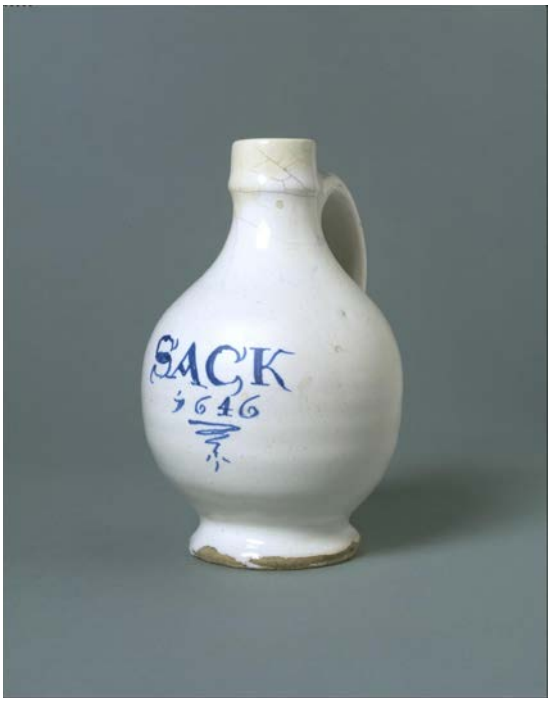

Figure 1 – Victoria and Albert Museum, London, museum no. 414:819-1885

One example in the Victoria and Albert Museum collection is typical of the design (see Figure 1). It is decorated in white glaze with blue writing comprised of the words 'SACK/1646' above a flourish. The bottle has a diameter of 9.7 cm and a height of 15 cm, making it of average size (see below, p. 100), whilst the ovoid form, splay foot, and handle are all representative of others of this type. A further example also at the Victoria and Albert Museum is decorated in identical style, with the words 'WHIT WINE/1641' inscribed in blue (see Figure 2). This bottle is slightly bigger at 17.5 cm in height and 12.8 cm in diameter, but again has the same form. Across various collections, public and private, at least 219 of these bottles are known, but it is likely that there are many more. The bottles have proved popular amongst collectors, likely because of their inscribed dates, and thus additional unknown bottles may be held in private collections. The seminal catalogue of dated English delftware by curators Louis Lipski and Michael Archer meticulously recorded all the known bottles in 1984, and since then several additional bottles have come to light. The information from this catalogue has been combined with the available details from new finds, and will be used here in an analysis of these dated bottles.

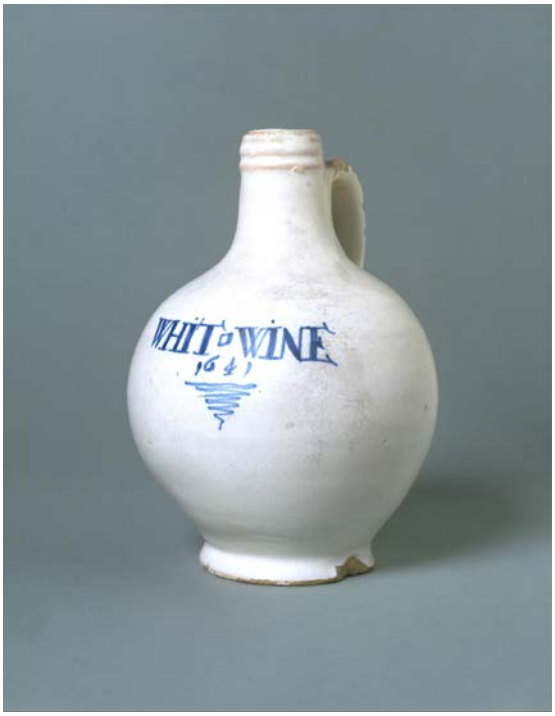

Figure 2 – Victoria and Albert Museum, London, museum no. 414:818-1885

The wine bottles in question are all made from tin-glazed earthenware, and decorated with white backgrounds and blue inscriptions. Alongside the year, the bottles are inscribed with a type of wine, predominantly 'Whit', 'Sack', and 'Claret', as well as two bottles that are inscribed 'Rhenish wine'. 'Sack' is the most popular inscription, with at least seventy-seven being inscribed as such. Other than those that have suffered damage, all the bottles have handles. The size of the bottles notably varies, with a relatively large range in size between bottles. The smallest recorded is just 10.8 cm high, whilst the largest is 24.5 cm high. Over 85% of those recorded are between 12 cm and 20 cm high, and there is a great deal of variation within this range. Unfortunately height and sometimes diameter are almost always the only measurements recorded for most of these bottles, and capacity has only been recorded for one to my knowledge. However, the great variation in height suggests that the bottles were not generally made to fulfil set capacities. There is some grouping – twenty-one bottles are 15.9 cm high and sixteen are 15.2 cm high, but there is no correspondence of date within these groupings. This lack of standardisation in size is due to the bottles being made by hand and not by mould, which again suggests that they were not designed to hold

specific capacities.[5] This makes it unlikely that they were used for the sale of wine in taverns, but instead were probably for private use.

The bottles were produced in factories along the south bank of the Thames from Rotherhithe westwards. Fragments have been found in sites of former delftware factories in London including Potter's Fields, Pickleherring or Still Stairs, and Rotherhithe (Archer 1997, 266). They were fired in two stages. After the clay pot was fired once a lead glaze with added tin oxide was applied, giving a thick lustrous glaze, and the bottles were fired again. The decoration, including the inscriptions, could be added with the same glaze, with copper oxide added to make the blue.[6] Firing delftware in two rounds was necessary, since if glaze is applied to a clay body it will 'crawl' leaving bare patches – by firing it first then dipping it in glaze, such faults are avoided (Britton 1987, 11). This two-stage process meant there was an element of expense with English delft. Painted pieces were intended for show, whilst undecorated delftware was for everyday use. Undecorated wine bottles do exist, so we can infer that the decorated ones were intended for special occasions. Little evidence is known for the price of delftware, not least because items are rarely individually recorded in inventories, yet one document written for tax purposes and dated 4 April 1696 does give prices for five different kinds of pottery. Under 'Fine Painted Wares', 'Bottles and Flasks' are priced at '10s. To 2s. 2d.' per dozen. Meanwhile 'Wine Potts' are listed at the more expensive price of 16s. 6d. per dozen. In comparison, undecorated white ware was much less expensive. Although no bottles are listed in this section, 'Drinking Potts', 'Sillibub Potts and Cawdell Potts' could be purchased for as little as 16d. up to 2s. per dozen (Wills 1967, 443). This supports the idea that painted wares were more expensive and may have been intended for special occasions, or as a gift, rather than regular use.

Collectors, curators, and archaeologists have analysed the bottles predominantly in terms of function, and this discussion sometimes involved a consideration of the dates. It has been suggested that they were used by vintners to hold wine for prospective customers – the inscription thought to have corresponded to the year and type of wine (Howard 1931, 47). The bottles themselves could not be used by vintners to sell wine – an act in 1636 prevented the sale of wine by the bottle in an attempt to regulate capacity (Dumbrell 1983, 19). Whilst this was intended to regulate the sale of wine in *glass* bottles since no two could be blown to the same capacity, as stated, delftware wine bottles were handmade and so would be subject to the same problem. It is possible that vintners might have used them for samples, yet it seems unlikely that sufficient bottles would be kept to correspond with every

[5] Roy Stephenson (Museum of London), personal correspondence, 11th December 2013.

[6] Roy Stephenson (Museum of London), personal correspondence, 11th December 2013.

year and type of wine available. Moreover, the argument that the inscription corresponds not to the year the bottle was made but to the year of the wine assumes that vintage dates were keenly observed. Yet it was only in the second half of the seventeenth century, some time after the date of many of these bottles, that storage methods improved enough that wines from particularly good years could be preserved and the practice of bottling vintage wines began (McNulty 1971, 99). Whilst the years on the bottles did not therefore refer to vintages, they could have still been utilitarian, acting as a marker of freshness or a kind of expiry dates, or alternatively they could have been a more abstract temporal reference.

It is likely that the bottles would have been used as decanters. Wine was stored in casks in cellars and small quantities transported to the table in these or comparable bottles (McNulty 1971, 99; Archer 1997, 266). Although it would have been possible to store wine in the bottles, and glass storage bottles were not introduced until later in the seventeenth century, the design of these bottles made them undesirable for storage.[7] Even the largest of the bottles is too small to be used in either capacity, whilst the attention given to their decoration and finish makes it likely that they were intended for special occasions and possibly for subsequent display (Lipski and Archer 1984, 11). Meanwhile, the position of the handle would have made drinking directly from the bottle difficult. If the bottles were used as decanters, then, rather than for storage, it is necessary to consider what kind of occasion they may have been used in. This can shed light on the meaning of the year dates on the bottles.

4. *The Cultural Context of Drinking*

There is a great deal of evidence that alcohol played a major role in the activities that took place at New Year, and over the Christmas period in general. As such, it is possible to place the dated wine bottles within the context of other drinking vessels associated with seasonal festivities. The popular rituals involved in the celebration of the Twelve Days incorporated a degree of disorder, with a Lord of Misrule, ritualised inebriation, and communal wassailing all taking place on New Year's Eve (Cressy 1989, 16; Hutton 1994, 9). Many broadside ballads from the seventeenth century document these practices. In 'A pleasant Countrey new Ditty: Merrily showing how to drive the cold Winter away' (Anonymus 1625), the importance of drinking

[7] That the bottles could adequately store wine is suggested by the story of a bottle that was found in 1735. The mouth had been waxed over and the wine found inside was reportedly perfectly good. The bottle was inscribed 'New Canary put in to see long keep good. April 1659. Ri. Combe'. See Hodgkin and Hodgkin 1891, 83. On glass bottles, see McKearin 1971, 126-127.

during the festive period is emphasised. The ballad describes how the winter pastimes of the country, which centre around drinking alcohol, are more agreeable than those of the 'City and Court'. In the country, 'More Liquor is spent, / And with better content / To drive the cold winter away'. Even 'The poorest of all' can enjoy 'a Pot of good Ale', whilst 'Wassels of hot brown Ale', and 'a cup and a Song', are also encouraged specifically at the close of the year, 'With mirth and good cheere, / To end the old yeere, / And drive the cold winter away' (Anonymous c. 1625). The accompanying illustration on this broadside also depicts a group of men sitting around a table. One drinks from a tankard, and a bottle can be seen on the table.

Moreover, there are references in almanacks and prognostications that suggest the consumption of wine was particularly associated with the month of January because of its medicinal benefits. In the broadside ballad 'The Country-Mans Kalender'; notably, calendar is spelt with a K, making direct reference to the Roman *Kalends*), each month is described in terms of the popular activities associated with it, with the entry for January significantly referring to the drinking of sack – the type of wine most commonly inscribed on the dated bottles:

This Month may be cold, and therefore behold,
All those that have plenty of Silver and Gold,
If Garments you lack, buy them to your back,
And see that you line them with Malago-Sack;
It will warm you. (Anonymous 1692)

The idea of wine being a warming drink ideal for the winter is again taken up in Nicholas Breton's *Fantastickes*, in which he devoted a section to each month. In January, he writes, 'the fruit of the Grape heats the stomake of the Aged' (1626, 10). Again, Richard Saunders, in his astrological prognostications for the year 1665, advised in January: 'drink often white Wine in this Moneth, because Flegm is very predominant … drink also these Spices with either Wine or Ale, as Grains, Ginger, Nutmegs and Cloves, and such like, are greatly commended this Moneth' (1665, 43).

There is also evidence that wine was a particularly common New Year's gift. In 'Christmas, His Masque', written in 1616, Ben Jonson includes a description of the personified 'New Yeare's Gift', introduced as one of Christmas' many children. Amongst the attributes of 'New Yeare's Gift' are different food gifts such as oranges, rosemary, and gingerbread, and significantly 'a bottle of wine on either arme' (1969, 235). Similarly, on 2 January 1659-1660, Samuel Pepys recorded in his diary how he both received and gave bottles of sack as gifts, referencing three occasions of someone giving wine as a gift, highlighting its typicality. He wrote:

> In the morning before I went forth old East brought me a dozen of bottles of sack, and I gave him a shilling for his pains. Then I went to Mr. Sheply who was drawing of sack in the wine cellar to send to other places as a gift from my Lord, and told me that my Lord had given him order to give me the dozen of bottles. (1905, I, 3)

Likewise, the journal of Timothy Burrell provides further evidence that wine was chosen as a gift. Burrell used his journal to record his accounts, and at the end of every year he includes a summary of the gifts he received. At the end of 1693, for example, it is recorded that, 'Among many presents received this year, 62 in number ... a dozen bottles of wine from P. Courthope' (1850, 15). Again at the end of 1687 and 1688, Burrell's journal records that his brother sent him two dozen bottles of claret and twenty-four bottles of Rhenish respectively. Wine was evidently a popular gift and the dated tin-glazed bottles would have been ideal containers in which to give it.

The dated wine bottles can also be put into context with other communal vessels intended for seasonal drinking, such as posset pots, some of which are markedly similar in design and which significantly are often inscribed with the year. Posset was a warm, restorative drink which was often drunk at special occasions where a pot of the mixture was passed around and consumed collectively by all the revellers. It was made with wine, eggs, sugar, cream, and spices, with the mixture ideally separating so that the liquid bottom half could be drunk, whilst the crust that formed on top could be eaten with a spoon (Glanville and Lee 2007, 58). Sack possets were most common, with several seventeenth-century recipes surviving for possets made with various quantities including 'half a pint of sack', 'a spoonful of sack', 'a point of sack', and even 'so much Sack as will make it taste well' (Anonymous 1669, 131-135; Woolley 1675, 92-93). In their work on the material culture of drinking, Philippa Glanville and Sophie Lee have asserted that sack possets were 'much consumed over the Christmas period by nocturnal revellers' (2007, 58). Indeed, this is supported by contemporary references that demonstrate that the drink was a tradition around Twelfth Night. On 5 January 1659-60, Samuel Pepys was greatly disappointed when, 'there being a great frost', he went to visit a friend 'in expectation to eat a sack posset but Mr. Edward not coming it was put off' (1905, I, 9). Likewise on 6 January 1667-1668 Pepys recorded that, after an evening of singing and dancing, 'we had a good sack posset' (254). It is important that sack wine was desirable for the making of this festive drink, suggesting that bottles of sack may have been given as gifts around New Year for use in possets.

The design of posset pots and cups can provide a valuable material comparison with these wine bottles, particularly since so many are also dated. Posset pots and cups have multiple handles to facilitate the passing of the posset around a gathering. One lead-glazed earthenware pot confirms that such multi-handled vessels were intended for posset with the inscription

'Robart Pool mad this cup and with a gudposet fil'.[8] As well as the year, some have names and inscriptions that suggest they were given as gifts – one is inscribed with the three initial cipher 'B/E*D', thought to have been used to commemorate a marriage, along with the date 1653.[9] The inscription on a later pot overtly records it as a gift: 'TOMAS DAKIN MADE TIS CUP FOR MARY SCULLTHARP OR HER FREND AB 1710'.[10] Indeed, whilst posset was also drunk for medicinal purposes as a remedy for minor complaints like colds, their inscriptions as well as the fine decoration that appears on many suggests that these pots were intended for special occasions, in contrast to those plain, undated ones that also survive (Lipski and Archer 1984, 200). Posset pots were likely also given as gifts at New Year since their use corresponds to those seasonal practices associated with New Year, whilst their design confirms that they were used for special, social occasions. Indeed, some even have dates specifically around the festive period – one in the Fitzwilliam Museum is inscribed 'December the 2 M' and below 'A BOOL TO FEEL Y', meaning, 'A bowl to fill you'.[11] Furthermore, like the wine bottles, many larger posset pots are made from tin-glazed earthenware with blue and white decoration. One such pot is inscribed with 'K.G/1651', and significantly above the inscription is a crown – a similar motif is seen on a number of the wine bottles.[12] This places the cultural meaning of posset firmly within the same context as wine.

Wine meanwhile had its own symbolic meanings and associations. Felicity Heal has argued that food gifts constructed a distinctive bond between giver and receiver – this can help us to interpret wine gifts which had their own distinctive connotations (2008, 44). Historians like Angela McShane and Charles Ludington have emphasised that wine was perceived as a royalist drink, adopted by those loyal to the Stuart crown as a symbol of their cause during the Civil War, Restoration and later Jacobite uprisings (McShane 2004; Ludington 2013). The increasingly widespread practice of loyal healthing involved the ritualised drinking of wine and became a powerful symbol of royal allegiance during the turbulent political years of the seventeenth century. Indeed, following the Restoration, the ritual had become such a potent indicator of loyalty that refusing a loyal health became increasingly dangerous (McShane 2014, 250). Wine drinking also served to create a sense of community, particularly amongst royalists who were dispersed in exile following their defeat in the Civil War. Through an examination of extant letters from royalists living in exile,

[8] Victoria and Albert Museum, London, museum no. C.24-1949.

[9] British Museum, London, museum no. 1887, 0210.124.

[10] Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, museum no. C.257-1928; Victoria and Albert Museum, London, museum no. C.770-1922.

[11] Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, museum no. C.107 & A & B-1928.

[12] Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, museum no. C.1319 & A-1928.

Marika Keblusek has argued that drinking wine was an important part of their experience abroad, as drinking someone's health became 'a confirmation of friendship, of shared intimacy, sometimes even of consolation'. In this way, drinking wine in a loyal health was an act of resistance, marking one out as a member of 'an underground community' (2004, 55, 58). This reflects Heal's argument that food gifts cemented social bonds through shared use, or could simply symbolise such sharing through the act of giving (2008, 44). The communal drinking of wine re-enforced the bonds between royalists, and was such a powerful tool that it produced the same effect even when those involved were dispersed in exile. We can see the giving of a gift of wine as a way of symbolising these bonds.

The dated wine bottles may have been used as part of these communal drinking rituals. McShane has shown how the Reformation had important ramifications for the drinking of wine and loyal healthing. Since all Christians were now allowed to take part in communion, there was a significant shift in the material and social experience of ritual – 'in principle, every person could now drink wine from a fine cup ... three or more times a year' (2014, 251). This impacted the design of the vessels, with overtly Catholic iconography removed, whilst political iconography was added (262-263). These changes provide important context for the dated wine bottles – the inclusion of political iconography such as the letters CR, crowns, or even portraits of monarchs were influenced by the design of other ritual vessels used for the drinking of wine. Moreover, McShane has argued that providential tales relating to the drinking vessels demonstrate the belief that the objects themselves actively made revelations about the integrity of drinkers (262-263). The way these objects were decorated thus took on added importance. For the ordinary health-drinker, this might mean earthenware mugs decorated with loyal mottos. Whilst the dated wine bottles were used for decanting wine rather than drinking it, they were likely used for the sharing of wine in communal rituals such as these. The addition of royalist mottos or iconography on some made overt claims about the loyalties of their users – one in the Victoria and Albert Museum for example is decorated in blue with a large crown alongside the inscription 'SACK/1643' (see Figure 3), whilst another bears a portrait of Charles II; but even those bottles that simply recorded a type of wine could possibly associate the owners, givers, or users with royalist sympathies.

This cultural context can be used to further analyse why there were dates on these bottles. The earliest dated example is inscribed 1621, whilst the latest seventeenth century bottle is dated 1676.[13]

[13] There is one eighteenth-century bottle, dated 1719, but this appears to be an anomaly.

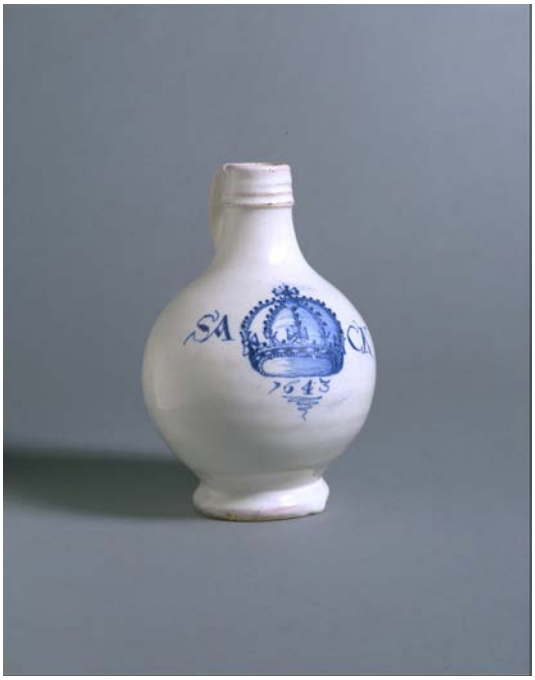

Figure 3 – Victoria and Albert Museum, London, museum no. C.114-1938

Interestingly, the dates on the bottles group around the mid-seventeenth century, with over 70% of the recorded dated wine bottles inscribed with years between 1644 and 1652. There are at least 131 known bottles dating to these years. At least thirty-one are dated 1650, whilst 1647 was also a popular year with at least twenty-one bottles inscribed with this date. Several conclusions are possible for the popularity of these years. If the wine bottles were being used by a community of royal supporters who were now dispersed or driven underground, the dates created temporal links across this diaspora, fixing a loyal community temporally when they could not be joined geographically. Likewise, the dates served to bolster and reaffirm the presence of loyalty to the crown in the very years when it was suffering a crisis. With the King defeated by 1647, executed in 1649, and a republican government in power by 1650, the dates on these bottles could emphasise that royal support would not die.

5. *Conclusion*

This article has explored the materiality of a moment in time, the passage of one year to another, in order to examine what material culture can tell us

about how people experienced and perceived time in early modern England. It has looked at the practices, rituals, and debates surrounding New Year's gift exchange, and has taken as a case study the dated tin-glazed earthenware wine bottles that may have been part of this materiality. In doing so, it has shown that through the exchange of dated wares and associated activities like food exchange and wassailing, people responded to and gave meaning to this passage of time communally through seasonal rituals and the reinforcement of social bonds and obligations. Moreover, the discussion of the conceptual nature of the New Year's gift, its role as an omen of good luck, and puritan hostility towards it, has demonstrated that these objects were far from passive tokens. They were thought to actively influence the coming year, they prompted specific memories or obligations, and they embodied communities near-by or disparate. Those gifts marked with a date and perhaps other decorative messages like initials or loyalist iconographies would have been kept and displayed in the home, a tangible reminder of both the temporal moment of exchange and the social networks and customs it represented, and its meaning would have been drawn from this context. This article has also shown the various methods we might use to interpret this meaning, as dated objects often leave little documentary trace. Whilst no definitive evidence survives to prove that the bottles were given as New Year's gifts, by exploring the wider context of New Year's customs and gift giving, it has been shown that the bottles can be placed within the rituals that took place at this specific moment of the year. Yet the bottles also demonstrate the variety of different ways we need to think in order to interpret a dated object. On the one hand the dates may be a reference to the changing year, but on the other, the wine bottles also fit into a range of different discourses. The connection between objects and time was therefore never straightforward, but had multiple layers of meaning, even when associated with just one specific moment.

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Time Management and Autonomous Subjectivity: Catherine Talbot, Politeness, and Self-Discipline as a Practice of Freedom

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Abstract

The article investigates the moralist author and bluestocking Catherine Talbot's (1721-1770) system of time management and self-discipline through her manuscript journals. Her writings paint a picture of a woman who, by monitoring her daily activities by the minute, aimed at making the most of her time in a very concrete way. More specifically, Talbot's time management was an integral part of her regime of self-imposed discipline, aimed at moral and polite self-improvement and rational selfhood. Moreover, the article argues that Talbot's quest for self-control can be seen as an attempt to formulate autonomous subjectivity within the framework of the culture of politeness and to gain pleasure through working on the self. Self-discipline could also be a means of acquiring freedom from normative gender roles in an environment where discipline was seen as a masculine prerogative.

Keywords: Eighteenth-Century Women, Gender Identity, Self-Discipline, Subjectivity, Time Management

1. *Introduction*

In November 1753, the moralist author and bluestocking Catherine Talbot (1721-1770) wrote in her journal:

Tuesday Nov^{r} 6 [1753]. Up at 7 ½ – it should be earlier if I did not drink Asses milk. The time past much as usual til 11 ¼. We then took an Airing till 1 … Reading & Writing 1 ¼, Dressing I am ashamed to say it, ¾ filled up the time till 3.[1]

[1] Journals of Catherine Talbot (henceforth *JCT*), 6 November 1753, BL Add. MS 46688, f. 20.

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Another entry from the same month:

> Wednesday Nov[r] 28 [1753] … the good D[ss] knocked at my Door, & after ¼ running up & down all the stair cases I could find by way of Exercise, I went & read with her in her Closet Sir Ch[arles Grandison]: till 1 ½ … Then went into the Drawing Room, & while I walked for near ¾ read the Psalms for the Day, mused on some of my own Faults. (*JCT*, 28 November 1753, BL Add. MS 46688, f. 28)

Such meticulous records of her daily doings, often keeping track of her activities every quarter of an hour, are quite common in Catherine Talbot's journals from the 1750s, when she was in her thirties. She started her account of every day by noting the time she woke up – mostly between 5 and 7 o'clock – and continued to jot down her activities to a high level of precision. Talbot seems to have been obsessed with self-monitoring herself and her time management, and every half an hour spent in idleness and frivolity led to serious self-flagellation. In 1751, she wrote: 'Oh that I Could but find Myself Improved. There was [a] great need of it, & is as much as there was. Indolence [&] Laziness are my most Formidable Enemies now. How many weeks have they made me lose in meer minutes!' (*JCT*, 31 December 1751, BL Add. MS 46690, f. 45).

This article examines this curious, almost obsessive time management Talbot was engaged in, and offers some interpretations of her motivation behind this severe regime of self-control. My argument will be that Talbot was committed to a rationalist and moralist plan of personal self-perfection, not only aimed at developing her practical skills in everyday polite feminine employment, but also tying her to the Enlightenment project of rational subjectivity. Moreover, through engaging in what Michel Foucault calls ethical work on one's self, Talbot was able to build an autonomous feeling of identity and selfhood, as well as receive personal satisfaction. Time management, as we shall see, was a crucial aspect of this project; especially for Talbot, whose position in life was, in many ways, subordinate, taking charge of her own time in this concrete way was an important means for gaining control over her life and circumstances. Talbot's project of self-discipline through time management also highlights questions of gender from many aspects; rationality and self-control were considered to be predominantly masculine characteristics in the eighteenth century, which made women's practice of them potentially subversive. However, at the same time, I will argue that Talbot used the practices of self-discipline to achieve primarily traditional feminine virtues.

Even though journalising was very common amongst the literary elite classes of eighteenth-century England, and especially women were encouraged by didactic writers to keep track of their time in order to avoid wasting it, records of time spent as meticulous as Catherine Talbot's are extraordinary, if not unique. Spending one's time productively had important national

and social implications in eighteenth-century England; as Sarah Jordan has argued, in the forging of the self-understanding and identity of the 'British nation', idleness became an important quality against which Britishness was defined (2003, 17). Simultaneously, as wealth started to challenge birth as the foundation of gentility, industriousness became the middling sorts' ticket to social prestige and respect, fuelling their aspirations to join 'the better sorts' of polite society. Jordan points out, however, that the middle classes were paradoxically using their industriousness 'to leave a class known for its industry and join a class which by definition was idle' (18; see also Klein 1993b, 363-366). Idleness, in other words, was simultaneously seen as the ultimate fulfilment of social status as well as deeply threatening to the self, to society, and to the nation at large. For these reasons, time management offers an interesting and thus far little researched viewpoint through which we can examine the anxieties eighteenth-century polite society felt about their social and personal identities.

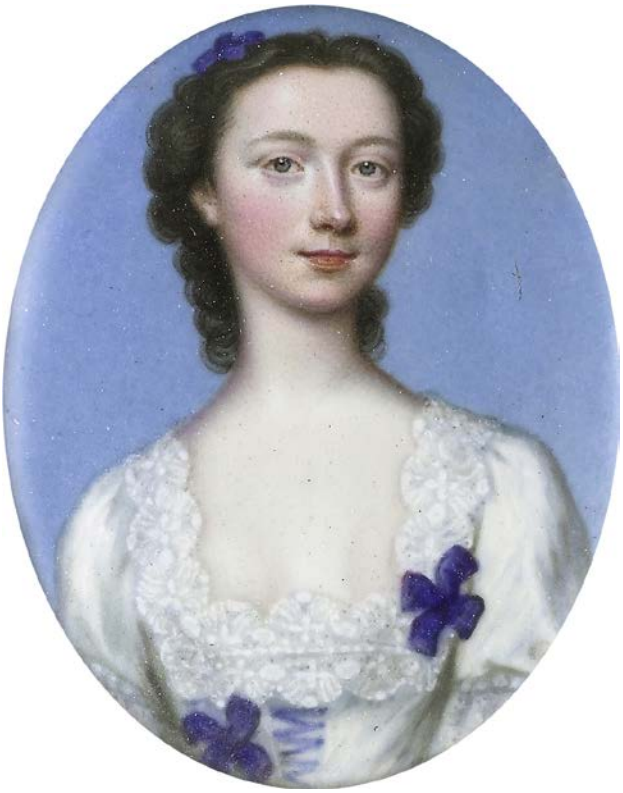

Figure 1 - Catherine Talbot by Christian Friedrich Zincke (1683/4-1767) [n.d.] © Bonhams

2. *Catherine Talbot – the Diffident Bluestocking*

Catherine Talbot was an author and a bluestocking whose essays on religious and moralist topics were published posthumously in two collections, *Reflections on the Seven Days of the Week* (1770) and *Essays on Various Subjects* (1772). Talbot spent her life living with her mother in the household of Thomas Secker (1693-1768), Bishop of Oxford and, from 1758, Archbishop of Canterbury. Talbot's father had died before her birth, and she and her mother lived off the benevolence of Secker. In the absence of a proper suitor, Talbot remained unmarried, against her own wishes. Catherine Talbot's life was, in practice, very much connected with Secker's ecclesiastical position and duties, and since she and her mother were financially entirely dependent on Secker, Talbot's position in the household was somewhat ambiguous. On the one hand, she was a gentlewoman who was not under the direct control of a male relative, but on the other hand, her situation was, in reality, a subordinate one. As she grew older, Talbot assumed the roles of Secker's housekeeper, personal secretary, and companion. She wrote in her journal that being of 'some use' and giving 'some Cheerfulness' to Secker and her mother was her 'only real business' (*JCT*, 30 October 1751, BL Add. MS 46690, ff. 27-29). Talbot was thus in a position where she was nominally independent, but in practice had very limited control over her own comings and goings; instead, Secker's activities and movements dictated many of the everyday minutiae of Talbot's life. As Rhoda Zuk notes, in her journals and letters Talbot occasionally 'voices a sardonic recognition of the narrow range of choices available to her' (2004).

Talbot's ambiguous position in the Secker household offers some initial clues concerning her obsessive self-monitoring. She was constantly expected to arrange her life around the bishop's ecclesiastical duties, as well as his personal whims. Indeed, Secker's influence on Talbot's behaviour was considerable; he was apparently a short-tempered man, and Talbot could brood for days on mistakes which had caused him to snap at her. When she was six minutes late for an appointment with him, she recorded being

> Chid as I indeed deserved because Eng:s time is this Month tied to a Minute, & ought *I* ever to make *Him* wait. Inconsiderate Animal! I was rather vexed with myself, but so foolish, so Childish, that I hate to be Chid, & altogether, being very far from well, was put out of Spirits for all day. (*JCT*, 1 February 1752, BL Add. MS 46690, f. 51)[2]

Moreover, Talbot was expected to act as the bishop's representative in the eyes of the world; she felt it her duty, for example, to appear daily in church and to constantly set an example to others by her behaviour. When dining privately at her friend Marchioness Grey's house and attending a concert in

[2] Talbot referred to Secker by the codename 'Eng[land]:' in her journals.

Easter week, she felt her mind 'unsatisfied with such an unusual degree of Gayety' in a week that 'ought sure to be peculiarly Serious' – not because she herself thought she did wrong, but because she was afraid 'some good body or other would be offended' with her (*JCT*, 25 March 1752, BL Add. MS 46690, f. 63). Talbot was also expected to take part in many of the sociable events of the bishop's palace. These social responsibilities gave Talbot endless trouble; she was a naturally shy person and continually suffered feelings of inadequacy. In November 1753 she wrote in an exasperated fashion:

> What can one do … to keep just the right Medium & make a tolerable part of any Company one respects without saying a word too much? There is nothing I dread so much as being talkative Yet at my Years one must not sit like a Statue—On these occasions & on these only I sometimes wish my self back to the other side of Twenty, when my L^{d}& Mamma are not with me, & it seems as if I should say somewhat, yet am so painfully tho' justly diffident of my self that I had much rather hold my Tongue. I scarce ever in my Life left a Company that I valued without feeling great uneasiness from the fear of having shewn my self unworthy of bearing a part in it. (*JCT*, 12 November 1753, BL Add. MS 46688, ff. 20-23)

And later on, in another journal entry:

> My heart is heavy to day. Yet without any reason except … feeling my own want of every requisite except peacefulness towards making an Agreeable Companion … the more strongly one feels [such Considerations] the more unfit they make one to be tolerable in Society. (*JCT*, 30 November 1753, BL Add. MS 46688, ff. 28-30)

In other words, Talbot acutely felt that she was failing in her responsibilities. For a gentlewoman, especially placed in such a representative role as Talbot's, it was of vital importance to master the rules of politeness and to be adept in easy sociability. Gentlewomen were seen to be a crucial component of polite sociability in eighteenth-century England; in fact, scholars have argued that women's central role in polite sociability was a specific eighteenth-century feature, and something that sets the period apart from both previous and following centuries (Klein 1993a, 103-108). According to Lawrence Klein, 'the enhanced stature of sociability and politeness involved a normative enhancement of the feminine' (1993a, 107; see also e.g. Glover 2011, 81-82). In other words, women became the paragons of ideal politeness, occupying a crucial place in mixed sociability, where their presence was thought to have a refining influence on men's manners.[3] As another bluestocking, Hannah More, put it, the 'rough angles and asperities of male manners are imperceptibly filed, and gradually worn smooth, by the polishing of

[3] On women and politeness in the eighteenth century, see e.g. Klein 1994; Cohen 1996; Vickery 1998; Carter 2001; Klein 2002; Davidson 2004; Greig 2013.

female conversation' (1777, 13-14). Therefore, the appearance of an effortless management of company was an important and inseparable part of the ideal portrait of an accomplished woman. According to Hannah Greig, the inability to perform satisfactorily on this account and a lack of talent in smooth interaction caused severe anxiety in elite women, and in a very concrete way narrowed down their opportunities in life (2013, 15-17). The ability to shine in company was extremely important for the female members of the so-called bluestocking group, in which Talbot was included, who were universally hailed as the brightest stars of entertaining sociability, 'Enlighten'd spirits' who had 'prevented the triumph of bad taste in society by instituting elegant conversation' (Troide and Cooke 2012, 412, footnote 20).[4]

Polite society also placed other sorts of demands on its female members. Gentlewomen were expected to conform to a set of heavily gendered, normative demands concerning their appearance, movements, accomplishments, behaviour, and character. Politeness was based on a naturalisation of a dichotomous gender difference, which resulted in an idealisation of specifically feminine behaviour in women's conduct literature. Women were claimed to be 'naturally' modest, affectionate, soft, tender, meek, pious, and chaste; therefore, a woman who did not portray these characteristics in her appearance, speech, and deeds, risked jeopardising her reputation and status within polite society (Ylivuori 2015, ch. 2 and 3). In practice, 'natural' femininity was codified as specific acts, looks, and practices that gentlewomen were expected to engage in to communicate their polite status to the outside world. Accordingly, these women played the harpsichord, danced minuets, dressed with sobriety, curtseyed gracefully, and conversed with ease to maintain not only their genteel status and polite reputation, but also their femininity.

Thus, Talbot was not only failing her social responsibilities as a companion and representative of Bishop Secker, but also falling decidedly short of the norms of ideal polite femininity that her life as a gentlewoman revolved around, and, more specifically, failing to manifest the conversational and sociable virtues she should have embodied as a bluestocking. In fact, Talbot's journals show that she subjected herself to continuous severe self-criticism for these reasons. After visiting a 'good Clever' friend, she wrote that she had 'learnt many lessons of true Good-Breeding & Good humour this day. For my own part have none of it, am monstrously Selfish Arrogant & Unpolite. How can I Continue so When I feel so strongly the Charm of Politeness' (*JCT*, 19 [June 1751], BL Add. MS 46690, f. 21). Indeed, as Zuk notes, Talbot's journals and letters 'communicate a morbid anxiety about her usefulness, and record an arduous, self-imposed regime that included the duties of housekeeper and hostess, catechizer of servants, and supervisor of children, as well as the pursuit of scholarship' (2004). Talbot observed

[4] On bluestockings and conversation, see also Eger 2005, 288-305.

herself with an unforgiving and critical eye, and every imperfection she detected gave rise to a new bout of self-loathing. Especially Talbot's journals, mainly addressed to either her close friend Jemima Yorke, Marchioness Grey (1722-1797) or Julia Berkeley, the daughter of Bishop Berkeley, draw a disconcerting picture of a woman engaged in agonising introspection and relentless self-discipline.

3. *Talbot's Method of Discipline*

Talbot's regime of self-discipline can most straightforwardly be seen as an effort to work on herself in order to resemble more closely the ideal of polite femininity that was expected from her. Through industrious self-application, she strove to learn polite languages, to read polite books, and to assume the tastes and habits of polite society – thus aspiring to become a more capable and presentable polite subject. However, I want to suggest that Talbot's time management can be interpreted as part of a larger moralist and rationalist project to aspire towards the rational control of the mind over the body, thus linking Talbot to the Enlightenment project of rational selfhood. To discuss this further, I will now analyse Talbot's journal entries more closely in order to examine what she was, in fact, doing with all this time she was so meticulously managing.

When we leave out Talbot's social and domestic engagements and look at her so-called leisure time – that is, time she was free to dispose with as she wished – it is possible to divide her documented daily activities into four groups: working (painting, needlework, handicrafts); studying (arithmetic, languages); reading (novels, plays, and religious material); and 'moral work' (philosophising, contemplating 'her evils'). Looking at these activities, it becomes clear that Talbot's military regime of self-control was aimed at personal and moral self-improvement. In a very straightforward way, her everyday work included honing her education and practising various accomplishments. She was a decent scholar and worked hard to improve her skills in French and Italian; in fact, she wrote some of her journals in French as an exercise. She read sermons and books on morality, practised painting flowers for hours at an end, and applied herself to arithmetic. An entry in her journal from December 1753 neatly summarises Talbot's daily activities:

> Depuis 11 Jusqu'a 3, Lectures utiles, reflexions sérieuses & reconnoissantes [sic], quelque Lettre ecrit, Promenade d'une demi heure avec un Livre, un peu d'Arithmetique, un peu d'Italien, Toilette passablement Courte. (*JCT*, 3 December 1753, BL Add. MS 46688, ff. 28-30)[5]

[5] 'From 11 to 3, useful reading, serious & grateful reflections, wrote some Letters, a half an hour's Walk with a Book, some Arithmetic, some Italian, dressing tolerably short'. All translations are mine.

This passage also reflects the moralistic attitude she had adopted towards dress and 'toilette'. Dress was a highly problematic area of polite identity construction in eighteenth-century England. On the one hand, it was a crucial part of a proper genteel appearance and considered to be an especially important and well-suited female interest. On the other hand, moralist didactic writers, such as James Fordyce and John Burton, were extremely concerned about the amount of time, energy, and money women spent in their sartorial display, and excessive fondness of dress was connected to such vices as luxuriousness, immoderation, and vanity (Fordyce 1766, I, 29-30; Burton 1793, I, 149; Klein 1993a, 110; Batchelor 2005, 9-11; Berg 2005, 4-5; Ylivuori 2015, 136-138). Accordingly, Talbot as a moralist herself was pleased if she could manage her dressing up within half an hour; anything beyond that gave her conscience serious pangs. 'Dressing from 1 to 2 ¾. Fie upon Dress!' she exclaimed on one particularly long session in front of the mirror (*JCT*, 18 December 1751, BL Add. MS 46690, f. 41). However, Talbot was acutely aware of the meaning that polite society attached to a woman's attire, as well as the moral obligation to manage her duties to the best of her ability: 'Drest in 1/4. but hideously ill – I do not care – yet I will mend, for to be less a dowdy w^{d} require not a minute more time only a little more care, & one sh^{d} do nothing ill be it never such a Trifle' (*JCT*, 18 December 1753, BL Add. MS 46688, ff. 33-35).

Underlying the immediate goal of improving her education, there seems to be the aim to acquire modest humility and mental strength in the face of life's afflictions in Talbot's regime of self-discipline. Talbot also indicates a desire to wean the body of luxury and idleness and bend it to the regulation of the will – as displayed by her contemptuous attitude towards dressing. Indeed, even though I have put down moral work as a separate category, to some extent all of Talbot's self-improvement seems to have been aimed towards moral advancement. In 1751 she wrote:

> If this Summer more is given me with all its usual Delights & Advantages how shall I improve it so as to be the better for them when Winter Comes? And then (to look strangely far forward) How After a well spent Rational Winter how shall I continue to be in still a happier Disposition against another Summer? And thus to go on thro' Life how Charming! … I have got into a strange Careless Way of losing time. Strict Tasks & Regular Hours I believe must be the way of mending That. (*JCT*, 11 May 1751, BL Add. MS 46690, f. 4)

Talbot's detailed records of her time seem to have served primarily the rationalist goal of self-perfection. To this effect, Talbot noted every wasted minute as punctually as well-spent ones: 'This day has been the more pleasing to me because I have not I think lost five minutes of it', she wrote in 1753 (*JCT*, 21 November 1753, BL Add. MS 46688, ff. 26-27). Most of her journal entries from the early years of the 1750s begin by noting the hour of waking

up – be it 5 ¼ (1 July 1751) or 8 ½ (29 November 1753; *JCT*, 1 July 1751, BL Add. MS 46690, f. 24; *JCT*, 29 November 1753, BL Add. MS 46688, ff. 28-30). She felt an obligation to confess honestly whenever she had been idle; 'Let me own then that much of my time has moved heavily & uselessly to day from a stupid lumpish heaviness & uncomfortableness', she wrote to Julia Berkeley (*JCT*, 2 November 1753, BL Add. MS 46688, ff. 17-19). In other words, Talbot aimed at transparent and truthful disclosure in her time-monitoring. She not only kept a conscientious track of her daily time, but often reflected in her journals on the use she had made of her time during the past month or months. When looking back to summer 1751, she worried that it had been wasted: 'I fear I as usual so broke my time with a thousand little errands & employments that I did not make the improvement of it I might & ought to have done' (*JCT*, 30 October 1751, BL Add. MS 46690, ff. 27-29). A few years later, she reproached herself for allowing the amusements of London to tear her away from her project of self-improvement, comparing her idle life with Julia Berkeley's rural existence:

> Wednesday Oct[r] ye last.
> Fare thee well Thou long month. May the next be better improved! Part of it will I am sure. But Oh the wearisome hours of London! Indeed my Love yours is on the whole much the pleasanter life since you have it in your Power by daily agreeable Walks to keep up the Cheerfulness & hardyness & Activity that ones Confinement here & hanging over a Fire side is so calculated to take away, & then with what spirit may you go on uninterrupted by any thing but this necessary care of Health in a continual course of improvements! (*JCT*, 31 October 1753, BL Add. MS 46688, ff. 17-19)

Talbot liked to divide her day according to the usefulness of her tasks. Mornings and afternoons were to be spent soberly, while more frivolous employments, such as reading 'Trifling Books' – though 'a necessary Medicine sometimes' – should be 'always defer[red] … till after Dinner if Possible' (*JCT*, 2 February 1754, BL Add. MS 46688, ff. 36-37). Even though Talbot as a staunch moralist looked down on such low entertainment as farcical comedies and French novels, she nevertheless managed to draw useful lessons from them:

> I have been too idle to day, as I might have employed myself much better than in reading a french Book, which however gave me as I went along many serious & grateful reflexions, as it exhibited scenes of Misery which tho' in this Book fictitious are too common in real Life not to make persons whose situation is so peculiarly happy as Yours & mine sincerely & humbly thankful. This Book gives I fear too true a Picture of the Universal Profligacy of the French Nation. (*JCT*, 6 November 1753, BL Add. MS 46688, ff. 20-23)

Chastising the body in order to strengthen her character was one of Talbot's most important self-appointed tasks. The mere limits of her physique often

prevented Talbot from employing her time to the utmost effectuality; when her family insisted on her getting seven hours of sleep a night to maintain her health, she complained that 'by this Means I do nothing, have no time' (*JCT*, 1 February 1752, BL Add. MS 46690, f. 51). In fact, Talbot saw her frail human body mostly as a nuisance which demanded pampering and thus hindered the full development of her mind: 'But how Slow Alas how perpetually interrupted is the Progress of embodied Mind! A Mind too of so slight a Make, in a Body so liable to weariness, & that makes such large demands of time for refreshment & amusement' (*JCT*, 26 June 1751, BL Add. MS 46690, f. 22). Therefore, Talbot endeavoured to harden her body by various methods. She regularly read standing or walking in order to better both her mind and body simultaneously, and could impose unpleasant tasks on herself to strengthen her mind over matter:

> [At 11 ¼] Returned to my own room, read both English & Italian & mostly standing, settled some Accounts &c till 1 ¼ … Walked absolutely in the Dark & very Cold till 7. & by that time found it grow very agreeable. Tis the Case of most disagreeable things that are upon the whole right & good for one: A very little use makes them not unpleasant, a very little Reflexion Delightful. (*JCT*, 1 November 1753, BL Add. MS 46688, ff. 17-19)

Not only her body, but Talbot's spirits also regularly failed her in her project of self-improvement. A particularly gloomy journal entry describes her occasional melancholy: 'Saturday ready to hang my self. Jaded to Death & almost ill' (*JCT*, [n.d., 1745-1753?], BL Add. MS 46688, f. 14). She often recorded herself too weary or low-spirited, 'heavy & dull' or 'épuisée' to work effectually, and was liable to bouts of melancholy and depression, which she however condemned as an ungrateful weakness that prevented the proper management of her social duties (*JCT*, 19 December 1753, BL Add. MS 46688, ff. 31-32; 17 July 1753, BL Add. MS 46690, f. 87). She recorded herself feeling dejected in 1752: 'Wicked Fool! for does not this hurt & grieve Dearest M[ama]: & is it not unreasonable, groundless – O Fie Fie! These reflections have cost me bitter Tears. I hope useful ones' (*JCT*, 3 March 1752, BL Add. MS 46690, f. 59). Undoubtedly Talbot felt the weight of the social requirement for women's constant cheerfulness, which followed from their role in polite society as the soother of men's troubles and the light-hearted amuser of the company, and fought to overcome her unfeminine gloominess.[6]

Undeniably, questions of femininity and masculinity are immediately relevant to Talbot's project of self-improvement. Talbot's struggle towards self-perfection is a feature that can be connected to the so-called 'Enlightenment subject' – that is, the subject as a rational agent who believes that the self is fully within an individual's power to perfect through 'disengagement and rational control', an idea forwarded by, for example, John Locke in *An*

[6] On the feminine ideal of cheerfulness, see Ylivuori 2015, 158-160.

Essay Concerning Human Understanding (1689; see Taylor 1989, 160-163; Hall 2004, 24). However, Locke and other propagators of rational selfhood generally excluded women from their philosophical considerations, since women were thought to be 'by definition irrational beings' (Hall 2004, 28). Catherine Talbot's project of rational self-improvement and her rejection of the glorification of sentiment can be seen as a means of taking part in this supposedly masculine sphere – striving towards autonomous, moral, and rational subjectivity. In this sense, Talbot can be connected to an eighteenth-century tradition of proto-feminist philosophical critique, including such well-established names as Mary Wollstonecraft and Mary Astell, who aimed to establish women as equally capable of rationality and self-control as men.[7]

4. *Youth and Self-formation*

There is a perceivable change of tone in Talbot's journals from her youth to old age regarding self-improvement and self-discipline. As Talbot herself notes, her young self was a giddy creature who loitered her days away and allowed her mind to be 'full of Vain Anxiety & foolish unhappiness' (*JCT*, 1 February 1752, BL Add. MS 46690, f. 51). Only in her thirties did Talbot begin her project of relentless self-improvement, which she apparently again eased up somewhat in her later years. She also often reflected on her progress, condemning her 'Stupid Worthless Vehement' younger self and expressing gratitude for having been 'led into Uniform Rational Happiness & a State of Improvement' in her more mature years (*JCT*, 12 November 1751, BL Add. MS 46690, f. 33). In other words, time also played another role in Talbot's project of self-improvement in the form of dividing her life cycle into different parts. Youth was, both in Talbot's mind and according to the general didactic ideal of female education, the time for the cultivation of virtues and the formation of character.

Repeatedly regretting having wasted the valuable days of her youth in leisure, Talbot was also determined to help others to avoid making the same mistake. To this effect, she took an interest in the matters of a young friend of the family, Julia Berkeley, daughter of Bishop Berkeley:

> Je m'interesse pour elle, Je l'aime, il me semble que c'est un de mes Devoirs [illegible] tons ses petits défauts & de les redresser. Elle m'aimè tant, on a une telle Confiance en moi – Est-ce encore ma mêler de ce qui n'est pas mon affaire? (*JCT*, 30 July 1753, BL Add. MS 46690, f. 90)[8]

[7] On women's capability of rationality and English proto-feminism in the Enlightenment period, see e.g. Simonton 2005, 36-37; O'Brien 2009, 11-20, *passim*.

[8] 'I take an interest in her, I love her, it seems to me that it is one of my duties to [illegible] her little imperfections and correct them. She loves me dearly and has confidence

Talbot pondered in 1753, and quickly decided that it was her duty to try and reform Julia into feminine perfection:

I found my Dear Girl so neatly dress'd, so composed, so reasonable, & so fond of following her little Plan of Employments, that it has given me infinite Satisfaction & Thankfulness. Surely I … owe every Care I can give to such a Sweet Child as this who seems Providentially thrown under my influence … Ill should I repay the Esteem I was undeservedly honour'd with by her Father … if I did not endeavour all I could to form & sooth this Young Mind Capable of becoming every thing it ought. (*JCT*, 6 August 1753, BL Add. MS 46690, f. 93)

Talbot convinced Julia to follow her own programme of meticulous journalising and maximum utilisation of time, and expected the girl to send her daily accounts of her doings so that Talbot could superintend whether her time was spent in the most useful way. Talbot soon had reason to be displeased with her pupil, for

the Journal was not however by any means what I wished it … I extracted the two first days out of your Journal with great ease & pleasure because they were regularly writ & on the whole well spent. Yet in Tuesday you will see there are three hours unaccounted for … I dare say in every [day] you spent many hours very well, & if any were loiter'd away do not be discouraged my Dear but only endeavour that this week may be still better improved than the last.[9]

Some weeks later, Talbot was forced to chide Julia again: 'By what Perverse Accident is it that I have never yet since we left Cuddesden [*sic*] had one such Letter & Journal from my Julia as I Hoped & she Promised? … My own Path is in Clear Sunshine. May Yours be so!' (CT to Julia Berkeley, 28 November 1753, BL Add. 46688, ff. 28-30).[10]

Julia's failings grieved Talbot, for she saw the brief years of youth as the period when a woman's character and accomplishments should be formed. 'What will become of my Julia if she dreams away, & in dull unpleasant dreams too, this golden Opportunity of uninterrupted leisure with the benefit of M^{rs} B: & the Governor to assist, regulate, applaud & delight in her daily improvements', Talbot bemoaned (*JCT*, 14 October 1753, BL Add. MS 46688, ff. 24-25). She firmly believed that true happiness was to be found through improvement, not self-indulgence, and criticised the common empty-headed female way of life and

in me – Then again, is it my business to mix myself with something that does not concern me?' I have reproduced Talbot's small grammatical errors as they appear in the original journal.

[9] Catherine Talbot [CT] to Julia Berkeley, 30 October 1753, BL Add. MS 46688, ff. 15-16.

[10] Cuddesdon Palace was Bishop Secker's residence in Oxfordshire.

those poor idle Girls who for want of knowing how to amuse themselves at home are forced to fancy themselves happy in the continual & wearisome repetition of the same insipid Diversions Day after day till they grow uneasily conscious themselves that every body else is tired of seeing them. (CT to Julia Berkeley, 9 November, 1753, BL Add. MS 46688, ff. 20-23)

However, Talbot herself also often failed to live up to her own standards, and repeatedly chided herself for failing to follow her plan of self-improvement – either by being idle, working half-heartedly, or spending her time in morally reprehensible ways, like reading French novels, for example.[11] For Julia's complaints of ennui, listlessness, or want of spirits, common enough amongst elite females, she recommended 'constant Exercise' and going on 'diligently & regularly with your employments & your Journal'; in this way, these complaints would 'cease of [them] self' (*JCT*, 9 November 1753, BL Add. MS 46688, ff. 20-23). Talbot herself, however, managed to repel her gloom by cheerful employment only occasionally.

5. *Self-discipline, Pleasure, and Freedom*

Talbot's self-imposed regime of discipline not only bettered her social and domestic skills, but it also seems to have brought her an acute sense of private satisfaction. Not only did she believe that 'Our true Happiness lies not in Enjoyment but Improvement', but she appears to have experienced tremendous secret joy from the thought of, for example, being able to 'steal an hour & be up before 5', and thus push herself towards the limits of her mental and physical capabilities.[12] In other words, she engaged in self-improvement not only to achieve particular goals, such as bettering her arithmetical skills, but also to experience pleasure and a sense of achievement. In this sense, Talbot's project comes close to the enjoyment received from ascetic exercises, such as, for example, dieting. The feminist philosopher Cressida Heyes suggests in her Foucauldian analysis of modern dieting that the practices of dieting provide satisfaction for the dieter; they give the individual an 'active, creative sense of self-development, mastery, expertise, and skill' (2007, 78). Talbot's regime of self-discipline seems to have had similar effects on her. Moreover, Talbot's self-improvement scheme also highlights the elision between mastering oneself and caring for oneself in a Foucauldian sense, suggesting, as Heyes formulates it, that 'the controlled and relentlessly self-disciplined persona is

[11] *JCT*, 26 June 1751, BL Add. MS 46690, f. 22: 'A Pleasant Leisure day – But alas how useless am I, & how little improvement do I make of all this leisure'.

[12] CT to Jemima Yorke, Marchioness Grey, 25 July 1761, Bedfordshire and Luton Records and Archives, Wrest Park Manuscripts, no. 750/635; *JCT*, 3 November 1753, BL Add. MS 46688, f. 19.

also the most ethically responsible' (85). Thus, Talbot was essentially engaged in a project of ethical self-care and self-formation; she felt that her regime of self-discipline made her a morally superior person compared to both her own younger days and to other, idle and frivolous females.

In fact, Talbot's project of self-improvement can be interpreted as an aspiration towards autonomy both in respect to the free and rational 'Enlightened subject' as well as in a Foucauldian sense. Namely, self-discipline was not only a source of pleasure for women; it was also a source of freedom in several ways. Michel Foucault in *The Use of Pleasure* describes the care of self as a practice of freedom, his point being that controlling one's pleasures makes one free from those pleasures (1992, 78-80). Thus, discipline is a prerequisite of freedom. Indeed, according to Michael Schoenfeldt, early modern culture imagined a regime of self-discipline to be a necessary step towards any prospect of liberation. That is to say, for eighteenth-century subjects, self-control authorised individuality (1999, 11). This, of course, was the underlying principle of Locke's formulation of selfhood as a rational endeavour towards self-perfection.

Freedom in Foucauldian thought is a contested subject; since our choices themselves are culturally constituted, freedom cannot, in reality, mean any form of autonomous self-government. This has led many commentators to argue that there is no concept of freedom in Foucault's thought, since there is no truly autonomous subject (Butler 1993, 15; Oksala 2005, 2-3). However, Johanna Oksala argues that practices relating to care for the self can be seen as a deliberate part of freedom. Through critically reflecting on themselves and their conduct, subjects can cultivate and practise freedom and stylise the possibilities that open up around them. According to Oksala, the quest for freedom in Foucauldian thought becomes a question of 'developing forms of subjectivity that are capable of functioning as resistance to normalising power' (2005, 12).

Foucault argues that freedom acquired through self-care is essentially power; power that individuals use over themselves, but also power that they use over others. This is why self-control is, in Foucault's analysis, a masculine virtue; it is expected from those who are in charge, and it is considered to be indispensable for good government (1992, 80-84). The association between control and liberty was common in eighteenth-century political thought; Edmund Burke, for example, wrote that 'Men are qualified for civil liberty in exact proportion to their disposition to put moral chains upon their own appetites' (1989, quoted in Davidson 2004, 8). This capability for self-control was represented to be a masculine prerogative; women were considered to be naturally prone to vanity, excess, and luxury, and incapable of rational self-control (Armstrong 1987, 59-69; Kaplan 1987, 161-162; Mullan 1988, 207-227). By these means, women were effectively excluded from political power. The political rights attached to self-discipline also meant that any display of self-control in a woman was deeply disconcerting and politically subversive, since it undermined the patriarchal system of power. Therefore, female self-discipline was labelled unfeminine, something that made a woman's gender

suspicious. This is why Catherine Talbot's regime of self-control unfolds as an extremely controversial set of acts that bear deep gendered and power-related meanings. Catherine Talbot's case shows that she not only believed that women were capable of self-control, but she was also engaged with active self-formation and self-discipline to become an ethical, autonomous subject. When self-control was perceived as a masculine trait, the act of exercising discipline over a feminine self can be seen as an empowering act – a move away from normative passive femininity towards active masculinity.

Questions of gender are thus, in many ways, central for eighteenth-century practices of self-discipline. As Foucault writes, 'self-mastery was a way of being a man with respect to oneself', whereas 'immoderation derives from a passivity that relates it to femininity' (1992, 82, 84). There is, of course, a long tradition of seeing women as symbols of the flesh – licentious, gluttonous, unrestrainable. Therefore, women also have a centuries-old tradition of disciplining that flesh in an effort to rise to the level of spirit and to become, metaphorically speaking, male (Bynum 1988, 217). In this sense, Catherine Talbot's efforts of self-discipline resemble, for example, the extreme fasting of medieval woman saints that Caroline Bynum has researched; they can both be seen as a part of a historical continuum of women's ascetic practices, aimed at controlling and subduing the desires of the flesh in order to gain spirituality and/or rationality, either in one's own eyes or in the face of society.

When interpreted like this, self-discipline can be seen as a strategy for negotiating controversial desires and freedom from feminised conduct norms in other areas of life. Bynum suggests that medieval women's fasting was not merely substituting control of self for control of circumstance; instead, it gave women actual power over their lives and made it possible for them to reject traditional feminine duties and roles (1988, 220). Similarly, eighteenth-century women's engagement with self-discipline can be seen as a strategy for escaping the traditional domestic model of femininity. Deborah Heller has argued that bluestockings and other female intellectuals adhered to a strict regime of self-regulation that helped them 'secure liberation on other fronts', such as intellectual pursuits (2002, 234).[13] In other words, these women compensated for their unfeminine roles as female wits, poets, and scholars with strict disciplinary femininity in other areas of life – like Talbot did by balancing her intellectual impulses to 'Athenianise, Philosophise, Criticise, Debate, Discourse & Laugh' with her bluestocking friends by striving towards piety, morality, industriousness, and other normative feminine qualities in her personal life.[14] In other words, self-discipline was a powerful strategy for escaping gendered conduct expectations.

[13] See also Myers 1990, 2; Matchinske 1998, 20; Smith 2008, 165-187; Major 2012, 72-75.

[14] CT to Jemima Yorke, Marchioness Grey, 3 November 1750, Bedfordshire and Luton Records and Archives, Wrest Park Manuscripts, no. 2895.

However, it is important to notice that by assuming unfeminine roles in the intellectual sphere, women like Talbot bound themselves all the more thoroughly to the domesticised norms of female chastity and morality in their attempt to compensate for their intellectual digressions. Their emancipatory actions in some areas of conduct thus simultaneously served to reinforce patriarchy in other areas. In this way, self-discipline also played an important role in forming normative feminine eighteenth-century subjectivities. Mastering the ideal social and polite skills expected from well-bred women required diligent practice and constant vigilance (Heller 2002, 218). Indeed, this seems to be what Catherine Talbot was after, as well: to her, her project of self-improvement was a quest towards responsible, ethical – and to a large extent, normative – femininity. The ideals that Talbot strived for – such as domesticity and Christian morality – were ideals that were routinely labelled as feminine within the polite society, and Talbot clearly observed her own performances through the authoritative spectacles of these dominant discourses. Therefore, even if Catherine Talbot's strategy of self-improvement brought her experiences of pleasure and freedom, her self-disciplining was not enabling in the sense that it would have provided her with absolute freedom from feminine roles or behaviour. This is the Foucauldian subjectivity paradox; the ethical work one puts in to develop oneself produces subjectivity that is normative, yet the subject nevertheless feels that this subjectivity is autonomous.

Even if Talbot was aiming for discursive moral femininity, the process of self-care transformed her aspirations from external coercion into internal selfhood, thus providing her with a sense of autonomy. As we have seen, time management played a key role in this project; arguably because women in general and Talbot especially had a limited control over the use of their own time, managing the little they had could provide them with a sense of taking control over their own lives on a very concrete level, thus enforcing a sense of independent subjectivity. While her aim was to better fulfil the requirements of normative polite femininity, her conformity also paradoxically brought her subversive freedom through the rational autonomous selfhood she acquired through time management and self-discipline.

6. *Conclusion*

This article has examined Catherine Talbot's almost compulsive monitoring of her time, and her efforts to spend that time as diligently as possible in the attempt to achieve control of the self. I have argued that the duties and expectations Talbot encountered as a gentlewoman, bluestocking, and Bishop Secker's *protégée* caused her anxiety that she aimed to control by engaging in a regime of self-improvement. Through a carefully regulated program of work and exercise, Talbot aimed to acquire the qualities deemed crucial for

a gentlewoman in her position, such as the ability to paint flowers, speak French, and do basic arithmetic. However, her ultimate goal was the moral advancement and self-control she felt she received through these ascetic exercises and time management; this, in turn, translated into a sense of rational, autonomous identity and ethical selfhood.

Based on this examination, it is possible to argue that time management played an important and heretofore largely unresearched part in eighteenth-century elite women's identity construction. Time management ties together and opens up aspects of gender, social status, rank, ethnicity, and nationality in interesting and novel ways. There are numerous interesting paths for future research to pick up in this area. For example, leisure and idleness held simultaneously positive and negative connotations as signifiers of wealth and high rank as well as immoral foreignness and racial Otherness; the leisured individuals showed themselves in different light depending on their setting and audience.[15] Having time to spend, and the means of spending it, also held different meanings for men and women, whose relationship to time and its management was fundamentally different because of their respective places in society. The degree to which men engaged in similar practices of time measurement and control remains to be discovered. Moreover, industriousness was an important Christian ideal, and women's allegedly natural alliance with religion made diligence a particularly valued feminine quality. At the same time, however, women were criticised for their supposedly innate bent for idleness and frivolity. Such aspects of time management deserve closer scholarly attention in the future, since they are intimately tied to personal and group identities and, indeed, address some of the fundamental questions of eighteenth-century identity construction.

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[15] On the corruptness of excessive leisure and its connection to ethnicity and climate theory, see e.g. Wheeler 2000, esp. ch. 4.

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Killing Time: Ennui in Eighteenth-Century English Culture

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Abstract

The article explores the meanings of ennui in eighteenth-century England. Based on text searches, it proposes that the French term *ennui* was adopted into everyday usage in England around the mid-century, and was from the 1770s onwards used to signify especially the temporal aspects of the word, that is, boredom. Ennui was closely tied to social rank: it was thought to plague the wealthy if they had too much time on their hands. Interestingly, ennui was not particularly gendered, but plagued both men and women. It was intrinsically related to lifestyles. A multitude of activities were proposed to avoid ennui, from reading to physical exercise. Avoidance was a question of life and death: ennui could lead to moral collapse and ultimately to suicide, killing not only the body but also the soul.

Keywords: Boredom, British Cultural History, Eighteenth Century, Ennui, Temporality

1. *Introduction*

This essay explores the temporal meanings of ennui in eighteenth-century English usage.[1] It is an attempt to show the many ways in which ennui was linked with time. It looks especially at the element of boredom in ennui, and argues that boredom was the most important temporal aspect of eighteenth-century ennui. Both simple and existential boredom can be found in ennui, and for many eighteenth-century authors, simple boredom led to existential boredom. Ennui was a moral concept too, and strongly linked to the negative, corrupting influences of affluence, which reinforced the effects of boredom. In the eight-

[1] Most of the texts quoted in this essay were printed in London, but a few elsewhere in England, and quite a considerable number in Dublin, which I would like to think suggests that ennui was not limited only to London high society. I wish to thank my anonymous reviewers, the participants of the ISCH Bucharest 2015 session, and members of my research group for their valuable suggestions and comments. Special thanks to Eleanor Underwood for checking my English.

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eenth century 'boredom' as a *term* did not yet exist but the *concept* of boredom did. As has often been noted, boredom was an ancient feeling, a plague of the desert fathers who named it *acedia*, the noontide demon which made the midday hours of hunger last forever. In the high Middle Ages, *acedia* meant the sin of boredom with the life of prayer (Kuhn 1976, 40-46, 64; Kessel 2001, 20-21; Knuuttila 2004, 141; Toohey 2011, 107-111; Johannisson 2012, 82-89). In French, *ennui* was an old term, deriving from Latin (*in odio*). As Martina Kessel puts it, ennui as a human condition was born in the Renaissance and in seventeenth-century philosophy of mind (2001, 22), but as we will see, the word was not used in English as early as this.

Looking at ennui across genres, from fiction to religious texts, and from medical tracts to conduct literature, gives a broad basis for understanding the meanings of ennui. It shows that in eighteenth-century English usage, firstly, ennui was inextricably linked to time and to what we would call 'being bored'; secondly, that ennui was also an existential problem which could put a person in mortal danger; and thirdly, that ennui was not gendered unequivocally male or female. It also confirms the findings of earlier scholarship that ennui was highly class-oriented and was thought to plague particularly the elite. The essay takes the reader from a brief review of earlier scholarship to a discussion on method, and proposes a new timeline for the term 'ennui' in English. After this, the character of ennui in various genres is discussed, followed by an exploration of the birth of ennui and the ways by which one could avoid it. The temporal moralities relating to ennui are then examined, and the discussion closes with a look at gender and class.

1.1 *Earlier Scholarship*

Most scholarly interest in ennui has been manifested by literary scholars. This is also noted by Martina Kessel in her immaculately researched *Langeweile. Zum Umgang mit Zeit und Gefühlen in Deutschland vom späten 18. bis zum frühen 20. Jahrhundert* (2001; *Ennui. On dealings with time and emotions in Germany from the late eighteenth to the early twentieth century*), exploring the concept *Langeweile* in its many German contexts (2001, 11).[2] Another rare exception to the rule is the Swedish historian Karin Johannisson's inspiring 2009 *Melankoliska rum* (*Melancholy Rooms*), which unfortunately has not been made available to English readers. This volume explores the many forms of melancholy in the history of Western culture, and it devotes one of its nine chapters to ennui. Opening her discussion, Johannisson goes to Goethe's Werther's *Weltschmerz* and argues that ennui is existential melancholy. She proposes that there were two emotions involved in ennui: disgust and boredom

[2] Kessel's focus is strongly on gender and politics, and is essential reading for understanding the German Enlightenment.

(Johannisson 2012, 134, 139),[3] thus allowing for a temporary dimension to ennui as well.

This is not far removed from Reinhard Kuhn's position in his classic study of ennui in literature, the magisterial *The Demon of Noontide. Ennui in Western Literature* (1976). Again discussing Werther and his *Langeweile*, he argues that 'This boredom – *Langeweile* places the emphasis on the endless duration of time – is not contrasted with ennui as it is in Rousseau, but complements it to such an extent that it is difficult to distinguish the one from the other'. For Kuhn, ennui is 'inextricably linked with the notion of time and space' (1976, 5).[4] This, as we shall see below, is what the English sources in my study will argue as well; this association becomes perhaps even more emphasized when one leaves the 'high' literary sphere, since short term temporality then gains more space.

In my interpretation, this is in contrast to what Patricia Meyer Spacks argues in her *Boredom. The Literary History of a State of Mind*. She writes that 'Boredom was not (is not) the same as ennui, more closely related to *acedia*. Ennui implies a judgment of the universe; boredom, a response to the immediate' (1995, 12). While this may be or may have been true in the metaphysical sense – ennui implied a judgment, boredom not – I will suggest that eighteenth-century English ennui as a concept and lived experience included much more boredom than has often been thought. In other words, ennui had much more immediacy and held a stronger temporal element than has earlier been assumed.

Very usefully for the present purposes, in his *Boredom. A Lively History*, Peter Toohey divided boredom into two forms: simple boredom and existential boredom. Simple boredom included situational boredom – which can be brought on in a classroom or a meeting – and boredom of surfeit, which is brought on by excess and repetition (2011, 4-5, 12-13, 17). Toohey is interested in this simple boredom which, he points out, is usually considered not worth the effort of studying and is overlooked by scholars since it carries the 'stigma of childishness' (5-6). Kuhn, for example, considers this kind of boredom 'hardly worth serious study' since 'it is a temporary state dependent almost entirely on external circumstances' (1976, 5-6). While Kuhn dismisses simple boredom as an uninteresting subject of study, and focuses – like most scholars have done – on existential boredom, especially Toohey and Billy Ehn and Orvar Löfgren have paid attention to the less glamorous (simple) boredom of queuing, listening to boring sermons and so on. Even though Ehn and

[3] Because it is readily available to me, I am using the excellent Finnish translation of Johannisson's work, but it would be relatively easy to locate this discussion in the original Swedish version or in other translations.

[4] For Elizabeth Goodstein, too, boredom means the drawing out of time and an existential state (2005, 107).

Löfgren focus on present-day culture, the temporal definition of boredom is testable on, if not directly applicable to, past cultures as well, as they argue that 'when people have nothing to do, they "experience time as just that – time"', and when they are bored, 'time is then experienced as an oppressive void. This kind of time must be killed before it kills' (2010, 55-56). In this sense temporality, and ennui, can be deadly, and for the eighteenth-century people it was that in a very literal sense.

1.2 *On the Search Method Used*

Extensive database searches are key to reaching the many uses of ennui in eighteenth-century culture. I searched the staggering 33 million pages of text (more than 180,000 titles) from the eighteenth century available in Eighteenth Century Collections Online (ECCO)[5] for the keyword 'ennui'. Using the advanced search facility, I limited the search for 'ennui' by year, but allowed texts without a known publication year to be included, and by language (= English). Language limitation in the database is not perfect, and titles with other languages, especially many French and some Latin, are included (these are wrong hits). The French cases are problematic, as they are usually correct, but they are often rather remote from the English discussion. This, however, is not always the case, as will be seen with Molière. The French cases certainly cannot be completely dismissed, as these French books were mostly printed in London and were most probably intended for the English reader. Table 1 lists the total number of titles found.[6]

1700-1709	2
1710-1719	6
1720-1729	7
1730-1739	27
1740-1749	22
1750-1759	27
1760-1769	49
1770-1779	115
1780-1789	328
1790-1799	590

'Table 1 - Number of works containing ennui'

[5] This Gale database covers, as said, more than 33 million pages, and includes various sorts of publications (excluding newspapers). The OCR quality of the database is high, and wrong hits are relatively rare. I have used the database under the University of Turku licence.

[6] Numbers rechecked April 1, 2016.

While these numbers include some wrong hits and many reprints and double volumes, the numbers give a clear indication of the history of the term's usage in English. In the first decades, ennui is offered almost only in French books, grammars and dictionaries. To confirm that ennui was not used in English before the eighteenth century, I searched Early English Books Online (EEBO) for 'ennui', and found nothing in English usage, which further confirms that the term came in later.

The preliminary search result in the ECCO database is always a title, and one title of course can include several hits of the keyword. A preliminary perusal of the titles containing the word 'ennui' quickly revealed that until the 1780s 'ennui' was so rare (1700-1779; altogether 255 hits) that it was, in fact, possible to go through all the hits of 'ennui' from the database manually. In the 1780s and 1790s the titles were, however, so numerous (328 and 590 respectively), that checking all of them manually was no longer possible for the purposes of the present essay. Nonetheless, for the last two decades of the century I checked through most of the titles of fiction that I found, all the medical works, and most of those from other fields as well, omitting mostly only reprints, new editions and duplicates.

The increase in the number of titles mentioning 'ennui' cannot be explained only by the expansion of printing itself, or by the great number of reprints. The increase clearly confirms that use of the term 'ennui' was growing during the second half of the century. Therefore, the findings here can be considered more than mere guidelines, and I can confidently propose that 'ennui' was adopted into the usage of the English elite in the very middle of the eighteenth century, that for the next generation, in the 1770s, the term – and very likely the feelings attached to it – was already well known, and that by the third generation, in the 1790s, 'ennui' was already a familiar term. However, more sophisticated data mining, especially topic modelling and particularly into newspaper and journal material, will be needed, and will be welcomed, to make these findings even more nuanced.

2. *A New Timeline for Ennui*

In the last decade of the eighteenth century, John Bennett wrote some advice to young women in which he made visible the blurred lines between having too much time, feelings of ennui, and the moral difficulties that arose from trying to fill time in the wrong way:

> It is a great unhappiness to many ladies of fortune, that they have not sufficient employment to fill up their time; and in order to prevent that languor and ennui, which are the most unpleasant feelings of human life, either fall into a low state of spirits, or have recourse to play, public pleasures, or a perpetual round of visits, for their amusement. (1789, II, 11)

As we see, Bennett quite confidently uses the term 'ennui'. As the discussion above shows, I am able to suggest a new timeline for the term in English. By the time of his writing, in 1789, 'ennui' was a well-known term, but it had not been in use for as long as has been supposed. Patricia Spacks notes that 'ennui' came into English usage in the seventeenth century (1995, 14), but this is not the case. It was well into the eighteenth century before the term became naturalised. Early in the eighteenth century, however, the word ennui was certainly familiar to many who knew or studied French. In early- and mid-eighteenth century grammars and dictionaries, 'ennui' was typically translated as weariness (e.g. Malard 1716, 26; Durand 1746, 80; Chambaud 1750, 87; Elphinston 1756, 2), but uneasiness was also used (Buffier 1734, 5). Samuel Boyse translated 'ennui' as despairing (1738, 58). The word 'ennui' was also included in French grammars in guidelines for pronunciation, as an exception to the rule for pronouncing 'en', for example as 'En keeps its proper Sound when followed by another n; as, ennemi, prenne, &c. except' (Anonymous 1718, 15);[7] one could also find 'ennui' in Nathan Bailey's *Universal Etymological English Dictionary* (1721) as the origin of the word 'annoyance'.

For the reading elite, the word 'ennui' would perhaps first have been encountered in French literature. Molière's *Le Misanthrope* (first performance 1666) was, for example, available from local London printers from 1732.[8] This particular volume offered parallel texts, with the original French on the left-hand page and an English translation (by an anonymous translator) on the right. Here the fluent French reader would encounter the word 'ennui' on several occasions, but see it translated with a variety of words: 'uneasiness', 'tedious pain', 'pain', 'being ruffl'd' (1732, 20-21, 32-33, 108-109, 134-135). The fact that 'ennui' was not used once in the translation suggests the assumption that the word was not familiar to the English reader, and that it probably was not in spoken use in the early 1730s.

It seems to have taken some years more for the term to emerge in English usage. When it did so, sometime around the mid-century, it did so with such force that by 1754 'ennui' could be satirically considered by the bluestocking Sarah Scott to be a necessary condition of those with 'refined Sentiments and an elegant Mind' (1754, I, 55). In fact, the very first occasion on which I have found ennui being used in an English text in a naturalised way, without any mention of its French origin, is five years before Scott, that is, in 1749. The volume is Joseph Beaumont's *Original Poems in English and Latin*. It was printed in Cambridge 50 years after Beaumont's death in 1699 (and reprinted in 1799, again to mark the anniversary of his death). 'Ennui' is found in

[7] The same work also lists 'ennui' as an example of masculine nouns ending in -i (Anonymous 1718, 57).

[8] Based on material in EEBO and ECCO, checked 28 March 2016.

the preface, written by 'J.G.', the editor John Gee.[9] When describing what motivated Beaumont to write poetry after he was banished from Cambridge during the Revolution, he claimed it was to avoid the ennui of being without his books. Writing was an escape 'from that ennui and irksomeness of being, which in that long divorce from Books, could not but oppress his active and vigorous mind' (Beaumont 1749, xxiv). Gee seems to have considered this oppression to have been quite strong, as he chose as the first, opening poem one entitled, 'Reasonable Melancholy', and as the second, 'Death' (1-5).

3. *The Character of Ennui*

Lacking the term 'ennui' did not mean that the English lacked emotions related to ennui before the term itself came into use. Interestingly, Jean-Bernard Le Blanc wrote in his *Letters on the English and French Nations* that the English suffered greatly from ennui but that they did not have a word for it. He thought spleen, vapours and consumption would be ennui 'carried in its highest pitch', and that it would 'become a dangerous, and sometimes a mortal disease' (1747, I, 64-65). The synonyms given for the term in literature, or translations, also reveal that ennui was a concept easily understood by English speakers. In the case of Molière, as I said before, *ennui* was translated as 'uneasiness', 'tedious pain', 'pain', and 'being rufflʼd'.

Perhaps the most typical understanding and synonym for ennui was 'weariness', and very close to that was 'lassitude'. Going further in time, in the novel *Columella* (1779) the protagonist simply has too much time and feels ennui, which here is understood as lassitude:

> since my place has lost the force of novelty, and reading and other amusements are become indifferent, or rather insipid to me, I own that I find my time hang heavy upon my hands, and feel a consequent lassitude, or ennui as the French call it; and expect with impatience the state returns of the ordinary functions of life; and many a day do nothing but count the hours from breakfast to dinnertime, and from dinner to supper; not for the pleasure I take in eating or drinking (for I have no appetite) but merely for some little variety which those periods produce. (Graves 1779, 116-117)

Here, as the notion of reading and amusements having 'become indifferent' or 'insipid' and the loss of appetite reveal, ennui is partly existential in nature. Ennui is also clearly linked to the protagonist's having too much time to kill, and especially to days going slowly; the only variety there was in the day was waiting for time to pass from one meal to the next. It is nearly impossible

[9] Confirmation that J.G. is John Gee can be found in the *Dictionary of National Biography*: John Gosse: Joseph Beaumont, <https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Beaumont,_Joseph_%281616-1699%29_%28DNB00%29>, accessed 15 February 2017.

to read this without considering the state of ennui to be related to boredom: boredom and ennui were relatives, perhaps siblings.

Often ennui was boredom itself, an immediate, temporal feeling which hardly contained cognizance of life's darker mysteries. Of course, in comedy, one would recover from ennui very speedily: 'Yes, Doctor, I find myself greatly recovered from my yesterday's ennui' (Andrews 1781, 38). The comical in this case, dating from 1781, derives from the understanding that ennui was in principle somewhat deeper than a passing feeling, but it also reflects the fact that it was often nothing more than a moment of weariness, and hints at fashionable people's short-term thinking. This is instanced in Richard Watson's apology to Edward Gibbon: 'I am afraid, Sir, I have tired you with scripture quotations; but if I have been fortunate enough to convince you … I shall not be sorrey[10] for the *ennui* I may have occasioned you' (Watson 1776, 65-66). Watson realized that listening to a series of quotations might have been tedious and could have given rise to feelings of ennui, although he hoped it had not. Similar ennui could be caused by uninteresting people. This happened to Emma, the protagonist of a sentimental novel from 1773: 'O the Bore! I was dieing with ennui whenever he spoke! so talkative, there was no possibility of escaping the head-ach with him' (Anonymous 1773a, II, 203). Again, ennui presented itself in bodily terms, in a headache. In 1776, Laurence Sterne felt ennui in France due to

> the eternal platitude of the French characters – little variety, no originality in it at all – than to any other cause – [illegible] they are very civil – but civility itself, in that uniform, wearies and bodders one to death – If I do not mind, I shall grow most stupid and sententious … (1776, 78)

If we glance back, we quickly notice that from Graves' *Columella* to Sterne's ennui with the boring Frenchmen, the quotations above originated between 1773 and 1781. They all describe the same temporal dimension of ennui. This suggests that in the 1770s ennui was often understood as simple boredom (Toohey 2011, 17). This is in fact borne out by further contemporary evidence: the Bon Ton of the 1770s, the cream of society, were considered by their contemporaries to suffer from this. A song written in 1775 – which was, perhaps not altogether coincidentally, the same year as David Garrick's play *Bon Ton, or High Life About Stairs* was first performed at the Theatre Royal – suggested humorously that 'drowsy ennui' was a modish infirmity of the fashionable set of the 1770s (Anonymous 1775, 4). Further, in 1778, *The Theatrical Bouquet* combined 'weak nerves, bon-ton, ennui and foreign graces' (Anonymous 1778, 10). Ennui was entirely fashionable, but being a quality of the Bon Ton, it was something that could be mocked as well.

[10] I have retained the original spelling throughout.

After this, ennui stayed in fashion, but it did not lose its temporal dimension. Gregory Griffin's 1787 description of the sufferings of genteel society from boredom and their difficulties in finding a not-so-boring location in which to spend their idle hours is extremely interesting:

Dear Greg, Your Mic. [microcosmos] is dead Lounge, – dissipates insufferable Ennui of tea table, – fills boring intervals of Conversazione, – Exquisite substitute for switch, – and in short quite the Ton: – By the by, in your next propose some new Lounge – they are all so dingle at present, they are quite a Bore. – Lud, how much I have written. – You charming creature, hint at some new Lounge. Your's, Narcissus. (25)[11]

And in 1792, Robert Bage's novel, *Man as he is*, described a situation in which Mr. Bardoe was clearly bored, suffering from time-related ennui. He had arrived at an inn, and had to suffer a long wait for his meal:

All the inn was quickly engaged in the service of the honourable Mr. Bardoe, whose major domo ordered a supper, which for plenty and variety might have served the Duke of Tuscany at least. In the three hours taken in preparing it, his honour had walked a little in his apartment, lounged a little upon his sofa, looked a little in the mirrors, read a little in each of half a score travelling classics, and at length was taken with a little fit of ennui, which he thought very impertinent and provoking. (III, 265)

'A little fit of ennui', 'impertinent and provoking' sound similar to the ennui suffered by the earlier generation, the Bon Ton of the 1770s, and suggests that the nature of ennui did not completely change. Ennui rather received new audiences; boredom continued to plague the 'jet set' of the time.

By the end of the century, if not earlier, ennui had begun to receive the attention of medical writers. It was even recognized as a form of mental derangement. We can find this in Sir Alexander Crichton's *An inquiry into the nature and origin of Mental Derangement*, published in 1798. For him, ennui was 'irksomeness of mind' but interesting to us is the fact that ennui holds a temporal aspect here as well. In fact, ennui was *caused* by the very slowness of the passing of time:

The slowness hinted at is necessarily relative to the nature of the ideas. New ideas please much better when they succeed each other with a certain degree of slowness, than when quickly presented to the mind; but when a person is confined to the house, and is deprived of society, and has no opportunity of seeing a succession of new objects, and is not under the influence of any desire, or passion, which can give

[11] 'Narcissus' as the signee tempts one to make a detour to the interesting discussion of the somatisation of feelings in the culture of sensibility developed in the chapter, 'Ennui and Narcissism', in Stolberg 2011, 191-195, as Griffin's Narcissus very much seems to dwell in emotional perturbation.

rise to a flow of thoughts, he necessarily falls into this distressing state, from the too slow succession of old or accustomed thoughts. (1798, I, 321-322)

For Crichton, this slowness could lead to a chain of misery and torture, even delirium. Ennui presented itself along with restlessness and weariness, and took over the whole body of the sufferer, who 'yawns frequently, his senses become dull, his attention unsettled, and he at last falls asleep'. In the young and active, ennui if prolonged (another aspect of time), could present itself in startling activity:

I have seen a person in company after suffering impatiently these kind of tortures for a long time, at last totally forgetting where he was, suddenly start from his chair like a frantic person, walk about the room for a minute or two with a quick pace, panting for breath, as if he had not breathed freely for some hours before, until the expressions and astonishment of the people around him awakened him from his delirium, and brought him a proper sense of the indecorum he had been guilty of. (I, 323)[12]

This is fascinating. Crichton's description shows that ennui was not only listlessness, but could take the form of action which, being irrational, suggested madness. Even though space does not allow us here to go into nineteenth-century expressions of ennui, it should be noted that the eighteenth-century understanding of ennui gives a sound basis for reading the madness of ennui of the following century, the Romantic boredom of Byron and his companions, or Maria Edgeworth's much studied novel, *Ennui* (1809),[13] in which aristocratic ennui takes forms that bring on disease, including hypochondriasis, and can lead to moral or spiritual crisis, even the possibility of suicide.

4. *The Genesis and Prophylaxis of Ennui*

To understand ennui, it is useful to take a look at the birth of ennui, its causes and its origins in humans, and to reflect on the role of time in all this. The countryside seems to be the place to begin, as it was the birthplace of ennui for many people. For the socially privileged, the countryside stood in many ways in stark contrast to the town, especially to London, even though many of what were perceived to be the good and beneficial elements of country life, such as walking, were deliberately introduced into city life as well, and

[12] This exploding ennui can be seen as a reaction to the rigid rules of the culture of sensibility. See, again, Stolberg 2011, 191.

[13] On ennui in Edgeworth, see for example Woodworth 2011, chap. five. Interestingly, Hollingworth (1997) reads Edgeworth's novel as a metaphor of Irish politics.

the difference between the two was not always as clear-cut as it at first seems to be (Kaartinen, forthcoming). What the country especially lacked was the endless round of entertainment that the city offered night after night during the season. For many the country, like the city, did indeed offer an active round of visits, but it was recognized that even the 'constant round of pleasure, perpetual engagements, is not able to secure' one from ennui (Anonymous 1767, I, 8). Even though summer in the country was for many people a delightful change from the city, even a welcome season of rest, some novels of the time presented the countryside as a place of ennui, even to such an extent that it could be fatal.

In the novel *Edward*, the countryside itself was the culprit, the cause of ennui: 'you are reduced to seek amusement in the dull scenes of rural life – which fills you with spleen and ennui' (Anonymous 1774, I, 2). Remoteness was the danger: 'in a remote province, where one is in danger of dying of ennui' (Mackenzie 1777, 34). In other descriptions the country could be tolerable, given proper company: in a novel by Frances Brooke, a Lady Anne 'declares she can no longer support the country without [Mr. Mandeville] but shall die with chagrin and ennui' (1763, II, 67). What was most dramatically lacking in the country, and, as is shown in the following, what could be fatal, was the lack of amusement. In the novel *The Relapse* (1780), Clara refuses marriage, and cannot think of living in the country, as she would die of ennui there. The expanded dashes in the following quotation emphasize the horror:

> The Country! ––––––– Horrid! ––––– Sauntering, dozing over a book, yawning at what is called the conversation of the rustics of our neighbourhood, or yawning by ourselves, for want of something to say; each day repeating over and over the same dull scene we trod before:– mere vegetation! I should die in a twelve-month, of downright ennui'. (Anonymous 1780, I, 62-63)

The vegetative nature of country life was also the cause of the ennui of the lovely Maria in a popular collection, *The Weekly Entertainer*. A mean spinster aunt, jealous of the beauty of Maria, who was 'formed to shine in courts', denied her this possibility. Instead, she 'condemned this flower to droop unseen, and wither in the shade'. This was the 'dull scene of vegetative existence', to combat which Maria's only resource was books (For Monday Dec 8 1783: Anonymous 1783, 539), an aspect to which we will return later. The countryside as the scene of a merely vegetative existence is an extremely strong metaphor and one that appears in late eighteenth-century literature so many times that it very likely reflects the term's use in real life: life in the country was so dull that many saw it as nothing but a vegetative existence (Parson 1799, I, 18).

The countryside was at least similarly, if not even more traumatically, in Mrs Thomson's novel, *Excessive Sensibility*, in which a fashionable lady with terrible memories of the country could not understand why she 'should suffer

[her] elegant figure to be carried down to the family mansion-house, just like a new piece of furniture', and while the house itself was 'well enough', there were – the key to the definite superiority of London in the pursuit of avoiding ennui – 'no Operas, no Ranelaghs, no Routs, and, to sum up all, there are not pretty fellows, to put one in a good humour with one's self' (1787, 47). It could not be helped, and in August at Haddington Hall she was 'devoured with Ennui', and complained that

> I can't think what people of fashion do with country houses, unless it be to make nursery: or to confine a daughter in it. – My mother kept me confined in an old antiquate castle, until she got a second husband; – It pleased heaven to release me; but even the name of the country has given me the spleen ever since'. (45-47)

As we see, popular novels considered, there was a link between ennui and the country, and they suggest that the quiet social life and especially the lack of entertainment would make the time excessively long, and thus cause ennui.

However, to be fair, as Fanny Burney notes in her *Evelina*, it was not entertainment that one needed, but it was the company one had when entertaining oneself that really mattered. One could therefore feel ennui even in the amusements at Ranelagh: 'Those whose – whose connections, and so forth, are not among les gens comme il faut, can feel nothing but ennui at such a place as Ranelagh' (1779, I, 193). The importance of company, of good, suitable society, comes out very strongly in these passages. The country was dull especially because company was limited and what there was lacking in quality: 'Heavens! I expire with ennui: thirty miles from the metropolis and not a pretty fellow to dissipate the melancholy reflection' (Anonymous, A Lady, 1774, 28), or 'How long she would have borne patiently, and without *ennui*, the society of three persons, who seemed to be no more animated with what animated her, than the ancestors in effigy were, I cannot possibly guess …' (Craven 1779, 15) – hinting further that it was precisely country society that was dull and boring. Yet we must remember that dull company was not something one ran the risk of encountering only in the countryside; Steele suffered from ennui in France because of the 'eternal platitude' of the company (Sterne 1776, 78). On the other hand, a city, even a melancholy one like Rome, did not lead to ennui because it had much to offer in terms of fine arts and antiquities (Miller 1777, II, 222).

In the most dramatic cases, where a protagonist was being kept a prisoner, the countryside could lead to the vegetative existence mentioned in the two quotations above, which hint at true loneliness. However, being alone in literal terms was rarely a significant problem for the upper classes in the eighteenth-century – especially for women in fiction, as has been clearly presented above. Friendship was a great preservative against ennui: 'When dissipation fatigues, [fine ladies] fly to [friendship] as a resource from ennui' (Anonymous, A Lady, 1774, 143), and Lady Mary Walker advised that 'the

business of a family is the most profitable and honourable study a woman can employ herself in: this employing a great part of her time, will prevent her feeling that ennui attending fine ladies, and she will have no time for complaint' (1776, 206).

If one wanted to prevent ennui, then, one had to seek pleasure and good company, stay active, and take both mental and physical exercise. John Bennett suggested religious exercises instead of public pleasures and 'a perpetual round of visits' for young ladies to avoid ennui (1789; II, 11).[14] As in the case of the beautiful Maria above, and others, books were a typical, simple and recurring remedy against ennui (Stanhope 1774, 109; Griffith 1782, 63; Anonymous 1783, 539; 109; Hervey 1788, 183; Moore 1790, 212). This discussion of the benefits of reading, especially to women, and especially of reading novels, is interesting.

In the avoidance of ennui, the cultivation of letters and the study of science and other fields had a strong moral connotation (Karppinen-Kummunmäki 2015, 195-218). This can be seen in advice literature for women, for example in Hannah More who, writing on dissipation, pointed out that serious interests would prevent 'a strong passion for promiscuous visiting' and other less favourable pastimes, including gambling, and were particularly useful because study 'induces a relish for domestic life, the most desirable temper in the world for women'. For her, study was poignantly 'a relief against that mental disease, which the French emphatically call ennui'. For Bennett, study was, at its best, if pursued through suitable reading, 'an act of religion' (1789, II, 23-24). Unsurprisingly, study and avoidance of 'that monster' ennui were urged in connection with the promotion of education for both young men and young women – importantly, education would help women to enjoy time instead of trying to kill it:

> were women early taught to reason and reflect, they soon would direct their feelings aright – they would be virtuous from reflected principles, not from policy: and a less frivolous education would enable them to find resources at home, really to enjoy time, in place of that monster Ennui driving them into folly, riot, and dissipation, to kill it at the expence of peace, honour, and reputation. (Anonymous [Lady Wallace] 1787, 15)

In addition to reading, music and the study of nature were good remedies (Griffith 1782, 63; Bute 1785?, 4; Moore 1790, 212), and medical authors prescribed moderate physical exercise (Rymer 1785, 26; Adair 1799, 69-71). Ironically, so was playing at cards, which not only killed time but saved one

[14] James Boswell noted that 'Belief is favourable to the human mind, were it for nothing else but to furnish it entertainment. An infidel I should think, must frequently suffer from ennui' (1768, 252).

from the dullness of the conversation of any awkward company: 'when People of a certain turn are got together, they shou'd prefer doing any thing to the ennui of their own conversation' (Berkeley 1755, 74-75). Edward Topham recommended pleasure, 'the darling object of the mind, the dispeller of care, melancholy, and that ennui, which makes life itself so burdensome, was somehow or other to be obtained' (1776, 247). We get a hint what this pleasure could be in *The Modern Couple*. Here it included conversation, which in this case was beneficial, visits and walking, dressing, meals, and writing letters (for which there would be hardly any time if days were properly filled with activities; Anonymous 1776, 57). Very similar advice is given in *Hadleigh Grove*, where ennui was prevented by a whole series of delightful things to do: reading books, making music, walking, drawing, and meals; and then 'Our hours glided on the soft downy pinions of delight; not a moment was there allowed for lassitude or ennui. Our time was continually employed either in something useful, or something instructive, at the same time that it was entertaining' (Anonymous 1773b, 39-40).

5. *The Temporal Moralities of Ennui*

As we have seen, if one used his or her time well and properly, one would not be plagued by ennui. At times a person who suffered from ennui could be driven to killing time in unprofitable ways, and was then considered morally weak. It was especially serious when ennui might lead to immorality, for example in connection with marriage or its failure, and ultimately to suicide.

Ennui was a danger to marriage, and thoughtless, senseless behaviour would lead to ennui. Marital infidelity could come about because of ennui, boredom:

> An eternal round of sameness and insipidity disgusts them; and, as a refuge from ennui, they form a connection with one in nearly the same insipid line. The intrigue keeps attention alive, and the parties, having a sort of business on their hands, drive on at an extraordinary rate, till, by growing too bold, they cannot escape destruction. (Anonymous 1782?, 27-28; see also Hayley 1783, 137-138)

To illustrate this moral side of ennui, I will next take a look at two short novels which were written for educational and morally elevating purposes. Both stories were very likely written in the 1760s. The first of them is fictitious, but its anonymous author[15] says that everyone knows that the stories in it are true. The novel is a collection of falling-into-sin-biographies of former prostitutes, now 'penitents in the Magdalen-House'. For our purposes it can be assumed at least that the stories of the fallen women rang true to their readers.

[15] Sarah Fielding is a very likely author of this text.

The anonymous author of *The Histories* (1760) carefully introduced a moral into each of the 'autobiographies' of the fallen women in her novel. The moral in each case had very much to do with time – time had to be well spent:

> Novels should be wrote and read as books which are to teach by illustrating the moral by the facts, where precept is enlivened by examples, and imagination brought in to strengthen reason, not to confound it. If the writer loses sight of this design, still the reader may, if he pleases, keep it always in view; tho' such novels as require much effort in the mind to discover a good moral in them are certainly very pernicious; for works of imagination are fit only for the entertainment of an idle hour; when we should do by the reader, as indulgent parents act by their children, teach them in play, and blend instruction so closely with amusement, that the design shall be scarcely perceivable to the mind in that childish state of inactivity. (Anonymous 1760, I, xxii-xiii)

In the story of a wealthy merchant's daughter, the declines stems from the fact that she has fallen in love with a poor man but at the age of fifteen or so is forced to marry an old man of fifty, to her an utterly disgusting brute called Mr Merton. She eventually forgets her vow of fidelity, reasoning to herself that love must be a higher force than marriage vows, and begins an affair with her true love, Captain Turnham. Mrs Merton is caught, imprisoned by her husband, saved by Captain Turnham, and they run away. Time passes. The lovers live separately but she gives birth to a son, and then suddenly Mr Merton finds her and kidnaps her when she is on her way back home from her lover. She is taken to Mr Merton's dreary estate in the country and imprisoned there. She is upset because her baby has been left in London. She manages to escape from this prison too and, returning to London, gets in touch with Captain Turnham, finds her baby well, and they resume their blissful way of life. Mr Merton gets a divorce, the couple move to Scotland, where they present themselves as a married couple, and they have two more sons, but gradually the situation changes. Captain Turnham is overwhelmed by ennui. The couple see each other too much, and especially he grows bored with her: 'But when, by being seen every hour, our follies and our frailties become conspicuous, the love which was founded on a supposition we were free from them [the frailties], must decay' (Anonymous 1760, 224-225). Mrs Merton's interpretation of their situation seems to be linked to their living without regard to social conventions, being outsiders and therefore alone. She explains what happens:

> Of this I was very sensible; but yet I could not avoid being greatly affected, when I saw Captain Turnham's fondness abate. I was always at work; his vivacity could not for ever be proof against a dismal situation, and a total want of company. Conversation would flag, and even playing with his children would often become tedious. Ennui, that great destroyer of the happiness of those who have no misfortunes to distress

them, reached even our solitude, and oppressed Captain Turnham's spirits. I had no particular reason to complain; for he grew as weary of every thing about him, as of me. (225)

Ennui is the moral culmination point of the story, although what finally destroys Mrs Merton is brought on by Turnham's death while they are stationed in Gibraltar, where everyone knows their situation and where they are therefore completely isolated from decent society. When Turnham dies of a fever, she is left desolate, penniless, and with children, far away from Britain. In the end she has no other way out of the tangled web she is in but to become a prostitute.

The second moral biography is 'The Miseries of Idleness and Affluence', attributed in a collection to Dr Smollett. This story of Pichromacus[16] is a moral tale in which too much wealth destroys a loving, this time married, couple's happiness. Pichromacus and his future wife fall in love but they marry against the will of her father, who then refuses to give her any support. Pichromacus himself is an army officer on half-pay, the second son of a wealthy country gentleman, whose only inheritance was a decent education and his position in the army. After marrying, the couple lived on his income and the interest on a small inheritance she had from her aunt. They bought a house with some land in the country, and rented a large farm. Even though they were not blessed with children, he says, their life was bliss: 'The labours of the field, the little domestic cares of the barn-yard, the poultry-yard, and the dairy, were productive of such delights as none of your readers will conceive, except those who are enamoured of a country life' (Smollett 1772, 104).[17] This bliss was destroyed and complete devastation of their happy lives followed. Within the period of a few weeks, the husband's nephew, who had received a large inheritance from his father, died of smallpox, and the wife's only brother died in an accident, and they inherited a fortune. Suddenly, they were unbelievably wealthy, and began to live the life of the rich and idle: 'we quitted our romantic solitude, and rushed into all the pageantry of high life ... we became enamoured of tinsel liveries, equipage, and all the frippery of fashion' (104).

Because of this moral decay, ennui follows, and the couple come to hate each other: 'we find ourselves in a state of mutual disgust; and all the enjoyements of life we either taste with indifference, or reject with loathing' (106). He suffers from ennui:

[16] It seems very likely that the name, Pichromacus, of the tale is derived from the Greek pikrós (bitter) and machós (fighter), reflecting the protagonist's state at the time of telling the story, when he was suffering from ennui.

[17] The story was published before this collection but unfortunately I have not been able to locate the first printing, nor have I found this text used by other scholars. The identity of the author as Smollett therefore rests solely on this publication's Table of Contents, which attributes this text to him.

a confirmed imbecility of mind, and a want of relish, attended with a thousand uneasinesses, which render life almost insupportable. I sleep without refreshment; I am fatigued without labour; I am scarce risen when I wish the day was done; and when night comes, I long for morning: I eat without appetite, drink without exhilaration; exercise affords no spirits, conversation no amusement, reading no entertainment, and diversion no pleasure. (106)

His wife has ceased to be an object of love: 'even she that was once the delight of my eyes, and the joy of my heart, is now become the subject of perpetual disquiet' (107).

As we see, ennui could have devastating effects on a marriage, but of all the moral dangers of ennui, the gravest was suicide. Perhaps especially in the aftermath of Werther, ennui tempted its prey to suicide;[18] when ennui, the 'leaden mountain' (Burroughs 1798, 131) became overwhelming, there was the fear of suicide. So serious was ennui considered to be that, as Robert John Thornton put it in 1797 in his *Medical Extracts*, 'men often make the cruel choice, and seek death as a welcome release from that insupportable ennui which thus overpowers them' (879). Crichton pointed out that 'this tormenter of human happiness', ennui,

often occasions a degree of inquietude which is productive of the most alarming and fatal consequences; for the desire of relief becomes, in some cases, so great as totally to destroy all judgment, and consequently hurries the person on to the most criminal violence against nature. It is in this way that ennui, like melancholy, may terminate in suicide. (1798, 322)

Thus, ennui could be fatal not only for the body but also for the soul.

6. *Gender and Class*

In her *Melancholy Rooms*, Karin Johannisson points to the maleness of ennui. This is perhaps partly due to the nineteenth-century focus of her discussion. For her, ennui becomes flesh in the characters of the dandy and the flâneur. She suggests that 'ennui is an emotion of the young, the elite, and of men' (2012, 138). As many of the examples discussed above show, perhaps surprisingly, in eighteenth-century English usage ennui was not clearly gendered. Having said that, it must be admitted we are on very uncertain ground here. This is very much a genre-sensitive question: it is possible that ennui as an existential problem was a slightly more male feature, because it is manifest in male genres. Whether this is a sign of gendering or an issue of genres cannot at

[18] This is perhaps visible in Craven 1779, Dedication.

this point be stated conclusively; for example, in scientific treatises the generic 'man' may also have referred to women. This is a point which demands more comprehensive research, and cannot be solved here.

In the above discussion, we have seen both men and women suffering from ennui. The evidence points to a certain equality of the sexes in this respect. With married couples, both the husband and the wife were at risk of infidelity as a result of ennui, and in the educational advice literature ennui was present in the lives of both boys and girls. This apparent equality was probably related to the fact that ennui arose from life's temporal dimension, that everyone's life was affected by time. Choosing different sources and genres would have an effect on the gendering of ennui: after reading only advice books for young women, ennui would look like an overwhelmingly female issue, and after reading some volumes of French philosophy, ennui would become rather an existential question for the male. A brief look across genres, and one that calls for further (especially genre-comparative) study, shows that in eighteenth-century English usage ennui was not gendered, and not even bores were gendered: both men and women could be boring company. Both sexes were advised against ennui and members of both sexes were accused of being boring.

As we saw above, Pichromacus' bitter ennui was born out of wealth, fulfilment and surfeit. Even though an extreme, and fictitious, case, Pichromacus' tale is essentially a tale of ennui: a tale of riches, boredom, and losing interest. When all the senses are satisfied a thousand times, nothing makes a difference, but even in that existentialist issue, there was a slight thought of temporality in this suffering too:

> A full gratification of the sense would constitute a perfect satisfaction of the mind. But in such a state as this, when every passion is indulged, and every wish, the senses can suggest, gratified, the mind is as far as ever from enjoying a plenary satisfaction: it palls and sickens under an undescribable languor; which the Latins called the *taedium vitae*; and the French term ennui; and for which our language, though we are not strangers to such kind of sensation, does not afford a name. (Shepherd 1779, 80)

Ennui was therefore heavily dependent on social rank: it was an ailment of the rich who let themselves be idle and bored, who had too much time on their hands. Clearly, when Pichromacus had to live frugally, albeit not living in utter poverty, he was happy and felt strong, and when he gained an enormous fortune he lost everything important. Too much wealth was a danger, but this only meant that those with fortunes had to employ themselves in suitable ways, not that their wealth in itself would destroy them.

The vast majority of sources across genres seem to suggest that ennui was an ailment only of the upper levels of society. The Earl of Bute is the only source I found that suggests a less class-oriented definition of the ailment:

short as our existence is, how many find the day too long, how many tedious hours are past in absolute idleness, where even thought is banished: nor does this prevail in solitude only, nor is it peculiar to any age, rank or sex; we meet with it in the greatest cities, as well as in the desert … (Stuart 1785?, 1)

Interestingly, there is evidence to suggest that a laborer could *not* suffer from it, as they simply did not have time for that kind of existential problem: René Girardin's *An essay on landscape* described the countryside:

Farther on, in another inclosure, the husbandman drives his plough; whilst he sings, the youngest of his children play around him, and the eldest, who are able to work, hoe up the weeds in the fields that are already sown. – Labour prevents the disorder of the passions in youth; it gives health and strength, and prolongs the days of old age: and at night one may at least say, that these good people have escaped that ennui which is but too often the lot and the torment of the rich and great. (1783, 62)

While sympathizing with the hard toil of the country peasant, Girardin points out the advantage that he is after all saved from the dangers from which the rich and great suffer. This is seconded by Lord Monboddo:

But there is another thing as necessary as money for the enjoyment of leisure; and that is to know how to employ it. If he does not know that, he falls into a sore disease, which the French call ennui, and which, as it is a lasting and lingering disease, makes a man, I believe, more miserable than perhaps any other; for it is a disease of our mind or better part. It is the source of almost every vice and folly; for a man, who does not know what else to do, will do any thing rather than do nothing; and I maintain, that the richest man, who is haunted by this foul fiend, as it may be called, is a much more unhappy man than the day labourer who earns his daily bread by the sweat of his brow, and who, therefore, only submits to the sentence pronounced upon our first parents after their fall, and which, if it be understood, as I think it ought to be, of the labour of the mind as well as of the body, we must all submit to, or be miserable if we do not. And, accordingly, those, who can find nothing to do, endeavour to fly from themselves; and many of them fly from their country, and go abroad, for no other reason. (Burnett 1779, 92)

Ennui was the plague not only of the aristocracy but of the elite in general; it was considered to be 'a thing not unusual in the brightest circles' (Anonymous 1769, I, 150; see also Goodstein 2005, 110).

7. *Conclusions*

The Earl of Bute interpreted ennui in very temporal terms: for him, ennui haunted those 'whose hours hang heavy on their hands' (Stuart 1785?, 1). He believed ennui to be born in idleness and empty hours, and it is very interesting that for him ennui did not discriminate between male and female or, as we saw above, between ranks. A look at many genres and a multitude of

sources has shown that in eighteenth-century English usage, ennui was a fluid concept which was interpreted and used in various ways. This is a remarkable finding. Perhaps because the English language did not have a term similar to *Langeweile,*[19] the term 'ennui' bent to the use of those who wanted to express the temporality of their suffering, the moments of boredom. These were due to repetition and sameness, which then created frustration and plain dullness. Country life showed that dullness could lead to ennui both in company, in the endless repetitive rounds of social life and, of course, if one was left without company. The literature studied here very strongly suggests that in the eighteenth-century ennui was a synonym for boredom, both simple and existential boredom, with the emphasis on the latter.[20]

The vast majority of the texts mentioning ennui did not gender ennui strongly; it was generally understood as an ailment of the elite of either sex, generated by their way of life, if they were not careful. Too much time on one's hands led to ennui, and could in the worst cases lead to complete destruction. Importantly, English ennui was not only existential, which has less to do with temporality, as it included much of what we would call boredom: a terrible weariness, lassitude, frustration even. In this meaning it comes up in humorous contexts too, to make fun of the nervous, restless elite. In this sense it was very temporal. This is why Kuhn's definition of ennui as 'independent of any external circumstances' (1976, 12) rings very foreign to eighteenth-century uses of the term. As we saw, it was feared that the existential crisis of ennui would lead to suicide. That being the case, we can agree with Kuhn that

> we can tentatively define ennui as the state of emptiness that the soul feels when it is deprived of interest in action, life, and the world (be it this world or another), a condition that is the immediate consequence of the encounter with nothingness, and has as an immediate effect a disaffection with reality. (13)

But it was more than that: it was an immediate reaction to time dragging.

The eighteenth-century history of ennui is multifaceted, and shows that the term was used then in many different ways and with a number of meanings. People in the eighteenth century were keen to make the term their own, even at the risk of suggesting foreign ways and inclinations. They were extremely sensitive to time and its passing, and to the tedious moments when it did not pass quickly enough and one was desperate to find ways of killing time. They also recognized that if they failed in that, time could kill.

[19] Or Finnish, which is rather inventive in its expressions for 'the time becoming long', with for example 'aikatuleepitkäksi' or 'pitkästyä'.

[20] Contemporary correspondence confirms this finding. I am indebted for this observation to Henna Karppinen-Kummunmäki, who kindly looked at her collection of eighteenth-century correspondences and diaries for 'ennui'.

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(Re)thinking Time: Giordano Bruno and Michel de Montaigne

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Abstract

The article seeks to illustrate how the theme of time may be a worthwhile starting point towards uncovering useful connections between the philosophy of Giordano Bruno and that of Michel de Montaigne. Firstly, a brief literature review will assess the admittedly small but promising criticism that has previously attempted to bring the two writers together. Subsequently, the article argues that time is a meaningful way to approach their texts. Specifically, time refers to the drama that arises between the material body, which generally exists within a so-called natural order of time, and the mind which is not tied to the present moment, and is free to contemplate both past and future time. The article argues that Bruno and Montaigne's understanding of time in this manner leads them to question traditional representations of time, such as the common fear of death, in remarkably similar ways. This process will be illustrated through examples drawn from two chapters of the *Essais* and a dialogue from the *Eroici furori,* and will conclude by assessing the straightforward connections that have arisen between the two authors, as well as scope for further research in this area.

Keywords: Giordano Bruno, Michel de Montaigne, Sixteenth Century, Time

1. *Introduction*

In recent years, a small number of critics have attempted to establish significant biographical and intellectual connections between Giordano Bruno and Michel de Montaigne. Both writers do indeed appear to be obvious candidates for comparison with one another. Bruno, born in Nola (near Naples) in 1548, spent around two years (1579-1581) studying in Toulouse, the birthplace of Montaigne's mother and a city the Frenchman was well acquainted with.[1]

[1] 'Between September 1579 and the summer of 1581, Bruno lived in Toulouse, a city well-known to Montaigne' (Bayod 2004a, 11-12). Any English translations are my own except the translations of Montaigne's *Essais* and Bruno's *De gli eroici furori*, which are by

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The two men were also both resident in Paris in 1582, where Bruno was staying at the same time Montaigne, then mayor of Bordeaux, arrived at court regarding diplomatic matters related to his office (Frame 1994, 248). Much has also been made of the link with John Florio, an Italian-English scholar and good friend of Bruno, who incidentally produced the first translation of Montaigne's *Essais* into English in 1603.[2] Florio has been identified as a potentially significant link between the two writers, due to his admiration for Bruno's thoughts on translation, and his subsequent discussion of this in the preface to his translation of Montaigne (Pellegrini 1943, 193). Considering all of these possible points of connection, it seems likely that at least one major study would already have been published with the aim of establishing further crossover in their works.[3] However, no such large-scale study exists to date. One possible explanation for this hesitation may be the relative complexity that arises from attempting to compare two thinkers with such a unique approach to genre, together with the impressive range of their literary output. Bruno's so-called 'Italian Dialogues' (1584-1585), a series of six texts written in rapid succession in London, are a good example of the thematic and stylistic scope that Bruno experimented with; here he attempts a philosophical project that encompasses detailed discussion of cosmology, natural philosophy, ethics and more.[4] These works are unlike most other sixteenth-century texts, since they are rooted in Bruno's most radical theory on the infinite universe. Furthermore, Bruno experiments with the traditional philosophical dialogue, often including elements of satire and comedy in his work. The *Essais* are altogether different in genre. This series of so-called *essais* or 'attempts' comprises three books which cover a wealth of topics from

M.A. Screech and P.E. Memmo respectively (Montaigne 1991 and Bruno 1964 in *Works Cited*).

[2] Further discussion on the Florio connection may be found in Yates 1934, 89. Some critics have even discussed a link between Montaigne, Bruno and Shakespeare (who may have read at least some parts of Florio's translation of the *Essais*), although this connection is tenuous: 'Beyersdorff concludes that he [Shakespeare] is more likely to have been influenced by other literary works such as Montaigne's *Essays* (1580, Florio's English translation, 1603) or Lyly's *Anatomy of Wit* than by a philosopher like Bruno. He points out that it is doubtful if Shakespeare ever met Bruno, and that anyway they moved in different and at times rival circles, Bruno being linked to Sidney as a patron and Shakespeare to Southampton' (Gatti 1989, 173).

[3] 'And, during his stay in London, between the spring of 1583 and October 1585, he lived in the residence of the French ambassador Michel de Castelnau, who was known as a *politique,* with views not too dissimilar to Montaigne regarding the political and religious conflicts in France at that time …' (Bayod 2004a, 12).

[4] In the word of N. Ordine, 'It is here that Bruno begins to outline a complete trajectory from the philosophy of nature (*Cena*, *De la causa* and *Infinito*), passing through moral philosophy (*Spaccio* and *Cabala*), and arriving at contemplative philosophy (*Furori*)'. 2002, 13.

child-rearing to suicide. In each chapter, Montaigne attempts to pin down the flow of his thoughts as they enter his mind and express them through writing.[5] The word *essai* alone was unheard of in the French language of the sixteenth century; *l'essai* represented a completely new literary genre altogether (Magnien & Magnien-Simonin 2007, xiv). Clearly Bruno and Montaigne engaged with philosophy in very different ways, perhaps helping to explain why no major works have appeared that directly compare the two thinkers.

Despite these difficulties, the concept of time may well be able to highlight similarities within their philosophical projects. At the heart of these projects is arguably a desire to challenge preconceived knowledge about the world. During the sixteenth century, Western Europe was experiencing radical upheaval. Columbus' discovery of America dramatically questioned what European society thought it knew about the world. A whole new continent of people had been encountered, with cultures very different from those of its European invaders. Montaigne was fascinated with *les barbares*, and some of his most well-known chapters, 'Des Cannibales' (I, xxx) and 'Des Coches' (III, vi) deal with the 'otherness' of these tribal people and their exotic rituals. In fact, Montaigne doubted whether these supposed *sauvages* were really that different from Europeans at all.[6] Bruno was also attracted to the unfamiliar nature of this new world. Yet in the *Cena de le ceneri* (1584) he considers it a place not of savagery, but of innocence. In a striking critique of Columbus' treatment of the Native Americans, he sarcastically compares the explorer and his troops to the glorious myth of the Argonauts. Except that 'they have found a way to disturb peace elsewhere, to violate the native people of those regions'.[7] The New World is 'other', but it is an otherness which has been desecrated by the savagery of Europeans. Both thinkers began to question the assumed authority of European society, and whether the supposedly 'different' nature of this new civilisation was good, bad, or really that different at all.

Moreover, new ways of counting time were being introduced in the sixteenth century. The Gregorian calendar appeared in 1582, just as Montaigne was writing the *Essais,* and only a couple of years before Bruno began work on his 'Italian Dialogues'. Although it has now been in use for centuries, at the time of its inception the Gregorian calendar was another huge change to sixteenth-century society. Moreover, it was not a very welcome change. The

[5] In the words of Magnien and Magnien-Simonin: 'It is a matter of containing shapeless thoughts, in order to conserve and then observe them; fleeting in their uncontrolled movements, in short they are the flux of the interior monologue that Montaigne will label fantasies, imaginings or thoughts' (2007, xii).

[6] Montaigne's 'De la Coustume' (I, XXIII) is a good example of his ability to reflect so-called difference back onto his readership; he blames custom for blinding people to the strangeness of their own societal rituals.

[7] '[Loro] han ritrovato il modo di perturbar la pace altrui, violar i patrii genii de le reggioni' (Bruno 2002, I, 452).

new calendar was widely disliked, since it represented an upheaval of centuries-old custom concerning the counting of time.[8] In 'De mesnager sa volonté' (III, X), Montaigne confesses his trouble adjusting to the new calendar: 'The recent suppression of ten days by the Pope has brought me so low that I really cannot wear it' (1991, 1143).[9] As with the New World, the Gregorian calendar arguably symbolised another change to traditional perspectives on the world. In light of such developments, I believe that Montaigne and Bruno responded by using their writing to further destabilise customary ways of viewing the world. In particular, this article seeks to make some preliminary connections between Montaigne and Bruno through their active engagement with time, examining their portrayal of the difference between body-in-time and mind in (and out of) time. Embracing the spirit of change that was engulfing the sixteenth century, both men exhibit a freedom to rethink traditional conceptions of time, even inventing new ones, in response to the perceived dilemma between the body, which overwhelmingly occupies a finite existence within time, and the mind which conceives infinite possibilities outside of this existence.

This article examines evidence from two chapters of the *Essais*, 'Que le goust des biens et des maux depend en bonne partie de l'opinion que nous en avons' (I, XL) and 'Coustume de l'Isle de Cea' (II, iii).[10] Despite appearing in different books, the Villey-Saulnier edition notes that both chapters were probably written around 1572 (Villey 1965, 350). The chapters from this period are heavily concerned with death and time; indeed, both the 'Isle de Cea' and 'Que le goust des biens et des maux' contain a particular focus on *la mort volontaire.* These excerpts will be compared to the first dialogue from the second part of the *Eroici furori* (1585) by Bruno. This was the final text written by the author in Italian, and is described by Nuccio Ordine in a corresponding foreword as the conclusion to this particular series of Bruno's works.[11] It is primarily a reaction to the superficial language of the Petrarchists,

[8] Leofranc Holford-Strevens provides a general introduction to the significance of this reform in *The History of Time: A very Short Introduction* (2005). For a more detailed account of the transformation of Western computation of time, see Part II ('Our Time: The Imposition of Order') in Anthony Aveni's study *Empires of Time – Calendars, Clocks and Cultures* (1989). The most significant change involved removing ten days from the Julian calendar.

[9] 'L'eclipsement nouveau des dix jours du Pape m'ont prins si bas que je ne m'en puis bonnement accoustrer' (Montaigne 2007, 1010).

[10] 'That the taste of good and evil things depends in large part on the opinion we have of them'. For the ease of the reader, these texts will subsequently be referred to as the 'Isle de Cea' and 'Que le goust des biens et des maux'. All primary source references use the Bibliothèque de la Pléiade edition of the *Essais* (Montaigne 2007) and the *Opere italiane* published by UTET (Bruno 2002).

[11] 'He forges the texts with particular skill. First he lays down the basis of his infinite cosmology. And, after having freed the universe from geocentrism, he attempts to liberate

an attempt to transform 'a feeble language, emptied of every connection with the world' (Ordine 2002, 123) into something that can express the infinite universe with energy and meaning. Bruno uses a structure whereby each dialogue sees two interlocutors, in this case Cesarino and Maricondo, analysing a series of sonnets that describe various stages of 'heroic love' and attempting to uncover their true meaning hidden beneath the language. Already, it appears that the initial subject matter and form of each author is entirely different from the other. However, a deeper understanding of the tension between body and mind in (and out of) time emerges in these texts, spurning fascinating attempts to exploit this tension and create new ways of considering time. It should be briefly noted that this article mainly addresses questions of 'what' and 'how' in relation to these representations of time, and leaves partly unanswered the question of 'why'. Unfortunately the article format leaves little room to address this question adequately; instead I have briefly highlighted the contextual elements above in order to prompt further discussion as to the motivation behind Montaigne and Bruno's representation of time.

2. *Bruno and Montaigne: A Growing Area of Study?*

In general, it appears that Montaigne critics have remained indifferent to Bruno. Instead, several scholars working primarily on Bruno have taken the initiative, the most significant step forward beginning with Fulvio Papi's *Antropologia e civiltà nel pensiero di Giordano Bruno* (1968). Many of the common themes discussed by later critics take Papi's text as their primary influence. Chapter seven, 'La civiltà come dignità dell'uomo' ('Civilisation as human dignity') is of particular interest. Here Papi identifies a veiled reference to Montaigne in Bruno's satirical work *Spaccio della bestia trionfante* (1584); Montaigne is the 'personaggio pazzo' or 'crazy person' being referred to when Jupiter is addressing *Otium*, complaining that some do not realise 'there is a huge difference between not being depraved and being virtuous' (Papi 1968, 346).[12] Papi considers this a direct attack on Montaigne's essay 'Des Cannibales', and its favourable portrayal of New World tribes and their supposedly 'virtuous' lifestyle. Papi compares quotations by both writers which describe in identical fashion their perception of New World civilisation compared to European society; both thinkers are struck by the moral

… matter, ethics, aesthetics and knowledge … Bruno is writing the *Cena* and he already has in mind, broadly speaking, the *Eroici Furori*' (Ordine 2002, 41).

[12] In Bruno's words 'Differenza molta tra il non esser vizioso e l'esser virtuoso'. See Ordine 2002, 90-120. Brian Vickers provides a useful survey of the classical influences of the *Otium* vs. *Negotium* debate: 'Throughout this tradition human worth was evaluated in terms of the degree, and success of one's involvement in society, for the public good' (1990, 2).

decadence of their own society and how far it has been distanced from nature compared to the 'savages'; both thinkers use this other world to question their own society and what it really knows about, in this case, living in accordance with nature. Papi then identifies a key pattern which will later be confirmed by other scholars working on Montaigne and Bruno – namely their tendency to reach entirely different conclusions, having identified exactly the same problem at hand.[13] Indeed, Papi says that for the first time in the history of Western thought two different positions are established here; one argues that, whilst nature should be a primary point of influence, society must act towards transforming itself 'as harmonisation and temperance of natural requirements' (131); the other believes that New World society is already a beacon of virtue with its simple, tribal existence, whilst Europe has corrupted itself beyond recognition with bloody civil wars.[14] Papi provides clear evidence that Bruno and Montaigne identified the same problem inherent within sixteenth-century society, but also shows that they propose very different solutions. Therefore he is one of the first critics to acknowledge the difficulties that arise between interpreting the two thinkers, whilst simultaneously highlighting the potential value of a comparison between the two.

More recently, Nicola Panichi's monograph *I vincoli del disinganno: per una nuova interpretazione di Montaigne* (2004; *The bonds of disillusion: Towards a new interpretation of Montaigne*) attempts a more wide-ranging comparison between the two writers. Clearly, the title suggests a focus on Montaigne, and Panichi's interpretation seeks once more to connect the plurality of themes and opinions contained within his works, a burden faced by nearly all Montaigne scholars. Panichi's tenuous point of entry into the *Essais* is one of 'ties', 'connections' – the *vincoli* mentioned in the title (which incidentally derive from Bruno's 1588 treatise on magic *De vinculis in genere*). In chapter three 'Le età della storia' ('The ages of history'), Panichi identifies history as one of the main connections in the *Essais* – 'the real intertext throughout the whole work'. He claims that Montaigne defines historical time in terms of repeating cycles, and subsequently compares this cyclical concept of history with Bruno's *vicissitudine* – a fundamental notion of time which is examined in this article. Panichi then claims that the term 'vicissitude' appears in later editions of the *Essais* and can be seen in the margins of posthumous editions (81). Furthermore, whilst it may be unwise to definitively label history in the

[13] Michele Ciliberto echoes this sentiment stating that, although they often move from a common issue, '[they] present two radically different solutions' (1999, 193).

[14] Papi discusses Montaigne's relativism, and the notion of the 'good native' which arose from early modern thinkers comparing their own society, steeped in bloody wars and persecution, to a simpler life. 'The disease of European society is about to give birth to the myth of the good native who is naturally moral and, because of this, immediately happy' (1968, 350).

Essais as circular, nevertheless this leads Panichi to renew Papi's New World discussion through a temporal lens, acknowledging the repercussions for early modern conceptions of time, as well as space:

> The discovery of the New World not only demonstrates the space of a new humanism, but also the time of a new humanism: the originality of this time can throw into question the conviction that the world is about to end and can, in fact must, rejuvenate. As Blumenberg well understood, the New World is the horizon of possibility for humankind – Bruno thought so too, nevertheless he criticised some aspects of *otium* that wouldn't become *negotium* in the *Spaccio* – and, at the same time, a missed opportunity for the possibility of the rejuvenation of the whole world. (2004, 88-89)

Here Panichi has highlighted just one of several ways that established conceptions of time were undergoing scrutiny in the Renaissance. The discovery of America questions the Christian theory of the Second Coming; a timeline signalling the imminent end of the world has been radically displaced by an encounter with a previously unknown society, which is less developed and thus occupies a different 'time' in history. Although the links between the two authors are less convincing than those established in Papi's study, Panichi highlights how important contextual elements influenced Bruno and Montaigne's awareness of time and prompted them to question and query traditional conceptions of time.

Perhaps the most promising recent works that have sought to compare Montaigne and Bruno are a series of brief articles by Jordi Bayod, and a study by Eric MacPhail (Bayod 2004a, 2004b; MacPhail 2014). Bayod aims to find a direct textual link between the two authors in light of the contextual evidence that unites them. He discusses the cosmological implications of Copernicus found in a passage of Montaigne's well-known skeptical exercise the *Apologie de Raimond Sebond* (2007, II, XII). He also revisits Papi's discussion, supporting it with textual evidence from other Bruno works. MacPhail begins from a slightly different premise, stating that in order to understand these 'two complex figures' he has chosen to work from a basis of anthropocentrifugalism, 'the radical alternative to anthropocentrism' (2014, 532).[15] After addressing Papi's criticism, MacPhail states that the debate which arises between the worth of *Otium* and *Negotium*, as the classical gods sit in counsel trying to reform the heavens, is really a debate on the meaning of history. He also explores certain issues discussed here by commenting on the

[15] 'To enlarge on this recent trend and to reorient the prevailing view of Bruno's reaction to Montaigne, I want to propose a new basis of comparison between two figures who were, in terms of their publishing career, exact contemporaries. This basis I will call anthropocentrifugalism … Both authors concur in their tendency to subordinate and ultimately to negate the importance of humanity and human history in the scope of the cosmos' (MacPhail 2014, 531).

human consciousness of time compared to animals, and how this affects the way in which humans use time compared to other creatures. Despite differing approaches, both critics identify common ground between Montaigne and Bruno that has previously gone unstudied – namely the importance of their views on human beings and nature. MacPhail believes that both thinkers 'subordinate and ultimately … negate the importance of humanity and human history in the scope of the cosmos' (2014, 532). Bayod agrees that, despite their differences of opinion regarding objective truth and scepticism, 'it seems the two come together through the idea of the homogeneity of nature and particularly with respect to all forms of life' (2004b, 266).

Evidence concerning the importance of time already begins to appear in criticism on the reception of the New World – arguably both thinkers conceive Native Americans as occupying not only a different space but also a different time to themselves (Panichi suggests America represented a new temporal paradigm: 2004, xx). MacPhail furthers this work by examining temporal aspects of the relationship between humans and animals. Subsequently this article approaches time again, but here it emerges through a specific understanding of the difference between objective, countable time and the ability of the mind to think outside of the present moment. Of course, the notion of objective time vs internal time has many philosophical influences. Aristotle sparked this discussion when he attempted to equate time with number, concluding that time is countable in motion in respect of before and after (Sorabji 1983, 84). But even he was left unsatisfied with this definition, asking whether time would exist without the soul, since who would be there to count it? Centuries later, Augustine continues this debate in his *Confessions,* arguing that time is an extension of the soul, emphasising the internalisation of time through his famous remark: 'What then is time? Provided that no one asks me, I know' (2008, 231). In recent years, phenomenology and the study of time consciousness has expressed this divide more completely. In particular, Marcel Conche's article 'Temps, temporalité, temporalisation' has served as a template for this article, since it draws upon a combination of these philosophical influences in order to provide a perceptive definition of time. According to Conche, *temps-en-soi* (time in and of itself) represents what is perceived to be the natural order of time observed in plants, animals and humans; it is 'independent from us, the foundation of all our experiences' (2009, 11). Time in its most basic form is the power which turns future into past, responsible for the inevitable decay of the human body and its gradual, unstoppable decline towards death. *Temporalité*, on the other hand, is the reserve of the mind. Despite the body's one-track existence within time, Conche emphasises that time resides within man too, 'because I can think time' (16). Furthermore, the human ability to 'think' time – for example through memory or philosophy – diminishes the passive role of the body's existence in time and forces one to act, to engage with it: 'there are no mere

spectators of life' (17). Montaigne and Bruno perfectly exemplify this call to action and, in doing so, generate fascinating new perspectives on time.

3. *The Body in Time*

'The body knows only differences of degree: otherwise it is of one uniform disposition' (Montaigne 1991, 60). This observation by Montaigne appears towards the middle of 'Que le goust des biens et des maux', a chapter that, just like the 'Isle de Cea', deals in large part with the graphic destruction of the body. The Villey-Saulnier edition notes that Montaigne was certainly aware of how shocking these chapters would appear to his readers. Although both are relatively short in length, they are filled with countless examples that portray the stabbing, poisoning, mutilation, and burning of the body. These instances of death appear alongside the main thread of each argument and Montaigne does not warn the reader about them. To what end does the author of the *Essais* include these examples? For Montaigne, the body 'in time' as it were, has one trajectory to complete: it is born, it lives for a certain amount of time, it dies. An existence which moves continually towards death is the sole *train*, the sole *pli* or line that the body is naturally bound to. At the start of the 'Isle de Cea' he reinforces the idea that there is a natural order of time in which the body exists, and that for most people the human condition is dictated in large part by this fact: 'Nature has ordained only one entrance to life but a hundred thousand exits' (1991, 393). Nature has given human beings one entry into the world. Since the body cannot be brought back to life, death is a certainty, and it is destined to occur in any number of external ways. Later on, this article will explore how, in the very same chapter, Montaigne manages to pull apart even this basic fact of life; for now, however, it is important to note that for the vast majority, human existence hinges on this natural course of being in time.

Various descriptions of the body's destruction only serve to further illustrate this fact, a dramatic reminder of the basic trajectory of this objective time, which appears to act externally, *upon* the body. In the 'Isle de Cea' Montaigne presents the reader with images of decay and disease: 'When Servius the grammarian suffered from gout, the best thing he could do, he decided, was to rub in poison and kill off his legs' (1991, 394).[16] 'Speusippus the philosopher, long afflicted with dropsy …' (394)[17] is scorned by Diogenes for continuing to live in such an afflicted state. There are also several violent accounts of individuals killed in battle, no doubt partly a consequence of the bloody civil wars Montaigne had witnessed for years in his home country. One

[16] 'Servius le Grammairien, ayant la goutte' is forced to 's'appliquer du poison à tuer ses jambes' (2007, 369).

[17] 'Le Philosophe Speusippus affligé de longue hydropisie' (370).

unfortunate soldier is butchered to pieces, whilst 'Que le goust des biens et des maux' also features several accounts of knives and other weapons devastating the body in the heat of battle. This abundance of examples featuring bodies dying from decay, disease, violence, accident – these are the *mille yssues* that are 'offered' out of this life. Furthermore it appears that this natural order of time, the simple trajectory that the body makes from birth to death, is largely independent of individual control. Montaigne confirms this in the 'Isle de Cea' by echoing the opinion of the Stoics. Despite the degree of choice that suicide brings with regard to death, most people believe it is better to live in accordance with Nature, *selon Nature* i.e. 'But it also means that the fool can remain alive even when he is wretched …' (394).[18] Suicide disrupts the natural order, it presents the individual with the opportunity to die before time and occasion: 'Avant le temps et l'occasion' (2007, 373), before the right time, the right occasion. However, it seems that, in most cases, whether one is killed by disease, or a violent blow to the head with a sword, there will always be a point in time when the body finally crumbles, and when this happens the natural trajectory of time, from birth to death, is completed. The fact remains that if the body were merely an empty vessel, and humans did not have the intelligence to conceive of memory, history and so on, bodies would continue to be born, exist, and eventually die. This is the essence of what Conche has termed 'temps en soi', or time in and of itself.[19] It is the most obvious way that time becomes apparent to human beings, since one is forced to accept one's finite existence within it.

For Bruno the body is primarily viewed as a material entity, and it exists within an order of time that, like Montaigne, he describes as the natural order of things. Montaigne illustrates this idea of time through graphic corporeal imagery, ascribing a simple entry into and eventual departure from life. Bruno identifies a more circular, vicissitudinal order of time which affects all material things, including the body. As previously stated, critics such as Panichi have already discussed *vicissitudine* at length, since it appears across several of Bruno's works. It essentially describes a continual ebb and flow between states, and is often referenced by Bruno when referring to the passage of time on Earth. He sees the order of the whole universe as

[18] 'maintenir sa vie, encore qu'il soit miserable' (369-370).

[19] In 'Isle de Cea', Montaigne briefly mentions how Christianity inadvertently reinforces this linear trajectory, by stating that only God can choose when human beings die: 'Car plusieurs tiennent, que nous ne pouvons abandonner cette garnison du monde, sans le commandement exprès de celuy, qui nous y a mis; et que c'est à Dieu … de nous donner congé, quand il lui plaira' (2007, 370) ('For many hold that we may not leave our guard-duty in this world without the express commandment of Him who has posted us here; that it is for God … to grant us leave-of-absence when he wishes' [1991, 394]). However, in this chapter, the Christian point of view is not explored in any particular detail and is apparently provided for the reader as one school of thought amongst many.

vicissitudinal – light will always succeed shadows, death will always follow life and then vice versa. One of the most detailed instances of vicissitude appears in the fifth and final dialogue of the *Cena de le ceneri*, Bruno's first work in the series of 'Italian Dialogues'.[20] Here Bruno explains that *materia* is incorruptible and thus it only changes state, rather than being destroyed entirely:

> the matter and substance of all things is incorruptible, owing to the fact that all parts are subject to all forms, so that according to all the parts (as far as is possible) there is everything; if not in one and the same time and instant of eternity, at least in different times, in various instants of eternity, successively and due to vicissitude: because even though matter is capable of being all forms, each part of matter cannot be everything altogether.[21]

This means that 'la morte e la dissoluzione' of bodies is actually impossible; instead, 'from time to time, within a certain order, [bodies] come to reinvent themselves, altering, changing, mutating all of their parts'.[22] Matter is incorruptible, and subject to all forms. However, as Bruno states here, it cannot be everything at the same time. Thus time is merely a constant changing from state to state, which Bruno observes daily in nature itself:

> and everyday experience demonstrates this: in the womb of the Earth, some things arrive and other things are sent away. For humans too, we come and go, we pass through and then return: and no thing of ours does not eventually become alien, and no alien thing does not eventually become ours.[23]

The evidence we have seen from the *Essais* suggests that Montaigne defines the body in time through a finite trajectory, from birth to death, emphasising the potential violence or pain that may cause someone to die. However, Bruno accepts his finite existence with relative ease, since vicissitude signifies that death

[20] Critics such as Nuccio Ordine argue that *Il candelaio* (1582), a play written in the vernacular in Paris, should be considered the first text within this series. See Ordine 2002, 41.

[21] 'per che essendo la materia e sustanza delle cose incorrottibile, e dovendo quella secondo tutte le parti esser soggetto di tutte forme, a fin che secondo tutte le parti (per quanto è capace) si fia tutto, sia tutto, se non in un medesimo tempo et instante d'eternità, al meno in diversi tempi, in varii instanti d'eternità, successiva e vicissitudinalmente: per che quantunque tutta la materia sia capace di tutte le forme insieme, non pero de tutte quelle insieme può essere capace ogni parte della materia' (Bruno 2002, I, 555-556).

[22] 'a tempi a tempi, con certo ordine, viene a rinovarsi alterando, cangiando, mutando le sue parti tutte' (Bruno 2002, 556).

[23] 'e questo l'esperienza d'ogni giorno nel dimostra: che nel grembo e viscere della terra, altre cose s'accoglieno et altre cose da quelle ne si mandan fuori. E noi medesmi e le cose nostre andiamo e vegnamo passiamo e ritorniamo: e non è cosa nostra che non si faccia aliena, e non è cosa aliena che non si faccia nostra' (Bruno 2002, 556).

is merely another change of state. Everything exists within a vicissitudinal state of time, humans included: 'And so everything of its kind has vicissitude … from this state which we call life to that state which we call death' (Montaigne 1991, 556).[24] Examples from the *Eroici furori* illustrate this idea with specific references to time. In particular, the idea of 'la ruota del tempo' ('the wheel of time'; Bruno 2002, 661) is introduced as another, more poetic image of vicissitudinal time.[25] One of the symbols that the two interlocutors analyse is that of a wheel 'that moves continually around its centre', and which appears alongside the motto *Manens Moveor*. Maricondo explains that this emphasises the circularity of time, 'che si muove in circolo' (661):

> so that motion and rest concur, for the spherical motion of a body upon its own axis and its own center implies the rest and immobility associated with rectilinear motion; or, one may say, there is a certain repose of the whole and a motion of its parts; and the parts which are moved in a circle have two kinds of alternate movement, in as much as some parts ascend to the summit, while others in turn descend to the bottom; some parts remain in an intermediate position, and some remain in the extreme position either at the top or bottom. (Bruno 1964, 195)[26]

Note the sense of balance and completeness that pervades this image of 'la ruota del tempo' – as one part of the wheel reaches 'la sommità' it must be replaced by another part descending towards 'il basso'. Eventually, Bruno uses this characteristic of vicissitude to demonstrate how a certain degree of predictability can be assigned to the future. However, here it is enough to understand that, as in the extracts from the *Cena de le ceneri,* Bruno understands time through continual movement; the natural order of things comprises a continual motion of states that endure and replace one another. Furthermore, as with Montaigne, Bruno emphasises how this conception of *temps-en-soi* is a natural phenomenon, a process outside of human control which seemingly affects everything and everyone. Cesarino states that 'everything' on Earth undergoes constant change, because of the vicissitude

[24] 'Cossì tutte nel suo geno hanno tutte vicissitudine di dominio e servitù … de quel stato che si chiama vita e quello che si chiama morte' (Bruno 2002, 556).

[25] Previous critics have interpreted the 'ruota del tempo' as a symbol of fortune, but this theory does not explain why Bruno links vicissitude directly to its image. For more on this debate see Ordine 2002, 849.

[26] 'dove il moto concorre con la quiete, atteso che nel moto orbiculare sopra il proprio asse e circa il proprio mezzo si comprende la quiete e fermezza secondo il moto retto: over quiete del tutto, e moto secondo le parti; e da le parti che si muoveno in circolo si apprendeno due differenze di lazione, in quanto che successivamente altre parti montano alla sommità, altre dalla sommità descendono al basso; altre ottengono le differenze medianti, altre tengono l'estremo dell'alto e del fondo' (Bruno 2002, 661).

of all things;[27] emotions, movements, materials – everything is guaranteed to move from one contrary to the other, 'this constitutes the natural order'.[28] Once again, if one ignores the ability to 'think' time, it appears that for Bruno time would simply constitute a series of changing states. The body cannot travel back or forth in time, rather it is subject to a series of continually changing conditions, of which death happens to be one part.

And yet it is patently obvious that 'time' carries much more significance for human beings than simply an empty, natural process from birth to death. Time is not devoid of any real meaning. The ability of humans to 'think' time signifies that the exact opposite is true. Bruno already states his awareness of this complexity at the beginning of the second part of the *Eroici furori;* after introducing a description of vicissitude in its most basic form, Bruno clearly states that humans cannot stop at contemplating time in this manner. Maricondo observes that, despite the truth and certainty of this process, 'However, as for ourselves, whatever may be our circumstances, the present afflicts us more than the past does, and both present and past together please us less than the future can' (Bruno 1964, 180).[29] Humans are not content with accepting the so-called natural order of things, and this is where Conche's notion of *temporalité* comes in. Human beings are able to remember the past, for example, and feel remorse as a result of this. The mind resides within the body, but is not held captive by objective, external time. Instead it naturally seeks to interpret this process. Rather than being tied completely to the present moment, the mind is able to think about the future, to recall the past, to fear and hope, to philosophise. The next section of this article will further illustrate how both thinkers reveal their shared understanding of this fundamental difference between body and mind.[30]

4. *Temporalité: The Mind in (and out of) Time*

The tension between a body which is ultimately destined to die, and a cognitive faculty which acknowledges this but can conceptualise other strands of time, forms the basis of what Marcel Conche has labelled *temporalité.* For human beings, the future is 'the horizon of a destiny which is death itself' (2012,

[27] 'per forza della vicissitudine delle cose' (Bruno 2002, 646).

[28] 'questo comporta l'ordine naturale' (Bruno 2002*,* 646).

[29] 'al nostro riguardo sempre, in qualsivoglia stato ordinario, il presente più ne afflige che il passato, et ambi doi insieme manco possono appagarne che il futuro' (Bruno 2002, 644).

[30] In the words of Marcel Conche, 'Yet, man is not only within time. The opposite is also true. Time is within man. Because I think time. Thus we have *temporalité,* which is the negation of time. Past, present, and future don't exist together: each is separate from the other. Yet, with *temporalité,* they emerge and are thought of together: beyond my past, in accordance with my present, I project my future' (2009, 16).

17).[31] Yet there is something inside human beings, as Montaigne concludes in 'Que le goust des biens et des maux', which allows them to focus on more than just death. Consequently, Montaigne identifies the soul as the part of our being that is able to exist outside the *train* and *pli* of the human body.[32] 'The soul can be diversified into all manner of forms; she reduces all bodily sensations and all physical accidents to herself and to whatever her own state may be. That is why we must study her, inquire into her and arouse in her almighty principles' (Montaigne 1991, 60).[33] Bruno's understanding of human potential is extremely similar. In the *Eroici furori* he too highlights the ability of the soul to transcend bodily concerns, and how this phenomenon is triggered by the virtue of contemplation:

> the sense of inferior things is attenuated and even nullified when the superior powers are valiantly intent upon the more glorious and heroic object. So great is the virtue of contemplation (as Iamblicus notes) that sometime the soul not only turns itself from inferior acts, but also escapes the body completely. (Bruno, 1964, 197-198)[34]

Humans possess a powerful entity, the soul, that both Montaigne and Bruno feel individuals should utilise more carefully, focusing attention on cultivating its 'potenze superiori' or 'ressors tout-puissants'. Of course, taken on its own, this was a relatively common assumption for Renaissance thinkers to make. But Montaigne and Bruno recognise that it has vital consequences for human existence in time. Since human beings possess such potentiality

[31] For an introduction to phenomenological approaches to time similar to Conche's, see Tymieniecka 2007, xiv: 'Briefly, the human being realises that he or she is essentially a temporal being in se and just as much a being sustained upon other coincidental temporal beings, and upon the temporal conditions around him or her'.

[32] It appears that Montaigne and Bruno consider the mind to be a part of the soul. The mind possesses faculties such as intuition and imagination which contribute to the overall 'power' of the soul. The soul is mentioned most frequently as the root of human power, but the mind forms an integrated part of this power, and is often referred to directly as 'l'esprit' or 'la mente' in examples where 'l'anima' or 'l'ame' may also have been appropriate. This article refers to both terms since they both express how Montaigne and Bruno 'think' time. Incidentally Conche does not make a distinction between soul and mind. For example, he states that Aristotle often discusses the 'soul' but then rewords his example, instead referring to 'l'esprit humain'. See Conche 2009, 12.

[33] 'Elle [l'ame] est variable en toute sorte de formes, et renge à soy, et à son estat, quel qu'il soit, les sentiments du corps, et tous autres accidents. Pourtant le faut-il estudier et enquerir, et esveiller en elle ses ressors tout-puissants' (Montaigne 2007, 266).

[34] 'il senso di cose basse è attenuato et annullato dove le potenze superiori sono gagliardamente intente ad oggetto più magnifico et eroico. È tanta la virtù della contemplazione (come nota Iamblico) che accade tal volta non solo che l'anima ripose da gli atti inferiori, ma et oltre lascie il corpo a fatto' (Bruno 2002, 663). In the footnotes to this particular edition, Ordine emphasises Iamblico's interest in the conflict between the human body and philosophical contemplation (Bruno 2002, 663).

within themselves, 'We have … given ourselves over to the vagrant liberty of our mental perceptions …' (Montaigne 1991, 266).[35] The body has one trajectory, one single strand in time to follow. Human intellect, on the other hand, opens out endless possibilities. Why should one confine oneself to the experience of objective time, ignoring the potential of *temporalité* and instead letting one's actions be dictated completely by the body? This point is further emphasised by their consideration of bodily needs. Both thinkers acknowledge that the body experiences certain needs over time, such as hunger, thirst, and sexual desire. The *Eroici furori* is a text which explores the possibility of transforming passionate love into something higher, into a productive quest for divine knowledge. Thus there are many references to the senses, and bodily responses to corporal beauty. Maricondo explains to Cesarino that an individual risks becoming completely imprisoned by feelings of lust, and walking around as if the body were 'a prison which holds his liberty in chains … a chain which holds fast his hands, shackles which have fixed his feet, and a veil which obscures his vision' (Bruno 1964, 195).[36] The body can imprison the soul's freedom; one who is tied solely to the bodily senses in this way, allowing their actions to be determined by what they feel in the present, is 'Servant, captive, ensnared, enchained, impotent, impenetrable and blind' (195).[37] An unintelligent being such as an animal is simply 'a slave to one's body' (195),[38] letting it act without regard for future consequences. Montaigne echoes this statement, further highlighting the gap between humans and nature that thinking time elicits. He describes how animals are completely overwhelmed by their bodily needs: 'The beasts, since they leave them [emotions] to the body while leading the mind by the nose … as we can see from the similarity of their reactions' (1991, 60).[39] For humans, on the other hand, 'la pointe de nostre esprit' (Montaigne 2007, 266) infuses us with choice and the possibility to think and act outside of the whims of

[35] 'nous sommes emancipez de ses reigles' i.e. the rule of Nature, 'pour nous abandonner à la vagabonde liberté de noz fantasies' (Montaigne 2007, 266).

[36] 'carcere che tien rinchiusa la sua libertade … catena che tien strette le sue mani, ceppe che han fissi gli suoi piedi, velo che gli tien abbagliata la vista' (Bruno 2002, 660).

[37] 'servo, cattivo, inveschiato, incatenato, discoperato, saldo e cieco' (Bruno 1964, 195). Ironically in 'Que le goust des biens et des maux', Montaigne also explores the other side of the argument on sexual desire, questioning why some people despise the most pleasing and useful organs of all i.e. those which 'servent à nous engendrer' (Montaigne 2007, 271), 'those which serve to beget us' (Montaigne 2007, 65).

[38] 'Servo e schiavo del suo corpo' (Bruno 2002, 660).

[39] 'Les bestes … laissent aux corps leurs sentiments, libres et naïfs' and that this is evident in the behaviour of all species, 'qu'elles montrent par la semblable application de leurs mouvements' (Montaigne 2007, 266). Of course, in typical fashion, Montaigne briefly questions whether this is actually a blessing and that if human beings were able to live solely according to the body, the torment provoked by the soul would be placated.

the body. However, such a degree of cognitive power comes with a mildly sceptical warning regarding mental wellbeing and the risk that utilising such intelligence can potentially sever one's relationship to nature:

> What use is knowledge if, for its sake, we lose the calm and worse than that of Pyrrho's pig? Intelligence was given us for our greater good: shall we use it to bring about our downfall by fighting against the design of Nature and the order of the Universe, which require each creature to use its faculties and resources for its advantage? (1991, 57)[40]

Montaigne is keenly aware that the gift of intelligence can transport human beings far outside the natural order of existence – he understands that this can be potentially ruinous as well as enlightening. Bruno is similarly aware of this in his observations on the degree of power that human intellect can wield; the soul is 'Exposed to blessings from on high' (1964, 199),[41] it has potential far above and beyond that of other beings in Nature. One of the first sonnets that Maricondo and Cesarino analyse describes a typical example of the *tormento* experienced by the lover. As Maricondo points out, it is possible for an individual to transform the desire and passion for the object into divine beauty:

> For I am sure that nature, having put this (corporeal) beauty before my eyes and having endowed me with an interior sense through which I can discern the most profound and incomparably superior beauty, wishes that from here below I become elevated to the height and eminence of that most excellent species. (1964, 184)[42]

The intellectual capabilities of 'senso interiore' are fundamental in allowing Montaigne and Bruno to escape the restricted existence of the body in time. They both understand quite clearly that there is a conflict between a body that is destined to die, a slave to its own wants and needs, and human intellect which inspires the possibility to ascribe more meaning and complexity to time. At the start of the 'Isle de Cea' Montaigne claims that in the *Essais* all he has done has been to indulge idle thoughts, to 'niaiser et fantastiquer': 'If, as they say, to philosophise is to doubt, then, *a fortiori*, to fool about and to weave

[40] 'A quoy faire la cognoissance des choses, si nous en devenons plus lasches? si nous en perdons le repos et la tranquillité, où nous serions sans cela? et si elle nous rend de pire condition que le pourceau de Pyrrho? L'intelligence qui nous a esté donnée pour nostre plus grand bien, l'employerons nous à nostre ruine; combatans le dessein de nature, et l'universel ordre des choses, qui porte que chacun use de ses utils et moyens pour sa commodité?' (2007, 263).

[41] 'esposta alla recepzion de doni superiori' (2002, 665).

[42] 'perché son certo che la natura che mi ha messa questa bellezza avanti gli occhi, *e mi ha dotato di senso interiore,* per cui posso argumentar bellezza più profonda et incomparabilmente maggiore, voglia ch'io da qua basso vegna promosso a l'altezza et eminenza di specie più eccellenti' (2002, 647-648; italics mine).

fantasies as I do must also be to doubt' (Montaigne 1991, 392).[43] With these words he immediately summons the role of the imagination in his writing, and underlines his perception of the freedom that the human mind possesses in order to experiment beyond the laws of Nature. Although he claims to be a mere apprentice, contemplating mere 'mortal and vain disputes',[44] the intellectual freedom he asserts here allows him to subvert the notion of time itself, through a radical discussion of suicide. Bruno demonstrates a similar aim, but emphasises that his ultimate goal is to attain divine knowledge. He understands that bodily senses can only provide a limited knowledge of the world; the mind is capable of reaching past the surface, perhaps one day even penetrating the divine. Cesarino asks Maricondo what he can possibly mean by stating that *la mente* aspires towards something higher. Is it not possible to simply look up towards the stars instead? Maricondo responds thus:

> Certainly not, but by proceeding to the depths of the mind; and in oder to accomplish this, it is not at all necessary to gaze wide-eyed toward the sky, to raise one's hands, to direct one's steps toward the temple, wearying the ears of statues with the sounds we make; but it is necessary to descend more intimately within the self and to consider that God is near, that each one has Him with him and within himself more than he himself can be within himself. (Bruno 1964, 193)[45]

An indvidual can engage their mind towards reaching for higher knowledge, which cannot be seen or heard, but instead exists deep within us.[46] Only the greatness of a soul unconquered,[47] is capable of achieving this. Hélène Védrine has described the tension arising from such a divide between the freedom of the mind and the existence of the body: 'The *Eroici furori* present the drama of the human condition, limited by nature, suffering terrible contradictions, incapable of finding peace and searching desperately to dissolve oneself in the One' (1967, 47). Similarly, Ordine has stated that 'Bruno describes the incommensurate disproportion that is created between a finite being and infinite knowledge' (2002, 135).

[43] 'Si Philosopher c'est douter, comme ils disent, à plus forte raison niaiser et fantastiquer, comme je fais, doit estre doubter' (Montaigne 2007, 368).

[44] 'humaines et vaines contestations' (2007, 368).

[45] 'Non certo, ma procedendo al profondo della mente per cui non fia mistiero massime aprir gli occhi al cielo, alzar alto le mani, menar i passi al tempio, intonar l'orecchie de simulacri, onde più si vegna exaudito: ma venir al più intimo di sé, considerando che Dio è vicino, con sé e dentro di sé, più ch'egli medesimo esser non si possa …' (Bruno 2002, 658).

[46] In the words of Nuccio Ordine, 'Philosophy, within its greatest manifestation, realises itself in this search for the One, in this contemplation of nature, in this effort to seize the invisible in the visible, unity in multiplicity' (2002, 81).

[47] 'la grandezza d'un animo invitto' (2002, 659).

Clearly there is a tension that arises between the body and intellect, which severely complicates the human relationship to time. They begin to experiment with time, challenging traditional responses to it by reinventing attitudes towards the future, for example. *Temporalité* is only possible due to this intellectual freedom of the mind in (and out of) time; Montaigne and Bruno engage in this philosophical search and, in doing so, address exactly the same issues surrounding fear of death. We have seen briefly that in the sixteenth century, questions of otherness and difference, prompted by phenomena such as the exoticism of the Native Americans, were influencing Montaigne's and Bruno's thought. Time is one theme that allowed them to push intellectual boundaries further, exploiting the undermining of tradition and, in this case, creating radically new expectations of the future. Montaigne's discussion of suicide offers human beings a much larger degree of control over the natural order of time. Bruno constructs an entirely new idea of the future through imagining a state of what this article will refer to as 'heroic time'. He creates an energetic new conception of time that is only possible through the power of the mind and its potential ability to rise above mortal concerns. As with Montaigne's exploration of suicide, the importance of mortal, objective time is diminished as the heroic lover transcends human knowledge and accesses higher knowledge, resulting in a 'death' which sees the lover intermingled with the divine. Introducing a collection of essays on time, Tymieniecka states that 'the reflective human being is pressed, impelled by the questioning bent of his or her beingness to wonder, to ask, to interrogate, to seek "reasons" for the turns of life's route' (2007, xv). Montaigne and Bruno are both deeply conscious of the conflict between finite body and the infinite scope of the mind. The next and final section briefly illustrates how both philosophers attempt to interrogate and ultimately 'rethink' ideas of time.

5. *(Re)thinking Time*

Since there is not enough space here to illustrate all of the ways that Montaigne and Bruno 'rethink' time, infusing it with new meanings and significance, this section will focus on some of their considerations regarding the future. The human mind can condition how one reacts to certain elements of time, and many of these reactions become entrenched in wider society. For example, Conche argues that time naturally provokes an instinctive dread in human beings. This is because it is certain that the future will culminate in death; 'Because of death, human *temporalité* is consumed by angst' (2009, 17). This state of *angoisse* is only possible through the ability of the mind to contemplate the future (*temporalité)* and Montaigne and Bruno describe this phenomenon in exactly the same way. Towards the start of the dialogue in the *Eroici furori*, Maricondo explains that, despite the relatively simple process of vicissitude,

human beings tend to divide time into past, present and future – '[They are] words which represent the three parts of time' (Bruno 1964, 180).[48] The past can torment someone through the memory of what has happened, whilst the future 'hangs in expectation'.[49] Oftentimes, people are in danger of living life with their minds already absorbed in the future: 'and he brings upon himself what has not yet befallen him, a thing certainly worse than whatever could overtake him' (215).[50] Montaigne identifies death as the root source of this worry; he agrees that many people are obsessed with waiting for the future to arrive. The anxiety becomes so unbearable that it is impossible to 'Merely patiently waiting for death to come' (1991, 392).[51] Fear of losing something is also mentioned as another factor that plagues human beings with anxiety. In 'Que le goust des biens et des maux', Montaigne recounts a period in his life when he inherited a lot of money. Instead of feeling happy about this inheritance, he explains how he was tormented by the future, scared of losing his fortune at any moment. As Bruno says, he was turning the future into the present, allowing his actions to be dictated by anxiety over something that may not even happen. Similarly, Cesarino, in *Eroici furori,* uses a metaphor to describe the jealousy that a lover may feel over their loved one, and he compares this to one who has just gained something: 'For example, it behooves one who has sought a kingdom and now possesses it to feel the fear of losing it; it behooves one who has labored to acquire the fruits of love and to know the special favor of the beloved to feel the bite of jealousy and suspicion' (Bruno 1964, 181).[52] For many human beings, their anxiety is rooted in trying to guess what the future may hold, and more often than not they ascribe an overwhelmingly negative meaning to the future. The mind becomes clouded by *angoisse*. In response, Montaigne and Bruno attempt to infuse the future with new and more positive meaning.

As we have seen, intellect resides within human beings. Montaigne and Bruno believe it is capable of envisioning more positive images of the future, rather than solely negative ones. After all, as both thinkers remind their readers, the power to change this conception of the future 'se loge[r] en nous', it is inside us, 'dentro di sé'; 'And if we did have such a choice and were free from constraint we would be curiously mad to pull in the direction

[48] 'son dizzioni che significano le tre parti del tempo' (Bruno 2002, 644).

[49] 'sempre in aspettazione e speranza' (644).

[50] 'si fa presente quel che non gli è sopragionto ancora, et è certo peggiore che sopragiongere gli possa …' (681).

[51] 'attendre patiemment la mort, quand elle nous vient' (Montaigne 2007, 368).

[52] 'atteso che ad un ch'ha cercato un regno et ora il possiede, conviene il timor di perderlo; ad un ch'ha lavorato per acquistar gli frutti de l'amore, come è la particular grazia de la cosa amata, conviene il morso della gelosia e suspizione' (Bruno 2002, 645).

which hurts us most' (Montaigne 1991, 52).[53] Thus they set about to asking questions of this traditional way of thinking about the future. Bruno cites Seneca in order to emphasise that often the fear of something bad occurring is worse than the 'bad thing' itself: 'he sees the effect of the fear of evil, which is worse than the evil itself' (Bruno 1964, 215).[54] 'Que le goust des biens et des maux' expresses this very same idea in the title; Montaigne begins the chapter by asking whether humans fear things themselves or the opinion they have of things. In the 'Isle de Cea', Montaigne also quotes Seneca, who advises that in life there are several things worse than death – pain, for example, or rape. After a brief exploration of Stoic doctrine, Montaigne concurs with Bruno, stating that fear is often worse than the thing feared itself: 'I find from experience that it is our inability to suffer the thought of dying which makes us unable to suffer the pain of it, and that the pain we do suffer is twice as grievous since it threatens us with death' (1991, 58).[55] In light of this reasoning, death (and subsequently the future in general) begins to be considered in a more positive light: 'Yet everyone knows that death, called the dreadest of all dreadful things, is by others called the only haven from life's torments, our natural sovereign good' (53).[56] Even rethinking the process of vicissitude itself can change the way humans perceive the future; as Bruno remarks, surely vicissitudinal time makes the future much more predictable? If society is in a state of moral decline, as he perceives that it is, at least it is certain that this will change – 'We can certainly expect the return to better conditions' (1964, 180).[57] From out of the darkness of this moral decadence, 'We can safely prophecy light and prosperity; if we live in an era of felicity and enlightenment, without doubt we can expect a succession of affliction and ignorance' (182).[58] Common fears over death and loss, which are rooted in

[53] 'il est en nous de la changer: et en ayant le choix, si nul ne nous force, nous sommes estrangement fols de nous bander pour le party qui nous est le plus ennuyeux' (Montaigne 2007, 258).

[54] 'vede gli effetti del timor del male, il quale è peggio ch'il male istesso' (Bruno 2002, 681). Seneca is a shared source between the two thinkers. Direct quotations frequently appear in the *Essais,* whilst Senecan tragedy is cited by Bruno several times in the 'Italian Dialogues'. For other uses of Seneca in the 'Dialogues' see Granada 1997.

[55] 'Et je trouve par experience, que c'est plustost l'impatience de l'imagination de la mort, qui nous rend impatiens de la douleur: et que nous la sentons doublement grieve, de ce qu'elle nous menace de mourir' (Montaigne 2007, 264).

[56] 'Or cette mort que les uns appellent des choses horribles la plus horrible, qui ne sçait que d'autres la nomment l'unique port des tourmens de ceste vie?' (259).

[57] 'possiamo certo aspettare de ritornare a meglior stati' (Bruno 2002, 643).

[58] 'possiamo sicuramente profetizzar la luce e prosperitade; quando siamo nella felicità e disciplina, senza dubio possiamo aspettar il successo de l'ignoranze e travagli' (645). Montaigne employs similar language when exploring pain in 'Que le goust des biens et des maux': 'D'avantage cela doit nous consoler, que naturellement, si la douleur est violente, elle est courte: si elle est longue, elle est legere, *si gravis, brevis: si longus, levis.* Tu ne la sentiras guere long temps, si tu la sens trop; elle

ideas of what the future might hold, have here been reversed and rethought. With the power of the soul it is possible to try and rise above such emotions:

> This book presents all the varieties of contraction, by which some ignominiously and others heroically arrive at the point of no longer feeling the fear of death, or suffering the pain of the body, or feeling the impediments of pleasure; for hope, joy and the delights of the higher spirit gather such force, that they abolish all the passions which can engender doubt, pain and sadness. (198)[59]

The ability to change the future into something more positive resides within each human being. Even if death itself cannot be prevented, fear of death can certainly be allayed. Although the body in time is still tied to its fate, Montaigne and Bruno demonstrate identical patterns of thought that can drastically change one's understanding of time, learning to control the fear that it may provoke. The common sense of *angoisse* over the future has been dramatically reduced due to the ability of the mind to philosophise over time. Previous critics seeking to compare the two thinkers have identified how they often reach entirely different solutions when faced with a shared problem. Indeed, as well as using philosophy in a similar manner in order to allay fear of death, they also further extend their examination of the future in separate ways, constructing extremely different conceptions of time that again seek to portray the future as positive. Both Montaigne's examination of suicide, and Bruno's construction of 'heroic time', are further examples of how they attribute a more positive characteristic to the future through their emphasis on human action. They both achieve this by diminishing the importance of objective time and their supposedly finite existence within it.

Montaigne undertakes a detailed exploration of how human emotion clouds one's response to time. Depression and self-loathing, common causes of suicide in human beings, are unique to the human mind, separating humans from their animal counterparts: 'it is unnatural that we should despise ourselves or care little for ourselves; it is a sickness peculiar to Man to hate and despise himself; it is found in no other animate creature' (1991, 397).[60] Such emotions feed off our unique ability to bring back the past and

mettra fin à soy, ou à toy; l'un et l'autre revient à un' (2007, 265) (In addition, it ought to console us that, by Nature, 'if pain is violent it is short; if long, light' … You will not feel it for long if you feel it grievously: either it will quench itself or quench you, which amounts to the same thing' [1991, 60]).

[59] 'De quali alcune vituperosa, altre eroicamente fanno che non s'apprenda téma di morte, non si soffrisca dolor di corpo, non si sentano impedimenti di piaceri: onde la speranza, la gioia, e gli diletti del spirto superiore siano di tal sorte intenti, che faccian spente le passioni tutte che possano aver origine de dubbio, dolore e tristezza alcuna' (Bruno 2002, 663).

[60] 'c'est contre nature, que nous nous mesprisons et mettons nous mesmes à nonchaloir; c'est une maladie particuliere, et qui ne se voit en aucune autre creature, de se hayr et desdaigner' (Montaigne 2007, 372).

incessantly think over events that have already happened. Throughout the *Essais,* Montaigne does not hide his interest in extreme forms of human behaviour, and suicide is no different. In fact, suicide completely destroys the preeminence of the natural order of time. It does more than simply rethink time – it actively hands over direct control of death to the individual, rather than 'waiting' for death to occur. The body is destroying itself by its own hand. We have already examined the graphic images of the body dying due to disease, accident or the violence of others; in both the 'Isle de Cea' and 'Que le goust des biens et des maux', Montaigne also lists countless examples of people actively dying by their own hand. A young woman throws herself in the river with her mother and sisters; villagers who are about to be captured fling themselves into a fire; in the Bible, Nicanor chooses to die rather than fall into the hands of enemies, and stabs himself, bangs his head against a rock and finally pulls out his own entrails. These shocking examples actually reveal a deeply heightened sense of control over time. Suicide allows the young woman to escape from being gang-raped by soldiers, whilst the villagers who burn in the fire have escaped enslavement, just like Nicanor. It appears that humans are capable of destroying the natural order of time, and why not? Montaigne makes a convincing argument in favour of the idea that sometimes human life is bleak – suicide is an individual choice that can end a miserable existence. His philosophy, which he labels the ability to 'niaiser et fantastiquer', has in fact led him to reject even the simple timeline that the body exists within. It is within ourselves to choose death, for, in the final analysis, it is a matter which concerns our being, our everything.[61] Humans possess the power to change the natural order of time itself. Rather than waiting for death, it is within our control to choose it if we wish. Even though suicide is largely considered to be a taboo, it is extremely positive in the sense that it hands over a large degree of control to human beings.

At first glance, Bruno's idea of 'heroic time', i.e. the lover transforming their passion into a philosophical pursuit that will lead to divinity, appears to be completely removed from Montaigne's discussion of suicide. And yet both thinkers are analysing an extreme example of human behaviour, and rejecting the natural order of time, dwelling on the positive implications of the destruction of the body. The notion of a 'heroic time' is central to understanding the *Eroici furori.* It is an interpretation of time that looks to the future as something that holds great promise; the lover has the potential to transform their passion into a productive pursuit of knowledge, eventually connecting with divine matter. Bruno believes that mortal love can be transformed into contemplation of the divine, aiming one day to uncover the divine itself. Maricondo explains the fundamental aims of the lover to Cesarino. Heroic time is dominated by a continual pursuit of philosophy, which will eventually lead to contemplation

[61] 'Car en fin c'est nostre estre, c'est nostre tout' (Montaigne 2007, 372).

of the divine. All one's energy must be spent on studying, on philosophising, and then the future will promise something better:

> These are the reasons why one must first of all leave the multitude and withdraw within himself. Then he must reach the state in which he no longer regards but scorns each struggle, so that the more passion and vice fight him from within and vicious enemies from without the more will he recover his breath and rise again, and with one exhalation (if possible) surmount the steep ascent. (Bruno 1964, 194)[62]

Death no longer becomes the sole destiny of an individual. According to heroic time, death is irrelevant since one will eventually be able to merge with divinity itself – the body will be left behind, 'lascie il corpo'. In the midst of the incomprehensible excellence of the divine, the body and mind dissolve into it. Echoing the myth of Atteone, hunted by his own dogs after seeing the goddess Diana, 'the hunter becomes the hunted'.[63] Furthermore, as the name suggests, the idea of heroic time does not include everyone. One must actively elevate oneself out of mere mortal concerns: 'Because the mind aspires to the divine splendor it flees association with the crowd and withdraws itself from the multitudes' (1964, 192).[64] Heroic time again destroys the preeminence of *temps-en-soi*. The body becomes irrelevant, the ultimate goal of attaining divine knowledge erases the concept of vicissitude – the body vanishes and loses itself – dissolving into non-time, mixed with the divine, the One.[65] This is the passage of time that one who devotes oneself utterly and completely to philosophy may follow – uncovering the secrets of nature or 'segreti della natura' is the only worthwhile way to pass the time. Once again this idea proves that humans have the potential to destroy the natural order of time, and dismiss its relevance. Like Montaigne, Bruno emphasises each individual's power of reflection. The power to rethink time resides within human beings.

6. *Conclusion*

Montaigne and Bruno understand that humans possess a deeply complicated relationship to time. The body in time exists within a relatively straightforward

[62] 'Ecco dumque come bisogna fare primeramente de ritrarsi dalla moltitudine in se stesso. Appresso deve dovenir a tale che non stime ma spreggia ogni fatica, di sorte che quanto più gli affetti e vizii combattono da dentro, e gli viziosi nemici constratano di fuori, tanto per deve respirar e risorgere, e con uno spirito (se possibil fia) superar questo clivoso monte' (Bruno 2002, 659).

[63] 'Il gran cacciator divenne caccia' (658).

[64] 'Perché la mente aspira al splendor divino, fuggie il consorzio de la turba, si ritira dalla commune opinione'; 'La mente dumque ch'aspira alto, per la prima lascia la cura della moltitudine …' (657).

[65] 'Svanisce, e perder l'esser suo' (682).

trajectory, tied utterly and completely to the present moment, with the spectre of death somewhere in the distance. The mind is a part of the body, and yet it is not. The mind allows Montaigne and Bruno to think time, and to rethink it. Consequently human beings are handed more choice and more control over their own temporal existence. Of course, humans cannot alter the flow of time itself. However, Montaigne and Bruno present their readers with strands of thought that can ease the sense of fear which arises from this fact. Rethinking the rationale behind fear of death, analysing the choices available through suicide and the potential that philosophical study can ignite are all ways in which human beings can transform a passive existence within time into something that offers more control over the future. This interaction with time potentially carves out a more unique place for human beings within the cosmos. Exploring the tension between body and mind in time clearly begins to identify several points of connection between Montaigne and Bruno, uncovering links between the two that have previously been ignored. It is hoped that further study of these connections will highlight in more detail the relationship that emerges between time and truth, and what the epistemological implications are for this desire to push the boundaries of human intellect. Future research may also decide to analyse the third aspect of Conche's definition of time, *temporalisation,* which signifies how one chooses to use one's time based on *temporalité.* In short, there are still many avenues of research to be pursued which can contribute towards further establishing a rich and meaningful field of study that embraces both the differences between Montaigne and Bruno's philosophy, as well as the fascinating points of convergence.

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Time and Exemplarity

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Abstract

The idea of history as *magistra vitae* – a collection of good and bad examples – was a central *topos* of historical writing in the West from antiquity till the late eighteenth century. The idea has served a number of different ends, motivating advanced political theory as well as functioning as a mere saying. The article investigates two books of historical examples, written for pedagogical purposes addressing young boys, both explicitly produced with this aim in mind: Johannes Schefferus' *Memorabilium Sueticae gentis exemplorum liber singularis* (1671) and Ove Malling's *Store og gode Handlinger af Danske, Norske og Holstenere* (1777). They differ considerably from modern history books in not being structured chronologically but according to the virtues the histories are meant to illustrate. The article compares the books' structure, tables of content, choice of virtues and introductory texts. The aim is to explore the tension between exemplarity and temporality in the two collections.

Keywords: Civic Virtue, Exempla, *Historia magistra vitae,* Malling, Schefferus

1. *Introduction*

One eye of history is time; the other geography. These were staple phrases in early modern history textbooks, intended to teach schoolboys and students how to study history. Historical knowledge was important because history was understood as the relation of great and memorable deeds, passed on to us to be remembered and honoured, and to teach us by example how to be virtuous, good and happy. History was simply a large collection of memorable narratives able to work as *magistra vitae*, the teacher of life – as Cicero once had termed it (*De Oratore* II, 9). Reinhart Koselleck has pointed out that this remained the dominant *topos* of Western historical thought from antiquity to the late eighteenth century, though in reality embracing a large variety of ideas and notions, and could occur in advanced political theory as well as in simple textbooks of the kind to be investigated here (1985, 22). The reason why history could provide behavioural models was the belief that human nature was not subject to change. And the same was

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true of virtue and vice, as well as the main challenges, problems and issues that humans were expected to confront. They remained largely unchanged, while political systems and dynasties correspondingly shifted and alternated, though never bringing with them anything fundamentally new. As pointed out by Koselleck, this was also the reason why history was usually designated in the plural, as *histories*. Without the idea of a 'linear, historical time [that] promised to reveal higher meaning' (Appleby, Hunt and Jacob 1994, 55), early modern historical understanding did not include an overarching, uniform and unifying temporal dimension that defined both historiography and the meaning of history. If the individual histories were parts of a larger pattern, it was that of a divine plan, not of sequential time (Schiffman 2011, 5-13).

Historical narratives could concern events and persons from the past. It was, however, not the past as such, or time and temporal processes of change, as in the modern understanding of history, that really mattered (Eriksen 2014). Describing this notion of history, J.D. Lyons has pointed out that 'the past per se is not the primary value. Rather the authority of the past becomes the raw material for the corrective genius of the writer in his quest to influence the future conduct of the reader or audience' (1989, 14). As the two eyes of history, time and space were necessary tools for a proper understanding of it, but they were not themselves integral parts of history. Together they rather made up the specific location where history took place. Chronology, defined as the calculation of the exact time of important events like the Creation or the Flood, even became an independent science in the early modern period. Another of its aims was to synchronize the bewildering inconsistencies between Christian and Egyptian or Chinese histories: the latter two claimed to date back to before Creation! Joseph Scaliger (1540-1609) and Isaac Newton (1643-1727) were among the leading agents of this once so ground-breaking science (Grafton 1983). More commonly, time or chronology was said to give history its shape and fixity (e.g. Holberg 1733, 45). Bossuet, in his well-known *Discours sur l'histoire universelle* (1681), originally written for the education of the French *Dauphin*, declared knowledge of chronology to be indispensable to avoid major historical errors like representing 'men under the law of Nature or under written law as they are under the law of the Gospel' or speaking of the vanquished 'Persians under Alexander as of the victorious Persians under Cyrus'. Students who do not know when the historical events had taken place 'will make the Greeks as free at the time of Philip as at the time of Themistocles or Miltiades' (1961, 666).[1] In short, chronological confusion created the worst kind of historical errors, for it prevented students from understanding the true meaning of what they learned.

This leaves a paradox. On the one hand, history illustrated never-changing virtues and vices. It told stories about great and good deeds which

[1] All translations are mine.

should be admired and emulated independent of time, and about values and principles which were more fundamental than any shifting modes of human life and not determined by any princely whim. On the other hand, histories got their form, their fixity and their true meaning from their location in time. Without knowledge about this, they could not be properly understood, not 'seen' as they really were. In actual history writing, both these dimensions would have to be handled. For how could history be fixed in time and circumstance and at the same time be exemplary, which meant reaching beyond its own immediate context? The present article will explore how this tension between exemplarity and temporality was handled in two specific cases. It will investigate two historical textbooks, written for boys and young men, published in the Nordic countries and quite widely read there. Textbooks of this kind do not represent 'cutting edge' historical research or philosophy. They are sources for cultural rather than intellectual history. What makes them interesting is that they provide excellent access to the simple truths, commonplaces and general ideas in early modern historical thinking and writing. They spell out basic premises and explain things that would be taken for granted in works addressing more advanced readers. They can be taken to present basic historical knowledge, truths that are held to be beyond dispute, and ideas that basically go unchallenged. In this way, the textbooks do not merely represent a didactic tradition, but are also valuable sources to an understanding of how the *magistra vitae topos* was set to work culturally.

The books were published hundred years apart, but share a number of common features. The aim of comparing them is to investigate how two works that belong to the same tradition, inspired by very similar ideas about history and employing the same generic conventions, nonetheless can also differ from each other in the way they engage with the relation between temporality and exemplarity. Despite their shared ideas about the use and usefulness of history as *magistra vitae,* their conceptualizations of the conditioning frames of human existence appear to be different.

2. *Two Nordic Textbooks*

Johannes Schefferus composed his *Memorabilium Sueticae gentis exemplorum liber singularis* at the University of Uppsala, Sweden, in 1671. It was translated into Swedish in 1733, with the title *En bok om det svenska folkets minnesvärda exempel* (*A Book about the Memorable Examples of the Swedish People*).[2] The Dane Ove Malling published his collection *Store og gode Handlinger af Danske, Norske og Holstenere* (*Great and Good Deeds by Danes, Norwegians and Holsteinians*) in Copenhagen in 1777.[3] Both books were produced with

[2] A modern edition appeared in 2005. All references are to this edition (Schefferus 2005).

[3] The most recent edition dates from 1992. All references are to this edition (Malling 1992).

explicitly educational aims. Schefferus, *professor skytteanus* in rhetoric, law and political thought, used the work very actively in his own teaching. His Chair had been established in 1622 as a direct response to the king's desire for competent government officers. The university had traditionally educated the clergy, but a growing state administration now created the need for young aristocrats to be trained in the arts of law, rhetoric and administration (Landgren 2008, 287 ff; Savin 2008).

The ambitious young author Ove Malling was given the task of producing a historical textbook by Ove Høegh-Guldberg, perhaps the country's most powerful man during the reign of the insane king Christian VII. He had initiated a reform of the Latin-school system in 1775, as well as a new law of 1776 which demanded that all civil servants be born within the realm. Together these novelties created the need for an education that fostered patriotism and knowledge of the history of the fatherland, and at the same time gave the pupils – as future civil servants – a good command of their mother tongue (Eriksen 1999). Malling's book was commissioned to answer these educational needs. The book met with huge success far beyond the educational system, and saw a number of new editions during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It was also translated into German (1779), French (1794) and English (1807 and 1822).

The fact that both books are composed with educational aims does not only imply that they are written for young boys rather than learned men, and thus expected to contain less complicated arguments and discuss less specialized issues in a less complex language. It also means that both books are explicitly oriented towards the future. History is intended to be the teacher of life in a very direct and even instrumental way, not only shaping the young boys as persons, but also supplying them with the tools they would need to enter government, state administration or, more generally, take part in civil life as truly patriotic citizens. The two books are both organized as collections of short narratives. They do not seek to explain the processes of change over time, or show the development of society or any of its institutions, for instance. Chronology is mainly an ordering principle and has little explanatory value of its own. The books present histories rather than history, examples intended to teach young people how to master future challenges aided by past experience.

Koselleck describes the relation between past experience and future challenges, which according to him stood at the core of the *magistra vitae* notion of history, by the two terms *space of experience* and *horizon of expectation*. His point is that in traditional and early modern society, these two spheres or dimensions were largely identical – there were few ideas that the future would bring situations or phenomena that the past had not already experienced. Hence, this experience, collective and accumulated, would be adequate to handle even future situations. Moreover, expectations towards the future would not exceed the limits set by past experience. This high degree of identity between the already experienced and the not yet lived was what made it sensible to think

of history as *magistra vitae* – the histories represented accumulated experience of past generations living in the same social and mental universe as the present or future ones. When the *magistra vitae topos* started to dissolve during the latter part of the eighteenth century, this was due to the fact that rapid social and cultural change, together with a new and genuinely historical notion of temporality, created a gap between the space of experience and the horizon of expectation (Koselleck 1985, 267 ff). This makes it probable that the differences between the two books are due to the nearly one hundred years that separate them, rather than the fact that they present two different – and antagonistic – 'fatherlands'. Though both build on the overall idea of history as a collection of useful and exemplary histories, they also represent two historically different ways of putting this idea into pedagogical practice. As we shall see, the frames of exemplarity as well of those of human existence are presented in different ways in Sweden in 1671 and in Denmark in 1777 respectively.

3. *A Tradition of Exemplary Narrative*

The two collections are thematically, not chronologically, organized, which makes them differ considerably from modern history books. To this impression of strangeness is added the authors' insistence that historical knowledge is relevant for the present and the future: the narratives are being presented because of their usefulness as models rather than as explanation of how past events or developments shape present situations. The location of the narratives – the past – is not described as something preceding the present, but rather as a close parallel to it.

The stories of each book are taken from the author's (and potential readers') own country, defined by the borders of each kingdom at the time of the books' publication. The two authors both present this as a significant feature of their respective work. Patriotic education was an integral part of the task Malling had taken on when writing his book, and part of the commission he received from Høegh-Guldberg. He also chose to emphasize the patriotic dimension in his introduction, saying that examples taken from other nations would be 'less important and less inviting for Danes and Norwegians'. The important advantage of domestic examples is that 'we experience more by reading and thinking about them because they are our own'.[4] Schefferus, for his part, is emphatic that 'for it is certainly so that we are more deeply impressed by examples from our own fatherland, examples that we so to speak have received as inheritance'.[5]

[4] In Danish, 'Vi føle endnu meere ved at læse og tænke om den, fordi de ere vore egne' (1992, 21).

[5] In Swedish, 'Vi påverkas nämligen starkare och mer på djupet av exempel från vårt fädernesland, sådana som vi så att säga erhållit i arv' (2005, 35).

In both cases these declarations are the result of an explicit break with established tradition. Through the centuries European schoolboys and students had read and learnt from the histories and exemplary rhetoric of Valerius Maximus' *Factorum ac dictorum memorabilium libri IX*, a collection of nine 'books' containing about one thousand histories and anecdotes taken from Cicero, Livy, Varro and other classical writers. The book occupied a central position in Schefferus' own teaching in Uppsala. He dealt with it during his lectures, and his students were given the task of defending or attacking its various examples and points, learning to know both the historical *exempla* and the rhetoric employed in historical argumentation (Johannesson 2005, xv; see also Savin 2008, 244). His own book thus represented a direct continuation of this tradition – by introducing Swedish examples and arguing for their greater efficacy and value – as well as a contrast to it.

Malling's approach to the same tradition is more nonchalant. In his introduction he says that 'there are certainly some who have collected this kind of deeds before. Valerius Maximus made a draft'.[6] Considering both the size and very durable influence of Valerius Maximus' work, these words seem somewhat condescending. They probably reflect Malling's ambitions as a writer as well as his position as a young man without teaching experience comparable to that of Schefferus. In spite of these differences between the two authors, their references to Valerius Maximus and the tradition of classical *exempla* in the teaching of history serves as an important framework to their own collections. Both authors acknowledge their place in this ancient tradition. By situating themselves in it, they both build on the authority that it represents while at the same time declaring that they present something that is new, different and better – though not too dissimilar.

The actual differences between the two books and that of Valerius Maximus are small, and certainly smaller than the two authors first indicate. Neither Schefferus nor Malling argued against the value of classical history as 'teacher of life'. Their expressed reason for wanting to substitute classical examples with Nordic ones was not that the former were too old or came from a historical context that was strange to the Nordic world. Nor did they claim the need for more recent examples. Temporal distance was not seen as a problem. They simply pointed out that examples from 'our own' people worked better when patriotism was the issue, because they encouraged identification and made a deeper emotional impression. However, even Valerius Maximus had given the most attention to examples from his own domestic Roman context. Narratives concerning for instance Athens or Sparta were singled out as 'external' in his work. It can thus be argued that the argument presented in

[6] In Danish, 'Vel er der nogle, som før mig have samlet saadanne Handlinger. Valerius Maximus har giort et Udkast dertil' (1992, 20).

the two books – the efficacy of domestic examples – had already been claimed by Valerius Maximus. The difference rather consisted in where and what the 'local' or domestic actually was: the Northern world of Schefferus and Malling versus the Roman world of Valerius Maximus. The relation between these two locations, as seen in the period, was not merely a matter of geography, nor one of historical time. The Nordic and classical worlds simply occupied very different positions on what can be imagined as a 'ladder of exemplarity'. The latter reigned at the top. In early modern European culture the classical world constituted far more than a specific time and place; it represented the very embodiment of exemplarity. The Nordic world was close to the bottom end of the ladder. Situated beyond even the farthest reach of Greek culture and the Roman empire, the cold and wild Northern countries were little more than the dark contrast to classical exemplarity. What Schefferus and Malling had to address when presenting their books was thus not the temporal or geographical distance between classical examples and the life-world of their students, but the lack of recognized exemplarity of the Nordic world.

Faithful to the tradition of Valerius Maximus, both Schefferus and Malling arranged their collections according to the virtues or moral qualities that the narratives are meant to illustrate. Seen in isolation the tables of contents in both books look like lists of desirable qualities attached to ways of acting. Closer investigation will nonetheless show that these lists are composed according to somewhat different principles. Even if (some of) the same virtues occur in both books and thus on both lists, they also represent different ways of thinking about the meaning of the virtues and the overall network of configuration that they are part of. Of particular interest in the present context is that none of these networks are defined through time or temporality. Taken as a whole, Malling's choice of chapters and way of structuring them seems to aim at constructing an autonomous system of mutually constitutive 'human and civic virtues' – a kind of Linnaean taxonomy of virtues. Schefferus, for his part, instead, presents a universe filled with signs and references, in which 'deeds', events and phenomena in the secular world are related to cosmic powers and a divine will.

4. *Structure and Overall Content in the Two Books*

Commenting on the chapters in his own book, Malling points to a methodological challenge that he encountered during his work: 'The categorization of the deeds into their classes has been difficult. Several deeds can be considered under more than one aspect, and several virtues are so closely related that it at times remains ambiguous where it belongs'.[7]

[7] In Danish, 'Handlingernes Inddeling under visse Classer har havt sine Vanskeligheder. Mange Handlinger kan betragtes fra forskiellige Sider, og mange Dyder grændse saa tæt sammen, at det undertiden bliver tvetydigt at bestemme en dydig Handling sit Sted' (1992, 21).

He has nonetheless stuck to a method of categorization that is determined by the order of the book itself. Each and every 'human and civic virtue' will be better understood when they are illuminated through a selection of examples, he claims. The musings over 'order' and the division into 'classes' reflect typical Enlightenment systems. Malling appears as a veritable Linnaeus of virtues when he presents his 'deeds' as specimens of this or that class, and introduces each class with short descriptions of its main features. This approach creates a neat order, but it is also what makes the overlap between the 'classes' problematic. The species of a well-ordered system should be clearly distinguished from each other by mutually exclusive properties.

Malling also explained why his presentation of the narratives (or specimens) within each class was not chronological. His main aim, he declared, had been to make the book enjoyable to the reader and to secure variation. A chronological arrangement would inevitably let all the 'best' examples come first, and the 'weakest' towards the end – which was not to be recommended (1992, 23). The explanation makes it very clear that time and chronology had no independent value in this kind of historical narrative. Compared with the argument over the problem of classes, it also becomes clear that chronology is not part of the intrinsic 'order' of histories in the same way as the classes of deeds and virtues are. Chronology – or lack of it – had to do with the presentation of histories, with the question of how the examples were to be organized to make the most durable impression on readers and best keep their attention. In addition to this, Malling's worries about the effects of a strictly chronological order of narratives illustrates that to him it was an obvious fact that the 'best' examples and greatest deeds belonged in the most remote past. The greatest authority and highest value resides in the past.

Schefferus presented no corresponding introductory reflections concerning his own chapters and used no particular terminology to describe them. And even if his table of contents looks like a list of virtues, his way of arranging them was different. The chapters in Schefferus' book refer instead to a more ancient mental universe. What defines the virtues in this case is not their respective places in a system of contrasting identities, but rather their relations to powers beyond human existence and outside the secular world. In Schefferus the virtues refer to eternity. Moreover, the narratives about virtues and great deeds are framed by stories that describe events and phenomena rather than human action, and which present powers and forces outside the human sphere of influence.

In his introduction to the modern edition of Schefferus, the literary critic Kurt Johannesson points out that most of the book is centred upon the four cardinal or 'natural' virtues: *prudentia*, *justitia*, *fortitudo* and *temperantia*, each of them presented over a number of chapters. He also underscores the significance of the first chapters, which are about religion, signs, omens,

and dreams. These stories are important because they speak about the signs by which the will of God can be known. Johannesson describes the final chapters as representing a 'variety of themes', like friendship, matrimonial love, the people's loyalty to their kings and the kings' love for their people. There are also chapters about patriotism, eloquence, physical force, luck, and persons who have been saved from great dangers and strange events, who have had an extraordinarily long life, or have died in unusual ways (2003, xviii). The echo of Valerius Maximus is easily heard here. Even his work has an introductory part about signs and omens, which indicates that such stories not only have their base in Christian seventeenth-century Sweden, but also reflect far more ancient ideas and mentalities. Stories about friendship, love, eloquence, and so on are likewise found in his collection. I would however argue that the arrangement of these narratives in Schefferus' work is less random than indicated by Johannesson. The chapters that present what he refers to as a 'variety' of themes, and which might look like a catalogue of strange episodes, do likewise show more of a pattern.

In the five chapters that follow the ones about cardinal virtues, different aspects of love and friendship are presented: love between spouses, loyalty to the king, friendship among equals, and the allegiance of soldiers. Setting aside modern ideas about love and friendship as belonging to the sphere of romantic emotion and sentiment makes it easier to see the qualities described in the stories as important parts of social structure. They regulate relations between individuals not only ethically but also structurally. Friendship and love represent social bonds that carry with them specific rights and obligations. Only rarely does this concern relations between social equals, most often it is a question of rights and duties within a hierarchy. Qualities like friendship, fidelity, loyalty and allegiance thus have no stable meanings, but depend on perspective and position within the hierarchy: a king's love for his subjects differs from that of his subjects for him. The exemplary narratives describe how friendship, fidelity, and love are practised in a number of different contexts, working as a performance of social roles and social structure. They also make it clear that virtue is not only about morals or personal obligation, but is also a matter of social competence.

After these stories follow two chapters on eloquence and physical strength respectively. The combination is less random than might appear at first sight. Eloquence is about the capacity of expressing one's ideas with force and persuasion, in such a way that they impress and move an audience. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines *eloquence* as 'The action, practice, or art of expressing thought with fluency, force, and appropriateness, so as to appeal to the reason or move the feelings' (*OED*, s.v. eloquence). The definition makes it clear that both chapters are about aspects of human force and capability of winning one's way. Schefferus himself presents the two chapters and the relation between them as follows:

So far we have presented virtues. We will now proceed to describe some tools by which the virtues may conquer. If any such tool is to be mentioned, it must be eloquence. For what tenable results can wisdom accomplish without its aid? ... To achieve something one also has no little help even from one's physical strength. For even if those who aim at accomplishing something admirable and great have a particular need for the faculties of their soul, they will reach no longer than half the way towards the goal without the assistance of physical force.[8]

While the virtues work as a normative framework of human activity, linguistic and physical power are decisive for individual agency and success.

The final part of the book has five chapters that each present stories about changing luck, and two about unusual deaths and extraordinarily long lives. Taken as a whole, the structure of the book provides an image of the human condition. In our modern – and thus anachronistic – terms, it can be said to present an understanding of the relationship between social structure and the individual. The book discusses issues like the limitation of individual agency, gives advice for human behaviour and presents the cosmic powers that fix the conditions of human life on earth. Schefferus' table of contents makes it clear that human life unfolds in the span between virtue and fate, between virtue and fortune or luck. The human task is to strive towards a virtuous life, the human vocation is to fulfil the ideals set by the virtues by means of the physical strength and mental faculties which one has been given. However, life is also governed by other conditions, over which humans have no power and can do nothing to change, but which may easily turn their existence upside down. Signs, omens, and dreams are thus highly important and may refer both to the will of God and to a predestined fate. In any case, they give glimpses into the realm of powers and cosmic connections that humans are subjected to, but over which they have no influence. The same applies to the changes of fortune – even they are excluded from human manipulations. The last chapters in the book describe individuals who have miraculously escaped great dangers, and tell stories about others who have won great fame in spite of a modest origin. In this way, even the individual's most earnest attempts of living a life in accordance with the virtues and with one's place in society are quite literally framed by determining forces and conditions. The message that can be read out of the book's structure seems to be that no matter how much one strives towards a deserving and virtuous life, and no matter what mental

[8] In Swedish, 'Vi har hittills behandlat dygder och skall nu övergå till att berätta om några redskap, med vars hjälp dygderna kan vinna sina syften. Om något av dessa redskap här skall nämnas, så är det vältaligheten. Ty hvilka hållbara resultat kan väl klokheten nå utan dess hjälp? ... För att utföra något har man ofta en icke ringa hjälp också av sina kroppskrafter. Ty även om de som försöker åstadkomma något berömvärt och lysande har en särskild användning för sin själsstyrka, kan denna likväl ofta inte komma längre än halvvägs, när den verkar utan bistand av kroppskrafterna' (2005, 221, 227).

and physical gifts one has been given, a human being can never conquer fate, escape chance, or defeat the will of God.

The ideas about this tension or span between virtue and fate reach back to Antiquity, and can be followed in European culture through the centuries. The Roman goddess of fortune and fate, above all known for her changing nature, was traditionally depicted with a wheel or standing on a ball. In *Il principe* (1532), Machiavelli writes that fortune determines half of what happens in the world, while human will answers for the rest (2007, 141). Art historian Rudolf Wittkower has traced the iconographical tradition of representing virtue and fate from antiquity to the seventeenth century, while philologist Marianne Pade has investigated the relation between virtue and fate in early modern translations of Plutarch (Wittkower 1938; Pade 2007). Kristiina Savin has investigated early modern notions of fortune, risk, and luck in a more specific Swedish context, regarding them as elements in a cultural repertoire. She points out that in this period luck – or happiness – was not considered to represent an emotional state, but refer to 'the sum of several social and economic factors which in the Latin literature were called the gifts of fortune (*bona fortunae*). From this perspective, fortune is not merely a subjective apprehension, but represents an objectively given external reality' (2011, 64). She consequently points out that even if fortune was an individual experience, it could be observed and evaluated from an external standpoint. The criteria for lucky events, a fortunate career, or a good life could be determined independently of the individual's emotional experience. Shifts between good luck and bad luck were likewise understood in terms of changes in an external world (67).

The pattern that can be read out of Schefferus' book is inscribed in a tradition which is just as ancient as the idea of history as the teacher of life. In Schefferus the signs and omens point towards the will of an all-powerful Christian God, in the same way as the 'natural virtues' are supplemented by His grace, but the principles and the structure from the classical tradition are nonetheless still intact. The individual stories – the examples – in Schefferus also carry a message that reaches beyond the stories themselves and the qualities that each of them is meant to illustrate. The stories make up a large and comprehensive image that not only presents the right ways to conduct oneself in order to live a good and deserving life, but which also serves as a kind of cosmic map of the forces that actually govern human life and to which humans are subjected. What defines and delimits qualities and virtues and what determines human agency is above all their relative positions within this larger image of cosmic forces and conditions. The lack of definitions and 'classes' in Schefferus compared with Malling is therefore not due to a lack of system or clear thought, but caused by the fact that the order of virtue in Schefferus is different. In his book, human life is presented as part of an eternal cosmic drama where virtues never change, but fortunes always do. In this universe the hand of God can be detected everywhere.

The 'structural conditions' of human life are not human-made, and their stability is not of this world. In such a context, histories are also examples of how eternity makes itself present in the secular world. The histories that take place in the secular world, defined by all its particularities of time and place, are merely superficial or accidental manifestations of these stable, cosmic and unchanging forces. Histories need time and location to take place, but not to acquire their deeper meaning.

5. *Defining the Virtues*

The introductory texts in both books serve to describe the virtues or events that will be presented and to relate the various stories to each other. Schefferus' texts are generally very short and work to entangle the virtues and qualities in a kind of network or complex pattern. In his description of eloquence (quoted above) Schefferus underscores that wisdom cannot do without it, and goes on to say that even courage needs the encouragement of eloquence. It also supplies justice, goodness, and temperance with beauty and pleasure (2005, 221). Wisdom, for its part, is said to have its source in piety, while justice stops it from becoming sly. Strength supports justice, while mildness prevents it from becoming hard. Courage in war has its parallels in mental strength and a strong character in civil contexts. In opposition to Malling, Schefferus does not regard it as a problem that the virtues overlap. He underscores connections, mutual references, shades and gradual change. The overall image that he presents demonstrates how all human existence and all secular life have one common source: the will and plan of God.

To the general description of each virtue, Schefferus often adds how the Swedes excel in it, either above other nations or on a par with them. About political cunning, defined as a subtype of wisdom, he says that:

> Wisdom moves along different paths, some of which deviate from the common lane and may be used in an emergency, so that a goal may be reached more swiftly and easily, which only with great risk could be achieved if following the beaten track. For it does happen that the masses are so ignorant or so stubbornly indifferent to their own best that one has to dupe them to reach a good outcome. To plan this kind of cunning and employ it with success has therefore been an important concern for men who are experienced in public affairs and love the common good. Not even Sweden has been lacking in men who are well skilled in this art.[9]

[9] In Swedish, 'Klokheten rör sig ibland på vägar, som något avvikar från den allmänt upptrampade och som den utnyttjar i nödlägen för att snabbare och lättare uppnå syften, som den endast under stor risk skulle kunna uppnå, om den höll sig till den vanliga vägen. Ty allt emellanåt är massan så farligt ovetande och envist likgiltig till och med för sitt eget bästa, att man måste överlista den för att föra den till det målet. Att uttänka detta slags list och tillämpa den med framgång har därför alltid varit en viktig angelägenhet för män med

Only a minor part of the introduction (quoted in its entirety here) really seeks to define this particular type of wisdom. The main concern of the text is to explain how it works and in what situations it is necessary. It is also important to spell out who the agents are that possess this kind of skill and have the responsibility and right to make use of cunning. The Swedish nation has fostered many men with these capabilities, but Schefferus also underscores that the right to use cunning is far from general or common. It belongs exclusively to men in certain positions and with public responsibilities. In this way Schefferus presents an understanding of the Swedish nation or people that is different from the modern one. The Swedish nation is not the population at large, but neither is it an ethnic and cultural group, as in the typical nineteenth- and twentieth-century understanding of nations and nationalism. To Schefferus, the Swedish 'people', to whom his book title also refers, are the persons about whom and for whom he writes: the nobility and the sons of nobility, those who govern the country or are learning to govern it. The histories – the examples – are *about* them, and *for* them. They are the ones who are supposed to learn from history, and they are also the ones concerned by it. History is not about the common people. This does not mean that they are absolutely excluded from it. Schefferus presents narratives about a peasant so strong that he could lift a horse, and about a man who was trapped in a deep mine at Falun but succeeded in cutting his way through the obstructing rock by means of a small knife. It is nonetheless obvious that such episodes belong to history merely because of their extraordinary content. Events and episodes that belong to history proper only very rarely concern common people. Their lives are mostly spent outside history.

Malling's introductions are more extensive than those of Schefferus. They all share a common structure and start with an explanation or definition. 'Brave courage' may serve as an example. Malling explains that:

> There are situations in life when great difficulties present themselves to us; there are others when we will meet unsought dangers, at times unavoidable ones, which defy us so that we will be forced to counter them. The weak man will fear, the timid will yield, give in, submit, or fly. The brave man however remains determined, and dares in such moments both to think and speak, dares to ask for remedies against danger, dares to grab for it even if it is the only possible way, dares to execute it, everything with the hope of success and without fear for himself.[10]

erfarenhet av offentliga värv och med kärlek till det allmännas bästa. Inte heller i Sveriges folk har det saknats män som behärskat denna konst' (2005, 70).

[10] In Danish, 'Der ere Tilfælde i livet, hvor store Vanskeligheder lægges os i Veien: der ere andre, hvor Farer, undertiden uundgaaelige Farer, møde os, uden at vi søge dem, eller trodse os der, hvor vi ere forbundne til at gaae dem i Møde. Her frygter den svage, den forsagte: han bøier sig, giver efter, ligger under, eller flyer. Den kiekke derimod staaer fast, tør i disse Øieblikke baade tænke og tale, tør spørge om middel mod Faren, tør gribe det, om der endog kun er et eeneste mueligt, tør sætte det i verk; alt i Haab om godt Udfald og uden Skræk for sig selv' (1992, 174).

The virtue or quality is thus explained by the means of action carried out in a specific context. Malling describes to his reader what the brave person *does*. In the quote above we are first told what the weak and timid person would do, then follows the direct contrast: the actions of the brave individual. After this, the text follows the same patterns of contrast in explaining the difference between the virtue in question and the other ways of acting that only apparently are good or virtuous. In this way, and unlike Schefferus, Malling does not describe shades and gradual difference, but simply contrasts. The text about courage goes on thus:

> Some believe themselves to be brave just because they have hardened themselves to defy danger, to run blindly against it, without any other intention than running, and without considering whether it will bring them honour or shame or whether they were called upon to act. This is not true courage. This is only wantonness, forwardness, or rage.[11]

In similar ways the smart is distinguished from the forward, the just from the unrelenting, and the wise from the cunning. The explanations are constructed over such oppositions, making each good quality stand out through the contrast with the bad. The same method is employed to distinguish between different good qualities, even if this is more problematic. In his efforts to draw the line between perseverance and courage, Malling returns to the problem of overlap, and concludes that these two qualities have some common features. He still insists on relevant differences:

> Courage alone is a glow that flares up when it is nourished, but at times will fade away when nourishment is lacking or decreasing. Perseverance is a steadily burning fire which is continually nourished and which spreads an evenly maintained warmth in the breast.[12]

The selection of virtues and deeds is also different in Malling. His choice does not reflect the traditional cardinal virtues. Neither does he present the tension between virtue and fortune. His 'great and good deeds' can be divided into four main categories. The first section of his book is about man's relation to God. Then follow two chapters about the king and the fatherland. After

[11] In Danish, 'Nogle have troet sig modige, fordi de have hærdet sig til at trodse, til at løbe blindt mod Farer, uden anden Hensigt, end at løbe mod dem, og uden at see paa, om der var ære eller Skam ved at vove, om de havde Kald dertil eller ei. Dette er ei det sande. Det er kun kaadhed, eller Fremfusenhed, eller Raserie' (1992, 174).

[12] In Danish, 'Mod aleene er en Lue, der blusser saa tit den oppustes og faaer Næring; men falder undertiden, fordi Næringen dæmpes, eller tager af. Standhaftighed er en jevntbrændende Ild, der næres stedse og udbreder en stadig vedligeholdt Varme i Brystet' (1992, 205).

this a number of chapters present virtues and qualities which above all are relevant when at war. Courage, bravery, perseverance, cunning, and justice are among them. The final section presents civic virtues like zeal, diligence, industry, and charity. Even this can be read as an image or map. However, this map does not present the conditions of human existence in a universe of divine power, strong forces and enigmatic signs. What Malling's choice of virtues serves to portray is rather the life of a good subject in an absolute monarchy. His table of contents informs the reader about the qualities of a good citizen, in prioritized order. Readers are instructed to love their king and their fatherland. By means of a virtuous life and diligent action, citizens are expected to work for the common good as well as for their own salvation. Religion is the frame: personal piety is not only praised, but also given pride of place as the first chapter of the book. Loyalty to the king – chapter two – has its basis in the fact that the king has his power from God. Secular civil society is nonetheless the main issue throughout the book. The greatest emphasis – in a number of chapters and stories – is put on good patriotic deeds, serving the state and the community of citizens. Even kings are presented as good citizens or as private individuals. They are wise, noble, and mild. The king is portrayed as the father of his house, be it in his affairs with his subjects or within his own family.

Human beings in Malling do not spend their lives in the unpredictable and at the same time constant span between virtue and fortune. They live in quite another world, safely situated in civil society which on the one hand is given by God – represented by solid Lutheranism – and on the other hand is defined by the absolute state. The agents are also different in Malling. To fulfil the promise made in the title, the collection had to include citizens from all parts of the realm of the composite Danish-Norwegian monarchy. The reader will thus meet persons from Denmark, Iceland, Norway as well as the duchies of Schleswig and Holstein. Equally important is the fact that both the bourgeois and peasants are represented in addition to the king and nobility. There are stories about brave soldiers, heroic clergy, and even the courageous Anna Colbjørnsen, wife of the vicar at Norderhov in southern Norway, who tricked the Swedes into an ambush during their campaign in 1716. In some cases the non-noble agents are anonymous or even represented as groups – like 'a Norwegian' or 'the Norwegians' – but just as often are given individual names. Not least does this apply to the chapter about industriousness which presents a large number of peasants. Malling got much of his material for this chapter from the patriotic societies that flourished in the period. These societies awarded prizes for different types of improvements, diligence, and useful projects, and supplied him with numerous stories about digging of ditches, cultivation of new fields or construction of manure cellars. One such story tells about the Norwegian peasant Gunder Haresaas from the Trondheim region who 'built a road that goes over steep hills and deep bogs up to a wide mountain valley, Giedaadalen; by means of which he has gained access for

himself and his neighbours to an excellent summer pasture for more than 70 cattle'.[13] The peasants Osmund Hustø, Ole Torvig and Jens Gundersen Kulaas from the Stavanger region all showed 'courage and swiftness' in hunting down wolves and bears. A truly magnificent example is the peasant Lars Huusbye, also from the Trondheim region. Even though he was a poor man, he established and cultivated a large orchard at his farm. He is also reported to have carried out other agricultural improvements. This peasant – all by himself – studied magazines and literature concerning agriculture, he added to them with notes and comments based on his own experience, and offered copies of and excerpts from this edifying material to others (1992, 408 ff).

There can be no doubt, then, that in Malling's view even ordinary citizens can be historical agents, in the sense that their deeds have exemplary value. Malling is nonetheless explicit that exemplarity is a feature of the deed, not of the person who carries it out. He also points out that in order to judge a deed, it is the deed that must be examined, not its executor:

> one may see Bishops and clergy drawing the sword to defend their country, one may see heroes laying down their weapons to live a life in quiet virtue. What is important to observe is the deed itself. It shall not be mentioned because of the person behind it, but the person because of the deed. This is the reason why one sometimes will find the peasant equal to the king, his deeds earn him the place.[14]

The argument makes it clear that the choice of persons presented in the book is not based on democratic ideas about representation. The image presented is not one of an egalitarian society. Malling's intention is to praise those who deserve it due to their deeds rather than their position, but in no way to suggest that this implies an adjustment or change of positions. The point is to underscore that peasants and citizens may 'equal the king' because they are ennobled by their actions. For this to happen it is fundamental that their actions be truly exemplary. When Malling argues that even civic virtue – like diligence, industriousness, and zeal – may hold an exemplary quality, he is also giving access to the scene of history to persons outside the governing elite.

[13] In Danish, 'opbrudt en Vei igiennem bradt Berg og bløde myrer til en stor Field-Dal, Giedaadalen; hvorved han har tilveiebragt sig og sine Naboer en ypperlig Sommer-Drift for over 70 Storfæe' (Malling 1992, 408).

[14] In Danish, 'thi man vil finde Bisper og Præster drage Sværdet og fegte for Fædrenelandet, og man vil see Helte nedlægge det og udøve de stille Dyder i roligt Liv. Men her agte man, at det er Handlingen, der egentlig sees paa, og at den ikke nævnes for Personens, men Personen for Handlingens Skyld. Dette er Aarsagen hvorfor man vil finde Bonden undertiden ved siden af Kongen; thi hans Handlinger fortiene at staae der' (1992, 22).

6. *On Courage*

Schefferus and Malling both made structural choices that clearly subordinated temporality to exemplarity in their books. Schefferus' presentation of signs, references, and cosmic powers and Malling's construction of a taxonomy of virtues differ considerably from each other. Both do nonetheless create frameworks that enhanced the intrinsically atemporal dimension of the virtues and deeds that were to be presented. Both embraced the set of virtues in a way that gave them the appearance of a stable existence, indisputably independent of the more superficial shifts of temporal circumstance. It remains to be explored if this atemporal quality of histories is also maintained in the actual episodes that are narrated in the two books. To facilitate the examination and make comparisons possible, the following discussion will focus on a virtue that is given a prominent place in both books: courage.

Malling's definition of courage is without any temporal dimension and without historical specificity. He introduces the virtue in his usual systematic way, contrasting true courage with duels and other pretentious fights, which do not produce true heroes. Courage, on the other hand, has to do with the battles that honour and obligation demand: defending the king and the fatherland, doing one's duty. As duties will vary according to one's position in life, Malling also draws a distinction between courage in common men, seen largely as a matter of physical strength, and in leaders, which includes strategic capacity (1992, 224). Schefferus for his part introduces the chapter on courage with the claim that the Swedes have 'always' excelled in this virtue. He also says that this virtue is recognized by everybody, quite independently of their social standing. The references that follow are not very specific, but an informed reader will recognize a compact version of Swedish history in the introductory text. The non-temporal 'always' is thus made specific by means of a roughly chronological presentation, rather than a definition of courage as such.

Schefferus' narratives – or examples, as he calls them– about courage are all rather short. They are not presented in chronological order and not clearly related to period or circumstance. In some stories, the name of a king is mentioned, which indirectly situates the story historically. The same goes for the wars that in some cases are given as frames for the reported act of courage: the event can be said to have taken place during the war against the Danish king Kristian, or during a war in Russia or in Livonia. Readers well versed in the events of Swedish history, and particularly that of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, will understand which campaigns and thus which period this refers to. It is nonetheless obvious that such discernment has not been regarded as a prerequisite to enjoy – and learn from – the examples. The only temporal distinction that is given some relevance can be found in a remark that the most ancient narratives (from heathen times) may seem like fairy tales and thus be less trustworthy than the more recent ones (Schefferus

2005, 128). What gives Schefferus' chapter on courage its structure is thus not time and chronology, but rather the thematic connections that are made. Stories about brave kings make one such thematic cluster, stories about courageous women who fight like men, and at times even dress like them, is another. Not the least important are the stories about brave soldiers and common men who possess great physical strength and ability to fight.

All the narratives are short, most of them fill less than a page each. They are usually one-episodic and contain little circumstantial information. Schefferus' book presents, as Kristiina Savin has described, 'dramatic moments, colourful details, directly reported speeches and dialogues and emphatic partiality' (2008, 235). When it comes to courage, it is the action itself – the fight –that is presented, rather than its circumstances. In this way, Schefferus' narratives are even less historically specific than his introduction. The temporal dimension is at best a part of the 'stage' where heroic action takes place, and courage appears as a quality that is independent of time, agent, and circumstance, but fundamentally tied to battle and physical strength.

The narratives about courage in Malling are considerably longer and have a more complex structure with many episodes linked together. Some of them amount to compact biographies about men known for their courage and bravery, for instance about the sixteenth-century naval hero Cort Adeler (1992, 247-253). Unlike Schefferus, Malling does not present any stories about brave commoners. The protagonists of all his stories are kings, noblemen, or at least military officers. There are no women in the chapter on bravery. As was the case with Schefferus, all events and episodes are related to war and warlike struggle. It is nonetheless by means of setting up contrasts and emphasizing differences that Malling, in accordance with his definition of courage, includes strategic cunning in this virtue. Some of his stories consequently present military leadership and successful strategies rather than the fight itself.

Malling's stories also contain far more specific details about time, place, and circumstance. For some events the exact year is given. There is also information, for instance, about the number of ships involved in a battle, or the number of men in an army. Moreover, despite Malling's general remark that he will not present his stories in a chronological order (cf. above, p. 190), he does so in the chapter on courage. The first story is about the Cimbrians – a people held to be ancestors of the modern Danes – and their struggle against the Romans in Gaul and northern Italy. After this follow stories taken from saga literature, and then from more recent times. The last part of the chapter presents episodes about Danes involved in the war of Spanish succession. It concludes with some comments that link these persons to the ancient Cimbrians, and with the claim that other European peoples have 'always' recognized and admired the bravery of the Danes (1992, 274).

Despite the chronological order and greater specific historical detail, even Malling thus ends with a patriotic 'always' that very much resembles

that of Schefferus. Historical period also becomes more significant in Malling than in Schefferus. On the other hand, the choice of a chronological order is what excludes Malling from making distinctions between legendary, ancient times and a historical 'presence' including all of Christian time in the way Schefferus does. Most important in the present context is nonetheless that, despite the variation in composition, complexity, and historical detail, there seems to be little significant difference in the role of time and temporality in the two books' understanding and presentation of courage.

7. *Time and Exemplarity*

There is no doubt that the narratives in both Schefferus and Malling are presented as examples, and history as *magistra vitae*. How does exemplarity negotiate time in these stories? It has been pointed out throughout this article that the temporal dimension does not play an important role in the shaping of the stories and that time and period are ascribed comparatively little explanatory value. Even chronological order is sometimes explicitly set aside to further enhance the exemplary value of the collected stories. Nonetheless, not even examples can escape temporality, at least not as long as they are part of a narrative. Narrating events cannot do without temporality. For a better understanding of what is at stake here, a closer look at the nature of examples might prove useful. What are they, and how are they made? J.D. Lyons will be our guide here. In his study of the rhetoric of example in early modern France and Italy, Lyons defined examples as a 'connection of a general statement or maxim and a local or specific actualization of that maxim' (1989, 5; see also Eriksen *et al*. 2012). The example is thus:

> a dependent statement qualifying a more general and independent statement by naming a member of the class established by the general statement. An example cannot exist without a) a general statement and b) an indication of its subordinate status. Moreover, examples are most frequently used to c) provide clarification of the general statement and d) demonstrate the truth of the general statement. (Lyons 1989, x)

This structure can easily be identified in the two books studied here. In both cases, the narratives contained in the books are emphatically presented as relating to the general statement or class – the respective virtues. The relationship is clearly of a hierarchical kind, making the stories depend on the general statement for their full meaning and message. It may also be argued that Malling tends to use his examples mainly to clarify the general statements. His stories serve to illuminate the systematic definitions that are presented in the introductions. His narratives flesh out the definitions and make them more easily comprehensible. Schefferus, for his part, tends to use the narratives more to demonstrate the truth of his general statement, as when he starts by saying that the Swedes have always excelled in this or that virtue and then presents stories to prove it.

An implication of the description given by Lyons is that examples are defined by the structural relation between the statement and the instantiation or case. This relation itself has a temporal dimension. One of the conventions for giving examples is the explicit combination of a general rule, usually given in the present tense, and a specific historical event, which usually is presented in the past tense (1989, 26). This pattern is followed by both the authors investigated here, in the sense that their introductions to each chapter, presenting the virtue to be exemplified, is written in the present tense, and the following stories in the past.

Lyons also points out that 'when used in an example, an entity loses its autonomy and unicity', because 'occurrences and events in examples not only can but must be both themselves and representative of something else – of the subordinating concept – and must be replaceable in that function with other events or entities' (28). An example, then, is not just any narrative, but one 'with a claim to particular form of truth' – that which is given by the relationship of a general class to a particular instance (12).

At the same time, the instantiation, when it is narrative, will also have a temporal structure of its own. This creates the ambivalence that has been observed in the histories presented by Schefferus and Malling. As narrative units each of them presents the reported events in the temporal order required by the plot of the story. To some degree, as we have seen, this even involves a more extensive historical chronology represented by the names and reigns of kings, the duration of wars and military campaigns and so on. If this historical temporality should come to dominate, however, the stories would no longer be replaceable and work as examples or instantiations of a general statement or value. Their relation to the overall statement would be broken and their exemplarity dissolve.

The replaceability of examples reveals – or claims to reveal – an identity of events, figures, and even plots across chronological borders. In this way, replaceability not only relates the single example to the general statement by placing it in a subordinate position. It also relates the example directly to other examples of the same general truth, claiming them all to be 'of the same kind' and equal to each other. They are linked in a way that cuts across time and specific circumstance, that cuts across history in its modern sense. According to Lyons,

> the importance accorded the temporal orders is paradoxically linked to the way example allows an act or object to reappear at different periods and thus to defeat change. If an *exemplum* / copy can allow the past not only to be alluded to or reflected upon, but actually resuscitated, then time itself can be subordinated to a higher, more powerful order. (1989, 11-12)

In Schefferus and Malling it is obvious that the system of virtues itself represents a higher order than that of historical chronology. The historical

time of the actual narratives, both as single units and as a collection, is subordinated by this order. This is nonetheless done in different ways in the two books, and the order in question appears to be of two different kinds. Schefferus presents his collection in the guise of a 'grand narrative' about the will of God and the strength of powers like fate, chance, and luck. This is what frames his stories about virtue and human achievement, gives them their ultimate meaning and serves to position them within a higher order. It is from this order that the individual stories get their true meaning, and it is also this order that eclipses historical time. In Malling, the individual stories are written into a higher order of a different kind. It does not produce a grand narrative and it is not in itself temporal. The order presented by Malling is simply systematic. This can be seen in the Linnaean introductions to each chapter. The nature of each virtue is suspended in a network of identities and differences: Malling explains what the virtue is and what it is not. It can also be discerned in the overall structure of his book, which does not present a cosmic drama in the way Schefferus does, but rather appears as a systematic table – again comparable to those of Linnaeus – in which all items get their true meaning from the relations they are part of.

The two books that have been examined here were written largely for the same purpose. Both are textbooks intended for young people, and based on the general idea of history as the teacher of life, as a collection of useful examples to learn from. They do not claim to be works of great historical erudition, and do not enter into any of the debates current among the learned history-writers of their times. Despite their unpretentiousness and the relative simplicity implied by their genre, this investigation has shown them to differ quite significantly from each other in the ways they make use of the *topos* of history as *magistra vitae*. It has also proved the fruitfulness of using this kind of material to gain a more advanced understanding of the cultural implications of the *topos*, and the ways in which it could be made to work.

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Appendix

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Time, Tempo, Tense

Aristotle, from *Physics*, IV, 10

The next subject to be discussed is Time. The best plan will be to start by solving the difficulties connected with it, making use of the usual arguments. In the first place, does time belong to the class of things that exist or to that of things that do not exist? In the second place, what is its nature? The following considerations might lead us to suspect that it either does not exist at all or that it hardly exists, and in a way that is unclear. One part of it has been and is no longer, one part is going to be and is not yet. And of such parts is time – both infinite time and any time we may envisage, made up. And it would appear impossible that, being made up of things that do not exist, it could have an essence.

Furthermore, if there exists a divisible thing, all or some of its parts must exist. But of time some parts have been, while others are going to be, but no part is, although time can be split up into parts. For what is 'now' is not a part, since a part can be measured, and a whole must be made up of parts. On the other hand, time does not seem to be made up of 'nows'. Furthermore, it is not easy to see if the 'now', which appears to separate the past from the future, remains always one and the same, or is always different.

If it is always different, and if, in the temporal stretch, none of the parts which are different may exist simultaneously with another (unless one contains the other, as the shorter time is contained by the longer) and if the 'now' that is not, but was before, must have ceased at some time, so the instants, too, cannot be simultaneous, but the one that was before must always have ceased to be. But the prior 'now' cannot have ceased to exist 'in itself', because in that case it would still exist; and yet it cannot have passed into another 'now'. Indeed, instants cannot be thought of as continuous to one another, in the same way as continuity is not possible between points. If, then, it did not pass into another 'now', it would exist simultaneously with the innumerable intermediate 'nows'; but this is impossible. But neither is it possible for the 'now' to remain always the same; in fact, no determinate divisible thing has one sole limit; there is only one limit, whether it is linearly stretched or exists in more than one dimension; but the 'now' is a limit, and it is possible to envisage a determinate time. Furthermore, if coincidence in time, namely, being neither before nor after, means to be in the same time and in the same 'now', if we admit coincidence of what is before and what is after, then things

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that happened ten thousand years ago would be simultaneous with things that happen today, and nothing would be before or after anything else.[1]

Lucretius, from *De rerum natura*, I, 459-463

Tempus item per se non est, sed rebus ab ipsis
consequitur sensus, transactum quid sit in aevo,
tum quae res instet, quid porro deinde sequatur;
nec per se quemquam tempus sentire fatendumst
semotum ab rerum motu placidaque quiete.

[Time does not exist by itself, but from things themselves it derives the meaning of what happened in the past, of what persists now and what is to follow; and no one can perceive time separated from the movement of things and from quiet stillness.]

Ovid, 'Envoi', from *Metamorphoses*, Book XV, 871-879

Iamque opus exegi, quod nec Iovis ira nec ignis
nec poterit ferrum nec edax abolere vetustas.
cum volet, illa dies, quae nil nisi corporis huius
ius habet, incerti spatium mihi finiat aevi:
parte tamen meliore mei super alta perennis
astra ferar, nomenque erit indelebile nostrum,
quaque patet domitis Romana potentia terris,
ore legar populi, perque omnia saecula fama,
siquid habent veri vatum praesagia, vivam.

[Now the work is done, that neither Jupiter's anger, nor fire nor sword, nor devouring time may erase. Let that day which has only power over my body, end the uncertain space of my time: yet the best part of me will be borne perennial above the stars, and my name will stay indelible, and, wherever the influence of Rome extends over the lands and populations it has conquered, I will be on people's lips and, famous throughout the ages, if the poets' prophecies are true, I shall live.]

[1] Unless otherwise stated, translations are editorial.

Augustine, *The Confessions of Saint Augustine* (c. 400 AD), Book XI, translated by E.B. Pusey (Edward Bouverie)

Lo, are they not full of their old leaven, who say to us, 'What was God doing before He made heaven and earth? For if (say they) He were unemployed and wrought not, why does He not also henceforth, and for ever, as He did heretofore? For did any new motion arise in God, and a new will to make a creature, which He had never before made, how then would that be a true eternity, where there ariseth a will, which was not? For the will of God is not a creature, but before the creature; seeing nothing could be created, unless the will of the Creator had preceded. The will of God then belongeth to His very Substance. And if aught have arisen in God's Substance, which before was not, that Substance cannot be truly called eternal. But if the will of God has been from eternity that the creature should be, why was not the creature also from eternity?'

Who speak thus, do not yet understand Thee, O Wisdom of God, Light of souls, understand not yet how the things be made, which by Thee, and in Thee are made: yet they strive to comprehend things eternal, whilst their heart fluttereth between the motions of things past and to come, and is still unstable. Who shall hold it, and fix it, that it be settled awhile, and awhile catch the glory of that everfixed Eternity, and compare it with the times which are never fixed, and see that it cannot be compared; and that a long time cannot become long, but out of many motions passing by, which cannot be prolonged altogether; but that in the Eternal nothing passeth, but the whole is present; whereas no time is all at once present: and that all time past, is driven on by time to come, and all to come followeth upon the past; and all past and to come, is created, and flows out of that which is ever present? Who shall hold the heart of man, that it may stand still, and see how eternity ever still-standing, neither past nor to come, uttereth the times past and to come? Can my hand do this, or the hand of my mouth by speech bring about a thing so great?

...

But if any excursive brain rove over the images of forepassed times, and wonder that Thou the God Almighty and All-creating and All-supporting, Maker of heaven and earth, didst for innumerable ages forbear from so great a work, before Thou wouldest make it; let him awake and consider, that he wonders at false conceits. For whence could innumerable ages pass by, which Thou madest not, Thou the Author and Creator of all ages? or what times should there be, which were not made by Thee? or how should they pass by, if they never were? Seeing then Thou art the Creator of all times, if any time was before Thou madest heaven and earth, why say they that Thou didst forego working? For that very time didst Thou make, nor could times pass by, before Thou madest those times. But if before heaven and earth there was no time, why is it demanded, what Thou then didst? For there was no 'then', when there was no time.

Nor dost Thou by time, precede time: else shouldest Thou not precede all times. But Thou precedest all things past, by the sublimity of an ever-present eternity; and surpassest all future because they are future, and when they come, they shall be past; but Thou art the Same, and Thy years fail not. Thy years neither come nor go; whereas ours both come and go, that they all may come. Thy years stand together, because they do stand; nor are departing thrust out by coming years, for they pass not away; but ours shall all be, when they shall no more be. Thy years are one day; and Thy day is not daily, but To-day, seeing Thy To-day gives not place unto to-morrow, for neither doth it replace yesterday. Thy To-day, is Eternity; therefore didst Thou beget The Coeternal, to whom Thou saidst, This day have I begotten Thee. Thou hast made all things; and before all times Thou art: neither in any time was time not.

Dante Alighieri, 'Inferno', from *La divina commedia* (*The Divine Comedy*), c. 1306-1321, V, 121-123

nessun maggior dolore
che ricordarsi del tempo felice
ne la miseria.

[There is no greater sorrow than to recollect happy time in misery.]

Leon Battista Alberti, from *I libri della famiglia* (*The Books of Family*), c. 1440

Giannozzo: Tre cose sono quelle le quale uomo può chiamare sue proprie: ... la fortuna ... il corpo ...
Lionardo: La terza quale sarà?
Giannozzo: Ha! cosa pretiosissima. Non tanto sono mie queste mani et questi occhi.
Lionardo: Maraviglia! Che cosa sia questa?
Giannozzo: Non si può legare, non diminuirla; non in modo alcuno può quella essere non tua, pure che tu la voglia essere tua.
Lionardo: E a mia posta sarà d'altrui?
Giannozzo: E quando vorrai sarà non tua. El tempo, Lionardo mio, el tempo, figliuoli miei.

[*Giannozzo*: There are three things which a man can truly call his own. ... fortune … the body ...
Lionardo: And what is the third?
Giannozzo: Ha! A most precious thing! My very hands and eyes are not so much my own.

Lionardo: Amazing! But what thing is this?
Giannozzo: It cannot be bound, it cannot be lessened; in no way can it be made other than your own, if only you want it to be yours.
Lionardo: And can it belong to another if I wish?
Giannozzo: And when you wish it can be not yours. Time, my dear Lionardo, time, my children.]

François Villon, 'La Ballade des Dames du temps jadis' ('The Ballad of the Ladies of Yore'), c. 1460

Dites-moi où, n'en quel pays,
Est Flora la belle Romaine,
Archipiades, ne Thaïs,
Qui fut sa cousine germaine,
Echo, parlant quant bruit on mène
Dessus rivière ou sur étang,
Qui beauté eut trop plus qu'humaine?
Mais où sont les neiges d'antan?

Où est la très sage Héloïs,
Pour qui fut châtré et puis moine
Pierre Esbaillart à Saint-Denis?
Pour son amour eut cette essoine.
Semblablement, où est la roine
Qui commanda que Buridan
Fût jeté en un sac en Seine ?
Mais où sont les neiges d'antan?

La roine Blanche comme un lis
Qui chantait à voix de sirène,
Berthe au grand pied, Bietrix, Aliz,
Haramburgis qui tint le Maine,
Et Jeanne, la bonne Lorraine
Qu'Anglais brûlèrent à Rouen ;
Où sont-ils, où, Vierge souvraine?
Mais où sont les neiges d'antan?

Prince, n'enquerrez de semaine
Où elles sont, ni de cet an,
Que ce refrain ne vous remaine:
Mais où sont les neiges d'antan?

'The Ballad of Dead Ladies', translated by Dante Gabriel Rossetti in *Poems*, 1870

TELL me now in what hidden way is
  Lady Flora the lovely Roman?
Where 's Hipparchia, and where is Thais,
  Neither of them the fairer woman
  Where is Echo, beheld of no man,
Only heard on river and mere,—
  She whose beauty was more than human?…
But where are the snows of yester-year?

Where 's Héloise, the learned nun,
  For whose sake Abeillard, I ween,
Lost manhood and put priesthood on?
  (From Love he won such dule and teen!)
  And where, I pray you, is the Queen
Who will'd that Buridan should steer
  Sew'd in a sack's mouth down the Seine?…
But where are the snows o yester-year?

White Queen Blanche, like a queen of lilies,
  With a voice like any mermaiden,—
Bertha Broadfoot, Beatrice, Alice,
  And Ermengarde the lady of Maine,—
  And that good Joan whom English-men
At Rouen doom'd and burn'd her there,—
  Mother of God, where are they then?…
But where are the snows of yester-year?

Nay, never ask this week, fair lord,
  Where they are gone, nor yet this year,
Save with thus much for an overword,—
  But where are the snows of yester-year?

Francesco Petrarca, 'La vita fugge, et non s'arresta una hora' ('Life flies and never halts an hour'), from *Canzoniere* (first printed in 1470), CCLXXII

La vita fugge, et non s'arresta una hora,
et la morte vien dietro a gran giornate,
et le cose presenti et le passate
mi dànno guerra, et le future anchora;
e 'l rimembrare et l'aspettar m'accora,

or quinci or quindi, sì che 'n veritate,
se non ch'ì ò di me stesso pietate,
ì sarei già di questi penser' fòra.

Tornami avanti, s'alcun dolce mai
ebbe 'l cor tristo; et poi da l'altra parte
veggio al mio navigar turbati i vènti;

veggio fortuna in porto, et stanco omai
il mio nocchier, et rotte arbore et sarte,
e i lumi bei che mirar soglio, spenti.

[Life flies, and never halts an hour,
and death comes behind at a swift pace,
and present and past things
wage war on me, and future things as well.

and remembrance and expectation grieve me
on this side and on the other, so that, in truth,
if I did not pity myself,
I would already be freed of all these thoughts.

The sweetness that my sad heart knew
I remember; but, from another side,
I see my sailing troubled by the winds;

I see no chance of harbour, weary my helmsman,
broken my masts and ropes,
and the beautiful stars I was wont to admire, quenched.]

Pierre de Ronsard, 'Je vous envoi un bouquet que ma main' ('I send to you a bouquet which my hand'), from *Continuation des Amours*, 1555

Je vous envoie un bouquet que ma main
Vient de trier de ces fleurs épanouies;
Qui ne les eût à ce vêpre cueillies
Chutes à terre elles fussent demain.

Cela vous soit un exemple certain
Que vos beautés bien qu'elles soient fleuries
En peu de temps cherront toutes flétries
Et comme fleurs périront tout soudain.

Le temps s'en va, le temps s'en va, ma Dame,
Las! le temps non, mais nous, nous en allons,
Et tôt serons étendus sous la lame;

Et des amours desquelles nous parlons,
Quand serons morts, n'en sera plus nouvelle;
Pour ce, aimez-moi cependant qu'êtes belle.

[I send to you a bouquet which my hand
Has just selected from those blooming flowers;
Which, had they not been cut this evening,
Would have fallen to earth tomorrow.

Let this be to you a clear example
That your beauty, though now in full blossom,
In a short while will be withered away
And like flowers will perish of a sudden.

Time flies away, Time flies away, my Lady
Alas! time does not go away but we, we do
And soon we'll be stretched under its blade;

And this love of which we are speaking
When we are dead will be no longer new;
And, therefore, love me, even though you are beautiful.]

Pierre de Ronsard, 'Quand vous serez bien vieille' ('When you will be very old'), from *Sonnets pour Hélène,* 1578

Quand vous serez bien vieille, au soir à la chandelle,
Assise auprès du feu, dévidant et filant,
Direz chantant mes vers, en vous émerveillant :
'Ronsard me célébrait du temps que j'étais belle.'

Lors vous n'aurez servante oyant telle nouvelle,
Déjà sous le labeur à demi sommeillant,
Qui au bruit de Ronsard ne s'aille réveillant,
Bénissant votre nom de louange immortelle.

Je serai sous la terre, et fantôme sans os
Par les ombres myrteux je prendrai mon repos;
Vous serez au foyer une vieille accroupie,

Regrettant mon amour et votre fier dédain.
Vivez, si m'en croyez, n'attendez à demain:
Cueillez dès aujourd'hui les roses de la vie.

A free paraphrase by William Butler Yeats, 'When You are Old', from *The Rose*, 1893

When you are old and grey and full of sleep,
And, nodding by the fire, take down this book,
And slowly read, and dream of the soft look
Your eyes had once, and of their shadows deep.
How many loved your moments of glad grace
And loved your beauty with love false or true,
But one man loved the pilgrim soul in you,
And loved the sorrows of your changing face.
And bending down beside the glowing bars,
Murmur, a little sadly, how Love fled
And paced upon the mountain overhead
And hid his face amid a crowd of stars.

William Shakespeare, sonnet 60 (first printed in 1609)

Like as the waues make towards the pibled shore,
So do our minuites hasten to their end,
Each changing place with that which goes before,
In sequent toile all forwards do contend.
Natiuity once in the maine of light,
Crawles to maturity, wherewith being crown'd,
Crooked eclipses gainst his glory fight,
And time that gaue, doth now his gift confound.
Time doth transfixe the florish set on youth,
And delues the paralels in beauties brow,
Feedes on the rarities of natures truth,
And nothing stands but for his sieth to mow.
  And yet to times in hope, my verse shall stand
  Praising thy worth, dispight his cruell hand.

The King James Bible, 1611; Ecclesiastes 3: 1-22

To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:
2 A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted;
3 A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up;

4 A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;
5 A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;
6 A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away;
7 A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;
8 A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.
9 What profit hath he that worketh in that wherein he laboureth?
10 I have seen the travail, which God hath given to the sons of men to be exercised in it.
11 He hath made every thing beautiful in his time: also he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end.
12 I know that there is no good in them, but for a man to rejoice, and to do good in his life.
13 And also that every man should eat and drink, and enjoy the good of all his labour, it is the gift of God.
14 I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before him.
15 That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been; and God requireth that which is past.
16 And moreover I saw under the sun the place of judgment, that wickedness was there; and the place of righteousness, that iniquity was there.
17 I said in mine heart, God shall judge the righteous and the wicked: for there is a time there for every purpose and for every work.
18 I said in mine heart concerning the estate of the sons of men, that God might manifest them, and that they might see that they themselves are beasts.
19 For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast: for all is vanity.
20 All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again.
21 Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?
22 Wherefore I perceive that there is nothing better, than that a man should rejoice in his own works; for that is his portion: for who shall bring him to see what shall be after him?

Andrew Marvell, 'To His Coy Mistress', 1681

Had we but world enough and time,
This coyness, lady, were no crime.
We would sit down, and think which way

To walk, and pass our long love's day.
Thou by the Indian Ganges' side
Shouldst rubies find; I by the tide
Of Humber would complain. I would
Love you ten years before the flood,
And you should, if you please, refuse
Till the conversion of the Jews.
My vegetable love should grow
Vaster than empires and more slow;
An hundred years should go to praise
Thine eyes, and on thy forehead gaze;
Two hundred to adore each breast,
But thirty thousand to the rest;
An age at least to every part,
And the last age should show your heart.
For, lady, you deserve this state,
Nor would I love at lower rate.
But at my back I always hear
Time's wingèd chariot hurrying near;
And yonder all before us lie
Deserts of vast eternity.
Thy beauty shall no more be found;
Nor, in thy marble vault, shall sound
My echoing song; then worms shall try
That long-preserved virginity,
And your quaint honour turn to dust,
And into ashes all my lust;
The grave's a fine and private place,
But none, I think, do there embrace.
Now therefore, while the youthful hue
Sits on thy skin like morning dew,
And while thy willing soul transpires
At every pore with instant fires,
Now let us sport us while we may,
And now, like amorous birds of prey,
Rather at once our time devour
Than languish in his slow-chapped power.
Let us roll all our strength and all
Our sweetness up into one ball,
And tear our pleasures with rough strife
Through the iron gates of life:
Thus, though we cannot make our sun
Stand still, yet we will make him run.

Vincenzo Viviani on Galileo Galilei

Vincenzo Viviani, an important mathematician, became Galileo's assistant in 1639, at the age of 17. He edited the first collected edition of Galileo's works (1655-1656) and acted as his first biographer (1654). In a letter to Prince Leopoldo dei Medici written in 1654, seventeen years after Galileo's death, he recounts that, by observing the oscillation of a chandelier in Pisa cathedral, Galileo noticed that the time the lamp took to swing back and forth was independent of the amplitude of the oscillation, and that he used his pulse beat to measure the time span of the swinging lamp. Galileo wrote about this isochronism in 1602.

Vincenzo Viviani, from *Racconto historico della vita del Sig^r Galileo* (a letter to Prince Leopoldo dei Medici, written in 1654, first printed in 1717)

Around that time [when he was completing his studies in Pisa], with the brilliance of his genius he invented that most simple and regular measure of time that derives from the pendulum, never noticed by anyone before, based on the observation of a chandelier's motion in the cathedral of Pisa; and, testing that motion with the most exact experiments, he verified the equivalence of its oscillations; and then he thought that it could be employed in medical practice for measuring of the pulse rate, to the wonder and delight of the doctors of the time, and as today is commonly practised; and that invention he then applied to various experiments and measurings of times and motions, and he was the first to apply it to the observation of stars, with great advancement of astronomy and geography.

Laurence Sterne, from *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*, 1759

I am this month one whole year older than I was this time twelve-month; and having got, as you perceive, almost into the middle of the fourth volume – and no farther than to my first day's day – 'tis demonstrative that I have three hundred and sixty-four more days to write just now, than when I first set out; so that instead of advancing, as a common writer, in my work with what I have been doing at it – on the contrary, I am just thrown so many volumes back – was every day of my life to be as busy as this – And why not? – and the transactions and opinions of it to take up as much description – And for what reason should they be cut short? at this rate I should just live 364 times faster than I should write – It must follow, an' please your worships, that the more I write, the more I shall have to write – and consequently, the more your worships read, the more your worships will have to read.

John Keats, 'Ode on a Grecian Urn', 1819

Thou still unravish'd bride of quietness,
Thou foster-child of silence and slow time,
Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:
What leaf-fring'd legend haunts about thy shape
Of deities or mortals, or of both,
In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?
What men or gods are these? What maidens loth?
What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?
What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;
Not to the sensual ear, but, more endear'd,
Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone:
Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave
Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;
Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,
Though winning near the goal yet, do not grieve;
She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,
For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!

Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed
Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu;
And, happy melodist, unwearied,
For ever piping songs for ever new;
More happy love! more happy, happy love!
For ever warm and still to be enjoy'd,
For ever panting, and for ever young;
All breathing human passion far above,
That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloy'd,
A burning forehead, and a parching tongue.

Who are these coming to the sacrifice?
To what green altar, O mysterious priest,
Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,
And all her silken flanks with garlands drest?
What little town by river or sea shore,
Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,
Is emptied of this folk, this pious morn?

And, little town, thy streets for evermore
Will silent be; and not a soul to tell
Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.

O Attic shape! Fair attitude! with brede
Of marble men and maidens overwrought,
With forest branches and the trodden weed;
Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thought
As doth eternity: Cold Pastoral!
When old age shall this generation waste,
Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,
'Beauty is truth, truth beauty,—that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.'

Charles Baudelaire, 'L'Ennemi' ('The Enemy'), from *Les fleurs du mal*, 1857

Ma jeunesse ne fut qu'un ténébreux orage,
Traversé çà et là par de brillants soleils;
Le tonnerre et la pluie ont fait un tel ravage,
Qu'il reste en mon jardin bien peu de fruits vermeils.

Voilà que j'ai touché l'automne des idées,
Et qu'il faut employer la pelle et les râteaux
Pour rassembler à neuf les terres inondées,
Où l'eau creuse des trous grands comme des tombeaux.

Et qui sait si les fleurs nouvelles que je rêve
Trouveront dans ce sol lavé comme une grève
Le mystique aliment qui ferait leur vigueur?

– Ô douleur! ô douleur! Le Temps mange la vie,
Et l'obscur Ennemi qui nous ronge le cœur
Du sang que nous perdons croît et se fortifie!

[My youth was but a dark tempest,
Crossed, here and there, by the shot of a brilliant sun
The thunder and the rain have made such a ravage
That my garden is nearly bare of ripe fruits.

Now I have reached the autumn of ideas,
And I must toil with spade and rake
To gather again the flooded soil
Where the water has dug holes as big as graves.

And who knows if the young flowers that I dream of
Will find in this ground washed like a strand
The mystic nourishment that would give them vigour?

Alas! Alas! Time devours our life,
And the dark Enemy that gnaws our heart
On the blood we lose will grow and get strength!]

Arthur Rimbaud, 'Le buffet' ('The Cupboard'), composed in 1870

C'est un large buffet sculpté; le chêne sombre,
Très vieux, a pris cet air si bon des vieilles gens;
Le buffet est ouvert, et verse dans son ombre
Comme un flot de vin vieux, des parfums engageants;

Tout plein, c'est un fouillis de vieilles vieilleries,
De linges odorants et jaunes, de chiffons
De femmes ou d'enfants, de dentelles flétries,
De fichus de grand'mère où sont peints des griffons;

- C'est là qu'on trouverait les médaillons, les mèches
De cheveux blancs ou blonds, les portraits, les fleurs sèches
Dont le parfum se mêle à des parfums de fruits.

- O buffet du vieux temps, tu sais bien des histoires,
Et tu voudrais conter tes contes, et tu bruis
Quand s'ouvrent lentement tes grandes portes noires.

[It is a large carved cupboard of dark oak
Very old, it has taken on the good aspect of old people;
The cupboard is open, and its shade gives off,
Like a stream of old wine, engaging perfumes;

Full, it is a mess of old oldities,
Of linen perfumed and yellowish, of rags,
Women's or babies', of withered lace,
Of grandmas' shawls embroidered with griffons;

- There you will find the medals, the locks
Of white or blonde hair, the photos, the dry flowers
Whose scent is mingled with fruits' scents.

- Oh cupboard of old times, you know so many stories,
And you would like to tell your tales, and you creak
When your big black doors slowly open.]

Emily Dickinson, from *Complete Poems*, 1890

Part Four: Time and Eternity

XXVII

Because I could not stop for Death,
He kindly stopped for me;
The carriage held but just ourselves
And Immortality.

We slowly drove, he knew no haste,
And I had put away
My labor, and my leisure too,
For his civility.
We passed the school where children played
At wrestling in a ring;
We passed the fields of gazing grain,
We passed the setting sun.
Or rather – He passed Us –
The Dews drew quivering and chill –
For only Gossamer, my Gown –
My tippet – only Tulle –

We paused before a house that seemed
A swelling of the ground;
The roof was scarcely visible,
The cornice but a mound.

Since then 't is centuries; but each
Feels shorter than the day
I first surmised the horses' heads
Were toward eternity.

Ford Madox Ford, from *The Good Soldier*, 1915

I have, I am aware, told this story in a very rambling way so that it may be difficult for anyone to find their path through what may be a sort of maze. I cannot help it. I have stuck to my idea of being in a country cottage with a silent listener, hearing between the gusts of the wind and amidst the noises of the distant sea, the story as it comes. And, when one discusses an affair –

a long, sad affair – one goes back, one goes forward. One remembers points that one has forgotten, and one explains them all the more minutely since one recognizes that one has forgotten to mention them in their proper places and that one may have given, by omitting them, a false impression. I console myself with thinking that this is a real story and that, after all, real stories are probably told best in the way a person telling a story would tell them. They will then seem most real.

Ferdinand de Saussure, from *Cours de linguistique générale* (*Course in General Linguistics*), 1916

If words were appointed to represent previously established concepts, each of them would have in all languages its exact correspondence as regards their meaning; but this is not the case.

...

Inflection offers particularly striking examples. The distinction of tenses, which is familiar to us, is alien to certain languages; Hebrew does not even know the fundamental distinction between past, present and future. Early German does not have a distinct form for the future; when one says that it expresses the future by the present, one affirms something that is inaccurate, for the value of the present tense is not the same in Early German as the one it has in those languages which possess a future tense in addition to a present. Slavic languages regularly distinguish between two aspects of the verb: the 'fectif' represents action in its entirety, as a point within a whole flux; the imperfect shows the action in its development, situated on the temporal line. These categories are difficult to understand for the French, because their language ignores them: if they had been predetermined, they would have been understood. In all these cases, we therefore discover, instead of preconstituted *ideas*, the *values* emerging from the system. When we say that they correspond to concepts, we imply that these are purely differential, defined not positively by their content, but negatively by their relationship with the other elements of the system. Thus, their most exact characteristic is that of being what the others are not.

Henri Bergson, from *Durée et simultaneité* (*Duration and simultaneity*), 1922

If I draw my finger across a sheet of paper without looking at it, the movement I perform, perceived from within, is a continuity of consciousness, something of my own flow, indeed, duration. If now I open my eyes, I see that my finger is tracing on the sheet of paper a line that is preserved, where all is juxtaposition and no longer succession; this is the unfolded, which is the record of the result

of movement, and which will also be its symbol. Now, this line is divisible, it is measurable. In dividing and measuring it, I can therefore say, if it suits me, that I am dividing and measuring the duration of the movement that is tracing it.

James Joyce, from *Ulysses*, 1922

Fabled by the daughters of memory. And yet it was in some way if not as memory fabled it. A phrase, then, of impatience, thud of Blake's wings of excess. I hear the ruin of all space, shattered glass and toppling masonry, and time one livid final flame. What's left us then?

Stephen closed his eyes to hear his boots crush crackling wrack and shells. You are walking through it howsomever. I am, a stride at a time. A very short space of time through very short times of space. Five, six: the *nacheinander*. Exactly: and that is the ineluctable modality of the audible. Open your eyes. No. Jesus! If I fell over a cliff that beetles o'er his base, fell through the *nebeneinander* ineluctably! I am getting on nicely in the dark. My ash sword hangs at my side. Tap with it: they do. My two feet in his boots are at the ends of his legs, *nebeneinander*. Sounds solid: made by the mallet of *Los Demiurgos*. Am I walking into eternity along Sandymount strand? Crush, crack, crick, crick. Wild sea money.

Thomas Mann, from *Der Zauberberg* (*The Magic Mountain*), 1924, translated by H.T. Lower-Porter

Space, like time, engenders forgetfulness; but it does so by setting us bodily free from our surroundings and giving us back our primitive, unattached state ...

Time, we say, is Lethe; but change of air is a similar draught, and, if it works less thoroughly, does so more quickly.

The diaries of opium-eaters record how, during the brief period of ecstasy, the drugged person's dreams have a temporal scope of ten, thirty, sometimes sixty years or even surpass all limits of man's ability to experience time – dreams, that is, whose imaginary time span vastly exceeds their actual duration and which are characterized by an incredible diminishment of the experience of time, with images thronging past so swiftly that, as one hashish-smoke puts it, the intoxicated user's brain seems to have something removed, like the mainspring from a broken watch.

No, not of course at all – it is really all hocus-pocus. The days lengthen in the winter-time, and when the longest comes, the twenty-first of June, the beginning of summer, they begin to go downhill again, toward winter. You

call that 'of course'; but if one once loses hold of the fact that it is of course, it is quite frightening, you feel like hanging on to something. It seems like a practical joke – that spring begins at the beginning of winter, and autumn at the beginning of summer. You feel you're being fooled, led about in a circle, with your eye fixed on something that turns out to be a moving point. A moving point in a circle. For the circle consists of nothing but such transitional points without any extent whatever; the curvature is incommensurable, there is no duration of motion, and eternity turns out to be not 'straight ahead' but 'merry-go-round'!

Marcel Proust, 'À la recherche du temps perdu', from *Le temps retrouvé* ('Remembrance of Things Past', *Time Regained,* translated by Stephen Hudson [Sydney Schiff]), Tome VII, 1927

I had a feeling of intense fatigue when I realised that all this span of time had not only been lived, thought, secreted by me uninterruptedly, that it was my life, that it was myself, but more still because I had at every moment to keep it attached to myself, that it bore me up, that I was poised on its dizzy summit, that I could not move without taking it with me.

The day on which I heard the distant, far-away sound of the bell in the Combray garden was a land-mark in that enormous dimension which I did not know I possessed. I was giddy at seeing so many years below and in me as though I were leagues high.

I now understood why the Duc de Guermantes, whom I admired when he was seated because he had aged so little although he had so many more years under him than I, had tottered when he got up and wanted to stand erect – like those old Archbishops surrounded by acolytes, whose only solid part is their metal cross – and had moved, trembling like a leaf on the hardly approachable summit of his eighty-three years, as though men were perched upon living stilts which keep on growing, reaching the height of church-towers, until walking becomes difficult and dangerous and, at last, they fall. I was terrified that my own were already so high beneath me and I did not think I was strong enough to retain for long a past that went back so far and that I bore within me so painfully. If at least, time enough were alloted to me to accomplish my work, I would not fail to mark it with the seal of Time, the idea of which imposed itself upon me with so much force to-day, and I would therein describe men, if need be, as monsters occupying a place in Time infinitely more important than the restricted one reserved for them in space, a place, on the contrary, prolonged immeasurably since, simultaneously touching widely separated years and the distant periods they have lived through – between which so many days have ranged themselves – they stand like giants immersed in Time.

T.S. Eliot, from 'Burnt Norton', *The Four Quartets*, 1943

Time present and time past
Are both perhaps present in time future
And time future contained in time past.
If all time is eternally present
All time is unredeemable.
What might have been is an abstraction
Remaining a perpetual possibility
Only in a world of speculation.
What might have been and what has been
Point to one end, which is always present.
Footfalls echo in the memory
Down the passage which we did not take
Towards the door we never opened
Into the rose-garden. My words echo
Thus, in your mind.
But to what purpose
Disturbing the dust on a bowl of rose-leaves
I do not know.

Jorge Luis Borges, from 'Nueva refutación del tiempo' ('A new refutation of time'), in *Otras inquisiciones*, 1952

Let us consider a life throughout whose course repetitions abound: mine, for instance. I never pass before the Recoleta without recalling that my father, my grandparents and my great-grandparents are buried there, just as I myself will be; then I recall having recalled the same thing innumerable times; I cannot walk through the suburbs in the loneliness of the night without recalling that the night pleases us because it suppresses useless details as our memory does; I cannot lament the loss of a love or of a friendship without musing on the fact that you lose only what you have not really had; every time I cross one of the street corners in the southern part of the city I think of you, Helena; every time the wind brings a scent of eucalyptus, I think of Androgué, when I was a child; every time I recall fragment 91 from Heraclitus: you will never go two times down the same river, I admire his dialectical skill, because the ease with which we accept the first thought ('the river is different') clandestinely imposes the second ('I am different'), and allows us the illusion that we invented it; every time I hear a Germanophile vituperate Yiddish, I reflect on the fact that Yiddish is, in the first place, a German dialect, scarcely coloured by the Holy Spirit. These tautologies (and others I do not mention) make up my whole life. Naturally,

they are not repeated in the same way; there are differences of emphasis, of temperature, of light, of general physiological condition. I suspect, however, that the number of variations is not infinite: we may postulate, in the mind of an individual (or of two individuals who do not know each other, but in whose minds the same process operates), two identical moments. Once we postulate this sameness, we may ask: are not these identical moments the same moments? Is not *only one repeated moment* enough to throw the time sequence off balance? Are not those enthusiasts who devote themselves to Shakespeare become, literally, Shakespeare?

...

Time is the substance I am made of. Time is a river which sweeps me away, but I am the river; it is a tiger which destroys me, but I am the tiger; it is a fire which consumes me, but I am the fire.

John Cage, 4'33'', 1952

On February 28, 1948, in a speech he gave at the Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, NY, John Cage spoke for the first time of what would become his most famous composition. He said that he meant to compose a piece of three or four minutes of uninterrupted silence, that would be entitled 'Silent Prayer'.

4'33'' was composed in 1952. It was represented as an empty score divided into three movements, composed, as the score said, for any musical instrument or any ensemble, in which the only direction for the performers is 'tacet'. The sound is deleted and the music is produced by the noises of the surrounding ambient, those, either voluntary or unvoluntary, made by the performer, or by the audience.

The original version of the score was composed in 1950, when Cage was teaching at the Black Mountain College, and its first performer was pianist David Tudor at Woodstock, NY, on August 29, 1952.

The score of 4'33'' occupies two facing pages of a Folio folder. On the left hand face is the author's hand-written brief introduction:

> NOTE: THE TITLE OF THIS WORK IS THE TOTAL LENGTH IN MINUTES AND SECONDS OF ITS PERFORMANCE. AT WOODSTOCK, N.Y., AUGUST 29.1952, THE TITLE WAS 4'33'' AND THE THREE PARTS WERE 33'', 2'40'', AND 1'20''. IT WAS PERFORMED BY DAVID TUDOR, PIANIST, WHO INDICATED THE BEGINNING OF PARTS BY CLOSING, THE ENDING BY OPENING, THE KEYBOARD LID. AFTER THE WOODSTOCK PERFORMANCE, A COPY IN PROPORTIONAL NOTATIONS WAS MADE FOR IRWIN KREMEN. IN IT THE TIME LENGTHS OF THE MOVEMENTS WERE 3'''', 2'23'', AND 1' 40''. HOWEVER, THE WORK MAY BE PERFORMED BY ANY INSTRUMENTALIST(S) AND THE MOVEMENTS ANY LENGTHS OF TIME.

For Irwin Kremen

The right-hand page, again hand-written, simply reads:

I

TACET

II

TACET

III

TACET

Albert Einstein, from *Relativity*, 1952

Since there exist in this four dimensional structure [space-time] no longer any sections which represent 'now' objectively, the concepts of happening and becoming are indeed not completely suspended, but yet complicated. It appears therefore more natural to think of physical reality as a four dimensional existence, instead of, as hitherto, the evolution of a three dimensional existence.

Fernand Braudel, from 'Histoire et sciences sociales: la longue durée' ('History and social sciences: The long duration'), in *Annales. Economies, Sociétés, Civilisations* 13, 4, 1958

All historical work decomposes the past, chooses among chronological realities, according to more or less conscious preferences and exclusivities. Traditional history, paying attention to short time, to individuals, to the event made us, a long time ago, accustomed to its hurried, dramatic, short-of-breath time.

The new economic and social history foregrounds the oscillation of cycles, and aims at its duration: it deals with the appearance, and indeed the reality of the rising and falling of prices. There is also today, next to narration (or traditional 'recitative'), a recitative of the conjuncture which considers the past over large time spans of ten, twenty or fifty years.

Much beyond this second recitative, an even more ample kind of history – one dealing with centuries – is located: history of long, even very long, duration. The formula, either good or bad, has become familiar to me to describe what François Simiand, one of the first after Paul Lacombe, would have called

histoire événementielle. But these formulas are not important; in any case, it is from one to the other, from one focal point to the other in time, from what is instantaneous to what is of long duration, that our argument is going to develop.

These words, however, are not absolutely certain; and so is the word 'event'. On my part, I would confine it to a corner, imprison it in the short duration: the event is explosive, 'nouvelle sonnante', as they put it in the sixteenth century. It fills up the conscience of our contemporaries with its abusive smoke, but it does not last, its flame is scarcely seen. Philosophers would no doubt tell us that this means to empty the word of a great part of its meaning. An event, strictly speaking, can be charged with a number of meanings and supports; sometimes it bears witness to deep movements and, by the contrived or genuine play of 'causes' and 'effects', endeared by the historians of the past, it appropriates a time longer than its duration. Endlessly extendible, it connects itself, either freely or not, to a whole series of events, of underlying realities which cannot be separated the one from the other.

Gerard Genette, from 'Discours du récit' ('Narrative Discourse'), *Figures III*, 1972

Order

Time of narration?

'Narration is a doubly temporal sequence ... : there is the time of the thing narrated and the time of the narration (the time of the signified and the time of the signifier). This duality not only renders possible all the temporal distortions that are easily encountered in narratives (three years of the hero's life summed up in two sentences of a novel or in a few sequence shots of a "frequentative" montage in film, etc.). More basically, it invites us to consider that one of the functions of narrative is to extrapolate one time scheme from another time scheme'.[2]

The temporal duality so strongly emphasized here, and referred to by German theoreticians as the opposition between *erzählte Zeit* (time of the story) and *Erzählzeit* (time of narration), is a typical characteristic not only of cinematic narrative but also of oral narrative, at all levels of aesthetic elaboration, including the fully 'literary' level of epic recitation or dramatic narration (Theramene's narration ...). It is less relevant, perhaps, in other forms of narrative expression, such as the *roman-photo* or the comic strip (or a pictorial strip, like the predella of Urbino, or an embroidered strip, like Queen Matilda's 'tapestry'), which, while building up sequences of images and thus requiring a successive or diachronic reading, also lend themselves to, and even invite, a kind of global and synchronic look – or, at least, a look

[2] Christian Metz, *Essais sur la signification au cinéma*, Paris, Klinksieck, 1968, 27.

whose direction is no longer determined by the sequence of images. Written literary narration is, in this respect, even more difficult to envisage.

...

Anachronies

To study the temporal order of a story means to compare the order in which events or temporal segments are arranged in the narrative discourse with the order of succession these same events or temporal segments have in the story, if the story order is explicitly indicated by the narration itself, or can be inferred from one or another indirect clue. Obviously this reconstruction is not always possible, and it becomes useless for certain extreme cases like the novels of Robbe-Grillet, where temporal reference is deliberately disrupted. It is just as obvious that in the classical narrative, on the contrary, reconstruction is more often not only possible, because in those texts narrative discourse never inverts the order of events without saying so, but it is also necessary, and precisely for the same reason: when a narrative segment begins with an indication like 'Three months earlier, etc.' we must take into account at the same time the fact that this scene comes *after* in the narration, and that it is supposed to have happened *before* in the story: each of these, or rather the relationship between them (of contrast or of discord), is fundamental to the narrative text, and to suppress this relationship by eliminating one of its members is not only not sticking to the text, but is quite simply killing it.

Jacques Le Goff, from *Storia e memoria* (*History and Memory*), 1977

The basic substance of history is time; chronology, therefore, has for a long time performed an essential role as a leitmotiv and an auxiliary science for history. The main instrument of chronology is the calendar, which far surpasses the historian's scope, since it is primarily the fundamental temporal frame of a society's functioning. The calendar reveals the effort performed by human societies to control natural time, exploit the natural course of thee Moon or the Sun, the seasons' cycle, the succession of day and night. But its most efficacious subdivisions – the hour and the week – belong to

culture, not nature. The calendar is the product and the expression of history: it is linked to the mythical and religious origins of humanity (festivities), to technological and scientific progress (time measuring), to economic evolution (time for work and time for leisure). It manifests the effort of human societies to transform the cyclical time of nature and of myth, of the eternal return into a linear time divided by groups of years: lustre, Olympiad, century, era, etc.

In our time, when data from philosophy, science, individual and collective experience have become relevant to historical research, there

is a tendency to introduce, along with these measurable frameworks of historical time, such notions as duration, lived time, multiple and relative times, and subjective or symbolic times. So, historical time recovers, at a very sophisticated level, the old time of *memory*, which crosses over history and nourishes it.

Paul Ricoeur, from 'Le retour de l'événement' ('The return of the event'), 1992

I would like to say, in conclusion, that this return of the event should not surprise the philosopher who will venture to affirm that historiography does not have exclusive rights on the event; and this is for a fundamental reason: the historian is himself the *agent-patient* of history, in the sense of all that happens to humans and all that humans make happen. In a sense, historiography, rebuilt and narrated by historians, is a part of the actual history which we all build up, which we all withstand, of which we are responsible without completely being its authors. From the point of view of the actual history which concerns all humans, and not only historians, the event happens within the very composition of historical time, where the memory of what has been, the expectation of what is going to be, and the present appearance of what we do and suffer as agents and patients of history are combined. If, in conclusion, the event is unconquerable in the domain of historiography, it is in the first place because it is unconquerable in the domain of the actual history which we, all together, carry on and suffer. By the same token that, for individual conscience, it is in the living present that memory of the past and expectation of the future are retrieved, at the higher level of history it is in the event of the present that what Reinhart Kosellek, in *Vergangene Zukunft*, calls 'the space of experience' – that is, the concern for the future, which provides a directionality to the present itself. I would like to repeat Kosellek's words: 'The space of experience is never sufficient to determine the horizon of expectation'. This is why the event which *appears* combines the two major meanings of the word history: series of events which are going to happen and narration of events by those who, not having lived it, reconstruct it.

Umberto Eco, from *Sei passeggiate nei boschi narrativi* (*Six Walks in the Fictional Woods*), 1994

Many descriptions of objects, characters or landscapes are part of the strategy of narrative delay. The question is, what does the story benefit from them. In an old book of mine on Ian Fleming's James Bond novels, I remarked that in such stories the author presents long descriptions of a golf match, a

car ride, or of a girl's meditations on the sailor that appears on the pack of Player's cigarettes, or of the slow progress of an insect, while he gets rid of the most dramatic events, like an attack to Fort Knox, or the fight with a shark, in a few pages, and sometimes in a few lines. I then concluded that the only purpose of these long descriptions is that of convincing readers that they are reading a work of art, because it is thought that the difference between 'high' and 'low' literature is that the first has a lot of descriptions, while the second 'cuts to the chase' ... Fleming slows down when dealing with the superfluous and speeds up when dealing with the essential because slowing down with the superfluous performs the erotic function of *delectatio morosa*, and because he knows that the stories narrated in a concise way are the most dramatic.

Stephen Hawking, from *A Brief History of Time: From the Big Bang to Black Holes* (updated and expanded tenth anniversary edition, 1996)

The increase of disorder or entropy is what distinguishes the past from the future, giving a direction to time.

If time travel is possible, where are the tourists from the future?

Only time (whatever that may be) will tell.

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