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Contents

Sexual Behaviour Trends among Young People in Malta

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Abstract

This article presents a systematic literature review about the sexual practices of young people who live in Malta. These include surrounding issues such as age at first sexual experience, reasons for engaging in sex, number of sexual partners, contraception use and teenage pregnancy. The systematic literature review is also guided by key elements related to young people's perspectives and knowledge base about sexual rights and sexual health. The review presents and critically explores research based on quantitative samples and also draws on findings from qualitative interviews, observational studies and young people's writings on sexuality issues. The review shows that young people in Malta are exploring and engaging with post-traditional sexual lifestyles in which they are culturally and socially immersed. The review is intended to inform policymakers and practitioners working with young people. It also aims to identify preventive factors that are deemed important for securing young people's sexual health and wellbeing. Finally the article identifies gaps in the literature on sexual behaviour and knowledge among young people in Malta.

Keywords: *sexuality, young people, sexual behaviour, systematic review, sexual health, Malta*

Introduction

Young people's engagement in sexual behaviours and their involvement in romantic relationships are considered normative and an important part of their development across different cultures and social contexts (Van de Bongardt et al. 2015). The recognition of young people's sexual behaviour as an integral part of their development, has led to a global intensification of research on adolescent sexuality (Aggleton et al. 2012). This expansion has led to a broader focus on young people's sexuality that is not limited to potentially risky aspects, but also on positive outcomes associated with sexual experiences during adolescence and emerging adulthood, such as sexual pleasure, satisfaction and happiness. Research about young people's sexual behaviour in Malta and their viewpoints on sexuality issues is also taking ground. This small but

growing body of research revolves around research agendas that concern both its normative and risky aspects. This article presents a systematic review of literature about the sexual practices of young people who live in Malta and their perspectives on a number of issues that are related to sexuality. These include topics on age at first sexual experience, reasons for engaging in sex, number of sexual partners, contraception use and teenage pregnancy. The selection criteria used to determine which studies are included in the review focus on (i) published studies in scholarly journals and books about sexual behaviour trends and perspectives among young people in Malta (ii) unpublished doctoral theses on sexual activity among young people in Malta (iii) research published between 2000-2020. The review includes 35 studies; 21 of which draw on findings from a quantitative sample and 13 studies that adopt a qualitative methodological approach. One study (Bugeja 2010) adopted a mixed methods approach that included data collection from both a quantitative questionnaire and focus groups discussions. All the studies were conducted with informants aged 13-35 years, residing in Malta. Each study was coded according to themes it presented. Relations between codes showed that findings formed four main categories, namely (i) informants' sexual activity and behaviour as reported by them (ii) informants' perspectives on sexuality issues and (iii) informants' knowledge about sexual matters. The review is dependent on the findings of numerous studies that employ various methodological and theoretical approaches. Research bias among the corpus of reviewed literature is not excluded and therefore causal conclusions about the sexuality of young people in Malta are tentative and suggestive. Contradictory conclusions emanating from the reviewed literature also need to be taken into account. The article suggests directions intended to bring forward research in the area of young people's sexuality in a Maltese context.

Sexual Activity

Issues surrounding sexual initiation during adolescence often bring up numerous questions that intrigue young people. This is also the case for Maltese young people. Queries about whether to have sex and thoughts related to sexual expression and possible consequences circulate within student cultures in Maltese schools and are debated through the hidden curriculum (Cassar 2014; Cassar 2017). A major quantitative study about sexual activity and behaviour among 14 and 15 year old students in Malta was published in 2010 by Bugeja. The findings showed that 12.3% of participants had sexual intercourse and the mean age at first intercourse was 14 years old (Bugeja 2010). The review of literature demonstrates that the rate of sexually active young people varies according to gender and age. Among 329 adolescents aged 16 to 18 years, 41% reported having had sexual intercourse (Ministry of Health 2012). The mean age at first sexual intercourse among the respondents aged 16 to 40 years was found to be 18 years (Ministry of Health 2012, p. 31). The main reasons for having sexual intercourse among the 16-18 year old age group were being in love (47.5%),

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knowing it was the next step in the relationship (44.7%) and being old enough (25.4%). The findings also show that 8.3% mentioned giving in to their partner's wishes as the reason for having sex (Ministry of Health 2012). Within the same age group 56.8% claimed to have had one sexual partner in last six months, 20.3% had none and 10.8% stated that they had three to five sexual partners (Ministry of Health 2012). The same study found out that among respondents aged 19 to 29 years, 27.6% reported doing "more sexually than they planned", because of the influence of alcohol and/or drugs (Ministry of Health 2012, p. 30). Male and female Maltese adolescents aged 19-29 years are more likely to disagree with "one night stands" than the younger generation aged 16-18 years, as 32.2% of the former and 27.4% of the latter reported being against casual sex (Ministry of Health 2012, p. 46).

While 44.8% of University of Malta students claimed to be single and had no sexual partners, another 10% reported having 2 sexual partners or more (Cefai, Camilleri 2009, p. 57). Respondents who had at least 2 sexual partners were more likely to be single or dating (Cefai and Camilleri 2009, p. 57). This suggests that the phenomenon of "hooking up" and "nonrelationship sex" is also present among young people in Malta (Manning et al. 2006). More male (25%) than female (19%) young people living in Malta, who are 15 years old, reported having had sexual intercourse according to a study conducted by the World Health Organisation (WHO) (2016, p. 180). Four years later, this rate remained the same for Maltese males (25%) but decreased for females (15%) of the 15 year old age group (WHO 2020, p. 76). With regards to sexually acquired infections 10.2% of Maltese respondents aged 19-29 years reported that they were told by a medical professional that they were infected (Ministry of Health 2012, p. 55). Table 1 shows a summary of quantitative findings during the last two decades.

Table 1: Sexual Activity per Decade

Date	Author	Informants' Age and Sample Size	Results
2000-2010	Cefai and Camilleri 2009	95.1% 25 years or younger 4.3% older than 25 years N=494	(i) 44.8% were single and had no sexual partners (ii) 10% had 2 sexual partners or more (iii) Respondents who had at least 2 sexual partners were more likely to be single or dating
	Bugeja 2010	14-16 years N=1310	(i) 12.3% had sexual intercourse (ii) Mean age at first intercourse was 14 years

Date	Author	Informants' Age and Sample Size	Results
2011-2020	Ministry of Health 2012	16-18 years N= 329	(i) 41% had sexual intercourse (ii) The main reasons for having sexual intercourse: being in love (47.5%), knowing it was the next step in the relationship (44.7%), being old enough (25.4%) and giving in to their partner's wishes 8.3%. (iii) 56.8% had 1 sexual partner in the last 6 months, 20.3% had none and 10.8% had 3-5. (iv) 27.4% were against casual sex
	Ministry of Health 2012	16-40 years N=1200	Mean age at first sexual intercourse was 18 years
	Ministry of Health 2012	19-29 years N=554	(i) 27.6% reported doing "more sexually than they planned", because of the influence of alcohol and/or drugs (ii) 10.2% were told by a medical professional that they had a sexually acquired infection (iii) 32.2% were against casual sex
	WHO 2016	15 years N=645	25% of males and 19% of females had sexual intercourse
	WHO 2020	15 years N=app 1500	25% of males and 15% of females had sexual intercourse

Contraception

Among the Maltese population reliance on natural methods of birth control such as abstinence, the rhythm method and withdrawal has been gradually decreasing

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during the last four decades (Savona-Ventura 2012). Although there has been a gradual shift towards the use of more effective measures of contraception by means of barrier methods among the Maltese population aged 40 years and less (Savona-Ventura 2012), the change in attitude has been slow. More than a decade ago, nearly 50% of students of the University of Malta, who claimed to be sexually active, did not use a condom or used it occasionally or rarely (Cefai, Camilleri 2009, p. 57). Potential risks associated with unplanned pregnancy however, were of concern to other Maltese female students attending a postsecondary school, who shared advice on protecting themselves from unwanted sexual experiences, sexually acquired infections and pregnancy (Cassar 2009). The review of literature consistently shows that contraception use among the Maltese population aged 35 years and less at the time of first sexual intercourse is lower when compared to that in other European countries (WHO 2016; Bugeja 2010; Mifsud et al. 2009). Condom use during the last sexual intercourse among 15 year-old Maltese boys and girls was the lowest among young people from 45 countries in regions across Europe and Canada (WHO 2020, p. 77). Less Maltese girls (33%) than boys (46%) aged 15 years reported having sex with a condom. The prevalence of not using either a condom or contraceptive pill during the last sexual intercourse for Maltese boys and girls combined, was also the lowest (WHO 2020, p. 79). More Maltese girls (61%) than boys (43%) reported not using either of these two methods with their sexual partner (WHO 2020, p. 79). The review of literature shows that there isn't one type of contraceptive method that was used by more than 50% of the young Maltese population. For example with regards to condom use 41% of males and 41% of females (both aged 15 years) stated that they made use of it during their last intercourse (WHO 2016, p. 185). In the same study 5% of 15 year old Maltese females reported that they used the contraceptive pill during the last intercourse and 16% of boys reported it was used when they had sex (WHO 2016, p. 185). In another study among 16-18 year olds about contraception use during the first sexual intercourse, 41.6% used condoms, 36.4% did not use any method at all, 22.1% used withdrawal, 5.2% the contraceptive pill, 1.3% the intra-uterine method and 1.3% the natural family planning method (Ministry of Health 2012, p. 50). A longitudinal qualitative study study covering a two year period, conducted by the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE) among 103 Maltese respondents who were teenage parents, showed that there was a lack of sufficient knowledge among participants on the efficacy and side effects of some contraceptives, who thought that "certain methods are safer than they actually are" (NCPE 2012, p. 15). After the pregnancy, 66% reported that they started using contraceptives, but the remaining 34% stated that they were still risking getting pregnant again, since no contraceptive means were being utilised (NCPE 2012, p. 14). In Malta a medical doctor is not legally obliged to tell the parents of a girl under the age of 16 about her request for the contraceptive pill. Yet 61.3% of 16-18 year old do not know this (Ministry of Health 2012, p. 22). Table 2 shows a summary of findings from quantitative research conducted during the last two decades.

Table 2: Contraception Use per Decade

Date	Author	Informants' Age and Sample Size	Results
2001-2010	Cefai and Camilleri 2009	25 years or younger (95.1%) older than 25 years (4.3%) N=494	32.5% sexually active students never used a condom
2011-2020	Ministry of Health 2012	16-18 years N= 329	(i) 41.6% used condoms (ii) 36.4% did not use any method at all (iii) 22.1% used withdrawal (iv) 5.2% used the contraceptive pill (v) 1.3% the intra-uterine method (vi) 1.3% the natural family planning method 61.3% do not know that a medical doctor is not legally obliged to tell the parents of a girl under the age of 16 about her request for the contraceptive pill.
	WHO 2016	15 years N=645	41% of males and 41% of females used a condom
	WHO 2020	15 years N=app 1500	(i) 46% of males and 33% of females used a condom (ii) 5% of girls and 16% of boys reported the contraceptive pill was used when they had sex (iii) 61% of girls and 43% of boys used neither a condom nor a contraceptive pill during the last sexual intercourse

Teenage Pregnancy and Abortion

The review of literature indicates that the majority of unmarried mothers in Malta are not teenagers. Data collected from the National Statistics Office (NSO) shows that teenage parents in Malta represent less than a third of all unmarried mothers (2011). Compared with earlier decades the number of births pertaining to teenage parents has increased (NSO 2011). In 1960 the total number of teenage unmarried mothers, who were less than 19 years old was only 9. This went up to 250 in 2008 (NSO 2010, p. 25). Of these there were 55 single teenage mothers (1.3%) aged 17 years and younger (p. 23). In 2001, 52.9% of single teenage mothers were less than 18 years old and in 2006 this percentage increased to 67% (NSO 2010, p. 23). In 2010 the fertility rate for Maltese girls aged 15 to 19 years was nearly 0.2% (European Commission 2012). When comparing teenage pregnancy rates in Malta with those of other EU Member States, Eurostat (2010) reports that in Malta there was a small increase in births to teenage parents, while in most Member States there was a decline. The review of literature shows that in Malta stigma attached to teenage parenthood is less prevalent than before and in general family support is still strong (Cutajar 2006; Savona-Ventura 2009; Dibben 2015). Similar to other teenage parents in different countries, those living in Malta reported experiencing financial difficulties. Almost 50% of teenage parents in Malta are classified as working class (NCPE 2012, p. 8). Almost 75% of Maltese respondents who were teenage parents claimed that their salary and their social welfare package were insufficient for them and their child (NCPE 2012, p. 41). Comparative data from different developed countries demonstrates that socioeconomic status is a predominant factor in predicting teenage pregnancy (Singh et al. 2001).

Public and private debates surrounding abortion in Malta are generally laden with discourses of guilt, sin, blame, promiscuity and shame (Dibben 2015). Existing taboos that surround abortion shroud it in secrecies (Cassar 2007; Cassar 2019). The official position of the major political parties in Malta continues to affirm that abortion should not be decriminalised. Only 1% of Maltese respondents of a comparative study among 32 European countries approve the legalisation of abortion (Lottes and Alkula 2011). Nearly three decades ago the younger Maltese generation was already more in favour of decriminalising abortion than older adults (Abela 1991, p. 206). A number of Maltese women travel abroad to undergo abortion. In 2001, legal abortions carried out in England and Wales by Maltese women totalled 57 and 32 of them were aged 25 years and over (NSO 2010, p. 199). In 2002 there were 69 terminations and 30 of them were under 25 years of age (NSO 2010, p. 199). In 2007 there were 69 Maltese women who underwent a legal abortion in England and Wales. The number decreased to 38 the following year. For both 2007 and 2008 the majority of Maltese women who aborted in England and Wales were aged 25 years and older (NSO 2010, p. 199). On average around 60 abortions each year are carried out in England and Wales (Mifsud et al. 2009). These amount to 1.5% of all deliveries

in Malta (Mifsud et al. 2009). A number of Maltese women travel to other European countries to terminate unwanted pregnancies (Mifsud et al. 2009). Table 3 shows a summary of quantitative findings per decade.

Table 3: Teenage Pregnancy and Abortion

Date	Author	Results
2001-2010	Mifsud et al. 2009	An average of about 60 abortions (1.5%) each year are carried out in England and Wales.
	NSO 2010	(i) In 2001, 52.9% of single teenage mothers were less than 18 years old and in 2006 this percentage increased to 67%. (ii) In 2008 there were 250 teenage unmarried mothers, who were less than 19 years old. (iii) In 2008 there were 55 single teenage mothers (1.3%) aged 17 years and younger (iv) In 2001 legal abortions carried out in England and Wales by Maltese women totalled 57 and 32 of them were aged 25 years and over. (v) In 2002 there were 69 terminations and 30 of them were under 25 years of age. (vi) In 2007 there were 69 Maltese women who underwent a legal abortion in England and Wales. The number decreased to 38 the following year. (vii) For both 2007 and 2008 the majority of Maltese women who aborted were aged 25 years and older
	Eurostat 2010	In Malta there was a small increase in births to teenage parents, while in most European Union Member States there was a decline.
2011-2020	Lottes and Alkula 2011	1% of Maltese respondents of a comparative study among 32 European countries approve the legalisation of abortion.
	NSO 2011	Teenage parents in Malta represent less than a third of all unmarried mothers.
	European Commission 2012	The fertility rate for Maltese girls aged 15 to 19 years was nearly 0.2%.
	NCPE 2012	(i) 50% of teenage parents in Malta are classified as working class (ii) Almost 75% of Maltese teenage parents claimed that their salary and their social welfare package were insufficient for them and their child.

Sexual Minorities

Legislative and policy developments in the area of sexual minority rights are providing more visibility and equality to persons considered diversely gendered. The civil status of same-sex couples has been aligned to that of married couples and marriage acquired a gender neutral status with an amendment to the Marriage Act (House of Representatives 2017). Yet lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, questioning, intersex plus (LGBTQI+) young people living in Malta still struggle with coming out as they experience social exclusion (Clark 2012). They have inherited a tradition that generally regarded sexual minorities as a threat to religious values and also to the family as a revered institution around which Maltese society revolves. The privileging of heteronormativity had often resulted in social pressures on sexual minority young people to conform to heterosexual roles. Consequently they often shrouded themselves in secrecies, invisibility and silence that closeted their aspirations, desires and needs (Cassar, Grima Sultana 2016, 2017). The review of literature consistently shows that LGBTQI+ young people living in Malta suffered the consequences of discrimination in important areas of their life, such as those related to employment and education and were victimised through appalling physical and emotional abuse (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights 2014; Malta Gay Rights Movement 2003). Maltese LGBTQI+ young people have also been victims of harassment and violence in public spaces (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights 2014). These violent incidents are hardly ever reported to the authorities (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights 2014). None (0%) of the Maltese respondents "who had been a victim of harassment in the past year because of being LGBT reported the last such incident to the police" (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights 2014, p. 100). In Malta "54% of young LGBTI respondents reported suffering psychological harassment during their schooling, whereas 13% reported experiencing physical violence" (Council of Europe 2018, p. 10). Maltese LGBTQI+ young persons keep back from being open about their sexual orientation with their relatives and avoid holding hands with their same-sex partner in public, as they fear victimisation (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights 2014).

For Maltese LGBTQI+ young people, coming out to parents is still an emotional ordeal (Cassar, Grima Sultana, 2016).   Parents' acceptance of their children's sexual orientation in Malta often entail painful experiences marked by anxiety, fear, shame and sense of confusion (Cassar, Grima Sultana, 2017; Cassar, Grima Sultana, 2018). The effects of heteronormative dominance on intimate and sexual relationships are reproduced by students in Maltese schools but these are also actively contested by others who challenge established norms of sexual relations (Cassar 2015). The review of literature also shows that perspectives with regards to LGBTQI+ persons rights are shifting. Whereas an earlier study found out that 66.5% of Maltese adolescents did not consider cohabiting gay and lesbian couples as a family (Inguanez et al. 2012), another study claimed 77% of Maltese citizens believed that the same legal rights

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should be granted to both homo and heterosexual persons (European Commission 2015, p. 3). Table 4 illustrates a summary of quantitative findings from research conducted during the last decade.

Table 4: Sexual Minorities

Date	Author	Results
2011-2020	Inguanez, Gatt and Schembri 2012	66.5% of Maltese adolescents did not consider cohabiting gay and lesbian couples as a family
	European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights 2014	(0%) of Maltese respondents who had been a victim of harassment in the past year, because of being LGBT, reported the last such incident to the police.
	European Commission, 2015	77% of Maltese citizens believed that the same legal rights should be granted to both homo and heterosexual persons
	Council of Europe 2018	(i) 54% of young LGBTI respondents reported suffering psychological harassment during their schooling
		(ii) 13% reported experiencing physical violence

Research Gaps

This section identifies areas that are under-researched. The review of literature indicates that there are no clear results about whether and to what extent the sexual behaviour of young people in Malta is directly related to their perspectives, beliefs and sexual attitudes. Research that studies these links and correlations is largely absent. Additionally research on young people living in Malta who have not yet had sexual intercourse, but have engaged in sexual behaviour in other ways is largely missing. Young people typically follow a progressive sexual trajectory before engaging in intercourse, irrespective of the cultures and places they live in (Hipwell et al. 2010). This study therefore identifies the sexual practices of "technical virgins" (Uecker et al. 2008) as an area for future research. Research on the predictors of the timing of sexual initiation is also lacking. Other gaps in the academic literature concern issues surrounding asexuality, pornography use, sexting, hooking up sex, abortion, hyper-sexualisation of girls and sexual objectification, hyper-masculinisation of boys, use of online dating sites, young adult sex workers and non-monogamous relationships. All these issues intersect with gender, ethnicity, race, sexual orientation and social

class and collate with cultural differences that determine sexual behaviours. These issues are also linked with psychosocial factors associated with sexual behaviours and concerns on body image, self-esteem and ability to self-reflect and evaluate one's sexual behaviour. Research on interpersonal factors associated with the sexual experiences of Maltese young people that are related to family structure, level of education, type of sexuality education received (if any) and peer influences is limited. Young people's sexual activity and behaviour is likely to be similar to that of their peers (Sumter et al. 2009). Perceived peer sexual risk-taking is also related to adolescents' own sexual risk behaviour (Van de Bongardt et al. 2015).

Other important areas that call on the need for further investigation among the Maltese young population concern empirical research on sexual consent and protection from sexually acquired infections. These are directly related to other complex issues which could lead to stigmatising infected partners, mistrust, giving in to social expectations, and safeguarding one's reputation and gender stereotypes. How youth sexuality is understood and lived out is also determined by social displays of young people's sexual activity, as mediated through communication technology and therefore research in this area located in the Maltese context holds paramount importance. There is also a general lack of research on dating violence, sex offending and sexual assault. A study has been identified and it reports one case of date rape and 20 unwanted sexual experiences that occurred among 150 Maltese female students (The Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies 2008, p. 27).

Studies on the sexuality of young persons with a physical and/or intellectual disability are largely missing. Research in this area informs the development of new legislative measures concerning persons with disability and the revision of existing legislation and policies. In Malta, policymaking about the sexuality of young people who have a disability is considered challenging (Azzopardi-Lane, Callus 2014). From a wider perspective, research on sexually inexperienced youth in Malta is also limited. Empirical studies on the accessibility of sexual and reproductive health services by Maltese young people are also lacking in general.

The review of literature presented in this article indicates a need for cross-sectional studies that focus on positive sexual health that is not solely marked by the absence of sexual problems and diseases but also affirm overall wellbeing in relation to the sexuality of Maltese young people. Research on how social and cultural influences impact sexual behaviour and attitudes reveals an intensification of diversity in lifestyles including those related to cohabitation, single teenage parenthood, non-monogamous relationships and non-heteronormative sexual identities. The literature suggests that the sexual activity of young people in Malta is being shaped by globalisation and the influence of western European culture in varying degrees. More than two decades ago there were already signs indicating this direction, as the influence of a strict and traditional sexual morality was waning and gradually giving way "to a more open discourse on sexuality and its ensuing secularisation" (Abela 1998, p. 66). The identified gaps in research as well as the

lack of longitudinal studies point towards a lack of theorization on sexual behaviour trends among young people in Malta, which indicate a fragmented overview of available knowledge. This could however also open up new avenues for much needed research on an aspect of young people's life that I find so fascinating.

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Necrophilia: Notorious yet Obscure

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Abstract

Since time immemorial, necrophilia has presented itself both as a horrifying and a fascinating subject. Its taboo and perversion make it a compelling subject matter for stories, novels and movies. Yet, in spite of its notoriety, it remains relatively under-documented and under-researched

Within various academic spheres. Given its idiosyncratic association with the bizarre, the issue has been primarily explored from a psychiatric and psychological dimension. The issue has been largely overlooked from a legal and criminological perspective. This paper aims to address this lacuna and contribute towards a more inter-and multi-disciplinary analysis of the subject by focussing on the legal aspects of necrophilia. The study utilises comparative and documentary content analysis to examine existing legal frameworks governing sexual offences with a specific focus on necrophilia. The analysis presents the ambiguous findings that despite its unorthodoxy, necrophilia is rarely addressed as an offence on its own right and contrary to expectations, it is generally meted out a more lenient punishment than other forms of sexual offences. The paper highlights that necrophilia, both in its notoriety and ambiguity, presents us with a deviant paraphilia which, although having a far-reaching impact on perpetrators, victims and society in general, still needs to be critically re-examined and adequately addressed.

Keywords: *necrophilia, paraphilia, sexual offences, crime*

Necrophilia: Notorious yet Obscure

Necrophilia is consigned to the most bizarre, morbid and pathological states of human conduct. Its taboo and perversion both horrifies and fascinates. The topic provokes investigation, yet eludes it. Indeed, despite its notorious exposure in fiction - stories, novels and movies - it lacks an adequate theoretical and academic analysis. As with other sexual aberrations, the issue has largely been investigated from a psychological and psychiatric dimension, yet receives little mention in criminological analysis. This allusion is evident in its omission from various domestic legal provisions covering offences of a sexual nature.

This paper aims at addressing this lacuna and contributes towards a more inter- and multi-disciplinary analysis of the subject by focusing on the legal aspects of necrophilia. Thus, the paper aims at providing a further theoretical and academic understanding of this phenomenon whilst promoting more evidence-based practice regarding policy and legislative change, especially in addressing existing lacunae within the Maltese legislative framework. This will be carried out through the examination of how the act of necrophilia remains largely unaddressed as an offence in its own right in a number of jurisdictions and when considered specifically as a criminal offence, it is less severely punished than other forms of paraphilia. Specific reference will be made to the existing frameworks or lack thereof within domestic legislation with the aim of proposing recommendations for the development of adequate legal and psychosocial services to address necrophilia and its multi-factorial impact on both perpetrator and the victim's significant others.

The study utilised comparative and documentary content analysis to examine existing legal frameworks governing sexual offences with a specific focus on necrophilia. It was executed across six countries, each from a different continent: the United Kingdom, Canada, New Zealand, Brazil, South Africa and India, enabling a comparative analysis between these countries and domestic legislation. The findings were subsequently analysed and evaluated to provide insight as to how different countries including Malta, address sexual offences, as compared to necrophilia. Following this introductory note on the aims and objectives of the study, along with the research design adopted, the paper will present an overview of the nature of sexual offences and paraphilia with a specific focus on necrophilia. It will then present the main findings arising from the research whilst proposing a number of policy recommendations to effectively address the issue from a psycho-social and legal perspective.

Sexual Offences: Variance and Ambiguity

Sexual offences have been defined as "acts and behaviours prescribed by the legal statutes of the jurisdiction within which they are enacted" (The Sage Dictionary for Criminology 2012, p. 405). This umbrella term encapsulates many diverse acts including harassment, assault and violence.

The definition implies that sexual offences are neither static nor absolute but are characterised by a wide variance of activities enshrined in socio-cultural and legal ambiguity. The illegality of such acts is often a reflection of the values and culture of the society within which they are set. The decriminalisation of homosexual acts in the 1960s within most Western countries and the criminalisation of marital rape are a manifestation of the changing values within social consciousness (McLaughlin, Muncie 2012). Some offences such as rape (even if the definition of the word varies across cultures) and lust murder are globally considered as forbidden acts that ought

to be sanctioned. However, other forms and aspects of sexual offences can and do differ vastly between countries (Holmes 2002). The presence of consent between all involved parties is generally considered to play a key role in establishing whether an act is to be criminally sanctioned or not. If the individuals involved are of age, cases involving sexual offences often hinge on whether it is proved beyond a reasonable doubt that consent was obtained under duress or was completely absent. However, if any of the parties involved are unable to provide consent either due to being minors, being mentally incapacitated or under the influences of substances etc., consent is generally considered to be absent or limited (McLaughlin, Muncie 2012).

The changing definition of what constitutes a sexual offence often leads to legislative change such as the decriminalisation of a particular act or the criminalisation and/or aggravation of another. Yet, the nature and extent of sexual offences are difficult to assess due to inadequate and distorted statistical data mainly attributed to the dark figure of crime (McLaughlin, Muncie 2012). The taboo and sensitive nature of sexual abuse paired with the victimisation experience often engrossed in power dynamics of domination and subjugation between victim and perpetrator along with aggressive cross-examination commonly found in courtrooms, heavily dissuade victims from reporting their crimes. Those who manage to do so are subjected to insensitive interrogations and invasive investigations, conducted by officers often untrained in working with sexual abuse victims. Furthermore, of the few cases reported, many are retracted and of those who effectively manage to go to court, many are dismissed due to insufficient evidence. Many jurisdictions lack ex officio prosecution and thus depend solely on the victim's willingness to file and press charges.

Paraphilia: Normal or Deviant?

The American Psychiatric Association defines paraphilia as the "intense sexual arousal to atypical objects, situations, fantasies, behaviours or individuals" (Devgun 2013). Paraphilia has also been defined as "psychosexual disorders in which significant distress or an impairment in a domain of functioning results from recurrent intense sexual urges, fantasies or behaviours" (Balon 2013). Although it is an ancient phenomenon, paraphilia has only received academic attention from the twentieth century onwards. The rarity of paraphilias coupled with the associated taboo constitutes a heavily contributing factor for its lack of academic and policy attention.

Aggrawal (2009) estimates that there are around 547 different forms of paraphilia, such as somnophilia, coprophilia, biastophilia, necrophilia, etc. The DSM-V presents specific listings for only eight forms of paraphilia, relating to voyeuristic, exhibitionistic, frotteurism, sexual masochism, sexual sadism, paedophilic, fetishistic and transvestic disorders. Other paraphilias fall under the general category of 'Other Specified Paraphilic Disorders' (American Psychiatric Association 2013). Additionally,

these paraphilia do not exclude one another and often exhibit co-morbidity. Sex often entails issues of power, characterised by domination and subjugation. Somnophilia, the sexual attraction to a person asleep or unconscious, has the helplessness of the victim at its core, the same as necrophilia, which to a certain extent are all linked to biastophilia or sexual arousal to the act of rape, gaining power and dominance over someone less powerful. Thus, these three paraphilias are often found to be interlinked by their urge for dominance and subjugation (Pettigrew 2018). Whilst all paraphilias are considered deviant, some are relegated to a darker pinnacle of deviance. Necrophilia is a case in point.

Necrophilia: A Deviant Paraphilia?

Necrophilia comprises the Greek words 'nekros' and 'philia', the former meaning corpse and the latter meaning love or friendship (Devgun 2013), often defined as 'sexual relations with corpses' (Stein et al. 2010). Historical documentation recounts necrophilia since time immemorial. Coined in 1850 by Joseph Guisban, necrophilia could be traced to ancient times. In Egyptian mythology, the goddess Isis used the severed genitals of Osiris to impregnate herself while in Greek mythology, Achilles had sex with Penthesilea after murdering her on the battlefield (Devgun 2013). It is believed that cremation and the use of solid granite tombs in India and Europe respectively, emerged to prevent any disturbance of graves from necrophiliac intent. In 1901, Victor Antoine Ardisson, nicknamed the Vampire of Muy, was arrested after the police raided his home and found the decaying remains of a three-year-old girl whom Ardisson had used for oral sex. He later explained that he had done so in the hope that the act would enable her to resurrect. Ardisson also exhumed the head of a thirteen-year-old girl and kept it as his bedmate for many years, referring to it as 'my little bride', kissing it and occasionally using it for oral sex (Devgun 2013). A more contemporary example is Gary Ridgway, the Green River Killer, who was found guilty of 49 counts of homicide and necrophilia in 2001. Following his conviction, he confessed to the killing of around 71 women (Devgun 2013). As seen from the examples presented, necrophilia has been ever-present across different time periods and cultural contexts. Moreover, media reportage of such offences such as the stories of Edmund Kemper who decapitated his victims, Ed Gein, a grave-robbing necrophile, Jeffrey Dahmer, a serial killer and cannibal, as well as others, have made such offenders contemporary legends to the extent of almost glorifying their acts (Holmes 2002).

Necrophilia was initially thought to be a rare male perversion, considered as severe as rape and paedophilia (Holmes 2002). Due to its implicit rare occurrence, no data on its prevalence in the general population exists (Milner et al. 2008). The absence of data about necrophilia makes an accurate if not also an approximate analysis of this mental illness and sexual aberration problematic. It is only after the

twentieth century that the issue started being given academic attention through research and through the documentation of sexual paraphilia (Pettigrew 2018). It is often believed that necrophilia is not as rare and uncommon as alleged and that it only appears so because of the absence of reporting and discoveries (Holmes 2002). Even when recognised by law, due to the victim being a dead person, reporting rates are minimal. This can be ascribed to the belief that nobody is harmed by the non-homicidal necrophiles since the molestation involves a corpse rather than an actual living human being, amounting to a 'victimless' crime.

Necrophiles often seek employment in workplaces that grant them the ability to access corpses such as morticians or funeral parlour assistants. These institutions only remain in business as long as grieving relatives trust them; thus such activity may not be reported so as to protect the reputation of the funeral home or hospital. (Holmes 2002). This leads to necrophiliac cases being primarily reported only if they are accompanied by aggravations, thus resulting in the depiction of all necrophiles as violent individuals (Pettigrew 2017).

Necrophilia: Classifying the Unclassifiable

Two main models attempt to explain and categorise necrophilia: the Resnick and Rosman's (1989) model and Aggrawal's (2010) ten classification model. The first of these models splits necrophilia into three groups: necrophilia homicide, regular necrophilia and necrophilic fantasy. Necrophilic homicide is defined by individuals who murder to attain a corpse for their sexual purposes whilst regular necrophilia refers to individuals who are opportunistic and use previously dead bodies for their sexual satisfaction. Finally, necrophilic fantasy refers to individuals who fantasise about having sexual activities with a corpse without physically committing the necrophilic acts. This broad classification encapsulates most necrophilic offenders without being too precise thus giving greater leeway for the classification to be possible, however, the lack of refinement makes it easy for mental health professionals and criminal justice workers simply attribute a title yet much harder to properly process these individuals (Boureghda et al. 2011; Rosman, Resnick 1989).

Aggrawal's (2009) ten-class model presents a more detailed classification by referring to a broader range of necrophiles ranging from: i) Role players / Pseudonecrophilia who are aroused by necrophilic role-playing; ii) Romantic necrophiles, generally comprising grief-stricken individuals who are in denial of the death of loved ones iii) Necrophiliac fantasisers whose sexual fantasies feature the dead; iv) Tactile necrophiles who require contact with a dead person for sexual gratification; v) Fetishistic necrophiles who subject to opportunity and who keep part of the corpse for ensuing sexual activities; vi) Necromutilomaniacs who achieve sexual gratification through mutilation/cannibalism of a corpse; vii) Opportunistic necrophiles whose commission of a necrophilic act is subject to available opportunity,

viii) Regular necrophiles who obtain sexual gratification solely from necrophilic acts, often through the stealing of corpses, ix) Homicidal necrophiles whose necrophilic act follows murder but precedes rigour mortis (warm necrophilia) and x) Exclusive necrophiles who are unable to achieve sexual gratification with living individuals and endeavour to carry out necrophilic acts through any means necessary, be it through theft of a corpse or even to the point of murder.

Contrary to the general media's depiction that individuals with necrophilic tendencies tend to be inherently violent, it is only in the sixth, ninth and tenth categories that the sexual acts are accompanied by physical aggression. However, despite its detailed classification, this model is not without fault, particularly since it does not allow for movement between different categories nor for behaviour which spans across multiple classifications. Aggrawal's system endeavours to offer a scientific method for classifying human behaviour which is difficult to achieve when dealing with the average individual, and thus, even more difficult when assessing unorthodox behaviour such as necrophilia. Likewise, Rosman and Resnick (1989) do not discuss transmission between their categorisations. However, their broader model acts as a trawling net that captures necrophiles who do not necessarily progress in their behaviour without overcomplicating diagnosis with the unnecessary division.

The Ambiguous Findings

The aforementioned definition of sexual offences by the Sage Dictionary of Criminology (2012) highlights that whilst the constitution of a sexual offence may differ significantly across different countries, certain criteria are internationally established. The countries under review all uphold in some way or another law pertaining to sexual offences either through one broad generic law or through several laws governing specific offences. For the scope of this paper, the laws that will be considered will be those that may be applied to the context of verbal, virtual and physical sexual offences.

Within domestic legislation, sexual offences are provided primarily within Malta's Criminal Code (1854) and Article 9 of the Equality for Men and Women Act (2003). Article 198(1) of the Criminal Code (1854) delineates that:

> Whosoever shall engage in non-consensual carnal connection, that is to say, vaginal or anal penetration of a sexual nature with any bodily part, and, or, any object, or oral penetration with any sexual organ of the body of another person shall, on conviction, be liable to imprisonment for a term from six to twelve years:
>
> Provided that penetration with any body part and, or object shall be deemed to be complete by its commencement, and it shall not be necessary to prove any further acts.

In terms of consent, Malta's legislation specifies in sub-article 3 of the same article that consent is to be "assessed in the context of the surrounding circumstances and the state of that person at the time…".

All countries under review concur that consent is required for sexual acts to be legal. However, the definition of consent is not always formalised within a country's legislation, creating ambiguity. This ambiguity regarding issues of consent is particularly evident in cases concerning necrophilia given its victimisation of a dead person who is unable to provide consent.

As will be argued in the following discussion, necrophilia or 'the sexually motivated abuse of a corpse' , is indeed often treated differently from other sexual offences within most countries (Pettigrew 2018). From the countries reviewed, only one legislative framework, that of the United Kingdom, refers specifically to necrophilia as a criminal offence in its own right[1]. The majority of the other legislative frameworks do not explicitly provide for necrophilia, though they uphold provisions which could be applied to cover necrophilic acts. However, given the lack of direct reference to necrophilia as a specific criminal offence, their successful application is largely subjective and discretionary based on the often, wide interpretation of vague terminology such as 'indignity', 'insult' and 'indecency'. Indeed, most of the laws analysed address necrophilia in relation to the violation or loss of dignity of a corpse, as opposed to a sexual offence in its own right. Similarly, the Maltese legislation does not refer specifically to necrophilia, thus providing a legal loophole.

The penalties for both sexual offences and necrophilia are presented in the following table to help create a clearer exposition and comparison of the punishment meted out in the countries under review.

Table 1: Comparison of Penalties

Country[2]	Sexual Assault / Offence/ Harassment/ Rape	Necrophilia/ Indecent Interference
Malta – Criminal Code (1854)	…be liable to imprisonment for a term from six to twelve years	n/a
United Kingdom - Sexual Offences Act (2003)	3.4 (b) imprisonment for a term not exceeding 10 years.	70.2 (b) imprisonment for a term not exceeding 2 years.
New Zealand - Crimes Amendment Act (2005) And Criminal Code (1961)	128B.1 o imprisonment for a term not exceeding 20 years.	150. imprisonment for a term not exceeding 2 years…

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1   The UK's legislation however limits this to cases of penetration, despite Aggrawal's (2010) view that necrophilia is most often a result of an oral fixation.

2   South Africa is not included in this comparative analysis due to its utilisation of the case law system.

Canada – Criminal Code (1985)	266.(a) imprisonment for a term not exceeding five years	180.1 imprisonment for a term of not more than two years…
Brazil – Penal Code (1940)	213. - imprisonment, from 6 (six) to 10 (ten) years	212. detention, from one to three years, plus fine
South Africa	n/a	n/a
India – Penal Code	354A.2 … imprisonment for a term which may extend to three years, or with fine, or with both.	297. imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to one year, or with fine, or with both.
Average Maximum PENALTY[3]	10 years	2 years

As observed from the above table, Holmes's (2002) aforementioned claim that necrophilia, once discovered, is considered to be as severe as other sexual offences, implies that it would be treated as harshly or more severely by the criminal justice system. However, this does not occur when presented with the comparison of the average maximum sentences meted out for both offences. The analysis indeed shows that necrophilia is generally attributed to a lesser punishment than other forms of sexual offences. The largest discrepancy is in the case of New Zealand where sexual offences are punished with a maximum of twenty years as opposed to that of necrophilia's two years.

Additionally, no legislative framework takes into consideration the aforementioned classifications of necrophilia, through aggravations, with no distinction for example between opportunistic necrophiles, who would not normally entertain necrophilic thoughts, and homicidal necrophiles who murder to obtain the body. Whilst such offences may be addressed through other criminal charges such as theft occurring through grave robbing or murder due to homicidal necrophilia, the root cause differs, therefore requiring different processing within the criminal justice system. Such distinction is required to be established by law since opportunistic necrophiles are unlikely to seek out these opportunities and therefore would not require the same rehabilitation nor are they subjected to the same punitive sanctions as homicidal necrophiles.

The findings of this research highlight that due to various reasons ranging from taboo, the rarity of occurrence and lack of reporting, prosecution and conviction, as well as its perception of a victimless crime, necrophilia is not given adequate attention, resulting in legislative lacuna and lack of service provision (Boureghda et al. 2011). This calls for adequate policy attention to address not only the legal lacunae but also the emergent socio-psychological dimensions arising from such a phenomenon.

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3   Due to the varying degrees of possible punishments that may be meted out, the maximum sentence for all was utilised to create uniformity.

Addressing the Un-addressable

Adequate measures to address the lacuna within domestic legislation and service provision need to be preceded by a mature discussion regarding sexual offences, paraphilia and even necrophilia. Without the generation of public concern on such topics, it is highly unlikely that policymakers will address these issues. Such a discussion would also require that sexual and mental health, with all their facets, are no longer considered a taboo area, which may hinder those who need advice or treatment for their sexual proclivities to seek help.

Given its entrenchment in power issues, adequate service provision dealing with perpetrators of sexual violence and abuse need also to uphold experts on necrophilia and other forms of paraphilia. This knowledge and understanding would enable them to better identify potential perpetrators and provide the relevant professional treatment to necrophilic offenders. As in the case of other sexual offenders, risk assessment is pivotal both within a custodial and a community-based context in order to limit any risk of further offences. Victim support ought to be provided to the family and to the loved ones of the victim due to the potential trauma that may be inflicted in knowing that one's loved one's peaceful rest was disturbed.

The comparative analysis of punitive sanctions relating to sexual offences suggests that while certain paraphilia such as paedophilia are heavily sanctioned, which under Maltese legislation carries a punishment of six to up ten years imprisonment (Article 203 of the Criminal Code), necrophilia is considered as a less grievous offence. It is rarely tackled on its own merits but often addressed as an offshoot of other offences such as indecency, mishandling, indignity or abuse of corpses. It is thus recommended that specific legal provisions proscribing necrophilia are enacted. This could be established on the framework of an encompassing framework focusing on sexual offences such as the United Kingdom's Sexual Act (2003) which while referring to other sexual offences, also specifically addresses necrophilia under article 70. Despite its limitations arising primarily from its focus on penetrative acts rather than sexual acts in general, which would otherwise allow for the coverage of a broader range of acts, this legislation represents one of the clearest frameworks specifically addressing necrophilia. An encompassing legal framework dealing with sexual offences within Maltese legislation would also provide coverage for other forms of sexual offences and related paraphilia.

Moreover, in addition to these policy recommendations, further and ongoing research needs to be sustained on the nature, extent, and development of paraphilia and their manifestations in both the local and international context with the intention that the currently existing policy and legislative lacunae are adequately addressed.

This research may serve as a basis for further research on the potential presence of paraphilic offenders on the Maltese islands, as well as to what treatment would work in the rehabilitation of such offenders. Additionally, the question emerged as to whether paraphilic tendencies, like other characteristic traits, can be found across

different generations of the same family, and if so, what would be the implications of such findings on the treatment of sexual offenders and that of their families. Finally, the researcher noticed that although there are plenty of models that explain and categorise necrophilia, there are no available tools to help criminal justice personnel charting behavioural progression between these categorisations, thus leading to them not being put into practice in real scenarios. The creation of such a tool would be essential were legislations to employ the use of categorisations when considering what penal policy ought to be utilised.

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The author/s have abided by the ethics regulations and procedures of the Social Wellbeing Faculty Research Ethics Committee (SWB FREC) of the University of Malta.

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Only Two Peas in a Pod: On the Overcoming of Ontological Taxonomies

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Abstract

In his 2016 work entitled *Dante's Broken Hammer*, Graham Harman first coins the term "onto-taxonomy", and proclaims it to be the main nemesis of his "object-oriented" approach to philosophy. The term has however rarely appeared in the absolute majority of his subsequent works, and has also been largely overlooked by thinkers broadly working within and around the field of Object-Oriented Ontology (OOO). In this paper, I propose to make up for this relative neglect in two ways. Firstly, Harman's critique of "onto-taxonomy" is analysed and situated in the context of other prominent critiques, such as those of Martin Heidegger's assessment of "Onto-theology" and Quentin Meillassoux's assessment of "correlationism." Secondly, I shall show how what I believe to be the three fundamental tenets of Harman's philosophical approach are derivable from his critique of "onto-taxonomy."

Keywords: *Graham Harman, Object-Oriented Ontology, Onto-Taxonomy, Contemporary Philosophy, Metaphysics*

In his 2016 book entitled *Dante's Broken Hammer*, Graham Harman first coins the neologism "ontological taxonomy" or "onto-taxonomy", and proclaims it to be the 'main target' of his specific form of "object-oriented ontology" (OOO) (2016a, p. 233). The term, however, only appears in a few pages towards the middle of said text, and has, to date, not been extensively used in almost all of his multifarious publications, with one notable exception being his recently published article entitled "The Only Exit From Modern Philosophy" (2020). The concept has also been largely overlooked by thinkers broadly working within and around the field of triple-O. However, I am of the view that this notion is important and that its relative neglect is unfortunate. For this reason, my aim in what follows shall be to frame Harman's ideas in relation to his critique of "onto-taxonomy," in order to show that the fundamental tenets of his philosophy can ultimately be derived from this account. In order to achieve this goal, I will first survey the evaluation of "onto-taxonomy," situating it in light of other critiques such as those of Quentin Meillassoux's evaluation of "correlationism" and Heidegger's critique of "onto-theology." I shall then proceed to frame this critique in relation to Harman's proposed threefold solution to onto-taxonomical thinking.

Onto-Taxonomical Thought

"Ontology" may be broadly understood to entail the study of Being as such. The term "taxonomy", in turn, refers to a science concerned with demarcation and classification. The neologism "onto-taxonomy" thereby combines each of these terms. It was coined by the American philosopher Graham Harman in order to criticise a deeply entrenched philosophical tendency to postulate a categorical difference – or *taxonomy* – between two exclusive *ontological* domains. The onto-taxonomic gesture may be said to generally proceed in the following manner. It starts off by ringfencing a series of supposedly outstanding traits possessed by a specific kind of being. From this, it then implicitly proceeds to the unwarranted conclusion that such purportedly unique and exceptional features ought to bestow such a being with an extraordinary ontological status which serves to clearly demarcate it from other existents (2016a, p. 230). Harman asserts that Medieval philosophy awarded this privileged status to God, who was endowed with a series of 'empty superlatives' designed to categorically distinguish and detach such a being – the *ultimate* Being – from the rest of His creation (2016a, p. 230). Since the birth of Modern philosophy, this privileged role accorded to God has, however, increasingly shifted toward the human. In its modern and contemporary forms, onto-taxonomy therefore imposes an assumed '*a priori* [...] split between' two fundamental ontological domains. One is earmarked exclusively for human beings (*qua* superior moral and rational agents) and their products (culture, creativity, and technology), while the other is reserved for everything else that is supposedly non-human (e.g. the mechanical or irrational) or does not form part of their unique traits (Harman 2016b, p. 5).

Ontotheology, Ontotaxonomy, and Correlationism

In *Dante's Broken Hammer*, Harman explicitly asserts that his term "onto-taxonomy" is developed 'by analogy' to Martin Heidegger's critique of "onto-theology" (2016a, p. 237). As is well known, Heidegger claims that Western metaphysics 'has eminently been both ontology and theology' or "onto-theo-logy" (2002, p. 54). For him, metaphysics is an *ontology* to the extent that it seeks to identify the most basic kind of being. Simultaneously, it is also a *theology* to the extent that it attempts to give an account 'of the totality of beings as such' by explaining their being in terms of a 'supreme, all-founding being' (Heidegger 2002, pp. 70-71). Stated as precisely as possible, "onto-theology" thus critiques the idea that there is one fundamental kind of entity acting as the foundation of all others. I am however of the view that Harman's critique of onto-taxonomy is broader in its scope, since it essentially critiques positions which postulate at least *two categories* of beings at the basis of Being rather than one. Thus, for instance, Harman is then able to criticise Heidegger

for successfully critiquing the latter position only to inevitably fall prey to the former when he affirms a permanent (cor)relation – or "co-propriation" – between two ultimately distinct domains, namely those of *Sein* (or "Being") and *Dasein* (which, for lack of a better word, may be roughly – yet not unproblematically – translated to "human").

Relative to this, it would be necessary to point out that the various historical forms of onto-taxonomy have either postulated an *a priori fissure* separating humans from everything else, or an *a priori relational bond* between the two. The former position is typical of what I propose to call "gap" onto-taxonomical thinkers such as Descartes and Kant, who postulate a fundamental *chasm* between minds and bodies or noumena and phenomena respectively. The latter position is, in turn, attributed to the various "correlationist" thinkers critiqued by the contemporary French philosopher Quentin Meillassoux in his now seminal work entitled *After Finitude* (2008) and elsewhere (2016). Roughly stated, the term "correlationism" may be taken to refer to various philosophies who proclaim a permanent and privileged relation between humans and everything else, such that it becomes impossible to think Being – or relations between beings – independently of humans and vice-versa (Meillassoux 2008). In spite of the myriad differences between the various "gap" and "correlationist" thinkers, it may nonetheless be said that both are ultimately onto-taxonomical in their persuasion. This is because they mutually start off with the unwarranted assumption that there are two and *only* two distinct realms which either need mediational bridging ("gap onto-taxonomy") or are always already conjoined ("correlational onto-taxonomy"). This last point is crucial and thus requires emphasis, since it hints at important differences between Meillassoux's critique of "correlationism" and Harman's critique of "onto-taxonomy," and it also casts doubt on the extent to which the "Speculative Realist" movement can be characterised as unanimously united in its critique of "correlationism" as has sometimes been claimed (Gratton 2014; Sparrow 2014; Young 2020). To elaborate, Meillassoux states that all forms of "correlationism" entail the claim that 'we only ever have access to the correlation between thinking and being,' rather than to 'either term considered apart from the other' (2008, p. 5). Given the aim and scope of the present paper, I cannot go into great detail about this matter. For the purposes of the current work, it however suffices to note that Meillassoux's specific path beyond "correlationism" involves the "speculative materialist" commitment to the idea that human reason is, in principle, capable of gaining access to a non-correlated Absolute (Meillassoux 2008; Meillassoux 2016; Harman 2013b, p. 25). It may nevertheless be noted that, for Harman, both "correlationism" and Meillassoux's supposed "materialist" passageway beyond the latter in fact remain tethered to onto-taxonomical thinking insofar as they essentially start off by *accepting* the categorical *difference* between thought and being, subject and object, nature and culture, and so forth, 'and merely [want] to show that these two domains are *not as separate* as some people think' (Harman 2016a, p. 239, emphasis added).

From what has been said up to this point, it is clear that Harman rejects the onto-taxonomical belief that humans are 'so utterly different in kind from everything else that they deserve an utterly different ontological category of their own' (2016b, p. 98). Against such a supposition, he argues that any 'distinction between [ontological domains] must be *earned* rather than smuggled in from the seventeenth century as purported self-evident truths' (2016b, p. 98). Of course, Harman does recognise that humans have characteristics which differentiate them from other beings. He mentions high-level thought and speech, the capacity for repression, and the fact that we are historical creatures as examples of such differences (2016a, p. 230). Yet, he also insists that these variances are ultimately only differences in *degree*, and that they therefore '[do] not justify basing ontology on a taxonomical dualism between people on one side and all the trillions of non-human entities on the other' (2016a, p. 230).

The Trouble with Onto-Taxonomic Thought

Harman sees onto-taxonomical thinking as highly problematic for the following three fundamental reasons. Firstly, he claims that the task of ontology ought to be the 'discussion of the features of *all* beings as such' (2016a, p. 230, emphasis added). Taxonomical philosophies nevertheless "short-circuit" this aim by creating a two-tiered ontology which '[decides] in advance that basic ontological structures can be read directly from the seemingly special features of privileged beings' (2016a, p. 231). Secondly, "onto-taxonomy" is said to be thoroughly *anthropocentric* in its scope and persuasion in that it assumes a strict categorical difference between humans and nature, or the cultural and the natural. Finally, "onto-taxonomy" is said to lead to an 'intellectual division of labor' (2016a, p. 231) whereby philosophy is disallowed from being able to discuss inter-objective relations independently of human witnesses; the human sciences are left only to deal with supposedly unique human attributes and affairs, while the discussion of relations between non-human others is left to the hard sciences (2016a, p. 232). Furthermore, "onto-taxonomy" is, in Harman's view, also incapable of properly considering and granting ontological dignity to varied types of technological and social objects as independent forces in their own right (2016a, p. 231).

Having discussed the problem of onto-taxonomy at some length, I will now turn to the question of how Harman's specific form of "object-oriented ontology" (OOO) offers a possible alternative to such thinking. I am of the view that his proposal for a move beyond onto-taxonomy involves three interrelated commitments, which may be said to also form the basis of his thought. I propose to name these three commitments "ontological democracy," "ontological accretionism" and "non-reciprocal entanglement." In what follows, I shall discuss each of these in this order.

Ontological Democracy

Harman's first move beyond onto-taxonomical thinking entails adopting an "ontologically democratic" view. This specific position emphasises on the irreplaceable existence of an indefinite number of singular entities – or what Harman calls "objects" – with each commanding equal dignity *qua* "object" (Harman 2013a, p. 6). Onto-democracy may be said to entail a "flat" sort of ontology (rather than "hierarchical" one, as in onto-taxonomy) which prohibits the premature assumption of any clear-cut tiered distinction between categories of entities. It is therefore a "neutral monism" to the extent that it deems Being to be composed entirely of objects, but also a "pluralism" insofar as it asserts that there is an indefinite number of individual ones (Harman 2009b, p. 279).

It would, however, be important to note that ontological democracy does not involve the claim that all objects are exactly alike and that humans are therefore no better than a pile of discarded garbage. Rather, it involves the commitment to the claim that "all objects are equally objects" and that there is therefore no *a-priori* categorical difference between the being of natural, technological, cultural, or scientific entities; a peanut, my neighbour Paul, COVID-19, a pot, pan, my laptop, a pistol, plutonium, and Poland are all in fact objects in this specific sense. Given this rather expansive catalogue of entities, one might then venture to ask what the criteria for "objecthood" within Harman's specific schema would be.

It may be noted that triple-O gives the term "object" an especially broad scope, taking it to refer to whatever is *ontologically irreducible*. In other words, and in the first instance, anything may be said to be an object as long as it cannot be reduced downward – or "undermined" – into nothing more than its ultimate component pieces, or reduced upward – or "overmined" – into nothing more than its relations and effects on humans or other objects (Harman 2013c). These forms of "mining" in turn constitute OOO's "negative" theses of objects, insofar as they seek to account for what an object *is not*. Nevertheless, Harman's system also identifies more "positive" features of objects. In a nutshell, his model distinguishes between *real* and *sensual* objects (RO and SO). The objects in the former category are said to exist autonomously from their relations, while those in the latter only exist in relation to some other object, whether human or otherwise. Furthermore, he claims that each of these objects exists in tension with its own respective real and sensual qualities (RQ and SQ) (Harman 2011). Together, what I here call the "negative" and "positive" theses of objects constitute the cornerstone of OOO.

In view of all this, it may then be summarily argued that Harman's sense of "objects" includes not only "mid-sized" entities, but also technological and social entities, fictional characters, mathematical objects, events, sets and historical objects. While this most certainly qualifies as what has been labelled a "liberal" construal of "objecthood" (Morelle 2016; Wolfendale 2014), I am also of the view that this "liberal" – or, better, "democratic" – approach would constitute a better

starting point for doing ontology than one based on the premature reduction of some purported class of entities to some more basic root, as is the case with "onto-taxonomies."

Ontological Accretionism

Harman's second move beyond onto-taxonomical thinking entails what I propose to call "ontological accretionism." This involves the rejection of the rigid division between natural substances and artificial aggregates postulated by thinkers such as Aristotle and Leibniz. This is because such a distinction grants the status of substance (or "object") to certain privileged entities at the expense of others, and also creates a hierarchical "two-world" taxonomical theory containing one fundamental layer of basic or natural entities and another derivative layer of relational, artificial, or technological aggregates. It may be noted that Harman rejects such "two-world" positions, since they tacitly involve the "onto-taxonomical" negation of the thesis of "ontological democracy" just discussed.

True enough, Harman claims that there is a sense in which no "object" 'has any parts at all' (2005, p. 93) since each is primarily an infrastructural unity rather than an aggregate sum of parts. Nevertheless, he also argues that every object is, in another sense, also composed of parts and is therefore a '*multiplicity* that is also somehow *one*' (2005, p. 96, emphasis added). In other words, every real object is always fashioned from what Harman calls 'domestic relations' (2009a, p. 135) between its component parts, but nevertheless also '*unifies* [these parts] into an emergent reality which has genuine qualities of its own' (2010b, p. 15, emphasis added). In this context, it is worth noting that Harman draws an 'absolute distinction' (2009a, p. 135) between an object's "domestic relations" and its "foreign relations". The former refers to the relations 'that a thing needs to some extent in order to exist' while the latter refers to 'the external alliances that [an object] does not need' (2009a, p. 135). Nevertheless, Harman claims that a real object is not exhausted by its "domestic" or "foreign" relations; an object is always (relatively) ontologically independent of its "domestic relations" insofar as it *emerges* over and above its constituent parts. It is also ontologically independent of its "foreign relations" insofar as it can reconfigure its alliances with the objects it relates to (Harman 2009a, pp. 135, 188). Thus, Harman argues that all relations – whether domestic or foreign – must ultimately be external to their terms (2009a, p. 188). By way of illustration, an individual hammer is relatively autonomous – or "withdraws" (Harman 2002) – from its external relations with other entities, and therefore acts as a unity 'with respect to its surroundings' (2002, p. 171). Nevertheless, the hammer is itself also 'a relational composite of its internal elements' (2002, p. 171). This, for Harman, in turn means that the hammer itself 'is not located at the basement of the universe at all, since a layer of constituent pieces swarms beneath it, another layer beneath that one, and

so forth' (2011, p. 112), to the effect that all objects are 'decomposable into further [entities] *ad infinitum*' (2002, p. 279). Moreover, Harman adds another important twist to this account by further claiming that 'if every entity is already made up of a set of relations' then it would also follow that 'every relation is also *ipso facto* a new entity' (2002, p. 260). Thus, he essentially claims that when objects 'enter into a genuine relation', the relation itself generates a new real object which 'has an identity and a depth that belongs to neither of its parts, and which is also irreducible to all of its current effects on other entities, or to the knowledge we may have of it' (2005, p. 85). Crucially, some real objects may also be "hybrid entities" which unify a mixture of natural, social, and technological elements. Given the above, it is therefore evident that Harman argues for an *indefinitely*-stratified model in which the actual world is an open system 'made up of objects wrapped in objects wrapped in objects wrapped in objects' (2005, p. 85). It may be further noted that Harman advocates an infinite regress of objects as the only possible alternative to two other models of reality which he regards as untenable, namely those that postulate a *finite* regress of objects – namely classical substance theorists – or *no regress* of objects at all – namely the "philosophies of human access" (Harman 2002, p. 293).

Non-reciprocal Entanglement

Harman's critique of onto-taxonomy finally involves the commitment to what I call "non-reciprocal entanglement", which is, in turn, presented as a solution to the possible onto-taxonomical postulation of a "world" made up of immanent, holistically entangled, entities standing in opposition to human transcendence.

As I have already stated earlier, Harman's starting point is that individual objects cannot be "overmined" into their relations, and must therefore be understood as existing independently of the latter; they exist autonomously (or "withdraw") from their direct external relations. Nevertheless, he also insists that real objects must simultaneously also be able of *indirect* entanglement and influence, for otherwise it would be impossible for change to occur (2005, p. 1). This simultaneous possibility of *direct* "withdrawal" and *indirect* interaction, in turn, leads Harman to the idea that real objects must 'touch without touching' (2005, p. 215) through a process he dubs "vicarious causation" (2012). Harman (*inter alia* 2005, p. 224; 2009, p. 147) often explicitly describes "vicarious causation" in terms of three core features, claiming that all causality is necessarily vicarious, buffered and asymmetrical. However, I hold that this list can be broadened to include three further principal characteristics, since, for Harman, causation is also alluring, binary and aesthetic. Due to space restrictions, I shall here only briefly summarise each of these features.

Causation and influence, for Harman, can only be "vicarious." One of the main theses of triple-O is that objects are autonomous from one another, or "withdraw" from their relations. This, in turn, entails that objects can only interact by proxy

through the mediation of an alluring relational stand-in – or what Harman calls the "sensual object" – acting as a deputy or "vicar" alluding to the "withdrawn" real object (Harman, 2012, p. 200). Causality is buffered insofar as the "sensual" or "relational" stand-ins inhibit the direct contact between real objects (Harman 2009, p. 221). Causation is, in turn, asymmetrical in two interrelated ways. It is asymmetrical in the aforementioned sense that a real object originally interacts with a sensual mediator rather than a real one (2012, p. 200). It is also asymmetrical because Harman claims that some mutual influence between two real objects is not the result of reciprocal interaction, but rather 'a special case of two simultaneous *one-way relations* in which two objects happen to relate to one another *independently*' (2010a, p. 96, emphasis added). In light of this second sense of asymmetry, it can be seen that causation is also binary, in the sense that interactions, for Harman, occur *exclusively* between two objects (2009, pp. 208-209), such that in instances 'where more than two objects seem to be in relation […] there will either be a slow accretion of pairs of terms, or a central term that related independently with each of the others' (2010a, p. 106). Finally, causation is also aesthetic in two interrelated senses; firstly, to the extent that Harman confers the source of all causal impetus to the sensual surfaces of things (2012, p. 195) and secondly, to the extent that Harman identifies the mechanism of allure with a surface or aesthetic effect which is able to split an object from its qualities, using the latter to allude to a real one.

Conclusion

As I have shown, Harman's philosophy may be said to be entirely premised on three fundamental commitments. Firstly, triple-O views reality as being composed of infinitely many singularities, each with their own specific nature and impact on the rest of the cosmos. Secondly, it rejects the "two-world" categorical difference between natural singularities and artificial multiplicities, insisting instead that each and every object is simultaneously both one and many. Thirdly, it rejects the notion of a single holistically interrelated world-lump, replacing the latter with a model of interactions by proxy dubbed "vicarious causation." Each of these ideas may, in turn, said to be entailed by the critique of "onto-taxonomy," a concept which has unfortunately often been neglected in works dealing with triple-O. The aim of this paper has therefore been to make up for this relative neglect by highlighting how Harman's fundamental commitments are entailed by this critique.

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Two Ways of Saying No to Quine

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Abstract: W. V. O. Quine holds that the *raison d'etre* of metaphysics is the drawing of two lists; the list of entities that are part of the world and of those that are not. To achieve this aim, he suggests regimenting true sentences belonging to 'our best theories' to determine their ontological commitments. Many accept Quine's project, differing with each other regarding what are the best theories, the sentences that belong to these and the entities that are part of the world. Other philosophers find this characterization of metaphysics deficient. Jonathan Schaffer considers the issue of what exists as trivial or uninteresting. The important issue is whether the things said to exist exists derivatively or fundamentally. He believes that there is a set of fundamental entities, and metaphysics ought to be concerned primarily with delineating this set of entities. Philosophical debates ought to be reconsidered along these lines. Theodore Sider on the other hand, thinks that the world contains a distinctive structure, and the aim of metaphysics is to discover the notions that enable us to describe facts concerning structure. Some of the possibilities and limits of these two approaches are highlighted.

Key words: *Quine, Schaffer, Sider, existence, ontology, fundamentality, structure*

Introduction

W. V. O. Quine's understanding of the primary aim of metaphysics, as well as of the means to achieve this aim, has been prevailing in Analytic philosophy for the past seventy years or so. Recently however, it has been challenged by a number of philosophers. This article will first outline the Quinean project regarding metaphysics. Then it will present two contrasting approaches regarding the primary aim of metaphysics; one by Jonathan Schaffer, and the other by Theodore Sider. The two approaches give rise to a number of issues and questions. The writing will present an account of the two philosophies, and highlight some of their possibilities and limits.

The Quinean Project

Quine holds that metaphysics ought primarily to address one fundamental question, the question 'What is there?' (or the Ontological question) All other questions

philosophers address in the various areas that fall under metaphysics; questions like whether a characteristic like 'red' is an abstract real property or whether it ought to be understood in nominalist terms, whether things endure or perdure, and similar questions; are all subservient to the fundamental question, 'What is there?' (Quine 1948, p. 33)

Metaphysics would then have the primary aim of drawing two lists. One is the list of those entities that exist and are part of the world. (By 'world' here, one should understand the sum of anything that exists. See Lewis 1986, p. 1) The other is the list of those entities that some might think are part of the world, but in fact are not. (Quine 1948, p. 21) They would not exist

'Existence' is considered by Quine as a univocal concept, having the same meaning regardless of whether the term is taken to refer to Gods, tables, numbers or human beings. (See Van Inwagen 1998, p. 237) It also admits of no degrees. Whatever exists, simply exists. This fact – that whatever exists, just exists - is much more metaphysically important than any differences that there might be between the different entities there are or might be.

To achieve the aim he sets for metaphysics, Quine suggests taking sentences from our 'best theories' about the world, and translating these into formal language using quantifiers, variables and predicates. The latter are introduced as 'abbreviations' for linguistic expressions we already use in everyday language. (Van Inwagen 1998, pp. 238, 243) The translation of sentences belonging to our best theories into formal sentences would reveal their real syntactic structure. (Quine 2013, pp. 159-161) It would also indicate what entities are part of the world if these sentences are true. (Quine 1948, p. 33) So if physics is amongst our best theories, and the sentence 'Everything is made up of atoms.' belongs to this field, one ought to translate the sentence into predicate logic to determine what entities would be part of the world given the sentence. The translation of the sentence would be:

$\forall$ x, x(is an atom) v x (is made up of atoms)

This would read: ('For any x, if x exists, x is an atom or x is made up of atoms.' Where x is a variable for an entity). The truth of the sentence would imply that the list of entities that are part of the world ought to include atoms, or anything else that is made up of atoms. If the sentence is true, there cannot be anything in existence which is either not an atom, or not made up of atoms. Any such being would be excluded from the list of entities that exist, and placed on the other list.

Quine's characterization of how to achieve the aim he sets for metaphysics presumes that human beings may fill the two above mentioned lists after having decided which sentences belong to our best theories, which are true and how to translate them. Other than this they have no influence in relation to these lists' contents. An entity's existence and how it exists is not in any way related to how humans or any other conscious beings for that matter may think or conceive of its existence. Even the possibly relational character of things listed is either ignored or considered marginal. Quine's characterization of how to go about the metaphysical

project reflects the Analytic paradigm within which he is working. This is permeated by 'a realist impulse, …[that] reaffirms the world's independence of the knowing subject' (Skorupski 1993, p. 129); a realist impulse that buttresses the assumption that the: 'world could …be recognized in its objectivity.' (Skorupski 1993, p. 149). These aspects would all be problematized in Continental philosophy where a key issue remains the issue of: 'our access to the world' (Harman 2008, p. 201), and the claim that the world can be recognized in its objectivity is highly contentious.

Key areas of disagreement amongst philosophers working within a Quinean paradigm are what are our best theories, which sentences belong to these, which sentences belonging to our best theories are true, and how certain sentences are to be translated. Some philosophers would hold that only sentences belonging to the natural sciences belong to our best theories. Others would include sentences from everyday life. Theists and Platonists might include sentences that refer to abstract and/or non-material entities and beings. Even when there is agreement about which sentences belong to our best theories and which are true, different philosophers might provide different accounts regarding the entities that are part of the world, depending on how they translate these sentences. Suppose 'Churchill is taller than Napoleon.' belongs to our best theories and is true. The sentence will have one translation if 'taller than Napoleon' is interpreted as a predicate which Churchill instantiates. The world would contain Churchill and a property 'being taller than Napoleon'/the set of entities 'taller than Napoleon', depending on how understands 'being taller than Napoleon' (whether in nominalist or in realist terms). It will have a different translation if 'is taller than' is taken to indicate a relation between two entities. Both Napoleon and Churchill would then have to be part of the world. The list of the entities that exist would be different in the two cases.

Regardless of all these differences, philosophers who uphold Quine's claims regarding the purpose of metaphysics, will concur that the primarily aim of this branch of philosophy is to fill the two above mentioned lists. Anything else is secondary and subservient to this question.[1] In what follows I consider two ways of rejecting this characterisation of metaphysics.

The First 'No' - Jonathan Schaffer

Most philosophers who do metaphysics in the Analytic Tradition stick to the Quinean characterisation regarding the aim of metaphysics, and the methodology to achieve this aim. The question 'What is there?' is still considered the basic question in the

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1   Despite characterizing the purpose and methodology of metaphysics along these lines, Quine himself upheld: 'ontological relativism'. This holds that there is: 'no, single, objectively correct ontological theory' regarding what exists (Effingham 2013, p. 31). He himself then, seems skeptical about the possibility of metaphysics achieving the aim he sets for the discipline.

field (See Effingham 2013). Since the publication of Quine's paper 'On What There Is', the main debate has been rather whether metaphysics (as conceived by Quine) makes sense or not, with Neo-Carnapians generally denying that it does (See for instance, Hirsch 2005), and a host of other philosophers rebutting such a claim and furnishing their own list of existents. The Neo-Carnapian approach however, is not the 'no' to Quine that I consider.

Since the 1990s, a group of philosophers within the Analytic tradition has grown dissatisfied with the Quinean characterization of metaphysics for meta-metaphysical reasons. These believe that metaphysics as a philosophical activity makes sense, but think that Quine mischaracterized its aim. In particular, they think that the question which Quine considers to be fundamental to metaphysics – the question 'What is there?' – is not fundamental at all. One of these philosophers is Jonathan Schaffer.

Schaffer considers the enterprise Quine proposes – that of jotting down objects along two lists – as relatively unimportant. Even the manner in which Quine conceives of the metaphysical project, is excessively flat. What is important to Quine is merely whether something exists or not. He does not take into consideration, or does not take sufficiently into consideration, the different levels of being.

Schaffer holds that there is a fundamental realm of entities which somehow accounts for the existence of other entities. These other entities would be derivative, and would exist in virtue of fundamental ones. Fundamental entities on the other hand, do not exist in virtue of anything else. There are various reasons why one might be induced to believe in such a fundamental level of entities. Ross Cameron claims that postulating a level of fundamental entities which accounts for all others is theoretically and metaphysically valuable, as well as intuitive. If we do not postulate a realm of fundamental entities, there would be: 'no explanation of everything that needs explaining … no collection of objects that explains the existence of every [other] entity' (Cameron 2008, p. 12).

The main aim of metaphysics ought not therefore to be the ontological quest to establish what exists. The primary aim of metaphysics is to characterize this fundamental realm of entities; to discover which entities are fundamental and which are derivative and exist in a non-fundamental manner. (Schaffer 2013, p. 351). The emphasis would be on identifying the former, with; non-fundamental entities being merely be an 'ontological free lunch' (Schaffer 2013, p. 361) Schaffer holds that there is a long tradition in philosophy, including Plato, Aristotle, Descartes and Spinoza, which conceives of the purpose of metaphysics along these lines (Schaffer 2013, pp. 350-354, 375-376). Within this tradition questions like 'What is there?' are inconsequential and unimportant. Questions like 'What entities are fundamental?' on the other hand, are interesting and informative. It is the latter question that philosophers ought to address.

Consider the sentence 'There is a table.' and assume that it is true. If one accepts common-sense ontology this sentence would belong to our best theories. The table would go on the list of things that exist by Quinean. If one is a Nihilist on the other

hand, and thinks that the world does not contain table but only ontological simples arranged table-wise, the sentence would not be taken to belong to our best theories. The sentence's truth would not indicate that there are tables, but only ontological simples arranged table wise. It would be these ontological simples that end up on the list of entities that exist. Schaffer holds that either approach fails to address the metaphysically interesting issue regarding the table. This issue is not whether the table exists (it obviously does). The metaphysically important issue is whether it exists fundamentally or derivatively. The key issue is whether it exists in virtue of something else (say some ontologically simpler entities), or whether it exists fundamentally (does not exist in virtue of anything else). This is what is metaphysically interesting.

Schaffer holds that most debates in metaphysics, for instance the debate between materialism and dualism, the debate about the existence of impossible worlds, that about fictional beings, or the debate regarding whether numbers exist, are interesting only if they are considered along these lines; if they are couched in fundamental-derivative terms. The debates should concern whether minds, possible/impossible worlds or numbers exist derivatively or fundamentally, not whether these exist or not. (Schaffer 2013, pp. 361-365). It is obvious that there are minds, numbers, fictional entities, and impossible worlds. The truth of sentences like 'Sherlock Holmes feigned his death.', for instance, implies the existence of Sherlock Holmes. Similarly, since 1 is a prime number while 20 is not, and 1 has characteristics which 20 does not have, the numbers 1 and 20 have to exist. (Schaffer 2013, p. 357) These ought all to go on the list of entities that exist given Quine's characterization of metaphysics. This however, is not an interesting conclusion. What would be metaphysically interesting is the question whether minds, numbers, fictional beings, and impossible worlds exist fundamentally or derivatively (Schaffer 2013, p. 257).

Schaffer's reaction to Quine's project is sensible. The Quinean project and the 'flat' manner in which it considers the entities that fill up the existents list, is quite narrow. The sentence 'There is a table.' Seems to imply that the world contains tables. The sentence 'Everything is made up of atoms.' on the other hand, is ontologically committed to the world containing atoms. If both sentences belong to 'our best theories', atoms and tables would both go on the list of entities that are part of the world. From a Quinean perspective the issue stops there. One however, may be rightly unhappy with this result. Surely, atoms cannot stand on the same ontological par as chairs. Adopting a Quinean perspective however, one would either have to admit that, in terms that are ontologically relevant, they are on the same par, since they both are included on the same 'existents' list. Or else, in Nihilist fashion, one might be tempted to deny the existence of tables. Both results however, might understandably be unsatisfactory. One might reasonably think that atoms are ontologically more basic than tables, without however wishing to deny the existence of the latter. Schaffer's characterization of metaphysics, would enable us to assert the existence of both, and yet assign to atoms a privileged role if one thinks that their existence is metaphysically more important.

It is however doubtful whether all major arguments and debates in metaphysics can be re-fashioned along the terms Schaffer envisages. Take the debate about the existence of God. Schaffer suggests reformulating this as a debate on whether God exists fundamentally or derivatively. Atheists would hold the latter view, while theists would subscribe to the former.[2] It is arguable however, whether the debate can be successfully couched along these lines. If the atheist concedes that God exist in some shape or form, she would be basically conceding defeat. This is especially so if the argument involves the traditional characterizations of God as a necessary being, who is omnipotent, omniscient and ultimately responsible for everything that exists. Given Schaffer's suggestions, the theist would hold that such being exists fundamentally, whereas the atheist would hold that it exists derivatively. If God however, is defined in the traditional manner as: a being who; 'contains within Himself the whole perfection of being' (Aquinas 2006, 1a, 4.2), 'a substance that is infinite, eternal, independent, omnipotent, and omniscient' (Descartes 1997, p. 152), or 'that by which no greater can be conceived' (Anselm 2001, p. 7), it is hard to think that it might exist in a derivative manner. If such a being exists, it cannot but exist in a metaphysically fundamental way. By definition, it cannot exist derivatively. If the atheist concedes that God exists in some way then, she loses the whole plot. The existence or non-existence of such entity would be what is philosophically crucial.

Perhaps, a common shortcoming of both Quine's and Schaffer's characterization of the purpose of metaphysics is their reductive character. They both focus on just one aspect of being, or consider only one aspect to be all-important. Quine focuses exclusively on existence. Schaffer seems to be solely concerned with whether an existent belongs to one level of reality rather than another. A metaphysics which accords equal or similar weight to both issues is possible. The mistake may lie in treating one question as fundamental, as largely unimportant. The issues of whether an existent exists and, if it exists, whether it exists fundamentally or derivatively, might be equally important quests.[3]

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2   Though being an atheist, Schaffer holds that the answer to the question as to whether God exists: 'is a trivial yes.....God is a fictional character.' (Schaffer 2013, p. 359). Fictional characters would exist, but would not exist fundamentally.

3   Aristotle's metaphysics is a case in point. Aristotle sets the 'study of being qua being' (Metaphysics 4) as the aim of metaphysics, rather than addressing some question or other. This involves (contrary to what Schaffer seems to suggest) questions about what entities are part of the world. For instance, one of his main endeavours is to banish to the non-existence bin Plato's Forms. (Aristotle 1990) Yet, Aristotle recognizes that not all things that exist, exist on the same par. Some exist in potency and some in act, and the latter are ontologically superior to the former. (Even amongst things that exist in act, God for instance sits at the top of the ontological hierarchy.) The two issues are fundamental to the study of being qua being.

The Second No – Ted Sider

In his *Writing the Book of the World* Ted Sider also characterizes metaphysics in terms of fundamentality rather than of the drawing of lists of entities. In contrast to Schaffer however, Sider characterizes fundamentality not in terms of the grounding of entities but in terms 'structure'. Structure is not an entity, set of entities or stuff. It is a posit underlying phenomena. The world would have a distinctive structure underlying everything there is, and which does not obtain in virtue of anything else.

Structure cannot be defined in terms of or reduced to anything else like causality, some set of laws, or necessity. The notion of structure is simple and explanatory (Sider 2013, pp. 15-18). Its postulation would be justified by its suitability to improve our models of and theories about the world (Sider 2013, p. 10).

In light of the world possessing such a structure, two different types of fact would obtain. The first would be Fundamental facts, which are facts that concern some part of or aspect of the world's structure. Then there would be derivative facts. These are facts that are not fundamental and do not concern some part or aspect of the world's structure. (Sider 2013, p. 5) They would obtain in virtue of fundamental facts. Fundamental facts can be described provided we have words expressing the right notions.

In our language we use a myriad of words and sub-sentential expressions expressing notions through which we can build true sentences about some aspect of the world. The notions these sentences may involve can be more or less suited to 'carving up' the aspects of the world we describe. Sider gives the following example to illustrate how a true sentence may carve up the world better than another true sentences because of the notions it contains. Take a flat surface split vertically into a green half and a blue half. One can describe this surface using the terms 'green' and 'blue', and present the true sentence 'The surface is painted half green and half blue'. Someone else may however decide to characterize the surface in a different way, horizontally rather than vertically. She would consider the top part of surface to be coloured 'grue', and the bottom part to be coloured 'bleen'. True sentences using these notions (i.e. gleen and blue) may be concocted. 'The sun is shining on the grue part but not on the bleen part of the surface.' might be true. Yet the notions 'blue' and green' are better suited to carve up the surface than the notions 'gleen' and 'blue'.

This is not enough however for Sider. Not merely some notions are better suited than others to describe the world, but that some notions would enable us to describe aspects of the world's structure as they are. This would be the second presumption Sider makes. There are notions that not merely describe aspects of the world better than other notions, but which: 'carve at the joints'. Sentences that contain only notions that carve at the joints, and which are true, would: '…match… reality's structure ...[in] an objectively correct way' (Sider 2013, p. vii) True sentences that contain only such notions would therefore describe fundamental facts. Other true

sentences would describe derivative facts. Take the true sentence 'There is a car in my garage.' If 'car' is not an aspect of structure, the notion 'car' will not carve at the joints. The sentence would not describe a fundamental fact, but a derivative one; a fact that obtains in virtue of some other fundamental fact/s (Sider 2013, p. 108). Suppose on the other hand that 'electrons', 'protons', and a particular relation call it 'C' holding between subatomic particles at a subatomic level all carve at the joints. The true sentence 'The electrons C the protons' would describe a fundamental fact. (Sider 2013, pp. 75-76). The key enterprise in metaphysics is to find the primitive notions that allow one to describe fundamental facts that concern structure; the ones that allow us to write the Book of the World (Sider 2013, p. 1).

The second presupposition Sider makes is needed for his metaphysics to be anchored firmly to the Realist tradition. If one had to accept that metaphysics is about finding the right notions, retain presupposition i) which holds that the world has a definite structure, but reject ii); thus, holding that there are no notions that carve at the joints; one's metaphysics would be verging dangerously close to idealism It would lean close to the Kantian-sounding project of choosing between different notions or sets of notions for reasons other than that the chosen notions/set of notions enable/s us to accede to the world's fundamental structure.

Sider's way of doing metaphysics then, is fundamentally different both from Quine's and from Schaffer's. For the latter two philosophers, metaphysics is concerned primarily with entities. (Establishing those entities that exist and those that do not for Quine; determining those entities that exist derivatively, and those that exist fundamentally for Schaffer.) For Sider on the other hand, the main business of metaphysics shifts to ideology; to notions rather than entities. The key focus becomes finding the notions that cut at the joints.

These notions would form an exhaustive set which would allow an: 'insight into structure'. (Sider 2013, p. 1) They would allow one to write the Book of the World; 'a privileged description of the world …[involving simply] fundamental notions' (Sider 2013, VII). In this regard then, Sider makes a third presupposition; the presupposition that these fundamental notions form an exclusive and exhaustive set that permits one to concoct one picture of how the world fundamentally is.

Sider's metaphysics therefore, involves these three commitments:
i)   That the world contains a fundamental structure.
ii) That there are notions that 'carve at the joints' and enable us to describe facts pertaining to and aspects of structure.
iii) That these fundamental notions form an exclusive and exhaustive set that permits one to concoct one picture of how the world is at a fundamental level; the level of structure.

In most respects Sider remains true to Analytic philosophy's realist spirit and the supposition that the world can: 'be recognized in its objectivity'(Skorupski 1993, p. 149). There can only one way in which notions may carve at the joints; only one way in which the book of the world may be written. In another respect though, he is akin

to Continental philosophy. This is because he problematizes the issue of 'our access to the world' (Harman 2008, p. 201); a key issue in this philosophical tradition. Not all true pictures of the world afford access the world's underlying structure. Sider however does not consider the issue of our access to the world in terms the relation between mind and the world or, vaguely, of the relation of language to the world, as a lot of Continental philosophers do. He does not raise the issue of whether we can have access to the world given that our access is mediated through language or the Mind. (In realist spirit, Sider assumes that such access is possible.) The core of his metaphysical project involves tracking those which notions provide such access to the world's fundamental structure. It involves considering various notions, keeping aboard those that allow such access (i,e, those that carve at the joints), and discarding those that do not.

Amongst the notions that carve at the joints, Sider refers to are the predicates of fundamental physics; logical quantifiers, junctors and the notion of identity, the predicate ∈ for set-membership, as well as to the notion of structure itself (Sider 2013, p. 6). This is the set of notions which, according to him, can allow us to draw a picture of how the world exists at the fundamental level. The picture of fundamental reality that he draws is both naturalistic and nihilist (thinking that there are only ontological simples); with fundamental reality consisting of space-time points and sets.

It is doubtful however, whether the set of notions Sider indicates as holding the key to unlock the world's fundamental structure is consistent with the third commitment his characterization of metaphysics involves; to wit that these notions form an exclusive and exhaustive set that allows one to draw a picture of how the world is at a fundamental level. As Timothy O'Connor and Nickolas Montgomery point out, the set of fundamental notions Sider elicits, cannot be exhaustive or exclusive. The set of fundamental notions Sider proposes includes all logical junctors. Yet, some of these junctors are redundant. What fundamental facts may be expressed through disjunctors, may be expressed via a conjunctors, and vice versa. Whatever truth may be expressed by, say, a conjunctor (or a conjunctor and a negator), may be expressed by a disjunctor (or a disjunctor and a negator). Suppose P and C are notions that carve at the joints. Suppose the proposition 'P & C' (in words: 'P and C.') expresses a fundamental fact. The same fact would be expressible by the proposition ⅂ (⅂P v ⅂C) (I words: 'It is not the case that, not P or not C.'). The two propositions are logically equivalent. So one of the two junctors becomes redundant when compiling the set of notions that cut at the joints. Or else, two sets, one including a disjunctor and the other an conjunctor are possible. Different, equivalent pictures, of the same fundamental reality may be concocted. But, as O'Connor and Montgomery suggest (O'Connor, Montgomery 2013), this would imply that there are 'Books of the World' rather than a 'Book of the World.' as presupposition (iii) seems to assume.

Sider would reply that the set of fundamental notions should be exclusive and exhaustive, but not hampered by redundancy constraints. If two notions both carve at the joints, they ought both to be included in our set of fundamental notions,

even if all facts that may be expressed through one notions may be exhaustively expressed through the other. As O'Connor and Montgomery note though: 'it is natural to impose a non-redundancy constraint on ideological elements' (O'Connor, Montgomery 2013). Occamist considerations would buttress this. The rejection of redundancy constraint by Sider seems *ad hoc*, so as to make the luxurious set of fundamental notions he concocts consistent with presupposition iii).

Conclusion

W. V. O. Quine holds that the primary aim of metaphysics is addressing the ontological question 'What is there?' It primarily involves jotting down those entities that are part of the world. This understanding of the main aim of metaphysics has prevailed in Analytic philosophy. In this writing accounts by two philosophers who reject this aim of metaphysics have been presented. One is by Jonathan Schaffer, who holds that the primary aim of metaphysics is to distinguish what exists fundamentally from what exists derivatively, suggesting that main debates in philosophy ought to be couched and be considered in these terms. While sympathetic with Schaffer's concerns and plea, I argued that, with regards to certain important debates, existential questions (i.e. whether a particular entity or a type of entity exists) cannot be marginalized in the way he suggests. I then considered the other approach by Theodore Sider, who suggests that the world has a fundamental structure, and the aim of metaphysics is to discover those notions that cut at the joints, and to compile an exclusive and exhaustive set of such notions. This would permit one to draw a picture of how the world fundamentally exists; to write the Book of the World. I claimed that the set of notions he furnishes can be considered as exclusive and exhaustive only if one rejects certain redundancy constraints which, however, it makes sense to retain.

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A Translator's Appraisal of Classical and Hellenistic Influences in Flaubert's *Salammbô*

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Abstract

In the present autobiographical appraisal my aims are: to mention briefly the reasons why I translated *Salammbô*; to give the reader of this paper, by means of parallel extracts from the Maltese and English translated texts, a glimpse of the dazzling beauty of Flaubert's epic prose descriptions; to make the student aware of what I, as a translator became aware of while translating Flaubert, showing how the latter succeeds in creating such an excellent masterpiece by means of intertextual classical references and other non-written materials (in particular the coins that were minted with the name of Gozo on them); and to demonstrate why the reader is set on a course to discover both the Classical and Hellenistic worlds together with antiquity's command over Flaubert's imagination. Biblical sources, which this paper will be slightly referring to, are another source abundantly used by Flaubert.

Keywords: *translation, epic, classical references, allegory, numismatics, Gozo*

My Salome is a mystic the sister of Salammbô a Saint Thérèse who worships the moon. **–** Oscar Wilde

Introduction

To my mind, there is no better way for anyone seeking to discover ancient Carthage through historical fiction other than to read Flaubert's *Salammbô*. Unlike any other novel, set in ancient times, written before 1862 or ever since, *Salammbô* offers to the student of ancient history a unique opportunity to read historical fiction, authored by an exceptional novelist, who, above all, aimed not simply at telling the story of a particular episode of Rome's greatest rival but actually at reconstructing Carthage from the remains of her own scattered ashes. *Salammbô* opens a window onto an imagined ancient Carthage, immediately after the First Punic War, during the Mercenary War (240 BC – 238 BC) – also referred to as the Libyan War – which almost brought the city to her knees but from which she, ultimately and astonishingly, managed to survive by the skin of her teeth. Thus, the novel recreates the ancient city of Carthage throughout one of her intensively dramatic moments

in her chequered history by giving, *inter alia*, a detailed description of the daily lives of her inhabitants and a glimpse of Punic power dynamics both at local and regional levels. Furthermore, in *Salammbô* Flaubert does not just describe Carthage as documented in historical sources but he also thoroughly presents the city as he imagined her to be.

A Personal Experience

I always wonder on how life is full of intersections. And it is precisely because of one particular intersection among the many interspersing my life that I decided to translate Flaubert's *Salammbô* into Maltese. *Salammb*ô intersects both my interests in French literature and anything to do with ancient or classical history.

The first time I came across Flaubert's novel was in the late seventies when, as a sixth former in Valletta, I was assiduously studying for my A-Level French. At the time, studying the Classics locally was not an option as no courses were available; so my particular interest in them could only be assuaged as a personal initiative. And *Salammb*ô was just the right choice, giving me the opportunity of hitting two birds with one stone by practising my French and at the same time enjoying reading, in my restricted free time, an ancient history novel. In a way it was like squaring the circle. The second time round was many years later, but just a few years ago, when I decided to translate Flaubert's novel into Maltese. An extraordinary and enriching experience, which not only required full care and concentration to replicate faithfully into Maltese Flaubert's masterpiece, but also obliged me to delve into and reflect on the historical and other material that Flaubert himself referred to in order to write it. It must also be remembered that it took Flaubert several years of research to finish the novel. As Andrew Brown maintains "He [Flaubert] sought inspiration, as ever, in massive feats of ingestion, devouring learned tomes as Moloch devoured children in the hope that fructifying rain would fall … [swallowing] some hundred volumes on Carthage" (Brown 2009, p. 124). Thus, I consider that during the roughly four years that I spent working on the translation I faithfully followed in Flaubert's footsteps till the very end of this literary journey.

Therefore, by translating the text I became aware more than ever before of how Flaubert's artistic genius and story-telling techniques, which prominently include intertextuality and ekphrasis from ancient sources, managed to convert Polybius' simple narrative history into a literary masterpiece. I have read quite a few well-written historical novels set in ancient times, so, both on the basis of this extensive reading experience and my translation, I can safely maintain that in my reading canon, Flaubert's *Salammb*ô is still the foremost artistically written ancient history novel to date. This view is also attested and reinforced by the intensive critical interest in academic circles that, since its publication in 1862, has resulted in an abundance of academic research, reviews, papers and publications on all its varied

themes. Indeed, few other historical novels dealing with antiquity ever reached such a height of literary and aesthetic perfection.

Salammbô: the Epic

Polybius' narrative of the Mercenary War (Polybius 1922, pp. 66-88) is, except for rare instances (more of this below), nothing but the subset of Flaubert's narrative text in *Salammb*ô. Actually, I find that by translating *Salammb*ô into Maltese I had simultaneously translated both Flaubert's novel and Polybius' account of the Mercenary War. Yet, Flaubert, whose knowledge of Polybius depended on the translation of the Benedictine monk Dom Thuillier (Bourguinat 2010), does more than just rework Polybius' bone-dry narrative account of the war. Stylistically speaking, he turns the latter's narrative into a Carthaginian epic in prose. This is evident in the many corresponding epic elements from the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey* and the *Aeneid*, overtly and covertly embedded, that pervades both the descriptive and narrative components of his novel. What follows are just a few examples of epic influence on Flaubert's novel:

- Carthage, like Troy, is a besieged city. The besieging mercenaries, like the Achaeans under Agamemnon's command, hail from different lands. And, accordingly, though admittedly very briefly, Flaubert imitates Homer's catalogue of ships in the *Iliad*, and lists the dismissed contingents of the Mercenaries' army that sailed from Sicily to Carthage at the end of the First Punic War:

    Men of all nations were there, Ligurians, Lusitanians, Balearians, Negroes, and fugitives from Rome. Beside the heavy Dorian dialect were audible the resonant Celtic syllables rattling like chariots of war, while Ionian terminations conflicted with consonants of the desert as harsh as the jackal's cry. The Greek might be recognised by his slender figure, the Egyptian by his elevated shoulders, the Cantabrian by his broad calves. There were Carians proudly nodding their helmet plumes, Cappadocian archers displaying large flowers painted on their bodies with the juice of herbs, and a few Lydians in women's robes, dining in slippers and earrings. Others were ostentatiously daubed with vermilion, and resembled coral statues. (Flaubert 2006, p. 5)

    Kien hemm irġiel min-nazzjonijiet kollha, Ligurjani, Lużitanjani, Baleariċi, Negri, u magħhom dawk maħrubin minn Ruma. Kienu jinstemgħu, maġenb id-djalett tqil Doriku, bħal imriekeb jidwu u ħfief is-sillabi Keltiċi, u t-truf tal-kliem Joniku inkompatibbli daqs l-għajta tal-ġakall mal-konsonanti ħorox

*tad-deżert. Il-Grieg kien jingħaraf mill-għelubija ta' ġismu, l-Eġizzjan minn spallejh merfugħin 'il fuq, u l-Kantabrijan mill-pxiexen wesgħin. Kien hemm Karjani li mkabbrin kienu qed ixejru r-rix ta' elmijiethom, u qawwisin mill-Kappadoċja li kienu pinġew ġisimhom b'ħabaq ta' fjuri kbar, u xi ftit Lidjani kienu qed jieklu libsin ilbies ta' nisa, bil-papoċċi f'saqajhom u l-imsielet f'widnejhom. Oħrajn kienu għal għajn in-nies imċallsin bil-vermilju, bħal statwi tal-qroll. (*Flaubert 2014, p. 4) [It is to be noted that the Maltese text is based on the French original and not on the preceding English translation shown in this paper. Readers of both the English and Maltese translations can, therefore, spot certain divergences. Accuracy, can only be measured by comparing the two translations with the original in French. From here onwards, this remark applies to all the translated quotations from the novel given in this paper.]

The list of nations mentioned in the above quotation is not exhaustive but is further extended later on as the war gains momentum, mid-way through the novel, to include amongst others: Zuaeces, Garamantians, Troglodytes, Ammonians, Atarantians, Auseans, Achyrmachidae, Gysantians, Gaetulians, Pharusians, Caunians, Macarians, Marusians, Ethiopians, Tillabarians and a people, whom Flaubert calls "Eaters of Uncleanness":

They were not Libyans from the neighbourhood of Carthage, who had long composed the third army, but nomads from the tableland of Barca, bandits from Cape Phiscus and the promontory of Dernah, from Phazzana and Marmarica. They had crossed the desert, drinking at the brackish wells walled in with camels' bones; the Zuaeces, with their covering of ostrich feathers, had come on quadrigae; the Garamantians, masked with black veils, rode behind on their painted mares; others were mounted on asses, onagers, zebras, and buffaloes; while some dragged after them the roofs of their sloop-shaped huts together with their families and idols. There were Ammonians with limbs wrinkled by the hot water of the springs; Atarantians, who curse the sun; Troglodytes, who bury their dead with laughter beneath branches of trees; and the hideous Auseans, who eat grass-hoppers; the Achyrmachidae, who eat lice; and the vermilion-painted Gysantians, who eat apes. (Flaubert 2006, p. 158)
Ma kinux il-Libjani tal-inħawi ta' Kartaġni; li għal żmien twil kienu jiffurmaw it-tielet eżerċtu; iżda n-Nomadi tal-Medda tal-Barka, il-briganti tal-Kap Fisku u tal-Promontorju ta' Derna, dawk ta' Fazzana u ta' Marmarika. Kienu qasmu d-deżert huma

> *u jixorbu mill-bjar salmastri b'ħitan tal-għadam tal-iġmla; iż-Żwaeżi mgħottijin bir-rix tan-nagħma, kienu ġew fuq imriekba miġbudin b'erba' żmiemel; il-Garamantjani, wiċċhom mgħotti b'velu iswed, bilqiegħda wara fuq żwiemel miżbugħin; oħrajn fuq il-ħmir, fuq l-onagri, fuq iż-żebri, fuq il-buffli; u xi wħud kienu qed ikaxkru ma' familthom u l-idoli s-saqaf tal-għerejjex tagħhom għamla ta' kurvetta. Kien hemm Ammonjani b'erba' dirgħajn imkemmxin bl-ilma ikħal tal-funtani; Atarantjani, li kienu jisħtu x-xemx; Trogloditi, li jidfnu l-mejtin tagħhom huma u jidħku taħt il-friegħi tas-siġar; l-Awsej koroh pesta, li jieklu l-ġurati; l-Axirmaxidej, li jieklu l-baqq, u l-Ġiżantjani, miżbugħin bin-nogħra, li jieklu x-xadini.* (Flaubert 2014, p.203)

- In the French text, the reader frequently comes across hyphenated epithets, a distinctive characteristic of Homeric narrative style, typical examples are: "Moloch-à-tête-de-taureau"/ "bull-headed Moloch" / "Molok b'ras ta' barri"; "Moloch-le-dévorateur" / "Moloch the Devourer" / "Molok id-Devoratur"; "Mangeurs-de-choses-immondes" / "Eaters of Uncleanness" / "Wikkiela tal-Ħwejjeġ Imniġġsin"; "Chef-des-odeurs suaves" / "Chief of the Sweet Odours" / "Kap tal-Fwejjaħ"; "buveurs-de-jusquiame" / "henbane-drinkers" / "dawk li jixorbu l-mammażejża"; "Suffète-de-la-mer" / "marine Suffet" / "Sufet tal-baħar"; and "Salammbô la fille de Hamilcar" / "Hamilcar's daughter" / "bint Ħamilkar.

- Furthermore, in his own way and following the example of epic poets, Flaubert scrutinizes the concept and the essence of the gods and their intervention in human affairs. Effectively, embedded in the novel, we come across the same theme of divine intervention in human doings as we find in Greco-Latin epic narration, a case in point is the episode of the crows, representing the messengers of the goddess, fighting it over the dead bodies of the Barbarian horde (Blix 2013, p. 731).

- Certain episodes in *Salammbô* are also similar to other themes found in Greek and Latin epics. For instance, like Odysseus, who had to deal with the insolent and arrogant Suitors, Hamilcar, returning home *in medias res*, discovers that his former mercenaries had brazenly wreaked havoc on his palace gardens, killed his sacred fish, and behaved disrespectfully towards his daughter. And like Odysseus, he exacts retribution for this unpardonable outrage to the law of hospitality both from his former mercenaries, who had committed the atrocities, and from his household servants, who had allowed them to take place.

- Flaubert's use of animal imagery and similes is also comparable to Homer's handling of such literary devices. In their narrative discours Homer and Flaubert frequently use zoomorphism both for symbolic and dramatic purposes: in the *Odyssey*, Circe turns Odysseus companions into swine , while in *Salammbô*, Flaubert constantly attributes animal individualities to his characters (Blix 2013, pp.724-743).

- Like Virgil, Flaubert uses a female character to symbolise the future demise of Carthage. The legendary Dido and fictitious Salammbô both meet a tragic death; the two of them leave the reader with a sense of heart-rending loss. There are other several intertextual similarities between these two female characters foremost of which is the fact that they come alike from Carthaginian noble families. More than this, the bejewelled "daughter of Hamilcar", can even be compared to "white-armed" Helen, daughter of Tyndareus and *casus belli* of the Trojan war, not just for her beauty but also for being the principal cause that motivated Mathô to breach the walls of Carthage. [Throughout this paper, I am retaining, as found in the original French text, the spelling of the name Mathô, instead of Mathos. Flaubert, deliberately uses the /o/ with a circumflex accent on it (which essentially substitutes the /s/), both for aesthetic and literary purposes, to link Salammbô's name with that of Mathô.]

- Even, the initial presence of the Barbarian contingents outside Carthage echoes to a certain extent the image of an enemy reaching the coasts of Carthage with the same looting purpose that the Achaeans had when they reached the shores of Troy.

Influences: Mythology, Legend and Cosmology

Congruently to what has been said above regarding the presence of epic elements, there are in Flaubert's novel recurring mythological and legendary borrowings that are essentially used both for thematic reasons and for the amplification of actions and descriptions. For instance, Mathô, like Hercules, goes into battle wearing a lion skin and the starving Carthaginian Moloch, like his half-man and half-bull counterpart the Minotaur of Knossos, remorselessly devours his human victims (Taillandier 1863).

The *zaïmph*, the holy mantel of Tanit, on which the safety of Carthage depended, reminds the reader of the Trojan *palladium*, the cult image on which the safety of Troy similarly relied. Both the *palladium* and the *zaïmph* are stolen (yet, it must be remembered that only the theft of the *palladium* by Diomedes and Odysseus had dire consequences, the theft of the *zaïmph* which mid-way through the novel is retrieved by Salammbô herself, could not bring about the destruction of Carthage

for historically the city's doom was predestined for later years and in different circumstances). From a narrative perspective, the theft of the cosmic *zaïmph* also reminds us of Jason's legendary theft of the Golden Fleece. Additionally, it also introduces the notion of sacrilege, which leads Stuart Barnett to consider that "The siege of Carthage that comprises most of the novel's narrative is, in effect, a siege of the gods of the Carthaginians." (Barnett 1991)

In his novel, correspondingly to what Hesiod does in the *Theogony* and to what Homer and Virgil do to a certain extent in their epics, Flaubert also expounds the cosmological origins and genealogy of the Punic gods and brings the reader face to face with "the enigmatic nature of the gods" (Barnett 1991).

Historical Details from Ancient and Classical Sources

Salammbô includes also borrowings from historical texts and effectively, as noted above, the storyline is intentionally based on the war's historical details as found in Polybius and to a very limited extent on the historical information obtained from Appian. In *Salammbô*, Flaubert follows Polybius to the letter and changes almost nothing of importance in his novel. However, this does not mean that he did not rework some of the historical details when he felt that alterations were required. In fact, several instances of reworking can be spotted. For exemple, from the historical point of view, the most germane modification found in the novel is the absence of Hannibal, the historical suffet. Flaubert purposely does this to avoid the confusion that it may cause with Hannibal, Hamilcar's son, the future bane of Rome, mentioned in the novel, but not in Polybius, as being just a small child. Flaubert required the child Hannibal namely to develop the thematic dilemma that Hamilcar faces when he is asked to hand over his young son for ritual burning. In an other insignificant deviation from the historical storyline as developed by Polybius, Flaubert attributes extraordinary physical strength to Mathô and not to Spendius. Also, in Polybius' account, contrary to what is found in Flaubert, Hamilcar has several nameless daughters. Flaubert mentions only one of them, naming her Salammbô, whom Hamilcar promises to the Numidian Narávas. Her name is not historically recorded in Polybius. It is purely the fruit of Flaubert's artistic imagination.

The novel also rigorously retains the historical facts regarding siege craft, armaments, combat tactics as found in ancient sources (Bourguinat 2010, pp. 35-62). And alongside these overt historical details Flaubert's imagination draws on covert and not so covert imageries as found both in Classical and Hellenistic literature. One particular Hellenistic source is the New Testament. Compounded from Jewish and Hellenistic cultures, the New Testament should for our present purpose be considered as a Hellenistic and not as a Christian source of reference. Consequently, from a purely historical point of view, both the story of the Passion and crucifixion of Christ are considered here as belonging to Hellenistic literature. Based on this

premise, the crucifixion of the lions and of the Mercenaries as described in the novel remind us on the one hand of the crucifixion of Christ in the New Testament and on the other of the crucifixion of Spartacus and his followers along the Appian way as narrated in Roman historical sources:

> *They ran thither. It was a lion with his four limbs fastened to a cross like a criminal. His huge muzzle fell upon his breast, and his two fore- paws, half-hidden beneath the abundance of his mane, were spread out wide like the wings of a bird. His ribs stood severally out beneath his distended skin; his hind legs, which were nailed against each other, were raised somewhat, and the black blood, flowing through his hair, had collected in stalactites at the end of his tail, which hung down perfectly straight along the cross. The soldiers made merry around; they called him consul, and Roman citizen, and threw pebbles into his eyes to drive away the gnats.*
>
> *But a hundred paces further on they saw two more, and then there suddenly appeared a long file of crosses bearing lions. Some had been so long dead that nothing was left against the wood but the remains of their skeletons; others which were half eaten away had their jaws twisted into horrible grimaces; there were some enormous ones; the shafts of the crosses bent beneath them, and they swayed in the wind, while bands of crows wheeled ceaselessly in the air above their heads. It was thus that the Carthaginian peasants avenged themselves*
> *when they captured a wild beast; they hoped to terrify the others by such an example. The Barbarians ceased their laughter, and were long lost in amazement. "What people is this," they thought, "that amuses itself by crucifying lions!" (*Flaubert 2006, p. 18)

Ġrew lejha. Kien iljun, marbut ma' salib mill-erba' dirgħajn bħal kriminal. Geddumu enormi mwaqqa' fuq sidru, u ż-żewġ saqajn ta' quddiem, nofshom moħbijin taħt il-kriniera folta, kienu miftuħin beraħ bħal ġwienaħ ta' għasfur. Il-kustilji, waħda waħda, kienu maħruġin 'il barra taħt ġildu mġebbda; saqajh ta' wara, imsammrin waħda ħdejn l-oħra, kienu xi ftit imtellgħin; u d-demm iswed, inixxi bejn sufu, kien inġema' bħal stalaktiti fit-tarf ta' denbu mdendel dritt għall-aħħar tul is-salib. Is-suldati żżufjettaw madwaru; sejħulu konslu u ċittadin ta' Ruma u tefgħulu ċ-ċagħak f'għajnejh, biex ikeċċu d-dubbien.

Mitt pass aktar 'il bogħod raw tnejn oħrajn, imbagħad f'daqqa waħda dehret filliera ta' slaleb bl-iljuni magħhom. Xi wħud kienu ilhom mejtin għal tant żmien li ma kienx baqa' mal-injam ħlief il-fdalijiet tal- iskeletri tagħhom; oħrajn nofshom imgerrmin b'xedaq imdawwar bi tkerriħ tal-wiċċ tal-biża'; kien hemm uħud enormi, l-għuda tas-salib kienet mgħawġa bil-piż tagħhom u kienu qed jixxenglu fir-riħ, filwaqt li fuq rashom qatet ta' ċawl kienu qed iduru fl-arja, mingħajr waqfien.

Kien b'dan il-mod li l-bdiewa Kartaġiniżi kienu jivvendikaw ruħhom meta jaqbdu bhima feroċi; kienu jittamaw li b'dan l-eżempju jbeżżgħu lill-oħrajn. Il-Barbari, waqfu jidħku, u ħassewhom mitlufin skantati. "X'nies huma dawn," ħasbu, "li jieħdu gost isallbu l-iljuni." (Flaubert 2014, p. 25)

The ordeal of Mathô, at the end of the novel, is also heavily influenced by the Passion of Christ as narrated in the Gospels.

Further traces of ancient historical borrowings are also present in other occurrences. Amongst others we find the following instances:

- The fate of Gesco, Hamilcar's Punic fellow general in the Sicilian War, and that of some seven hundred Carthaginian nobles held captive by the Barbarians remind us of the same misfortune suffered by the Athenians in Thucydides, following their debacle at the siege of Syracuse, when they find themselves dumped into a quarry, where they slowly wither to their deaths. This similarity is repeated once more at the end of Flaubert's novel, when the Mercenaries also experience the same sufferings, which they previously inflicted on their Carthaginian captives, thus reminding us a second time of the Athenians' predicament in Thucydides.

- Hamilcar Barca recalled by Carthage and arriving in the teeth of the revolt puts an end to Carthaginian military practices based on class distinction. Then, he recruits, fits and hardens enough soldiers from the lower classes to gain control of the situation. Hamilcar's measures to recruit Carthaginian soldiers reminds us of the Roman Consul Marius (157 BC – 86 BC), who conscripted the plebs for the Roman army to be able to encounter with sufficient military strength the barbarians threatening Rome.

- In the novel, Hamilcar's battles and strategic manoeuvres outshine even those of his son's campaigning in Italy as narrated in Titus Livius. Thus, depicted by Flaubert as a military genius, Hamilcar also reminds us of the campaigns of Julius Caesar in the *Commentarii de Bello Gallico*. In the novel, Hamilcar, like Caesar who was always outnumbered against the Gauls, dexterously handles complicated adverse military situations turning them from certain defeat into resounding victories.

Authenticity: A Voyage to the Levant, a Short Stop in Malta, a Visit to Gozo and Numismatics

For the sake of authenticity, Flaubert was not just happy to use simply what Greco-Latin written sources offered. He preferred to adopt an inclusive approach and

not just solely rely on ancient historiography or on the writings of contemporary armchair historians. For him, authenticity required first-hand experience, so he turned his attention mainly towards two other related, yet at the same time, different sources: archaeology (i.e. the physical ruins, the statuary and the lapidary remains associated with Phoenician and Punic cultures) and numismatics, where he hoped to find pictorial elements that could help him vividly describe Carthage and her inhabitants.

As, Bourginat states, in resuscitating Carthage by going to archaeological sites, Flaubert anticipated the inclusive approach to history writing which till then was still highly compartmentalised. His quest to see for himself the remaining physical evidence that could be used for his reconstruction of ancient Carthage took him therefore to the Levant, where, between 1849-1851 together with his friend Maxime Du Camp, he visited Lebanon and Egypt and later on North Africa about which he writes:

> J'ai visité à fond la campagne de Tunis et les ruines de Carthage, j'ai traversé la Régence de l'est à l'ouest pour rentrer en Algérie par la frontière de Kheff, et j'ai traversé la partie orientale de la province de Constantine jusqu'à Philippeville, où je me suis rembarqué. (Flaubert 1902, p. 271) [I thoroughly visited the countryside of Tunis and the ruins of Carthage, crossed the Eyalet of Tripolitania from East to West to enter into Algeria through the border of Kheff, and traversed the Oriental part of the province of Constantine as far as Philippeville, where I re-embarked.] (Unless otherwise stated translations from French sources are my own.)

To our credit, at the beginning of his Oriental tour, he stopped for a few days in Malta. During his stay, he visited Gozo to see the freshly discovered Ġgantija Temples which, at that time, were still wrongly considered to be Punic sanctuaries. As a result of this visit the Gozitan temples at Ġgantija, alongside the Temple in Jerusalem, constitute the genesis of the reconstructed shrine of Tanit as described in Salammbô. [It is to be noted that in the 19th century, French and other European travellers still considered Malta to be the antechamber to the Levant. This trend inherited from previous centuries, is amply felt for instance in Théophile Gautier's travelogue Constantinople (1853), in which a whole chapter, which I translated into Maltese and published in Il-Malti (Ħarġa Letterarja XCI 2018), is dedicate to his brief stay in Malta before heading for Constantinople.]

As for numismatics Flaubert studied the ancient coinage in circulation at the time of and prior to the First Punic War. In "Flaubert, Salammbô et le Cabinet des Médailles", Florence Codine and Julien Olivier (2017) give a thorough and well-illustrated explanation on how Flaubert consulted the Cabinet des Médailles of the Bibliothèque impériale (today's Bibliothèque nationale) as part of his intensive research to write his novel. According to Codine and Olivier, Flaubert consulted three

eminent personalities in connection with his visits to the Cabinet des Médailles. These were the archaeologist Félicien de Saulcy (for information about the region and the period of time concerned), Ernest Muret (who also showed him Assyrian clay tablets) and mostly Henry Cohen, the numismatics expert and collector of ancient coins. From the coins he consulted at the Cabinet des Médailles and with the help of these three learned gentlemen, Flaubert obtained details about the names of the cities and inhabitants that later on were to figure in his work. Amongst these coins, as stated by Codine and Olivier, there were some that originated from *Gaulos* (present-day Gozo). The coins mentioned in the novel include, amongst others, the gold and silver *shekels* used in Carthage and in the Near East, the *kesitah* and the *kikar* referred to in the Bible and the *drachmas*, the *talent* and the *minae* used by the Greeks. From these coins Flaubert extracted details to describe the Carthaginian way of life including men, animals, places and gods. A case in point is the description of the walls of Carthage, that is partly based on a Sidonian *shekel* representing crenelated walls.

Salammbô: the Allegory

The novel is also in Jacques Harmand's words, as specified in Bourginat, "a first-class sociological document" (Bourginat 2010, pp. 35-62). Bourginat, himself, rightly maintains that the novel, because of its barbarians, decadence and war themes, constitutes a historical discourse. As such, it presents a sort of allegory in which the payment disagreements of Punic high society with the Mercenaries represent the perpetual conflict between the bourgeoisie and the interests of the working classes. Goddar also agrees with Harmand and Bourginat saying that: "Flaubert emphasizes Carthage's greed and financial acumen, consistent with ancient sources, throughout *Salammbô*, referring to 'Son éternel souci du gain' ['Her eternal concern with profit.'] ..., and making the republic's reluctance to pay the mercenaries the war's central cause" (Goddard 1998, p. 276). Consequently, by transmuting Polybius' narrative into a modern richly textured and layered allegory of the struggle between the working and governing classes Flaubert gives it a universal dimension, extending it beyond time and space.

Seen from another angle of this allegorical perspective, the novel echoes the decline of civilisations. The idea of decadence is symbolised, among other things, by the illness which eats Hanno's body, the lamentful song which Salammbô demurely sings to the mercenaries (Bourginat 2010) and to a certain extent by temple prostitution. In the book, we find a repeat of the historically fine line separating civilisation from barbarism as propagated from Heroditus to Strabo by way of Diodorus into modern history. Flaubert's intention is mainly to make us aware of how this fine line can easily be crossed in dire situations. Actually, the line is crossed and blurred several times. This happens most conspicuously on two separate occasions:

(a) when, the Mercenaries, mostly coming from cultures as old as Carthage herself, recur to cannibalism and (b) in Carthage herself, where the supposedly civilised Carthaginians recur to the aberration of human sacrifice:

> *The Ancients assembled. The sitting was a long one. Hanno had come to it. As he was now unable to sit he remained lying down near the door, half hidden among the fringes of the lofty tapestry; and when the pontiff of Moloch asked them whether they would consent to surrender their children, his voice suddenly broke forth from the shadow like the roaring of a genius in the depths of a cavern. He regretted, he said, that he had none of his own blood to give; and he gazed at Hamilcar, who faced him at the other end of the hall. The Suffet was so much disconcerted by this look that it made him lower his eyes. All successively bent their heads in approval; and in accordance with the rites he had to reply to the high priest: "Yes; be it so." Then the Ancients decreed the sacrifice in traditional circumlocution, —because there are things more troublesome to say than to perform.* (Flaubert 2006, p. 197)

> *Ix-Xjuħ inġabru. Il-laqgħa kienet twila. Ħanno ġie għaliha. Billi ma setax joqgħod aktar bilqiegħda, baqa' mimdud ħdejn il-bieb, nofsu mistoħbi fil-borduri tat-tapizzerija għolja; u meta l-qassis il-kbir ta' Molok staqsiehom jekk kinux se jaċċettaw li jagħtu lil uliedhom, leħnu, f'ħin bla waqt, instema' jgħajjat fid-dell donnu l-għajta ta' Spirtu minn qiegħ ta' għar. Kien qed jiddispjaċih, qal, li ma kellux biex jagħti minnhom minn demmu; u kien qed jikkuntempla lil Ħamilkar, quddiemu fit-tarf l-ieħor tas-sala. Is-Sufet kien tant imħawwad b'din il-ħarsa li kellu jbaxxi għajnejh. Ilkoll qablu huma u jbaxxu rashom wieħed wara l-ieħor; u, wara r-riti, hu kellu jwieġeb lill-qassis il-kbir: "Iva, ħa jseħħ dan." Imbagħad ix-Xjuħ ħarġu digriet għas-sagrifiċċju bid-dawran ta' kliem tradizzjonali, – billi jeżistu ħwejjeġ aktar inkwetanti li wieħed ilissen milli jesegwixxi.* (Flaubert 2014, p. 227)

Archaeological Impact

It must be remembered that the Romans concluded the Third Punic War by inflicting complete destruction on Carthage. The city was literally wiped off the map. Scipio's troops carried out on Carthage a complete infamous execution of a cultural *damnatio memoria*. Thus, archaeologists, digging in the 19th century, did not expect to find anything spectacular as in Pompeii or the Egyptian Valley of the Kings. In a letter dated October 1858 addressed to Ernest Feydeau, Flaubert says that:

> Carthage needs to be done all over again – or rather, just done. I'm demolishing everything. It was absurd! Impossible! Wrong!' *Delenda*

est Carthago. But only in order to be rebuilt, and this time with feeling.
(Brown 2009, p. 124)

And this is precisely what Flaubert's hallucinatory conjunctures managed to do. In fact, these conjunctures are too strong to be refuted and because of this they have left their impact on the archaeological ruins of ancient Carthage herself. Thus, ever since Flaubert's novel appeared, almost in every history or archaeology book on Carthage, one is bound to come across *Salammbô*'s name, mentioned in the text and duly listed in the index, in connection with the tophet discovered there in 1921. The naming of the tophet after Flaubert's eponymous novel is a direct allusion to the ritual described in it, where Carthaginian children are shown being burnt as offerings to the child-devouring Moloch. It is also, retrospectively, an archaeological tribute to Flaubert for his efforts to raise public awareness about the city and her inhabitants.

Historical Inaccuracies

Bourginat further states that the reconstruction of the Punic civilisation in *Salammbô* aims at the whole rather than at the detail. In fact, Flaubert's first aim is to give a coherent and harmonious vision and not an absolute and fastidious precision of Carthaginian history. He understood that erudition should never close the doors to the imagination. To Flaubert we, therefore, owe this quasi-historical reconstruction of Carthage. But as a quasi-historical novel, from the historical point of view his narrative is marred by a number of striking anachronisms. One of the most conspicuous anachronisms, that immediately strikes the reader, is the aqueduct of Carthage through which Mathô and Spendius manage to enter Carthage and steal her sacred *zaïmph*. The aqueduct in the novel serves as a means of entry into beleaguered Carthage and its severing, thematically, forces Carthage to recur to human sacrifice. There is, however, no supporting documented or archaeological evidence that such an aqueduct existed in Carthage at the time of the Mercenary War. The archaeological remains of the aqueduct, seen by Flaubert and still visible in Tunis today, are those of the Roman aqueduct, which was probably built after Hadrian's visit to the city in A.D. 128 and later destroyed by Belisarius and his Byzantine forces, when the city was re-taken from the Vandals. And yet many, like Jehlen, believe that: "If Flaubert invented his aqueduct, it was not with a light heart, nor without a sense (aesthetic, intuitive) that it must somehow have existed." (Jehlen 2008, p. 23)

In addition, one can argue that Flaubert seems to Latinise Carthaginian society, dividing it between patricians and plebs: these terms, unequivocally, refer to Roman class distinctions and not to those in Carthage. He also, wrongly, assumes that the Carthaginian army consisted of legions while, at the same time, describing its battle

formation as belonging to the phalanx! As for the goddess Tanit, he describes her as being "la Venus Cartheginoise" ["the Carthaginian Venus"]. Such inaccuracies can only be considered as being out of tune for the historically minded reader but perfectly in tune with Flaubert's authorial licence.

Conclusion

As Alfred J. Church states it is "difficult to tell the story of Carthage, because one has to tell it without sympathy, and from the standpoint of her enemies." (Church 1880, p. ix) But, Flaubert handles this problem with dexterity turning her story into what J. Dugan describes as "a historical novel in the great tradition of Sir Walter Scott, a long prose poem with a markedly "Parnassian" flavour, or simply a novel in the most conventional sense of the word." (Dugan 1969, p. 13) And yet, in spite of Flaubert's perceptive abilities and its immediate success, the publication of *Salammbô* still caused a great deal of contemporary adverse criticism especially from Saint-Beuve, a literary critic, and Guillaume Frœhner, an archaeological researcher and collector of antiquities in Paris. Thus, in 1862, immediately after its publication, opinions were divided. Some even considered it to be an anti-classical text (Goddard 1998, p. 272). But, what precisely Flaubert's detractors refused to understand was that, in the absence of concrete historical evidence, artistic licence justifiably allowed him, by means of his extraordinary imagination, the freedom to reconstruct a tangible and realistic Carthage, and thus, to lift for a brief and specific time span the veil that shrouded her in almost complete mystery throughout her history. Indeed, it was not appropriate, on the part of his detractors, to level accusations that *Salammbô*'s Carthage had nothing historical about it. The historical research and archaeological notes, that Flaubert undertook to collect before stitching the final version of his novel, were evidence enough to prove this to the contrary. In 1862, they were valid and up-to-date. Yet, having said this, it would still be foolish to consider that after almost 150 years *Salammb*ô may not have lost some of its original historical validity. Today, its historical legitimacy can justly be claimed to be less so than in 1862, but the novel has nevertheless lost none of its literary and artistic qualities that, in certain instances, exceed even the imagination as found on canvas paintings which Flaubert rigorously consulted while writing the novel. *Salammbô* belongs to a dream world, where the author's/reader's imagination is at its centre. Flaubert is even recorded to have refused the text to be accompanied by illustrations that in his opinion could hinder the reader's resourcefulness. To my mind, both as a reader and translator-turned-analyst of the novel, *Salammbô* remains a unique and fascinating mix of all that epic and narrative prose, mythology, ancient and classical history, symbolism and allegory have to offer and this, ultimately, makes it more exquisite and interesting to the reader/translator of historical fiction, set in ancient times, as he needs to crack the code of its "many intertwined strands" (Mullen Hohl 1995,

p. 3) masterly woven by an author, whom like Herodotus the father of History, was able to stitch together both History and Literature by the transcendental power of the imagination.

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Malta and Sicily: An Overview of their Cognominal Kinship

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Abstract

The geopolitical, cultural and religious connections between Malta and Sicily have been extensively reviewed by several historians and ethnographers. In my case, I would like to back up this manifest bond in a collateral way. In fact, the aim of this paper is to enhance the long-standing ties between the two neighbouring islands via the scrutiny of their overlapping cognominal pool. The number of Sicilian surnames in Malta is simply staggering; however, Maltese surnames are equally discernable in Sicily. Thereby, this cross-fertilization of family names has undoubtedly been a two-way affair. The conditions and circumstances underlying this intriguing process are therefore worthy of examination.

Keywords: *surnames, Malta, Sicily, Girgenti, Licata, Pachino*

Introduction: Siculo-Arabic Surnames in Malta

A substantial number of old Maltese surnames can be traced back to Arabic, or at least to sub-Muslim, times. According to the *Chronicle of Cambridge*, Malta fell into Aghlabid hands in 870. However, the Maghrebine geographer Al-Himyarī (d. 1494), writing in 1461, categorically states that henceforth, the island remained an uninhabited *khirba* ('ruin').[1] The same author then asserts that in 1048–49, following a system collapse which had left Malta in the doldrums for whole decades, the Fatimid Muslims decided to repopulate the island. This demographic injection is likely to have been induced by Arabic-speaking (and perhaps Berber-speaking) people from neighbouring Sicily, at a time when that island was teeming with massive interfighting between the numerous *tayfas* (clans).

From the outset, one can observe that a good number of Maltese surnames of Arabo-Muslim origin are to be clearly detected also in Sicily, which makes perfect

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1   Al-Himyarī's geographical encyclopaedia bears the name *Kitāb ar-rawd al-miʿtār.* The segment concerning Malta is probably derived from al-Bakrī (1020–1094) and al-Qazwīnī (c. 1203–83). Cf. *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vol. iii, 1971, pp. 675–76, and J.M. BRINCAT, *Malta 870–1054. Al-Himyarī's Account and Its Linguistic Implications*, Malta: Said International, Malta, 1995.

sense, as the larger island itself embraces its fair share of Arabisms, both in its lexical and onomastic heritage. In Girolamo Caracausi's monumental *Dizionario onomastico della Sicilia* (1993), one encounters the vast majority of typical Maltese surnames, either as they stand or else in some cognate or related form.

During their 200-year rule in Sicily, the Saracens managed to entrench their language, artistic tastes, cultural acumen, scientific know-how, and religious mores in overwhelming terms. This Moorish heritage prevailed simultaneously in Malta. Many historians and linguists, local and foreign alike, believe, albeit not conclusively, that Malta was just a codicil of the Palermitan emirship, and that the Maltese language itself perhaps comprises the last vestiges of the Siculo-Arabic dialect spoken in medieval times on that island.[2]

In fact, some of these surnames might have ended up in Sicily via immigrations from Malta itself. For example, Caracausi states that the surname *Micalef* (**Micallef**) is certainly of Maltese origin (Caracausi 1993, p. 1016). In the Late Middle Ages and throughout the whole period of the Knights, many Maltese settled in Sicily and in southern Italy, especially in times of economic hardship. Yet again, many Arabic names were already in evidence in Sicily during Norman times, as recorded in Salvatore Cusa's *I diplomi greci ed arabi di Sicilia* (Palermo, I–II, 1868–82). Most of them are the names of Muslim serfs: **Buhagiar** (1145), *Busalib* (cf. **Saliba**, 1178), **Borg** (1178), *Tabuni* (cf. **Tabone**, 1178), **Agius** (1145), *Fitien* (cf. **Fiteni**, 1183), **Zammit** (1183), **Sammut** (1145), **Galea** (1178), **Caruana** (1178), **Xerri** (1095), **Curmi** (1095), *Ghaxaq* (cf. **Asiak/q**, 1095), *Ghebejjer* (cf. **Ebejer**, 1145), **Mintoff** (1178), and **Said** (1178) (Wettinger 1983, p. 61). The inclusion of **Galea** and **Curmi** is problematic as they can be explained as non-Semitic surnames via different criteria.

Most typical Maltese surnames are hence discernable in Sicily in the 12th century and by default, it is more probable that they reached Malta through the neighbouring island, particularly after the Arab reconquest of 1048–9. So even local Semitic surnames have an unmistakable Sicilian connection and since they happen to be among the commonest ones in Malta, they deserve particular scrutiny (Fiorini 1987-8, *passim*).

Maltese Surnames in Sicily

As already observed, most Maltese surnames of Arabic-Muslim extraction are unmistakably evident in Sicily as well. The following list of some thirty surnames is set to prove this state of affairs beyond reasonable doubt. The table is based on data provided by Caracausi in his *Dizionario onomastico della Siclia* (1993).

Maltese surnames	Sicilian forms
Abdilla	*Badalà* (PA, CT), *Adella* ? (PA)
Bajada	**Bajada** (PA), *Baiada* (PA), *Baiata* (PA, TP), *Bajata* (PA, TP)
Bigeni	toponyms *Biggeni, Bicini*
Borg	*Burgi* (PA, ME at San Pietro Patti, CT, also MT); toponyms *Burgio*, *Borgetto*
Briffa	**Briffa** (SR)
Bugeja	*Bugea* (AG), *Buggea* (PA, AG, CL, SR at Pachino), *Buggia* (PA at Altavilla Milicia)
Buhagiar	**Buhagiar** (AG), *Bugagiar* (CL), *Bugagior* (Gela); toponym *Buaggiaro*
Busietta	*Busetta* (PA, TP, AG), *Buscetta* (PA,TP)
Buttigieg	*Buttigè* (PA, CL)
Caffari	*Cafari* (PA, also RC, BR, LE), *Cafaro* (PA, CT)
Calafato	**Calafato** (PA, TP at Mazara del Vallo, AG, CL at Riesi, EN at Pietraperzia), *Calafati* (CZ, RC, LE)
Caruana	**Caruana** (PA, AG, CL, CT, SR, also CZ, TA), *Caruano* (AG at Canivattì, RG at Vittoria, also NA), *Carovana* (PA at Carini, CL at Gela)
Cassar	*Càssar* (PA, AG, CT, SR, also LE, NA)
Cutajar	*Cutaia* (PA, AG, CL, ME, CT, SR at Augusta), *Cutaja* (PA, AG, CL); toponym *Cuttaia*
Farrugia	**Farrugia** (SR), *Farruggia* (PA, TP, AG, CL, CT, SR, RG at Vittoria), *Farruggio* (PA, TP, AG, CL, EN at Piazza Armerina, ME, CT, SR at Palazzo Acreide, RG, also RC, NA), *Farrugio* (CL); toponym *Farruggi*
Fenech	**Fenech** (PA, AG, ME, CT, also Salento)
Gauci	*Gaudesi* (PA, CT)
Micallef	**Micallef** (CT), *Micalef* (PA, AG, SR, also NA)
Musù	*Musa* (PA at Cinisi, also NA); toponym *Musè*
Mula	**Mula** (PA, AG, CT, also TA), *Mulà* (PA, TP at Alcamo, AG, CT)
Said	*Saito* (PA, ME, CT, SR, also CZ, RC, NA); toponym *Saido*
Saliba	*Salibra* (PA, eastern Sicily, also NA); toponym *Salibi*
Sammut	*Zambuto* (PA, AG, CL), *Zammuto* (PA, CL)
Scerri/Xerri	**Scerri** (CT), **Xerri** (AG, SR), *Scerra* (PA, AG, CL at Gela, ME, SR at Priolo, RG, also PZ, TA, Calabria), *Sciarra* (CT at Mormanno, also Salento, NA), *Scierri* (CT), *Xerra* (PA, AG, CL at Gela)
Sciberras	*Scibbarrasi* (PA at Campofelice di Roccella), *Sciabbarrasi* (western Sicily), *Sciabarrà* (AG), *Sciabbarrà* (AG, SR)
Sciriha	*Scirica* (PA, AG, CT, also NA)
Sultana	**Sultana** (PA at Bagheria, CT, SR at Pachino), *Soldano* (western Sicily, CT , also CZ, RC, TA, NA)
Tabone	**Tabone** (PA, AG, CL at San Cataldo), *Tabbone* (PA, AG, CT), **Tabona** (PA)
Zahra	*Zagara* (PA, AG, ME, CT, also MT), *Zahora* (PA), *Zagra* (PA, AG at Licata, SR)
Zammit	**Zammit** (TP at Mazara del Vallo, CT, SR), *Zammiti* (PA), *Zammito* (PA, ME at Barcellona, also NA), *Zammitti* (PA, CT, SR, also NA), *Zammitto* (PA), *Zambito* (PA, AG, CT)
Zarb	*Zarbo* (PA, AG, CL, eastern Sicily), *Zarba* (PA, CL, CT, RG); toponym Zarbu
Zerafa	**Zerafa** (CT, RG at Scicli), *Zirafa* (AG)

[Provinces: AG = Agrigento, BR = Brindisi, CL = Caltanissetta, CT = Catania, CZ = Catanzaro, EN = Enna, LE = Lecce, ME = Messina, MT = Matera, NA = Naples, PA = Palermo, PZ = Potenza, RC = Reggio Calabria, RG = Ragusa, SR = Syracuse, TA = Taranto, TP = Trapani.]

A fleeting glance at the occurrences of such surnames shows the absolute preponderance of Palermo, the seat of the Arabic emirship. However, strong numbers are also evident in the Agrigento-Caltanissetta region and in Catania and Syracuse, on the eastern shores of the island. Far-flung Trapani and Messina are significantly less conspicuous while Enna and Ragusa are almost negligible. It seems that in present-day Sicily, there are no transparent traces of the common Maltese surnames **Mifsud**, **Mintoff**, **Chetcuti**, **Teuma**, **Agius**, **Busuttil**, **Axiak/q**, **Hili**, **Ebejer**, **Xuereb**, and **Seychell**; if there are, they have survived in unrecognizable forms.

Hull's Hypothesis of a Girgenti Colony

Given that the Maltese Christians in Norman and Swabian times were of predominantly Sicilian stock, at least through the male line, the question of their exact place of origin invites investigation. In the absence of standard research on the origin and distribution of surnames in late medieval Sicily, the obvious approach is to consider modern concentrations of surnames. Geoffrey Hull conducted such research based on the Sicilian telephone directories of 1980. Collectively, Maltese surnames as a group revealed themselves to be generally rare outside the area of southern and south-eastern Sicily comprising Noto, Ragusa, Modica, Pachino, Gela (formerly Terranova), Licata, Caltanissetta, and Agrigento (formerly Girgenti).[3] By far, the largest number of correspondences to 15th century Maltese surnames was found in the province of Agrigento. This observation seems to contradict the results deduced from Caracausi's data. However, Palermo seems to prevail in terms of mere correspondences whereas Agrigento enjoys the upper hand in terms of aggregate numbers.

The following names, in fact, are commoner in Agrigento (and occasionally in nearby Favara and Aragona), than anywhere else in Sicily: **Vella**, *Farruggia* (cf. **Farrugia**), **Schembri**, *Burgio* (cf. **Borg**), *Cassaro* (cf. **Cassar**), *Mangione* (cf. **Mangion**), **Pace**, **Camilleri**, *Falzone* (cf. **Falzon**), *Buggea* (cf. **Bugeja**), *Frenda* (cf. **Frendo**), *Gallea* (cf. **Galea**), *Zambuto* (cf. **Sammut**), **Tabone**, *Bono* (cf. **Debono**), **Cumbo**, *Moscato* (cf. **Muscat**), **Vassallo**, *Gutaia* (cf. **Cutajar**), *Cuschera* (cf. **Cuschieri**), *Pisano* (cf. **Pisani**), and **Caruana**. Even when another centre yielded the highest count for a Maltese surname, the form in question was found to be well established in Agrigento as well. This was the case with: *Zammitti* (cf. **Zammit**), *Greco* (cf. **Grech**), **Sacco**, *Atardo* (cf. **Attard**), **Conti**, **Bonanno**, *Brancato* (cf. **Brincat**), **Mallia**, and *Puglisi* (possibly **Pulis**) in Syracuse; *Zupardo* (cf. **Azzopardi**) and *Scicolone* (cf. **Scicluna**) in Gela; *Bennici* (cf. **Bonnici**) in Licata; and *Spataro* (cf. **Spiteri**) in Pachino (Hull 1993, p. 324).

The only cases in which some other centre has a complete or near monopoly of surnames extant in Malta are the following: **Formosa** and **Storace** in Syracuse; **Cilia** in Ragusa; *Cammisuli* (cf. **Camenzuli**) in Pachino; *De Bartolo* (cf. **Bartolo**), **Portelli**, *Magnuco* (*Mahnuc,* now extinct), **Cauchi**, *Scerra* (cf. **Scerri**), **Psaila**, and *Ascia*

3   Incidentally, Girgenti is the name of a rural district in Malta.

(perhaps **Asciak**) in Gela; *Callea* (cf. **Calleja**) and **Baldacchino** in Licata; and *Galia* (cf. **Galea**), **Bonanno**, and **Barbara** in Trapani (Hull 1993, pp. 324-5).

Consequently, contrary to one's expectation of finding in the south-eastern corner of Sicily the closest onomastic agreement with Malta, the Gela-Caltanissetta-Agrigento axis appears to be the source of most of the oldest Maltese surnames, with the latter district as the obvious epicentre. One important characteristic which 12th century Girgenti had in common with Malta was that it was then (with the rest of the Val di Mazara) a bastion of Arabic speech and Islamic faith in a Sicily that was in the process of being Latinized and Christianized. A valid question should now be asked: might the Swabian authorities, in planting Christian colonists in the Maltese archipelago in the early decades of the 13th century have deliberately recruited Christian speakers of Arabic from Girgenti whose knowledge of the language of the infidels would have also served the interests of the emperor? Or were they a flock of exiles in consonance with Frederick II's notorious policy of mass deportations?

As a metropolis, and the closest one to Agrigento, Palermo often yields the largest number of surnames extant in Malta today. However, it must be presumed that most of the Maltese names in large concentrations evidently belong to families originally from the neighbouring province, the validity of this assertion being borne out by the fact that these names very rarely occur elsewhere in the province of Palermo, whereas they are well distributed in that of Agrigento.

Many typical Maltese surnames are extant in modern-day Sicily, although often carrying different spellings. A brief list will suffice: *Attardo, Attardi* (cf. **Attard**); *Zuppardo, Zuppardi* (cf. **Azzopardi**); **Baldacchino**; *Balzano, Balsano* (cf. **Balzan**); **Barbara**; **Bartolo** (besides *Di Bartolo, De Bartolo, Lo Bartolo*); *Bizzini, Vizzini* (if inferring **Bezzina**); **Bonanno**; **Bonavia**; *Bennici, Bennico, Bennica, Bennice, Bonica* (cf. **Bonnici**); *Burgio* (cf. **Borg**); *Brancato, Brancati* (cf. **Brincat**); *Buggea, Buggia, Bugea, Buggè, Bugè, Bugia* (cf. **Bugeja**); **Calafato**; *Callea, Callia, Calia* (cf. **Calleja**); *Cammisuli, Caminsuli* (cf. **Camenzuli**); **Camilleri** (besides *Cammilleri, Cammalleri, Camalleri, Camillieri, Cammillieri*); **Caruana**; *Cassaro* (cf. **Cassar**); **Cassia**; **Cauchi**; *Procopio* (cf. **Chircop**); **Cilia**; **Consiglio**; **Conti** (and **Conte**); **Cumbo**; *Cuschera, Coschiera, Cuscheri* (cf. **Cuschieri**); *Cuttaia, Cutaia* (cf. **Cutajar**); **De Bono** (besides *Di Bono, De Bonis, De Boni, Bono*); **Delia** (besides *D'Elia*); *Falzone, Falzoni, Falsone* (cf. **Falzon**); *Farruggia, Farruggio* (cf. **Farrugia**); **Formosa** (besides *Formoso, Formusa, Formuso*); *Frenda, Frenna* (cf. **Frendo**); *Galia, Gallea* (cf. **Galea**); *Gaudesi* (cf. **Gauci**); *Greco* (cf. **Grech**); **Grima**; **Mallia** (besides *Mellia*); *Mangione, Mangioni* (cf. **Mangion**); *Moscato, Muscato, Moscati* (cf. **Muscat**); **Pace** (besides *Paci*); **Pisani** (besides *Pisani, Pisana*); *Basile* (if related to **Psaila**); *Puglisi, Pulizzi* (if related to **Pulis**); **Sacco**; *Zammuto, Zambuto* (cf. **Sammut**); *Xerra, Scerra, Sciarra* (cf. **Scerri**, **Xerri**); **Schembri** (besides *Schembari, Schemmari, Schembre*); *Scichilone, Scicolone* (cf. **Scicluna**); *Spitaleri, Spitali, Spitale* (cf. **Spiteri**); **Tabone** (besides *Tabbone*); *Tona* (if inferring **Tonna**); **Vassallo**; **Vella** (besides *Vedda, Bella, Di Bella, La Bella*); *Zammito, Zambito, Sammito, Sambito, Zammitti, Zimmitti, Zammitto* (cf. **Zammit**) (Caracausi 1993, *passim*).

Some Maltese surnames in Sicily, strictly in their present orthographic form, are in all probability recent imports and hence do not necessarily date back to the Middle Ages or to the Early Modern period. Hull supplies the following examples: **Attard**, **Bonnici**, **Borg**, **Cassar**, *Chiricoppi* (cf. **Chircop**), **Falzon**, **Farrugia**, **Galea**, **Frendo**, **Grech**, **Fenech**, **Mangion**, *Micalef* (cf. **Micallef**), *Moscatt* (cf. **Muscat**), **Psaila**, *Saito* (perhaps **Said**), **Zammit**, **Sillato**, *Sciabbarrasi* (cf. **Sciberras**), **Xerri**, **Portelli**, *Missud* (perhaps **Mifsud**), and **Spiteri** (Hull 1993, pp. 383-86). On the other hand, **Asciak**, **Curmi**, **Seychell**, **Agius**, **Ellul**, **Busuttil**, **Xuereb Hili** and **Dingli** are apparently unrecorded in present-day Sicily.

Maltese Settlers in Sicily

In the Middle Ages, Malta was simply an appendix of Sicily. Byzantines, Arabs, Normans, Swabians, Angevins and Aragonese ruled Sicily, and by default the Maltese islands. For four whole centuries (1130–1530), Malta was merely a geographical entity within the Kingdom of Sicily and enjoyed the same political status as any Sicilian commune.

Before the advent of the Knights Hospitallers of St John, depopulation in Malta was an endemic curse. The fear of Muslim invasions often led to mass evacuations from the islands. Things being what they were, it should come as no surprise that the Maltese found it so natural to settle in the various Sicilian communes and fuse with ease with the inhabitants of mainland Sicily. Large-scale migration to the larger island proved such a great worry to Palermo that, for example, in May 1437, the Maltese residents of Sicily were compelled to return to the island (Valentini 1941, p. 105).

Migration from Malta to Sicily during the Hospitaller period was not infrequent. Immediately following the debacle of 1551 (when the Turks virtually depopulated Gozo, Malta's sister island, in a lightning razzia), some 3,000 non-combatants were transferred from Malta to Sicily. Another *bando*, urging *gente inhabile* ('undesirables') to evacuate the island, was issued in 1561. As early as January 1565, months before the Great Siege, the Venerable Council of the Order deliberated to deport from Malta all those who were deemed unfit for combat, including women, children, and 'useless foreigners'. Again, in 1566, all those who were considered to be a liability to the defenders, as well as those who did not have enough provisions, including many impoverished peasants, were compelled to leave the island. Such people were ferried free of charge to Sicily on board the Order's galleys. Some may have returned; others quite likely, remained (Cassar 2000, pp. 97-8).

However, the most noteworthy migratory movements involved Maltese families of high standing. With the arrival of the Order of St John, the political powers formerly exercised by the *Università* (the local Commune) were doomed. Rather than suffer political irrelevance, some of the nobles left for Sicily (Ciappara 2006, p. 22). These included the *Nava*, *Platamone*, and *Mazzara* families (Montalto 1979, p. 65).

The Maltese nobilty were never in the Order's good books. Giacomo Bosio, in particular, emphasises the fact that it was the poorer classes who behaved valorously during the Great Siege, as many *famiglie* (families belonging to the aristocracy and the upper middle classes) fled in a cowardly fashion on the eve of the Turkish invasion (Bosio 1602, pp. 737-8).

The retreat of the Turkish forces hardly put an end to the collective terror. Virtually everybody on the island believed that an even larger Ottoman armada would return the following year to avenge their ignominious defeat. A better documented exodus of nobles and well-to-do families occured in 1566, just one year after the Great Siege. These wealthy families left their homes to be transported, some to Syracuse, others to Modica, Licata, Terranova, and Girgenti. These places started to look like colonies of Maltese, Greeks, and Rhodians who were deserting Malta (Bonello 2008, p. 24).

A sprinkling of Maltese family names turns up in many Sicilian localities but, as pointed out by Giovanni Bonello, what one finds in Licata is quite astonishing: **Calleja**, **Caruana**, *Cassaro* (cf. **Cassar**), **Camilleri**, *Farruggia* (cf. **Farrugia**), **Bondì**, **Bonello**, *Scerra/Xerra* (cf. **Scerri**), *Zarbo* (cf. **Zarb**), *Zirafa* (cf. **Zerafa**), *Sortino* (cf. **Sciortino**), *Sciculuni* (cf. **Scicluna**), **Portelli**, **Piscopo**, **Meli**, **Schembri**, *Sciria* (probably **Sciriha**), **Sacco**, **Rizzo**, **Pace**, **Spiteri**, *Falzone* (cf. **Falzon**), **Tabone**, **Gatt**, *Macri* (cf. **Magri**), *Butticè* (cf. **Buttigieg**), *Galia* (cf. **Galea**), **Mallia**, **Troisi**, **Trigona**, V**e**lla, (*A*)*Zuppardi* (cf. **Azzopardi**). One of the more common surnames in Licata is incidentally *Maltese* (Bonello 2001, p. 35). In this respect, Bonello's observation may be reviewed in contrast with Hull's already-discussed Agrigentine hypothesis. However, it is fair to point out that Agrigento and Licata are, after all, quite close to each other.

When the Order transferred its seat to Valletta, many nobles opted to move to the new capital to the extent that by 1582, only half of the houses in Mdina remained occupied. The old city lost much of its identity and other families preferred to migrate to Sicily – the second wave to do so within a fifty-year period. Among the more eminent members of the aristocracy who left Malta at this time were those of *Stuniga* and *De Naso* (Montalto 1979, p. 69).

Agius de Soldanis, very opportunely, gives a whole list of Maltese and Gozitan *famiglie* who left Malta for Sicily during the 16th century. Examples of extinct surnames abound: *Alaimo, Aragona, Arexula, Arsina, De Astis, Auxona, Baglio, Baldesco, Begliera, Bernardino, Bordino, Calabacchio, Calavrisi, Calava, Cancello, Chilona, Cilino, Cippualto, De Clementis, Santa Colomba, Falca, Fanchini, Habica, Laureri, Manfredi, Mazara, Michiola, Paglia, Paternò, Ravella* (Agius de Soldanis, Farrugia Gioioso 1936-53, p. 144).

The severe famine of 1591 forced many locals to resettle abroad, again mostly in Sicily, a migratory pattern that persisted well into the 17th century. In 1645, in expectation of an imminent Ottoman invasion following the capture of the Sultan's own galleon, the Knights deported from Malta *tutti i mendicanti, e donne forestiere, e poi tutta la gente inutile alla guerra*. These, again, were taken to Licata, and also

found accomodation in Modica, Girgenti, and Sciacca, constantly aided by the Treasury of the Order (Bonello 2001, p. 36). It is no wonder that, to this day, a large area of Licata is known as *Il borgo dei Maltesi*.

In southeast Sicily, traditional Maltese surnames are quite common. This fact can be explained in two ways. As already indicated, the exodus of several Maltese to Licata and the surrounding province of Agrigento was a regular feature during the whole Hospitaller period (1551, 1561, 1565, 1566, 1591, 1645). Otherwise Siculo-Arabs from the neighbourhood had, during some earlier period, colonized and re-peopled a practically uninhabited Malta (as proposed by Hull).

Economic and Cultural Ties with Sicily

Gian Francesco Abela, in his *Della Descittione di Malta Isola nel Mare Siciliano* (1647), emphasised the fact that Malta lies in the Sicilian Sea. One cannot fail to surmise that whatever lies in the Sicilian Sea must be Sicilian, and that what is Sicilian must be Italian. The 'Sicilian' character of Malta was truly overwhelming and could be discerned in both trivial and fundamental traditions, ranging from local cuisine to religious celebrations, from fashionable costumes to family codes of honour. The plethora of Sicilian surnames which reached the island during the whole Hospitaller period is just another aspect of this ethno-cultural interaction.

General political circumstances – from the 12th century onwards – had made the Maltese commune a natural extension of Sicily, sharing very much the same culture and comparable loyalties, with linguistic divergence apparently counting for little. Even during Hospitaller rule one encounters no detectable feeling of distinctiveness, with Maltese moving to Sicilian towns and villages with the same unconcerned ease that Sicilians moved into the Maltese commune (Cassar 2000, p. 257).

Before the Order's rule, Malta's links with the outside world appear to have been very scanty. Despite the fact that Malta had been under Aragonese rule since 1282, Sicilian influence and domination was complete as the island was under the direct jurisdiction of the Sicilian viceroy. Under the Catalan-Aragonese kings of Sicily, Catalan merchants could make use of their Maltese base in their trading activities in North Africa and the Levant (Dalli 2008, p. 252).

Sicilian cultural influence in the Maltese islands was never negligible. The upper crust families lived in constant contact with their Sicilian counterparts, while promising young men were dispatched to Sicily to pursue their academic or ecclesiastical careers. Lower down the social scale, Maltese seasonal labourers found their way to Sicily while a growing number of islanders settled permanently in the Val di Noto and elsewhere. By 1500, Sicilian influences had filtered down the social scale, becoming evident in all manifestations of material life and communal behaviour (Dalli 2008, p. 251). In 1536, Jean Quentin d'Autun, a French member of the Order, in his *Insulae Melitae Descriptio* (Lyons 1536), described Malta as being

fortunate enough to be 'part of Sicily'; he explains that since Roman times it has always had the same customs, the same rights, and the same government' (Vella 1980, pp. 18-9). He also observed that the Maltese 'have a Sicilian character, with a mixture of African …' (Vella 1980, pp.18-9).

This proximity, indeed, continued to be felt long after 1530. Thus, while the Order of St John managed to create a heterogeneous environment and strengthen links with the other European states, especially after the Siege of 1565, Malta remained so highly attached to nearby Sicily that four-fifths of the total amount of shipping registered between 1654–1600 continued to be directed to that island (Cassar 2000, p. 73). Above all, Malta's dependence on Sicily (especially Licata) for its grain led to the creation of an unyielding bond between the populations of the two islands. These close ties with Sicily must be seen within the context of 16th century conditions. It should be remembered that the Maltese islanders were deemed *regnicoli*, that is, they technically belonged to the royal domain of the Sicilian kingdom. Very conveniently, it made them eligible for duty free food provisions from Sicily (Cassar 2000, p. 78).

As already specified, in the 15th and 16th centuries, it became more common for the inhabitants of the municipality of Malta to move to Sicily in times of crisis and hardship. On the other hand, Abela could hardly resist pointing out that, by the middle of the 17th century, apart from being overpopulated, Malta was frequented by a multitude of foreigners, mainly Sicilians, who eventually settled there (Abela 1647, p. 75). These settlers often declared themselves to be citizens of Valletta or inhabitants of Malta, suggesting that early modern Malta was a haven teeming with alien immigrants.

To illustrate the close relationships between the Maltese and the foreign immigrants, it is sufficient to peruse the surnames in the baptism and marriage registers of local parishes, especially in the harbour area. The number of children with a foreign surname is almost equal to that of children with typical Maltese surnames, the main difference being that variety is greater in the former while frequency is higher in the latter. The marriage registers obviously show that intermarriage reached very high percentages in the harbour parishes and that, in the long run, the majority of grooms came from Italy, and even more so from Sicily (Brincat 1991, pp. 91-110).

It seems that even until the early 17th century, there was little feeling among the Maltese themselves that their commune was in any way unique or distinct from others in Sicily. Malta kept its representatives or consuls in the principal Sicilian towns. Their job was to ensure a regular supply of goods, particularly commodities, to the island. On the other hand, Sicilian businessmen had their representatives in Malta, and artisans were engaged side by side in all activities (Cassar 2000, p. 114). It seems that with the arrival of the Order, administrative autonomy from Sicily became more tangible although many generations had to pass before the Maltese could feel different from the Sicilians, or indeed from the Italians, at the individual

human level. In fact, Malta's independence was intermittently contested by the king of the Two Sicilies who looked upon Malta simply as a fiefdom, and as one more city like Palermo and Messina. It was also the king who chose the bishop of Malta, 'the fifth parish of Palermo', and to whom each successive Grand Master had to renew the oath of loyalty (Ciappara 2006, p. 8). On the other hand, the Order's government resented such conventions, considering these tendencies a threat to its sovereignty.

A.P. Borg, after scrutinizing the places of origin of Italian spouses in Malta (as registered in the respective parish records) for the period 1575-1650, observes that the majority hailed from Sicily. One can immediately observe the strong evidence of men from Messina (92), Palermo (51), Syracuse (49), and Catania (18). Besides, 66 are simply designated as Sicilians, without specific reference to their city of origin. Peninsular southern Italy is amply represented by Naples (86) and Calabria (15). Barring some dubious provenances, the Sicilians comprised at least 323 or 48.7% of the Italian contingent. Campania provided 13.4% of all spouses, Veneto 11.3%, and Liguria 10.6%; the remaining regions put together supplied just 16% (Borg 2003, pp. 207-14).

The 'Maltese' Colony of Pachino[4]

In 1756 the Starrabba family, holders of several public offices in Piazza Armerina, vowed to found a new colony in their feudal estate of Scibini (or Xibini), just a couple of miles away from Capo Passero, the southernmost tip of Sicily. The project was approved by Fogliani, the Sicilian viceroy, who had no qualms about accepting migrants from outside his kingdom. The colony, named Pachino, was to be populated by Christian folk of Greek, Albanian and Maltese descent.

Foreign settlers began reaching Pachino in 1760 and the first Maltese contingent arrived a year later. Among these pioneers, one encounters the families of *Zuppardi* (Azzopardi), *Zarbo* (Zarb), Vella, *Greco* (Grech) and *Momo* (presumably Mamo). Some found employment in the stone quarries; others opted to take up land cultivation. However, it was merely a modest start as the new settlement needed more skilled hands to prosper satisfactorily. Therefore, in 1767, Don Gaetano Starrabba, Prince of Giardinelli, dispatched Don Ferdinando Grim[a], a Maltese merchant, to the latter's native land to procure more able-bodied men for Pachino. The second wave of Maltese migrants thus disembarked in 1767–8. New surnames can be discerned among the newcomers: **Scerri**, **Mangion**, **Chetcuti**, *Buttigieci* (**Buttigieg**), **Mallia**, *Xiberas* (**Sciberras**), *Gat* (**Gatt**), **Schembri**, *Cricop* (**Chircop**), *Sciriac* (perhaps **Sciriha**), *Salibba* (**Saliba**), *Cinacura* (**Ciangura**), **Caruana**, **Debono**, **Bartolo**, *Boagiar*

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4   The facts and statistics provided in this short discussion are based on the paper by R. Savarino (2008) and the book by A. Cassola & S. Aliffi (2014).

(**Buhagiar**), **Mizzi**, **Felice**, Abela, **Cassar**, *Ascisa* (**Axisa**), *Bondici* (probably **Bonnici**), **Psaila**, **Spiteri**, **Cachia**, and **Bonanno**.

Other local family names which found their way to Pachino crop up in the State Archives of Syracuse; they include Camilleri, *Micalef* (Micallef), Borg, *Buggeja* (**Bugeja**), *Farruggia* (**Farrugia**), *Zahara* (**Zahra**), *Cammisuli* (**Camenzuli**), *Soltana* (**Sultana**), *Cortese* (**Cortis**), **Agius**, and *Falson* (**Falzon**). A few surnames of Maltese settlers are now locally extinct – e.g. *Sicropa, San* (if not an apocopated form of **Sant**)*, Tela, Chinziner, Cugno, Montenegro, Scalia, Vizina* (if not a variant of **Bezzina**)*, Dipietro*, and *Battaglia*. A handful of others survive in collateral forms – e.g. *Bianca* (for **Bianco**) and *Poggio* (for **Poggi**).

The Italo-Maltese Nexus since the *Risorgimento*

The repression of the liberal revolts in southern Italy and Sicily in 1821 brought the first trickle of political refugees to Malta. Subsequently, *Il Quarantotto* caused in Malta an upsurge of refugees escaping political persecution and vendettas; these included noblemen and members of the provisional government. Admittedly, some exiles merely used Malta as a place of transit before proceeding to other parts of the Mediterranean.

Some refugees were landed gentry; others were professionals or modest artisans. Most of them bore surnames which are still very much in evidence in Malta; obviously, not all stayed on and settled here but in some cases, we have proof that they actually did

Bianca Fiorentini includes the names of 891 Italians resident in Malta in 1849. Many surnames are at once familiar: *Balucci* (cf. **Baluci** and **Ballucci**), **Bianchi**, **Bruno**, **Carbonaro**, **Cesareo**, **Conti**, **Coppola**, **Costa**, **D'Agata**, **D'Alessandro**, **D'Amico**, **De Gaetano**, **Drago**, *Errera* (cf. **Herrera**), **Fiorentino**, **Gravina**, **Lentini**, **Lombardi**, **Lombardo**, **Lopez**, **Messina**, **Miceli**, **Navarra**, **Orlando**, **Palmier**(*i*), **Parlato**, **Pirotta**, **Rizzo**, **Romeo**, **Rossi**, **Rosso**, **Rubino**, **Salerno**, **Salomone**, **Sceberras Trigona**, **Terreni**, and **Valente**. However, it is imperative to point out that most of these family names are also documented in Malta in earlier records and consequently, in most cases, their present-day bearers enjoy a much older ancestry.

The watershed in modern Maltese political history was indirectly created by events on the Italian mainland from 1861 onwards, when being pro-Italian became synonymous with being anti-British (Abela 1991, pp. 80-1). The Language Question unleashed in the 1880s actually owes its origin partly to the active presence of the Italian rebels exiled to Malta during the *Risorgimento*, and partly to the constant British efforts to introduce English and eradicate Italian, deemed by the colonial government as 'the language of disloyalty'.

During the acrimonious days of the Language Question, the Maltese Nationalists

made much emphasis on the fact that most Maltese had Italian surnames. The Italo-Maltese writer Annibale Scicluna-Sorge, writing in the 1930s, claimed, albeit without scrupulous investigation, that some 80%, if not more of the Maltese population, was of Italian descent, as was evident from the local surnames which '*suonano di armonioso accento italico'* (Scciclina-Sorge 1932, pp. 73-4).

By the 19th century Malta had, in appearance, a thoroughly Italianate culture. For every Maltese, to be educated and to know Italian was one and the same thing; for countless generations, Italian had been the language of the courts and of the local Curia (Frendo 1988, p. 187). For Enrico Mizzi, leader of the Nationalist Party, Malta was *l'ultimo lembo d'Italia'* whereas Zauli Sajani described Malta as '*l'ultimo sasso d'Italia*, and indeed '*una continuazione della Sicilia*', both in a geographic and linguistic sense (Hull 1993, p. 128).

In the late 1920s, pro-Fascist Italian newspapers ascribed Malta as an Italian land with Italian history, culture, tradition, and language; an island populated by Italians, and where the aspirations of nationalists were being continuously thwarted by the British. These ideologists propagated the idea of Malta as *terra irridenta*. Meanwhile, Mussolini's government subsidised pro-Italian newspapers in Malta who kept insisting on the *italianità* of Malta and the Maltese.

World War II, as expected, unceremoniously brought an abrupt end not only to the Language Question but to all pro-Italian aspirations in British Malta. Shaken by the tumultuous events of 1940–43, Italo-Maltese relations were understandably slow to recover in the immediate post-war years. However, the friendship between the two countries, based on age-old historical attachments, assumed particular political value at the time of Malta's Independence in 1964, which was hailed with special warmth by the Italian Government and the Italian public opinion. Actually, the continuum of commercial, social, cultural, and artistic contacts gave birth to an authentic bond of solidarity that grew from strength to strength. This bond has since then grown into a consolidated network of bilateral, regional, and multilateral political co-operation.

When on 1 May 2004, Malta finally became a full member of the European Union, the two countries, now partners in the same economic bloc, merely consolidated their already strong political and cultural ties. Moreover, Italy and Malta have a Euro-Mediterranean vocation in common, which stands for countless chances of collaboration. The annual influx of Italian tourists in Malta has steadily augmented the social intercourse between the two nations. Meanwhile, the number of mixed Maltese-Italian marriages has never ceased, prompting the continued input of Sicilian and peninsular surnames into the Maltese cognominal pool. M,igration has always occurred in both directions, with a substantial number of Maltese, mainly brides, joining their husbands in their Sicilian and Italian home-towns.

On the other hand, the provenance of Sicilian grooms recently marrying local women is easily traceable; this is a mere sprinkling: **Mangiafico** (Syracuse, 1964), **Susino** (Pozzallo, Ragusa, 1973), **Cappitta** (Syracuse, 1974), **Arciola** (Catania, 1977),

Cacciatore (Gela, 1988), **Gagliano** (Catania, 1989), **Zammataro** (Biancavilla, Catania, 2003), **Finocchiaro** (Acireale, 2006), **Mancuso** (Marsala, 2007), **Trovato** (Catania, 2007), **Giuffrè** (Palermo, 2009), and **Zambuto** (Palermo, 2009).[5]

The Present Cognominal Situation[6]

During the two millennia of its history, Sicily has been invaded more times than any other part of Italy. Each invader has left its own mark on the language. As the centuries rolled on, increments from Byzantine Greek, Arabic, French, Occitan, Catalan, and Spanish were incorporated. Residues of these different elements are to be found in today's spoken language, particularly in place-names and in family names. Sicily's present twenty commonest surnames are (in descending order): **Russo**, **Messina**, **Lombardo**, **Caruso**, **Marino**, **Rizzo**, **Grasso**, *Greco*, **Romano**, **Di Stefano**, **Amato**, **Costa**, *Parisi, Puglisi*, **La Rosa**, **Bruno**, **Vitale, Arena**, **Pappalardo**, **Catalano.** (Caffarelli 2004, *passim*). Other surnames deemed typical of Sicily include *Giuffrida, Randazzo,* and *Trovato*. The surnames shown in bold type are all extant in present-day Malta. However, the almost negligible presence of the surnames **Pappalardo**, **Catalano**, **Randazzo***,* and **Trovato** is quite surprising. Common Sicilian *Giuffrida* is now totally absent in Malta. As for *Greco* and *Puglisi* they are collaterally represented by **Grech** and **Pulis**.

It is equally pertinent to point out the occurrence of some of Malta's commonest surnames in present-day Sicily. In all Italy, **Camilleri** is extant in 128 communes but it is mainly concentrated in Sicily, especially in Palermo, Agrigento, Caltanissetta, and Catania. Its presence in the north (Piedmont, Lombardy, and Liguria) is best explained by internal migration. The diphthongal form *Camillieri* is almost exclusive to Ragusa. **Vella** is counted in 535 Italian communes. Strong numbers occur in southern and western Sicily as well as in the Agrigento area. There are significant nuclei around Rome and Naples and once again, this is also very conspicuous in the North (Tuscany and Lombardy). **Farrugia** is represented in 21 communes. The cognate form *Farruggia*, occurring in 160 communes, is mainly encountered in Sicily, especially Palermo, Agrigento, and Caltanissetta. **Zammit** occurs in 18 communes; its cognate form, *Zammitti*, is evident in 37 communes, registering a conspicuous presence in Syracuse, and a less pronounced one in Palermo. *Zammitto* appears in 12 communes but the dissimilated form *Zambito* occurs in no less than 96 communes, again prevailing in the Agrigento area. **Attard** is represented in 20 communes. The full forms *Attardo* and *Attardi* are much more abundant, appearing in 120 and 132

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5   Records retrieved from the Malta Emigrants Commission (Dar l-Emigrant), Valletta.

6   The facts and statistics provided in this short discussion are based on several sources; these include Caracausi (1993); E. Caffarelli & C. Marcato, *I cognomi in Italia: Dizionario storico ed etimologico* (2 volumes), Torino: UTET, 2008, and the cognominal maps available on the internet website http://www.gens.labo.net/.

communes respectively. The former is chiefly Sicilian, registering higher densities in the Agrigento area.

Spiteri occurs in 49 Italian communes. There is a somewhat marked presence in Licata, Sicily. **Cassar** occurs in 60 Italian communes, but *Cassaro* is extant in 138 communes. The latter mainly prevails in the Agrigento-Caltanissetta-Licata axis. Its significant presence in the North (especially Lombardy) is best explained by internal migration. **Caruana** is extant in 149 communes; it is particularly conspicuous in the provinces of Agrigento, Caltanissetta, and Palermo. **Muscat** occurs in just five communes, but its full form, *Muscato*, is counted in 43 communes, particularly in Sicily and Apulia. The cognate forms *Moscato* and *Moscati* are much commoner and appear in 423 and 106 communes respectively. **Schembri** occurs in 199 communes. It prevails mainly in Sicily, stretching across the whole southern part of the island from Agrigento to Catania. The numbers counted in northern Italy are probably the result of internal migration. **Fenech** is extant in 33 Italian communes. Its epicentre seems to be in the province of Palermo.

Postscript

Apart from the already-cited *Malta–Pachino, una storia in comune*, Dr Arnold Cassola has published four other books which have substantially augmented our understanding of Siculo-Maltese demographic transactions: *Malta: People, Toponymy, Language: 4th Century B.C.–1600* (The Farsons Foundation, Malta, 2011); *I maltesi di Trapani: 1419–1455* (Malta University Press, Malta, 2015); *Malta-Sicily, People, Patriots, Commerce: 1770–1860* (Morrone Editore, Siracusa & Il-Kunsill Nazzjonali tal-Ktieb, Malta, 2016), and *I Maltesi di Vittoria e Scoglitti: 1628–1846* (Morrone Editore, Siracusa, 2018). In Cassola's own words, his research works, mainly relying on documents available in Sicilian archives, "contribute to furthering our knowledge of the millennial relations between the two islands and their peoples, thus adding to the mosaic of Siculo-Maltese relations." However, in the process, Cassola has also unearthed an extensive and valuable repertoire of Maltese surnames (most of them still extant, a few now extinct) which ended up in Sicily through commercial and migratory routes.

Conclusion

The oldest Maltese surnames are etymologically Arabic. The Arabs probably peopled Malta by men from Sicily, and it is significant that a good number of traditional Maltese surnames are to be detected in Sicily itself, especially in sub-Muslim times. In fact, Girolamo Caracausi's *Dizionario onomastico della Sicilia* (1994) records the majority of these Maltese surnames, either as they stand or else in some cognate,

related or camouflaged form. Since then, and up to the mid-nineteenth century, the dominant cultural driving force in Malta has come from Sicily, Italy and other European, mainly Mediterranean, countries. For 400 years (roughly between 1130 and 1530) Malta was merely a geopolitical appendix of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies. Understandably, in late medieval times, a plethora of Romance surnames reached the island under the successive Norman, Swabian, Angevin, Aragonese, and Castilians rulers. The influx of new Sicilian surnames which entered Malta during the subsequent period of the Knights of St John (1530-1798) is simply overwhelming. A huge number of Sicilians, seeking employment and adventure, converged on the island, where they settled and intermarried. In fact, the number of Sicilian (and Italian) plaintiffs applying for a nuptial license at the local Curia was never negligible, and the still extant *Status Liberi* records only confirm this phenomenon. Many recent additions from Sicily and Italy, mainly confined to the capital city, date primarily from the time of the Italian Risorgimento (1830–70). Throughout the 20th century, mixed marriages did slow down; however, Malta's EU membership and the recent influx of foreigners working on the island have secured a fresh input of Sicilian and peninsular surnames in the Maltese cognominal pool.

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Colonialism and its Impact on Women in Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions* and *The Book of Not*

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Abstract: The colonial predicament enslaves many Africans who struggle against the confines imposed on them by Western colonialists. They become alienated from what had formerly demarcated their role in society and are even made to perceive themselves as outsiders on their very own land. The effect of colonialism on African women is even worse as their position is further aggravated by patriarchy. Thus, this paper reflects on how the patriarchal situation together with living under the jackboot of colonialism put the African women in a rather precarious state. It also examines Frantz Fanon's ideas about the inherent connection between colonialism and violence, while tracing the harrowing reality of African women's lives in the different fictitious characters portrayed by the contemporary African female writer Tsitsi Dangarembga (1959 -) in her novels *Nervous Conditions* and *The Book of Not.* This paper explores how this female author depicts the socio-political and economic effects on fictionalized women and how they challenge colonial authority in their moments of agency. In so doing, Dangarembga deals with the perils of colonialism for the individual while apprehending the potential of the literary narrative to function as a means of challenging pervasive female representations.

Keywords: *Colonialism, Frantz Fanon, African women, African fiction, Tsitsi Dangarembga*

Introduction

> [C]olonialism forces the colonized to constantly ask the question:
> "Who am I in reality?"
>
> *(Fanon 2004, p. 182)*

Colonisation can be regarded as a long-term, all-encompassing social and political relationship which influences a multitude of people, attitudes, actions and responsibilities. It goes without saying that the issue of colonisation implies 'a relation of structural domination, and a suppression – often violent – of the heterogeneity of the subject(s) in question.' (Mohanty 1995, p. 259). Moreover, '[t]he colonial world

is a Manichean world. The colonist is not content with physically limiting the space of the colonized, i.e., with the help of his agents of law and order. As if to illustrate the totalitarian nature of colonial exploitation, the colonist turns the colonized into a kind of quintessence of evil.' (Fanon 2004, p. 6). In his psychoanalytical examination of colonisation in *The Wretched of the Earth*, the political theorist Frantz Fanon (2004) shows that in the process of colonisation, the coloniser finds power 'outside home' while the colonised endures 'the loss of his own home'; the 'home' in question is the one the colonised is accustomed to, and includes his native traditions and customs.

The renowned Kenyan writer Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o continues to build on what Fanon has pronounced by providing a vivid description of colonialism in Africa. As Thiong'o (2019) proclaims in an interview, '[i]n the post-independence era it was difficult for [African countries] to understand what was happening. And Fanon gave us the vocabulary that enabled us to understand'. Thiong'o categorises colonialism into three major aspects: economic, political and cultural control. As he rightly observes, during the colonial stage, imperialism 'wants primarily to control the productive forces of the people, that is, the natural resources and what their labour produces.' (1985, p. 18). These economic structures involve taking advantage of the vast majority of people for the colonialist's own ends. However, Thiong'o believes that in order to have economic control, there must be political control by the imposition of judicial institutions and military systems that control people:

> But to control the people economically, imperialism finds it necessary to have political control. That is, it imposes judicial systems, political systems, military systems and institutions designed to control people directly, particularly during the colonial stage. (Thiong'o 1985, p. 18)

He further ties these two aspects of colonialism, the economic and political control, with cultural control which regulates the values of individuals and 'how people look at themselves' in order 'to control the basis of their self-identity as a people.' (Thiong'o 1985, p. 18). Hence, economic, political and cultural control work together to alienate the colonised people from their immediate surroundings. The colonised individuals start identifying with their rulers by looking at themselves through the eyes of Europeans. As a result, Thiong'o postulates that '[i]f you look at yourself through the eyes of the person dominating you, then it means you are not really in a position to resist, or oppose him'. (1985, p. 18). Consequently, this African mental outlook comes to embrace the concept of 'otherness' due to the internalisation of negative associations with Blackness.

Fanon (2008) gives an exhaustive description of this internalisation in his seminal work *Black Skin, White Masks* which immediately hints at the fact that the colonised black man, in imitating the lifestyle and attitudes of the white ruler, yields to his very own hatred towards the skin which he cannot change, no matter how many 'white masks' he puts on. In fact, in this work Fanon defines colonised people as 'people in whom an inferiority complex has taken root, whose local cultural originality has been

committed to the grave.' (2008, p. 2). The colonised people start believing that they are less 'civilised' than the white man. They begin to compare themselves and their positions with the coloniser and his status and they greedily throw themselves upon Western culture in the hope of achieving the coloniser's power. Fanon goes so far as to state that '[t]he more the colonized has assimilated the cultural values of the metropolis, the more he will have escaped the bush. The more he rejects his blackness and the bush, the whiter he will become.' (2008, pp. 2-3). In other words, the colonial system creates an individual who loses his personal identity and originality because he limits himself to copying the white man's attitudes. Hence, while distancing himself from his native bearings, he can never be fully accepted by Europeans because he cannot become a true white man himself, no matter how hard he tries to assimilate white ways.

In simple terms, 'colonisation' refers to the control and occupation of one nation by another. This position of 'other' and 'colonised' that has been attributed to colonised subjects is even more critical and relevant for those women who are dominated by a patriarchal society because they are '*doubly* colonised by both imperial and patriarchal ideologies'. (Ashcroft et al. 1995, p. 250). This is because African males become completely absorbed by the colonial concepts of total authority and obedience which in turn, they impose on the women in their families. Ironically, women were not always perceived as subaltern in African society since prior to the colonial impact, 'gender relations were actually flexible and women could perform male functions, achieve powerful positions, and inherit property.' (Zambakari 2019, p. 52). However, not only was women's status declined under colonial rule, but women were also reduced to mere objects. Thus, colonialism brought gender differentiation as women no longer had economic autonomy and political power. In fact, as Zambakari argues, under colonial rule 'women's legal rights were subordinated to their male counterparts' leaving them in a precarious position (2019, p. 46). Moreover, colonisation made black men feel the need to reaffirm their sense of superiority and masculinity in order to compensate for the sense of inferiority imposed on them by their white rulers. This perpetuation of internalised inferiority lends itself to gender dominance and inequality for the women. In addition, as the literary critic Eustace Palmer remarks, the African woman is sometimes also 'subject to a kind of triple jeopardy, for she is not only exploited by the colonial system and by her male counterpart, but also alienated from her roots and forced, with the connivance or at the instigation of her African male, to conform to an alien lifestyle.' (2008, p. 193).

Black female writers, such as Yvonne Vera and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, often depict Palmer's 'triple jeopardy' in their literary work by emphasizing what African women have to endure in this alienated, colonial and patriarchal society which they inhabit. One such writer is also the Zimbabwean novelist Tsitsi Dangarembga (1959 -) who makes reference to such issues in her debut novel *Nervous Conditions* and its sequel *The Book of Not*. In her narratives, she highlights African women's on-going battle against the manipulations of colonial and patriarchal inculcations.

Nervous Conditions is set in the 1960s Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe. The story focuses on the characters of Tambudzai (known as Tambu) and Nyasha, who are teenage cousins. Nyasha's family returns to the homestead after the parents, Babamukuru and Beatrice, had been studying in England. As a result, Nyasha struggles with her identity; between African traditions and the Imperial culture. It is therefore a novel about identity, race, gender, and the subordination of women. Meanwhile, *The Book of Not*, set mostly at the school Tambu attends, tells her struggles in colonial Rhodesia with the backdrop of the rebel war and movement to an independent Zimbabwe. The story plots Tambu's stolen achievements and destroyed hopes as she starts rejecting her village life and becomes embarrassed of her culture. She becomes aware that she cannot change the race politics of post-colonial Rhodesia. Her attempts to enter new socio-economic standing remain unfulfilled since she cannot change the fact that she is still black.

Dangarembga's Expression of Colonial Realities

In Dangarembga's novel *Nervous Conditions,* the character of Nyasha best exemplifies the African woman's alienation from her roots. Her estrangement is simply the result of being caught between two different cultures while her father's insistence and acceptance of the colonial concepts as being the best, deepens this alienation. The time she spent in England turns her into an Anglicised person who has lost most of her mother tongue: Shona. On her return to the homestead, Nyasha, who is seen wearing a very short skirt, does not seem to know how to smile anymore and appears out of place. She is sullen at the homestead and disrespectful at home. Maiguru, Nyasha's mother, tries to explain her children's behaviour to her niece Tambu:

> They picked up all these disrespectful ways in England […] and it's taking them time to learn how to behave at home again. It's difficult for them because things are so different. […] They didn't see these things while they were growing up in England so now they are a bit confused. (Dangarembga 1988, p. 74)

Very often, Nyasha challenges the authority of her parents and, as the academic Andrade suggests, she pays the price for this 'with her mental and physical health' (2002, p. 29). Her eating disorder could be read as a response to the authority presented by her father. In fact, the seminal work of Hilde Bruch highlights the role of control in the development of eating disorders and even defines anorexia nervosa as a 'struggle for control, for a sense of identity, competence and effectiveness.' (1978, p. 251). Thus, the control over eating becomes one's main focus in the context of lack of power and effectiveness in one's life. This is exactly what Nyasha does since in the absence of power in all other areas of her life, she attempts to regain

some kind of self-control through her refusal of food. Various critics of *Nervous Conditions* have argued that Nyasha's father stands in for both patriarchal and colonial authority. In fact, Zwicker concedes that 'Nyasha's anorexia is a response to the collusion of patriarchal and colonial domination' (2002, p. 14). During the scene that precedes Nyasha's final, wild and uncontrollable emotions, when she starts tearing history books with her teeth because she is critical of the colonisers' purposes and education, she starts lamenting:

> "They've done it to me," she accused, whispering still. "Really, they have." And then she became stern. "It's not their fault. They did it to them too. You know they did," she whispered. "To both of them, but especially to him. They put him through it all. But it's not his fault, he's good." [...] "Do you see what they've done? They've taken us away. [...] They've deprived you of you, him of him, ourselves of each other." (Dangarembga 1988, p. 200)

She exhibits physical violence in the breaking of mirrors and clay pots, and in the self-embedding of clay fragments into her own flesh. This kind of physical violence, together with the mental violence that she voices, echoes Fanon's (2004) disputations of colonial and anti-colonial violence in *The Wretched of the Earth*.

Fanon argues that colonialism is immanently violent, and that '[t]he colonized [...] have been prepared for violence from time immemorial. As soon as they are born it is obvious to them that their cramped world, riddled with taboos, can only be challenged by out and out violence' (2004, p. 3). Dangarembga seems to hold a similar opinion to Fanon's idea about the inherent connection between colonialism and violence. In fact, she embodies this notion of violence through Nyasha's actions, described above. The girl's eating disorder however, implies that there is also an element of compliance with the colonists. As Zwicker cogently puts it, '[s]ince eating disorders require a high degree of self-regulation, Nyasha's anorexia suggests a degree of agency in the form of consent (she chooses, after all, what she consumes and what she rejects)' (2002, pp. 17-18). Consequently, Nyasha seems to allegorise Fanon's line of reasoning as read by Sartre.

Jean-Paul Sartre, in his preface to Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* (2004), argues that while the Colonialists placed certain excessive conditions on the Africans, such as having to distance themselves from their native history and traditions, the locals were accomplices in the implementation of such conditions. In this preface, Sartre states that '[t]he status of "native" is a neurosis introduced and maintained by the colonist in the colonized *with their consent*.' (2004, p. liv, emphasis in original). Hence, what is most telling about Sartre's statement is that it points out the participation of the colonised in his own colonisation and in fact, Nyasha's violent response to domination can be seen, according to Zwicker, as a 'willed act that is excruciatingly self-destructive' (2002, p. 18). Dangarembga herself, however, is totally against the aspect of self-destruction as pronounced by Zwicker.

Diagnoses of self-destruction are difficult as Dangarembga says in an interview with Rosemary Marangoly George and Helen Scott:

> Western literary analysts always call Nyasha self-destructive, but I'm not sure whether she is self-destructive. [...] I believe this comes from this cyclical process between your construction of yourself and what's out there. And so I think one has to be very careful in putting all the blame on Nyasha or Tambudzai for what happens to their selves. And this blaming the individual is something that comes to me very strongly in the analysis that I've read, and I don't believe it. (George and Scott 1993, p. 314)

Thus, it can be argued that Nyasha is not self-destructive but clearly uses her own body in an attempt to re-construct her very own self by showing resistance to the condition of African people under colonialism, especially Shona women. She ends up 'retching and gagging' all the food that her father forces her to eat (Dangarembga 1988, p. 198). What is significant is that she does it herself, with her own toothbrush (Dangarembga 1988, p. 190). Charles Sugnet argues that when Nyasha vomits all the food she eats, she 'is puking up colonialism itself' (1997, p. 46). However, as Sugnet perceptively notes, while Nyasha deeply resists colonial oppression, she still makes use of colonial products like cigarettes and tampons (1997, p. 46). She also favours a Western projection of femininity where women are depicted as having a curve-less figure. This clearly comes out when Tambu is admiring her own reflection in the mirror, and Nyasha expresses approval of her cousin's looks, but at the same time criticises her curves: 'Not bad at all. You've got a waist. One of these days you'll have a bust. Pity about the backside [...] It's rather large.' (Dangarembga 1988, p. 91). This shows that Nyasha has internalised Western concepts of female beauty and does not want to end up with 'heavy, strong hips' which are esteemed in Shona culture (Dangarembga 1988, p. 18). She prefers 'bones to bounce', a non-curvaceous form, which is so unlike the typical African female image (Dangarembga 1988, p. 197).

In fact, the Afro-American author Alice Walker, who coined the term 'womanism', writes that a womanist, 'loves roundedness [...] loves herself' (1982, p. ix). Meanwhile, the Nigerian writer, Catherine Acholonu, also proposes that a 'motherist' 'loves roundedness' (1997, p. 63). Despite not having a specific definition of 'roundedness' as used by these two writers, it can be taken to convey some kind of glorification of feminine physicality. In fact, the Shona cultural concept of roundedness can be perceived as a symbol of femininity since a voluptuous woman often represents fertility while a thin woman is generally regarded as undesirable.

When writing about Nyasha's eating disorder, Charles Sugnet also suggests that her 'anorexia is a way of refusing her femaleness' because, as he argues, this stops her menstruation due to starvation (1997, p. 43). However, it could be said that contrary to what Sugnet proposes, her vomiting could be read as a rejection of African femaleness rather than as a rejection of femaleness in general. What is certain,

however, is that her refusal of food is a way of biologically resisting submission to authority. This is because through her self-starvation, Nyasha tries to gain control over both cultural and colonial systems of oppression but instead, she 'was losing weight steadily, constantly, rapidly. It dropped off her body almost hourly and what was left of her was *grotesquely unhealthy* from the vital juices she flushed down the toilet' (Dangarembga 1988, p. 199, emphasis added). By referring to anorexia in her text, Dangarembga draws attention to this eating disorder which was commonly believed to be a Western condition. However, Dangarembga herself, who studied psychology at the University of Zimbabwe, believes that this might not be so since, as she remarks, Hollywood films are watched in Zimbabwe just like everywhere else around the globe and thus, even certain African 'women are becoming conscious of their weight.' (Peterson 1994, p. 346). In a conversation with Kirsten Holst Peterson, the author tries to portray a better understanding of this eating disorder when she states that '[c]ases of anorexia have been reported in Zimbabwe. The diagnosis of anorexia is something difficult. If a woman in Zimbabwe, rural or urban, is depressed, loses weight etc. who is to say that is anorexia or not?' (1994, pp. 345-6).

While Nyasha has unconsciously assimilated Western notions of femininity, preferring the thin Western figure to the voluptuous cultural ideal, she still has a strong emotional longing to feel part of her native Shona society. Hence, while she rejects the African curvaceous figure, she longs to have a better insight of her native culture and becomes obsessed with her 'craze of making clay pots' (Dangarembga 1988, p. 149). This mixture of the internalisation of Western notions and an outward longing to feel part of Shona culture manifests a sense of distress in the person who ends up with a hybrid identity that is neither British nor native Shona. Nyasha becomes alienated at multiple levels: from her Shona roots, from the British culture which she experienced during her childhood years and from the colonial state which she finds on her return to Rhodesia. Hence, she continuously identifies with the cultural values and experiences found in both societies while rejecting them at the same time. When discussing her feelings with her cousin Tambu, Nyasha says, 'I know [...] It's not England anymore, and I ought to adjust. But when you've seen different things you want to be sure you're adjusting to the right thing' (Dangarembga 1988, p. 117).

When she reaches a point where she is not being able to assimilate any further cultural anxieties, she suffers a mental breakdown and has to be admitted to hospital. The reaction of the white psychiatrist, as described by Tambu, is that 'Nyasha could not be ill, that Africans did not suffer in the way we had described. She was making a scene. We should take her home and be firm with her' (Dangarembga 1988, p. 201). Thus, Dangarembga's fictitious psychiatrist echoes the Western belief that African women do not suffer from mental disorders. In fact, psychiatry in Africa is often coloured by colonial and gender preconceptions. This is confirmed by the work of Dr. Megan Vaughan who cautions that, '[i]t was men who [...] found themselves defined as schizophrenic and confined to a colonial lunatic asylum' while 'African women,

on the contrary, were said not to have reached the level of self-awareness required to go mad' (1991, p. 22). This shows that even the psychological organisation of the colony exerted some kind of a racist and sexist system in distinguishing between male and female mental health. In reality, nervous breakdowns can actually be more common in African women than men as women are doubly affected because 'their position within the traditional African patriarchy duplicates their inferior status as colonized subjects' (Lund 2002, p. 171). Hence, Dangarembga's depiction of Nyasha's mental state acts as an attempt to redefine the dogma of mental illness by including the psychological experience of women living under colonial rule.

However, Nyasha is not the only fictional character that ends up suffering from a nervous condition. Andrade (2002) corroborates this when she argues that the plural form of the book's title, *Nervous Conditions*, not only announces the complexity of Nyasha's illness but also implies that more than one person in the narrative suffers from some kind of a nervous condition. She states that although Nyasha 'is the narrative's central and most tragic casualty of colonial violence, all of the colonized Africans around her suffer different forms of its consequences – and in a similar mode' (2002, p. 51). A perfect example of this is Babamukuru, Nyasha's father himself, who, ironically enough, is the one with whom Nyasha continuously argues. Just like Nyasha, he 'also experiences stress, poor eating habits, and "bad nerves"' (Andrade 2002, p. 51). Babamukuru is constantly trying to reprimand his own daughter's choice of clothes, the books she reads, and the people she talks to, while he even makes her eat all the food which is placed in front of her. He is submissive in the presence of the white ruler and then he compensates for his own humiliation by tyrannising his own family members, expecting unquestioning obedience from them. Hence, in her narrative Dangarembga clearly depicts Palmer's (2008) 'triple jeopardy' as Babamukuru even oppresses the weak ones around him and degrades people like Jeremiah and Ma'Shingayi, Tambu's parents, by imposing Western conventions on them through the enforcement of a Christian marriage. Thus, although Babamukuru has patriarchal authority within his family, his abusive actions could be read as a response to his lack of power within the colonial state: he in turn plays the role of a coloniser in an attempt to free himself from his own inferiority complex. Andrade corroborates this when she states that the fact that 'a colonized adult would seek to control what bodily practices he can through benevolent tyranny serves to underscore his own powerlessness in a system in which he is ostensibly a star product and emblem of power' (2002, p. 51).

Babamukuru is described as 'the perfect product of the British colonial system' (Palmer 2008, p. 183). Rendered fatherless at a very tender age, he realised that the only way to move forward and help his widowed mother was to be diligent and hard working. Babamukuru's mother, 'being sagacious and having foresight, had begged [the holy wizards] to prepare him for life in their world' (Dangarembga 1988, p. 19). Soon after, Babamukuru becomes 'a good boy, cultivatable, in the way that land is, to yield harvests that sustain the cultivator' (Dangarembga 1988, p. 19).

As Palmer points out, this 'probably meant total loyalty to the colonial machinery' (2008, p. 185). Hence, the white man's system and culture serve as a model for Babamukuru. He is later chosen from amongst the natives to be sent to the West so he would be 'trained to become useful to their people', the white man's people (Dangarembga 1988, 14). He is educated in the West and then propagates his embracement of European attitudes to fellow indigenous people upon his return to Africa. These 'chosen' ones become brainwashed into thinking that the white rulers are benevolent men who should be taken as models of civilisation. Such blind compliance with the white rulers is exactly what Nyasha tries to warn Tambu about: 'It's bad enough [...] when a country gets colonised, but when the people do as well! That's the end, really, that's the end' (Dangarembga 1988, p. 147).

Babamukuru's representation of the colonial culture is evident in the whitewashed house he owns, the very same house in which he lives with the rest of the family in the presence of an 'albino hound' (Dangarembga 1988, p. 65). When considering that the home is one's intimate place and that one identifies with the place in which one lives, then Babamukuru's home should be the place which establishes who he truly is. In fact, Dovey asserts that one's home creates a 'bonding or mergence of person and place such that the place takes its identity from the dweller and the dweller takes his or her identity from the place. There is an integrity, a connectedness between the dweller and the dwelling.' (1985, p. 39). However, Babamukuru tries to mimic the white man's type of lodging which clearly indicates that the effect of colonialism has affected his innermost core. Most of the rooms found in Babamukuru's house seem impeccable, with 'heavy gold curtains flowing voluptuously to the floor, the four-piece lounge suite upholstered in glowing brown velvet, [and] the lamps with their tasselled shades' (Dangarembga 1988, p. 68). Notwithstanding, other parts of the house, such as the kitchen, are not given the same attention: 'the cooker had only three plates, none of which was a ring [...] [t]he kitchen window was not curtained; a pane of glass was missing. This missing pane caused many problems because through the hole a draught blew' (Dangarembga 1988, p. 67). Thus, some areas of the house, those parts which are not seen by 'visitors whom it was necessary to impress', are neglected (Dangarembga 1988, p.68). Babamukuru wants to distinguish himself from the other Africans by copying the ways of the white man even in his own lodging, yet the impression given is that he does not have the means to introduce the same sense of elegance throughout the house. Therefore, the parts which he knows would not be visited by non-family members are not given importance to. As a result, he is partially imitating, or mimicking, the white man's culture. In fact, the notion of mimicry is described by Homi Bhabha as 'a subject of difference that is almost the same, but not quite' (2004, p.86). Bhabha sees the colonised intellectual as imitating the language, behaviour and culture of the white ruler, yet unable to achieve the same kind of equality. This is because, 'the discourse of mimicry is constructed around an *ambivalence;* in order to be effective, mimicry

must continually produce its slippage, its excess, its difference' (Bhabha 1984, p. 126, italics in original). This difference between Babamukuru's house and that of the white man also comes across in the gleaming whiteness which Babamukuru tries to imitate in his own house, trying to give an impression of sterility which is so difficult to maintain in the dry hot weather of Africa. He ends up with appliances that 'gleamed greyly' with a 'lack of brilliance' instead (Dangarembga 1988, p. 67). Babamukuru's niece, Tambu, perceptively notes this when she remarks that:

> The antiseptic sterility that [her] aunt and uncle strove for could not be attained beyond an illusory level because the buses that passed through the mission, [...] rolled up a storm of fine red dust which perversely settled in corners and on surfaces of rooms. (Dangarembga 1988, p. 71)

Nonetheless, Tambu is eager to leave her village because she starts internalising the colonial's mental picture of rural Africa as grimy and unhygienic. She ascends to a new type of self: a 'clean, well-groomed, genteel self', separated from the dirt and the flies of her rural home (Dangarembga 1988, pp. 58-59). Although Tambu cannot imagine losing touch with her African origins, she is eager to attend the mission school where her uncle is headmaster, and is even ready to succumb to colonial conventions. The colonial education that she gets there affects her personal identity and even her perception of her own community: she becomes captivated by Western culture and can no longer find confidence and comfort in her own native society.

Tambu's captivation is clearly evident in *The Book of Not* when she starts dreading going to her rural homestead during school vacations. While in *Nervous Conditions* Tambu's psychological state is not distorted, and she does not wallow in depression as Nyasha does, Tambu does wither in its sequel. This happens due to the imposition of emotionally disturbing experiences by the colonial education system and to the element of racism that it entails. As the title implies, Dangarembga's second text is 'a novel of "unbecoming" – of the loss of identity, feeling, and attachments' (Kennedy 2008, p. 89). Tambu internalises a Eurocentric perspective of her African 'otherness' and 'inferiority', which leads to her black subjectivity. Fanon postulates that '[t]he black man [...] is constantly preoccupied with self-assertion and the ego ideal. So much so, that whenever he is in the presence of someone else, there is always the question of worth and merit' (2008, p. 186). This happens because, according to Fanon, colonialism withholds recognition from the colonised individual and as a result, the colonised person constantly desires to achieve acknowledgement.

When applying Fanon's insights to Dangarembga's novel, this issue of self-assertion is succinctly articulated by Tambu who constantly strives for recognition in *The Book of Not*. In her aim to reach the honour roll, she contrives to memorise all of her lessons, 'remembering every word from the teacher's mouth' because she simply wanted to be 'absolutely outstanding or nothing' (Dangarembga 2006, p. 25).

When she manages to achieve very good results, she sets herself the task of having her name carved on the Silver Cup by obtaining the best O-Level results:

> I promised myself I would have it, and my name would be inscribed on it for everyone to see: Tambudzai Sigauke. Then people would know who I was, a person to be reckoned with and respected, not a receptacle of contempt. (Dangarembga 2006, p. 114)

This incessant desire to be recognised by Europeans and Africans alike leaves her depressed and disheartened since despite achieving excellent results, she is not awarded the Silver Cup because a white student is chosen instead.

Not only does Tambu remain unrecognised for her achievements, but the 'tortured path she has travelled in pursuing her desire for recognition has resulted in a narrowing of attachments and a shrivelling of self' (Kennedy 2008, p. 99). She even becomes alienated from her very own society because she internalises a European image of the degraded coloured man. The psychological damaging effect of this comes across when Sister Catherine tries to comfort Tambu who in turn is 'appalled at having let [her] skin and this white person's touch' (Dangarembga 2006, pp. 31-32). Her 'first impression was I had soiled my teacher in some way. I liked her and I did not want to do that. Sister should not touch me' (Dangarembga 2006, p. 32). Thus, Tambu, like many other indigenous people, has unconsciously assimilated a sense of inferiority and failure.

This internalisation of failure continues to take place even when her schooling years are over and she moves into an old colonial building: the Twiss Hostel. This place had 'a sign which read "right of admission reserved" [...] still glued above the entrance' (Dangarembga 2006, p. 203). Tambu perceives the knowledge that 'one was now included' as a positive indication of a new and different Zimbabwe (Dangarembga 2006, p. 203). However, she later realises that despite the political changes, things did not really improve. She starts suffering the same kind of humiliation she had encountered at the prestigious missionary school of the Sacred Heart because even here there is 'unofficial' enforcement of racial segregation. Moreover, the landlady constantly mixes her up with another resident and so, once again, Tambu fails to be recognised for who she truly is. She bitterly remarks that 'I had not been recognised, had not been perceived as an individual person but as a lump broken from a greater one of undifferentiated flesh!' (Dangarembga 2006, p. 207).

In Harare, she finds a job as a copy editor with an advertising agency. Here she creates an outstanding advertisement for 'Afro-Shine Hair Care' but it is her white colleague, Dick Lawson, who takes credit for her creative work and presents it to the client: 'I was not to meet the client. My copy was, but I was not good enough to merit that. [...] My copy was not good enough; under someone else's name, it was' (Dangarembga 2006, p. 236). Dispirited by her lack of success in owning full recognition for her brilliant work, she resigns from her job. She simply accepts the

white man's prejudiced attitude and rejects her true identity. Hence, even in the new Zimbabwe, the same structures of colonialism that had left a negative impact on Tambu continue to infiltrate her consciousness, causing a worsening sense of inferiority. The colonial subordination which she had faced and internalised throughout her Western education continues to affect Tambu as corroborated by Fanon's argument when he stresses the endurance of colonial attitudes beyond political independence and argues that '[c]olonialism and imperialism have not settled their debt to us once they have withdrawn their flag and their police force from our territories' (2004, p. 57). The colonial influence will continue to be felt long after the colonialists themselves would have left the land which they had greedily occupied.

Conclusion

The colonial system simply contrives to change the colonised individual into an 'other' by coercing the native into mimicking a Western identity. This is highlighted by Dangarembga's accurate description of the negative effects of colonialism on native Africans when she depicts certain fictitious characters, like Babamukuru, who strive to internalise the white man's culture. Her narratives bring to light various instances and images of oppressive colonial manifestations and poignantly reveal the socio-political and economic effects of colonialism on African people, especially African women. In fact, Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions* and *The Book of Not* highlight how colonial oppression affects women's lives, both socially and economically. This is confirmed by Tambu's mother, Ma'Shingayi, when she accurately describes the exploitation by the colonial economy as 'the poverty of blackness', a situation that turns the native, whether directly or not, into a victim (Dangarembga 1988, p. 16). Yet this author propounds the fictional women in her narratives as agents of resistance in colonial Zimbabwe. Thus, Dangarembga presents women who endure the negative effects of colonialism but also attempt to challenge colonial authority through different types of resistance, ranging from starvation to neurosis, in order to demonstrate opposition to colonial oppression. They set themselves the arduous task of retrieving some form of agency through their acts of protest in an attempt to improve their own situation or that of others. Therefore, although colonialism has led to cultural maiming and detrimental effects in the social, political and economic affairs of the country, in her narratives Dangarembga presents African women who illustrate their concerns in their various attempts of resistance.

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Seamus Heaney's Sonnet in the 'New Age of Anxiety'

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Abstract:

Around one-third of the sonnets Seamus Heaney published over his entire poetic career are found in the collection *District and Circle* (2006). Heaney maintained that this collection was distinct from his previous ones because it described a world that, in his view, was characterised by 'a new age of anxiety'. Such anxiety manifests itself repeatedly in poems that tend toward fragmentation and incompletion. And thus the question that immediately suggests itself relates to the adequacy of the sonnet form to tackle such a subject. For the sonnet as a form tends towards resolution and its architectural structure is inclined towards completion. By referring closely to a sonnet sequence from his 2006 collection, this article seeks to assess the ways in which Heaney makes of the sonnet form an apposite vehicle to reflect on the anxiety-ridden world of the twenty-first century.

Keywords: *Seamus Heaney, District and Circle, contemporary sonnet, sonnet sequence, unconventional sonnet, the 'new age of anxiety'*

Seamus Heaney's Sonnet in the 'New Age of Anxiety'

Around one-third of the sonnets Seamus Heaney published over his entire poetic career are found in the collection *District and Circle* (2006). Indeed, of the 68 poems in this collection, an unusual 21 are sonnets. For Heaney, as he remarks in an article about his choice of title for the collection, what distinguishes these poems from earlier ones is the fact that we live in 'a new age of anxiety' (Heaney 2006b). It is certainly significant then, that Heaney would turn to the sonnet form so insistently when reflecting on, in the words of the blurb, 'the eerie new conditions of a menaced twenty-first century' (Heaney 2006a). It would appear that the lyrical potency of such a form proves attractive to him. After all, as Michael Parker correctly observes, 'Evidence from previous collections suggests that the poet frequently has recourse to this highly governed, strongly traditional form when political and personal concerns are at their most intense' (Parker 2008, p. 370). And yet the question about the adequacy of the sonnet form to reflect upon such anxiety immediately suggests itself; not least since the fragmentariness of the contemporary world that Heaney seeks to bring to the fore can hardly be reflected in the sonnet's rigorous structure. On the face of it, the sonnet's architectural structure appears to be less

than amenable. Indeed, as the ensuing brief overview of its salient formal features will make clear, the sonnet is characterised by a logical development that tends towards a neat and final resolution.

Writing in 1972, John Fuller provides a rather narrow understanding of what constitutes the sonnet; he claims that 'the essence of the sonnet's form is the unequal relationship between octave and sestet' (Fuller 1972, p. 2). For Fuller, this relationship is of far greater significance than the fact that there are fourteen lines in a sonnet. Indeed, he goes so far as to maintain that 'it is the Italian (or Petrarchan) sonnet which is the legitimate form, for it alone recognizes that peculiar imbalance of parts which is its salient characteristic' (Fuller 1972, p. 1). For Michael Spiller who traces the development of the sonnet from its Sicilian origins to its 17th century specimens, the distinguishing characteristics of the sonnet are three, namely proportion (it is split into an octave and a sestet), extension (it is written in ten- or eleven-syllable lines), and duration (it has fourteen such lines). He goes on to claim that, 'Any poem which infringes one of these parameters will remind us of a sonnet quite closely; a poem which infringes two will be more difficult to accommodate, but we will probably try to establish some procedure to account for the deformation; and a poem which infringes all three will not be recognisable as a sonnet at all, and we will regard it as something else unless there is contextual pressure' (Spiller 1992, p. 3).

Helen Vendler's introduction to her commentaries on the art of Shakespeare's sonnets also reveals a proclivity towards a rigid understanding of the formal properties of the sonnet. Indeed, the emphasis on the basic requirements of 'structural coherence' and 'logical development' is amply felt throughout her analyses of the sonnets. The sonnet, as she argues, has a rigid organising structure in which each part of the sonnet has a logical relation to the others. The parts are thus strategically linked in an identifiable rhetorical structure or what she calls 'the architecture of the sonnet' (Vendler 1997, p. 4-5). Writing elsewhere, she succinctly sums up the sense of finality achieved at the end of the Petrarchan and Shakespearean forms when she observes that the 'European sonnet is very satisfying, since it implies, by its very symmetry, that the shorter six lines can resolve the preceding eight, just as the Shakespearean sonnet implies by its closing couplet that the quatrains' engagements can somehow be summed up, or capped, or ironically dismissed' (Vendler 2019, p. 79). Thus the sonnet as a form is recognised as one that tends towards solution; its architectural structure is inclined towards completion.

And yet such theories of the sonnet may appear unyielding and extremely conservative when juxtaposed to the views of more recent literary critics and poets whose answer to the question, 'What is a sonnet?', is as liberal as it gets. Think, for instance, of Don Paterson's remark in his introduction to an anthology of 101 sonnets that 'the sonnet is pretty much in the eye of the beholder' (Paterson 1999, p. xi) and Stephanie Burt's similar position when she claims that 'the sonnet is what each poet makes it' (Burt 2011, p. 263). The latter views are clearly very much informed by the reading of sonnets that emerged in the latter half of the twentieth-

century and the first decade of the twenty-first century—exemplars that would certainly fail to pass muster by the standards of the more conservative critic. For as Burt aptly observes in an essay on the contemporary sonnet, while 'questions about what counts as a sonnet, about how we should use the term, are now centuries old', what distinguishes the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries is 'a strong sense that such questions have no stable answers, that they can never be resolved' (Burt 2011, p. 245). Twentieth- and twenty-first century practitioners of the sonnets have extended the definition of the sonnet through their experiments and practice. It is, after all, *praxis* that informs theory in the field of literary genres and not vice-versa. Burt's remark that many of the poems included in the 2008 Norton anthology of the sonnet 'would not, a hundred years ago, have been called sonnets at all' is revelatory in this respect (Burt 2011, p. 245). Genre theories change in accordance to the ever-inventive works of the contemporary practitioner. And the sonnet form, in spite of its brevity and seeming constraints, has certainly proved immensely adaptable. So much so that as Paterson remarks, 'the form has diversified to the point where its definitive boundaries are so blurred that it has effectively ceased to exist' (Paterson 1999, p. xi).

Only it hasn't, of course. The sonnet is one of the oldest verse forms and it is hardly surprising that 450 years of sonnet writing in the English language have produced exemplars that have strayed considerably from the normative characteristics established in the early prototypes. For conservative critics such as Fuller and Spiller, such instantiations earn the descriptions of 'freak varieties' (Fuller 1972, p. 1) and 'deformation[s]' (Spiller 1992, p. 3). Even the more accommodating Stephanie Burt and David Mikics, whose *The Art of the Sonnet* (2010) explores many unconventional sonnets from the twentieth-century, make the all too stark distinction between contemporary sonnets that are 'self-consciously traditional' and those that are 'decidedly *impure*' (Burt, Mikics, 2010, p. 5, my emphasis). The terms ascribed to sonnets that fail to conform rigorously to the rule book are evidently disparaging and point to the firm conviction in the existence of a 'pure' form—unsullied by the vagaries of the errant poet. And yet, interestingly, when speaking about the notion of genre, Jacques Derrida opts precisely for the term 'impurities' to describe those works that are *integral* for the continued existence of the genre. It is indeed fitting in the context of this discussion that Jacques Derrida, in the essay 'The Law of Genre', should argue that the notion of genre is made possible through an a priori counter-law of 'impurity' (Derrida 1980, p. 57). Rather than focusing on the properties that are fundamental to the genre, Derrida turns his attention to instances that defy the rules that govern a genre. In his view, such instances of impurity serve to *strengthen* rather than weaken the law of genre. Far from compromising the strength of the law of genre, Derrida argues, the counter movement against the law serves to legitimise it further. And thus the negative connotations of the term 'impure' are promptly erased. Indeed, provocation and defiance in the face of the law of the genre not only ensure productive continuity, but are a necessary lifeline for the genre.

From his early political sonnet 'Requiem for the Croppies' (1962), which Vendler describes as an 'anomalous sonnet' (Vendler 1998, p. 22) to the poignant elegiac 'Clearances' sequence (1987) that finds ways, as Stephen Regan observes, of adequately betraying 'the standard form' (Regan 2019, p. 189), Heaney's use of the sonnet has always sought to do novel things with the fourteen-line poem. In his essay 'The Art of Heaney's Sonnets', Thomas O'Grady argues that while Heaney borrows the 'scaffolding' of the sonnet, several of his sonnets 'suffer from defects' (O'Grady 2000, p. 355). In a similar vein, Constance Jackson, who provides an astute reading of Heaney's early sonnets, remarks on his complete 'disinterest' in the perfect rhyme that typifies the sonnet form. After all, she quips, 'breaking the sonnet convention is conventional' (Jackson 2012, p. 36). And yet it seems that the 2006 collection establishes something further still. First, it is apparent that Heaney turns to the sonnet form with a far more urgent insistence in this collection; no other collection in his extensive oeuvre includes as many sonnets. Second, his use of the sonnet pushes the boundaries of the form to such an extent that critics cannot agree on the number of sonnets included in the collection. Third, there is a prevalent sense in which the 'scaffold' of the sonnet, to use O'Grady's term, is erected only to be summarily dismantled on the page. As Tara Guissin-Stubbs remarks when reflecting on the five-sonnet sequence 'District and Circle' in particular: 'Though the sonnet offers us a foundation, this soon breaks down. Our inherited knowledge of the form gives us hints on how to read these (often confounding) poems, but it does not help us square the circle' (Guissin-Stubbs 2020, p. 76). Turning its attention to this sequence, the rest of the article shall address precisely the question of the adequacy of the sonnet form to reflect what Heaney described as 'the new age of anxiety'.

Described by Andrew Motion as 'the single most impressive poem in the book' (Motion 2006), 'District and Circle' details the journey of the persona on the London underground train with uncanny precision. The speaker in these poems is a strange composite. In part, it is the younger Heaney who travelled on the District and Circle lines during a summer of vacation work in London in 1962. And yet it is also, as Heaney observes, partly the figure of the Tollund Man who had given him 'rare poetic strength more than 30 years earlier' (Heaney 2006b). The near-perfectly preserved bog body from the iron-age who inspired Heaney's Bog poems in the 1970s is here resuscitated and brought to life in the 'new world of virtual reality and real pollution, a world of violence and polluted public speech' (O'Driscoll 2008, p. 410).

'District and Circle' is a sequence that attempts, in its limited space, a Dantesque descent into the underworld. As Rachel Falconer explains in her illuminating discussion on the literary genre of *katabasis* (from the Greek for 'going down'), the descent 'relates a journey through which a character or persona undergoes an education or a trial of the self to achieve a certain wisdom' (Falconer 2012, p. 405). She convincingly demonstrates that this ancient literary genre has been revived in

recent years by contemporary poets as diverse as Geoffrey Hill, Alice Notley and Paul Muldoon who have sought, among other things, 'to discover continuities and coherences in otherwise fragmented or grief-struck lives, to defamiliarize and critique present-day politics, or to affirm certain values in the face of destabilizing global events' (Falconer 2012, p. 404). In her essay 'Heaney, Virgil and Contemporary *Katabasis*', she argues that the entire collection 'comprises a sustained *katabasis*' and singles out the five-sonnet sequence as the most explicit manifestation of this genre (Falconer 2012, p. 406). For Heaney, the underground journey must have had conscious parallels with Aeneas' venture into the underworld, not least since, as he explains, it is 'the one Virgilian journey' that was a 'constant presence': 'the motifs of Book VI [of Virgil's *Aeneid*] have been in my head for years—the golden bough, Charon's barge, the quest to meet the shade of the father' (O'Driscoll 2008, p. 389). It is indeed highly significant that Aeneas' journey ends with the encounter with his father that yields a prophetic vision of the destiny of Rome. Indeed, viewed in light of the katabatic genre and the evident Virgilian influence, 'District and Circle' creates the expectation of a prophecy. Heaney's descent into the underworld is ultimately a search for meaning in an increasingly alienating world that would presumably end with a vatic revelation and the longed-for 'resurrection scene'—one that he anticipates as early as the second sonnet in the sequence (Heaney 2006a, p. 17). And yet as shall become amply clear as we look closely at the third and final sonnet in the sequence, this journey offers no such insight and no such ascent.

The first sonnet details a routine encounter with a specific individual; the only such encounter in the entire sequence that otherwise describes the movements of the persona as those of one commuter in the midst of many. The persona recounts the habitual crossing of paths with a busker whose 'tunes from a tin whistle' would greet him as he descended the stairs. The emphasis in this first half of the poem is clearly on the exchanged looks between the commuter and the busker—described here as the former's 'watcher'. Although highly conscious of the 'two eyes eyeing' him, the persona does not feel threatened by the busker's 'unaccusing look'; neither does he avoid eye-contact (Heaney 2006a, p. 17). What follows in the sestet, however, is the persona's hesitation, as he would 'trigger and untrigger a hot coin', regarding the appropriateness of tipping the busker. It is the sudden 'recognition' that they are equals (a musician and a poet) that compels the persona to 're-pocket' the coin he held at the ready. Satisfied with his decision, the persona returns the busker's nod and moves on; the apparent serenity and finality of the sonnet is captured in the rhyming couplet:

> [...] I would re-pocket and nod,
> And he, still eyeing me, would also nod.
>> (Heaney 2006a, p. 17)

It is only midway through the third sonnet that the subject is brought up again:

> Another level down, the platform thronged.
> I re-entered the safety of numbers,
> A crowd half straggle-ravelled and half strung
> Like a human chain, the pushy newcomers
> Jostling and purling underneath the vault,
> On their marks to be first through the doors,
> Street-loud, then succumbing to herd-quiet...
> Had I betrayed or not, myself or him?
> Always new to me, always familiar,
> This unrepentant, now repentant turn
> As I stood waiting, glad of a first tremor,
> Then caught up in the now-or-never whelm
> Of one and all the full length of the train.
>   (Heaney 2006a, p. 18)

The sonnet begins by detailing the near automated movements of commuters on the London underground. Descending further down into the underground railway network, the persona is ever-sensitive to the movements of fellow human beings as they succumb to the mechanical directives of the train. The sounds and motions alter to a rhythm decreed by the arriving trains as 'street-loud' gives way to 'herd-quiet'. It is during this brief moment of silence that the sonnet gives way to reflection. Arguably, the most striking feature of the sonnet is, in fact, the volta. For the question that is posed after the incomplete quatrain refers back, not to earlier stanzas of the sonnet, as would be expected, but to the first sonnet in the sequence: 'Had I betrayed or not, myself or him?'. Strategically positioned midpoint through the sequence, the question reveals the sudden realisation on the persona's part of having committed an act of betrayal by deciding not to tip the busker on a previous floor. The effect created by the question is simultaneously one of interruption and continuity. The present sonnet seems to be cut short as it returns to an earlier moment in the commuter's journey and thus to an earlier sonnet. At the same time, the sonnet returns to what turns out to be an unresolved issue from a previous sonnet in the sequence. The supposed unity and self-sufficiency of the sonnet (a mainstay even within sonnet sequences) comes apart as the persona has second thoughts about his encounter with the busker.

This sense of fragmentariness is further enhanced through the missing line in the quatrain. Comprised of three lines, the second quatrain ends with suspension points that seem to stand in for the missing line in this thirteen-line sonnet. The rhyming scheme of the opening quatrains (*abab cdc-*) stops short of completing the pattern of alternating rhymes that is typical of the Shakespearean form. The absence of perfect

rhyme at the end of the Heaney line does not come as a surprise to his readers. Firm in his belief that there is 'virtue' in 'a slight dissonance', Heaney had been, by then, long-practised in the art of what he calls 'off-rhyme' (O'Driscoll 2008, p. 378). The rhyming pairs 'thronged'/'strung', 'numbers'/ 'newcomers' and 'vault'/ 'herd-quiet' can be deduced without too much difficulty and they point to the evident missing line that would provide the expected end-line rhyme to go with the word 'doors'. Yet 'doors' finds no imprecise echo as the 'herd-quiet' of the previous line gives way to a silent line. Moreover, the tense unease of the dissonant rhyming pairs is all the more conspicuous in the sonnet form where the audible harmony of end-line rhymes typically creates a distinctively noticeable rhythm. The effect is such that, as Meg Tyler remarks in relation to other sonnets from this collection, Heaney produces 'verbal structures that do not sound much like sonnets' (Tyler 2016, p. 138).

The second half of the sonnet, which comes closer in structure to a Petrarchan sestet with its *efgfeg* rhyme scheme, begins with the question: 'Had I betrayed or not, myself or him?'. The unmistakably intrusive line has the effect of announcing the volta of the sonnet in a striking manner. Indeed, the question, comprised of one full line and following on from the 'silent' line at the end of the three-line 'quatrain', has the effect of stalling the poem. The disjunction owes, in part, to the fact that the question does not properly belong to this sonnet. In fact, it is not immediately evident what the betrayal referred to is or who the pronoun 'him' refers to. By introducing an unrelated subject, the question breaks from the quatrains in a decisive way. Clearly, there is no continuity or logical relation between the two parts. Moreover, the dramatic shift in tone, announced by the arresting question, creates the expectation of a definitive response. The Petrarchan sestet, after all, is the place where the sonnet finds its resolution.

Yet the moment of reflection fails to yield a satisfactory answer to the question. The two lines that immediately succeed the question initiate a response: the persona contradictorily reflects that the indecision regarding the appropriate course of action is both 'new' and 'familiar' to him. The transitory stationary moment whilst he waits for the train affords a brief opportunity for reflection, but this is quickly interrupted by the audible 'tremor' of the incoming train. And the persona — 'glad of a first tremor' — ends his ruminations there and then. He stops short of elaborating on his 'repentant' and 'unrepentant turn'. The last two lines of the poem return to the immediate setting, and the commuter's journey ensues as he boards the train. So once again, the sonnet fails, as does the persona, to conclusively resolve the matter in question. Here, as elsewhere in the sequence, the constant onward journey takes precedence over the commuter's reflections.

Similarly, the last sonnet in the sequence, which is arguably the most unconventional one in the entire collection, lacks the characteristic internal logic and sense of completion of the sonnet form:

So deeper into it, crowd-swept strap-hanging,
My lofted arm a-swivel like a flail,
My father's glazed face in my own waning
And craning...
                                    Again the growl
Of shutting doors, the jolt and one-off treble
Of iron on iron, then a long centrifugal
Haulage of speed through every dragging socket.

And so by night and day to be transported
Through galleried earth with them, the only relict
Of all that I belonged to, hurtled forward,
Reflecting in a window mirror-backed
By blasted weeping rock-walls.
                                    Flicker-lit.
                                    (Heaney 2006a, p. 19)

Surely the most obvious deviations of this sonnet are immediately evident at first glance. This is not the typical shape of the sonnet. Four incomplete lines (lines 4, 5, 13 and 14) signal the alluded to fragmentariness through the layout of the poem on the page. The missing part-lines are more conspicuous than the silent line of the third poem. The glaring white space at the start or the end of these lines creates a sonnet that is visually eschew. If, as Paterson argues, the sonnet is 'a small square poem' that 'presents the poet and the reader with a vivid symmetry', here Heaney produces a misshapen and asymmetrical square (Paterson 1999, p. xvi).

This sonnet follows the persona's further descent and the eventual longed-for encounter with the 'shade of the father'. The moment is a fleeting one as the Heaney persona catches but a glimpse of his father's visage in his own reflection. As is typical in this ever-moving sequence, the onward journey of the commuter disrupts the brief moments afforded to thought or reflection. Indeed, the apparition of the father's 'glazed face' lasts but an instant. Significantly, it is here that the poet uses the first incomplete lines. In Falconer's view what is particularly striking in Heaney's underworld journey is the absence of the conversation with the dead or *nekyia* that characterises the katabatic genre. As Falconer observes, here there 'is no exchange of human word' (Falconer 2012, p. 414). She later adds: 'The poet's father [...] imparts no knowledge of the past or future to his son. Instead what follows the ellipsis are two empty half-lines, cutting a gulf between quatrains. So, no prophecy; just silence' (Falconer 2012, p. 415–16). Whereas Aeneas' descent in the underworld ends with a dialogue with the spirit of his father that yields a prophetic vision, in Heaney's journey there is no such prophetic insight. The katabatic experience has not, as Falconer argues convincingly, yielded the education or wisdom desired. The formative experience of dialoguing with the other does not take place in the

alienating underworld of the twenty-first century. The greater the need for such a conversation, the more resounding its absence. The painful and heavy silence is finally broken by the 'growl/Of shutting doors' and the onward, if spasmodic, journey.

Indeed, the sporadic movements of the traveller seem to be reflected in the absence of recognisable stanzaic patterns in this sonnet. It is not possible to speak of a quatrain or an octave here since the rhyming words straddle over the two usually distinct parts of the Petrarchan sonnet. The rhyming words 'socket', 'relict', 'mirror-backed' and 'flicker-lit' create an unusual rhyme scheme (*abaabccdededxd*). While rhetorically, syntactically and visually, the sonnet appears to be split into an octave and a sestet, the end-line rhymes suggest another division. The eighth line of the poem seems to belong to the second half of the sonnet that contains, like the third sonnet, an unrhymed line. The penultimate line of the sonnet that ends with the hyphenated word 'rock-walls' remains unrhymed. Thus, it may be concluded that as Burt remarks in relation to the sonnets of Heaney's contemporary, Paul Muldoon, '[i]n such poems uncertainty about what counts as a sonnet joins up with uncertainty about what counts as a rhyme, and with uncertainty about whether and where we make the patterns [...] that we believe we find' (Burt 2011, p. 261).

Once again, the volta in this sonnet is marked by the clear anticipation of a conclusive sestet; the words 'And so' at the start of the sestet clearly ring of finality and declare the imminent unfolding of a conclusion in the final sonnet of the sequence that ends on a sombre note of uncertainty about identity and belonging. The estranging and anonymous experience of the underground journey that yields no conversation with the living or the dead ends with the recognition of a certain oneness shared with fellow commuters. The distance between the commuter and the ever-moving crowd he is part of is evident in the sequence. No opportunity for conversation arises and the persona only refers to people who cross his path as a moving throng 'hurtled forward' in near-unison. And hence the conclusion, at the end of the sequence and after the missed chance to converse with the father, that the anonymous 'they' are 'the only relict/Of all that [he] belonged to' is both unexpected and disconcerting. The journey promised to yield a comprehension of the self through a dialogue with the other and ends by admitting that the only sense of belonging is to be found among strangers. Conveyed through the poignant personification of the 'blasted weeping rock-walls' that give off his reflection, the sense of disillusionment, though subtly alluded to, is profound.

This feeling of discontent is compounded by the fragmentariness of the last line. Comprised of the compound word 'flicker-lit', the line is hardly conclusive. The half-lines in the first half of the sonnet only just prepare the reader for the final dramatically pared line. This noticeably shortened line at the close of the sonnet has the effect of positioning the last sonnet of the sequence (and subsequently the sonnet sequence in its entirety) in a space of in-betweenness: the poet at the end of this journey stands in between the earthly and the subterranean, the real and

the reflected, and, ominously, between light and darkness. Reminiscent of a flashing alarm or siren light, the irksome, indefinitely flickering light that brings the sequence to an end precludes closure.

In choosing a form where there is the evident expectation of closure and denying us that closure, Heaney heightens the sense of incompletion further. Indeed, 'the dynamic relationship between form and subject matter', to use Regan's words, is still very much at work in these sonnets (Regan 2019, p. 8). For clearly the fragmented form mirrors the inconclusive and subsequently incomplete subterranean journey. The unanswered questions and unforthcoming prophecy are reflected in the fractured and fraught form of the sonnet itself. Speaking about the absence of completion in the sonnets from this collection, Tyler writes:

> The sonnet forms in *District and Circle* act as membranes between the poet and the external world. The form is where he tries to work things out. However, the poems intimate that the sonnet closes too soon for the scope of the subject matter. There is something potentially too tidy about the form, too jewel-like in its perfection, in its insistence on resolution and completion. Having worked in the form for so many years, Heaney realizes its limitations; the sonnet is too complete and, at the same time, given the subject matter he tries to contain in it, leaves us with a feeling of incompletion. (Tyler 2016, pp. 135–36)

And if, as Rachel Falconer astutely argues in her essay on the genre of *katabasis*, the katabatic journey ends with a return to the surface and a wisdom newly earned, what this journey underlines by refusing the persona a return to the sun-lit 'mown grass' recalled in the second sonnet is that no such wisdom has been forthcoming. The anticipated enlightenment which would bring closure to the persona and the sequence itself is here starkly absent.

Clearly, the sonnet form in Heaney's 'District and Circle' sequence announces itself decisively as incapable of completion. And it is precisely by creating the expectation of logical development and conclusion and upsetting such expectations that Heaney can further accentuate the feeling of anxiety that typifies contemporary society. On the surface it would appear that the sonnet is ill-suited to speak of contemporary angst. But rather than doing away with the form altogether, Heaney uses it to bring the concerns of an anxiety-ridden age to sharper relief. Fraying at the edges, it reveals a threadbare structure that reminds us only vaguely of the stalwart sonnet form. And far from being defective, deformed or freakish—to recall some of the unflattering epithets of the aforementioned critics—these sonnets speak of the contemporary world in a form that soon becomes recognisably our own.

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Classification of Maltese Biology Examination Questions using Bloom's Revised Taxonomy

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Abstract

This study investigates the question types according to Bloom's Revised Taxonomy in the final Paper 1 Advanced Biology examinations at a public post-secondary Institution and the National ones at the cognitive domain. The data of the study was obtained by examining the May/June 2017 and 2018 past papers. A total of 205 questions were analysed (97 Institution and 108 National). The questions were classified in terms of the cognitive levels of the Bloom's Revised Taxonomy. Data was given with tables as percentage. The study highlighted that not all objectives were present in every examination paper. The findings show that both types of examinations mostly include questions that do not promote higher levels of thinking. The Institution Paper 1 has two sections: Section A that tests the theoretical aspect, like the National examination while Section B tests the practical aspect. The highest percentage of questions in the National and Institution Section A examinations were from the remembering type of objective while from applying type in Section B. The percentage of questions in the cognitive domain, remembering type, were higher in the National examination. Analysis was also carried out to determine the marks being awarded to the different cognitive levels. When both examinations are considered, the bulk of the marks were in the remembering and understanding types of objectives. The percentage of marks allocated to the remembering type of objective in National examinations was 2.5X more in 2017 and 1.5X in 2018 than in the Institution Section A. In Section B, the applying type of objective was rewarded the highest marks. This study strongly highlights the narrow scope in terms of student achievement in high-stake examinations and shows how the present Maltese biology examination procedures promote low-level learning.

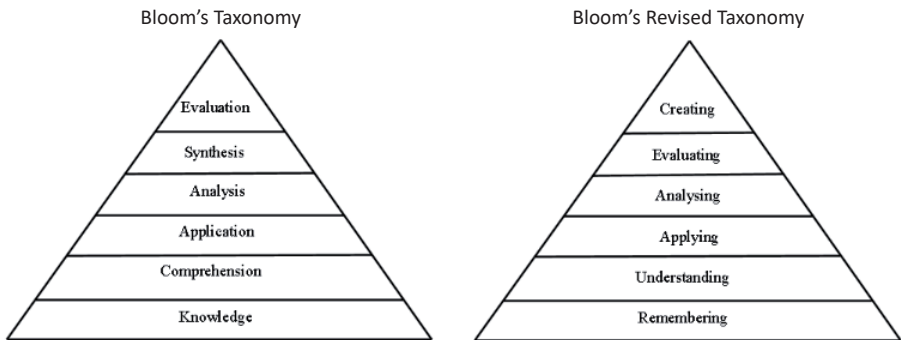Keywords: *biology, bloom's revised taxonomy, cognitive domain, post-secondary*

Introduction

Bloom's Revised Taxonomy of educational objectives – Cognitive domain

In 1956, Dr Benjamin Bloom compiled a taxonomy to help educators compose questions on different levels of thinking. Bloom's cognitive taxonomy was based on

six different domain levels (Figure 1), starting from the simplest to the most complex. The first one, for example knowledge, must normally be mastered before the next one, comprehension, can take place. The American educational psychologist David Krathwohl and some of his associates subsequently focused on the affective domain, which is concerned with student interests, attitudes, and feelings. These researchers renamed three categories, interchanged the order of two, and the names of those retained categories were changed to verb form to fit the way they are used in instructional objectives (Krathwohl 2002). The words 'Knowledge', 'Comprehension' and 'Synthesis' were replaced by 'Remember', 'Understand' and 'Create' respectively. Application, Analysis, and Evaluation were kept, but written as verbs, hence Apply, Analyse, and Evaluate. The Bloom's Revised Taxonomy was used as the theoretical framework for the present analysis.

Figure 1: Bloom's Taxonomy and Bloom's Revised version of educational objectives cognitive domains

Bloom's Taxonomy

Evaluation
Synthesis
Analysis
Application
Comprehension
Knowledge

Bloom's Revised Taxonomy

Creating
Evaluating
Analysing
Applying
Understanding
Remembering

Some educators have simplified and combined the levels of cognitive domain (Zoller 1993). They use the term 'lower-order cognitive skills' (LOCS) for memorisation and recall that require only a minimum level of understanding and 'higher-order cognitive skills' (HOCS) for the application of knowledge and critical thinking that require deep conceptual understanding. By using HOCS, students do not remember only factual knowledge, but use their knowledge to solve problems, to analyse, and to evaluate (Karamustafaoglu et al. 2011). It is widely believed that such questions reveal whether or not a student has truly grasped a concept. Bloom (1956) argues that it is important for examinations to measure higher-learning as well. Surely, this does not imply that all exam questions must focus on high-level questions; but it is important to assess students' understanding on a wide range of cognitive levels (Tobias, Raphael 1995).

Aims and Objectives

The main research question for this study was: How do Advanced Biology level examination questions at a public post-secondary Institution and the National ones (2017-2018) classify on Bloom's Revised Taxonomy? This question raises further queries; mostly, what is the proportion of low-order and high-order questions in such examinations? Did the examinations challenge the students intellectually? How do the Institution examinations compare with the National one?

Thus, the main objectives of this study were:

1. Classification of question types using the Bloom's Revised Taxonomy of educational objectives-cognitive domain.
2. Determining the percentage of low- and high-order questions in Paper 1 Institution and National examinations.
3. Determining the percentage of marks allocated to each educational objectives-cognitive domain in the Bloom's Revised Taxonomy.

The significance of the present research is in its reference to and reliance on Bloom's Revised Taxonomy, which has the potential to examine the merits and demerits of local examinations. The findings can help paper setters to compose questions with the appropriate proportion of low- and high-order cognitive level.

Methodology

The Examination Paper Layout

Students sit for the Institution examination (in June) after one year of instruction and for the National one (in May) after two years of learning. Thus, the Institution examination covers half of the Advanced level syllabus, while the National one covers all of it. The Institution examination consists of two papers: Paper 1 consists of 10 compulsory short-questions and Paper 2 consists of a comprehension, unstructured and structured essays where students have a choice. The National examination consists of four papers: Papers 1 and 2 are similar to those at the Institution, paper 3 deals with the written part of the practical and Paper 4 is the hands-on practical paper.

The examination papers chosen for this study consist of short-answer questions that are answered on the lines provided in the paper. Papers from both examinations are to be completed in three hours and each carries a maximum of 100 marks. However, the two examinations differ in their layout and material covered from the syllabus. The Institution examination is divided into two sections: Section A and Section B, but there are no sections in the National one. Section A covers theory, is worth 70 marks and consists of 7 questions (10 marks each) while Section B covers the practical aspect, is worth 30 marks and consists of 3 questions (10 marks each).

Paper 1 of the National examination examines the theoretical part of the subject since Paper 3 covers the practical component.

Analysis of the Advanced-level Biology papers was performed on the following areas:

1. Classification of question types using Bloom's Revised Taxonomy of educational objectives-cognitive domain.
2. Comparing the percentage of marks allocated to each objective and the percentage of questions in each objective to investigate if questions were awarded more marks as they progressed up the hierarchy.

1. Classifying the question types using Bloom's Revised Taxonomy

The examination papers were analysed in a manner adapted from Bloom's work. The questions were examined using the table of verbs associated with each objective of the cognitive domain (Table 1). These verbs describe the complexity of behaviour needed to answer the question (Dalton, Smith 1986).

**Table 1: Bloom's Revised Taxonomy of educational objectives
(Anderson, Krathwohl et al. 2001): cognitive domain with associated verbs**

Category	Key verbs (keywords)
Remembering [low-order] – Retrieving relevant knowledge from long-term memory.	List, Name, Recognise, State, Describe, Recall, Repeat, Retrieve
Understanding [low-order] – Determining the meaning of instructional messages, including oral, written, and graphic communication.	Conclude, Define, Illustrate, Predict, Tell, Identify, Summarise, Categorise, Classify, Discuss, Compare, Contrast, Explain
Applying [low-order] – Carrying out or using a procedure in a given situation.	Generalise, Infer, Show, Use
Analysing [high-order] – Breaking material into its constituent parts and detecting how the parts relate to one another and to an overall structure or purpose.	Distinguish, Select, Arrange, Organise, Outline
Evaluating [high-order] – Making judgments based on criteria and standards.	Assess, Justify, Critique, Judge
Creating [high-order] – Putting elements together to form a novel, coherent whole or make an original product.	Design, Compose, Plan, Hypothesise, Revise

2. **Comparing the percentage of marks allocated for each objective and the percentage of questions in each objective.**

The data gathered from identifying the questions into the different objectives were used to identify how many marks each objective received. In the case of a question being composed of two parts, the marks were divided evenly. The examination papers from both examinations were marked out of 100 marks. Since Section A in Institution papers carries 70 marks and Section B carries 30 marks, the marks allocated for each section were calculated as a percentage to allow comparison.

Results and Discussion

Analysis of the examination papers using Bloom's Revised Taxonomy cognitive domain.

Tables 2-4 and Figures 2-5 present the quantitative analysis of the 2017–2018 examination papers. This analysis revealed that, excluding Section B, examinations at the Institution and National levels were dominated by questions from the remembering and understanding objectives (Figure 2). When considering the entire Institution examination, questions belonging to the remembering (34.0% in 2017; 44.9% in 2018) and applying (27.7% in 2017; 22.4% in 2018) objectives dominate. However, in the National examinations, remembering and understanding carried the highest percentages. Results show that the National examinations have a higher percentage of questions from the remembering objective (59.2% in 2017; 67.8% in 2018) compared to the Institution. The percentage of understanding objective questions in the National examination (18.4% in 2017; 22.0% in 2018) is comparable to that at the Institution (23.4% in 2017; 18.4% in 2018).

Results from the National examination will be compared to those from the Institution Section A, since both deal with the theoretical aspect. When comparing Section A questions with the National ones (Table 1), none belonging to the 'creating' objective were set. Cullinane and Liston (2016) reported a similar result when analysing the Leaving Certificate Biology examination papers between 1999–2008 in Ireland. They reported no questions from the creating and evaluating objectives.

The percentage of recall questions (59.2% in 2017; 67.8% in 2018) in the National examination were higher than those at the Institution (38.7% in 2017; 52.6% in 2018). Mercieca (2014) reported a high amount of recall-based questions (50-95%) in the National Maltese Advanced Biology papers from 1998 to 2011. However, no studies have been done on the Institution papers for comparison. From transcripts and analysis of National past examination papers, Mercieca (2014) concluded that Paper 1 could have included more reasoning-based questions, indicating that the trend of a high percentage of low-order questions has persisted over time.

In the present study, verbs were classified according to the hierarchy in Bloom's Revised Taxonomy. However, this did not necessarily reflect the nature of the question. For example, in the 2018 National paper Question 9: "With reference to Figure 4, distinguish which organism is an ectotherm and which organism is an endotherm.", the term 'distinguish' falls under the Analysis section (Bloom's Revised Taxonomy Verbs 2001), which is a high-order domain. Nonetheless, the syllabus specified that students needed to know the terms 'ectotherm and endotherm' respectively. The graph presented is not a novel situation since it is discussed in lectures, being part of the syllabus. Allen and Tanner (2002) state that if students are explicitly given an answer to an analysis question in class and then given that same question on an exam, then that question only requires recall. This renders the question a low-order domain one. Thus, the percentage of low-order questions could actually be higher than that reported in this study and that by Mercieca (2014). This situation was also encountered in Institution papers, for example in the 2017 Question 1: "Distinguish between passive and active transport".

Table 2: Frequency and percentage of questions per cognitive objective in Institution examinations (LO: low-order; HO: high-order)

Cognitive objectives	2017						2018					
	Section A		Section B		All	All	Section A		Section B		All	All
	(/31)	(%)	(/17)	(%)	(/48)	(%)	(/38)	(%)	(/11)	(%)	(/49)	(%)
Remembering (LO)	12	38.7	4	25	16	34.0	20	52.6	2	18.2	22	44.9
Understanding (LO)	8	25.8	3	19	11	23.4	7	18.4	2	18.2	9	18.4
Applying (LO)	6	19.4	8	44	13	27.7	6	15.8	5	45.4	11	22.4
Analysing (HO)	1	3.2	1	6	3	4.3	2	5.3	0	0	2	4.1
Evaluating (HO)	4	12.9	1	6	5	10.6	3	7.9	0	0	3	6.1
Creating (HO)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	18.2	2	4.1
Low order	27	87.1	15	83	41	85.1	33	86.4	9	82	42	85.7
High order	4	12.9	2	17	7	14.9	5	13.6	2	18	7	14.3

Table 3: Frequency and percentage of questions per cognitive objective in National examinations (LO: low-order; HO: high-order)

Cognitive objectives	2017		2018	
	(/49)	%	(/59)	%
Remembering (LO)	29	59.2	40	67.8
Understanding (LO)	9	18.4	13	22.0
Applying (LO)	6	12.2	3	5.1
Analysing (HO)	3	6.1	1	1.7
Evaluating (HO)	2	4.1	2	3.4
Creating (HO)	0	0.0	0	0

Low order	44	89.8	46	94.9
High order	5	10.2	3	5.1

Section B Questions at the Institution

Table 2 and Figure 2 show that Section B questions are from the first three low-order cognitive objectives: remembering, understanding and applying. Three points emerge from this table when considering the percentage of questions in the applying objective in the years investigated: (1) a similar percentage was obtained, (2) the highest percentage of questions were from this objective and (3) the percentage of questions were more than double of those in Section A. This implies that the two sections in the institution are consistently focusing on different objectives. Nonetheless, questions from the high-order cognitive objectives, analysing, evaluating and creating, are poorly represented, where one or two of these objectives are totally missing. Questions from the creating objective were absent in 2017, while analysing and evaluating objectives were absent in 2018.

Figure 2: Graph showing the percentages of questions from Institution and National examinations (2017-2018), classified according to Bloom's Revised Taxonomy (Anderson, Krathwohl et al. 2001)
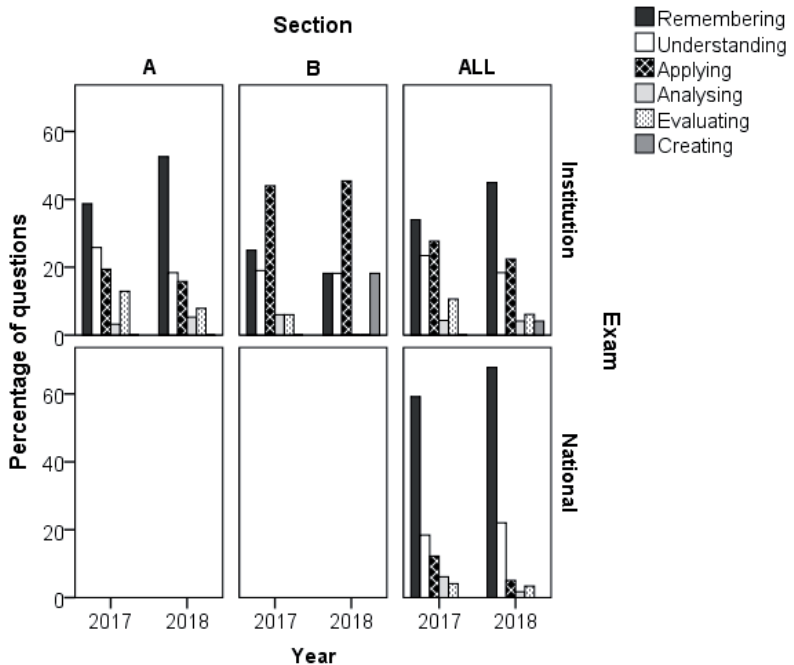
Table 2 shows that the number of questions asked at the Institution (48 in 2017; 49 in 2018) and National examinations in three hours is very similar (49 in 2017; 59 in 2018). However, when reviewing the questions, it was noted that in the National examinations, 11 instances were recorded where one question had two verbs (2 questions in 2017); (9 questions in 2018). This was observed once in the Institution papers, whereby the question asked for statements to be listed as True or False and to give a reason. In this respect, the Institution questions were better worded, as students may find two commands in one sentence confusing.

Irrespective of the examination type or section, low-order questions predominated. This result fits in with the International literature. Allen and Tanner (2002) remark that in 1956, Bloom reported 70–95% of the questions presented to undergraduate students required them to think at low-order cognitive ability and that although Bloom's Taxonomy has been around for 40 years, the typical college-level objective test questions still assess predominantly the lower-order thinking levels. According to Harlen and James (1997), this low level of thinking promotes rote learning and regurgitation of facts, requiring little to no understanding of the topics. The Maltese papers analysed had a considerable number of closed questions, requiring one word or one sentence answers. For example, "What is the water potential of pure water at atmospheric pressure?" (Institution paper, 2017). These questions often required specific information favouring rote learning and memorisation of facts. Such questions were more numerous in the National papers compared to those in the Institution. For example, over the two-year period, the verbs 'Name' and 'What is' appeared 21 times in the National papers while 11 were present in the Institution ones. The number of open-ended questions that allow students to develop their answers in greater detail and show that they understood the topic were fewer in the National examinations. The lack of such questions was also observed by Cullinane and Liston (2016) in Higher Level Biology examination papers between 1999–2008 in Ireland. The National Syllabus states that: '*A minimum of 25% of the marks of the overall examination (papers I, II, III and IV) will be dedicated towards higher order thinking skills such as data analysis, synthesis and problem solving situations as indicated in the scheme of assessment.*' (MATSEC 2019 Syllabus, p. 5). The syllabus does not specify the percentage of low- and high-order questions per paper, however, the percentage of the latter form of questions (Table 3; Figure 4) were under-represented (10.2% in 2017; 5.1% in 2018).
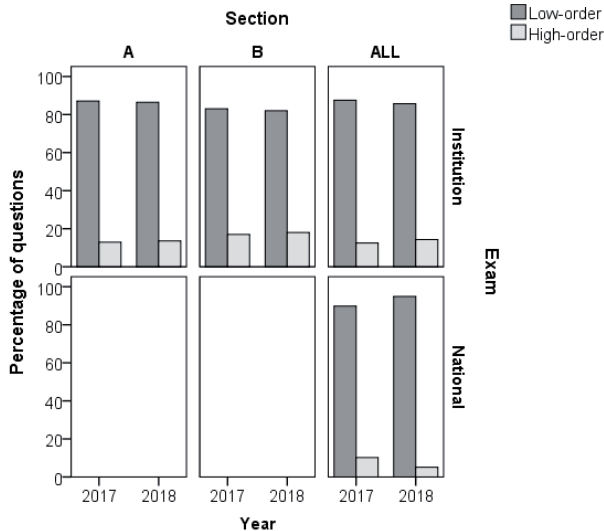
Comparing the percentage of marks allocated for each objective and the percentage of questions in each objective.

The second part of the study investigated the frequency of marks for each objective in the cognitive domain in order to establish which type of question was rewarded in the exam. Data is recorded in Tables 4-5 and Figures 4-6. When both examinations are considered, the bulk of the marks were in the remembering and understanding objectives types (Table 4). In the National examinations, the percentage of marks allocated to the remembering objective type (60% in 2017; 68% in 2018) by far exceeded that in Institution papers (24.3% in 2017; 47.1% in 2018) (Table 4). Thus, in this respect, the percentage of marks allocated to the remembering objective in the 2017 National examinations was more than twice those of the Institution paper, while those allocated in the 2018 National examinations were around 50% more than those in the Institution paper. In Section B, the applying objective was rewarded the highest marks (38.3% in 2017; 43.3% in 2018).

The general picture that emerges from Figure 5 is that the low-order objectives received a higher percentage of marks in all papers examined, ranging from 71.4% (Section A, 2017) to 96.5% (National paper, 2018). This result is comparable to that obtained by Cullinane and Liston (2016) who reported 81.85 % from Irish National Higher Level Biology papers. This study shows that the National papers award more marks (88% in 2017; 96.5% in 2018) to the low-order objectives compared to Section A at the Institution (71.4% in 2017; 60% in 2018).

The final result in this investigation involves a comparison between the percentage of questions and percentage of marks rewarded (Table 5 and Figure 6). Table 5 highlights the imbalance between the percentage of questions and percentage of marks between the low-order and high-order objectives.

Figure 6 shows that in all papers except in the 2018 National examinations, the high-order objectives received more marks compared to the percentage of questions. This indicates that students were being rewarded more for higher order thinking, but the difference was small to have a significant impact on the final grade. This finding concords with the Irish study (Cullinane, Liston 2016).

Table 4: Number of marks (/70) in Section A and (/30) in Section B together with the percentage of marks per cognitive objective in Institution and National examinations. (LO: low-order; HO: high-order)
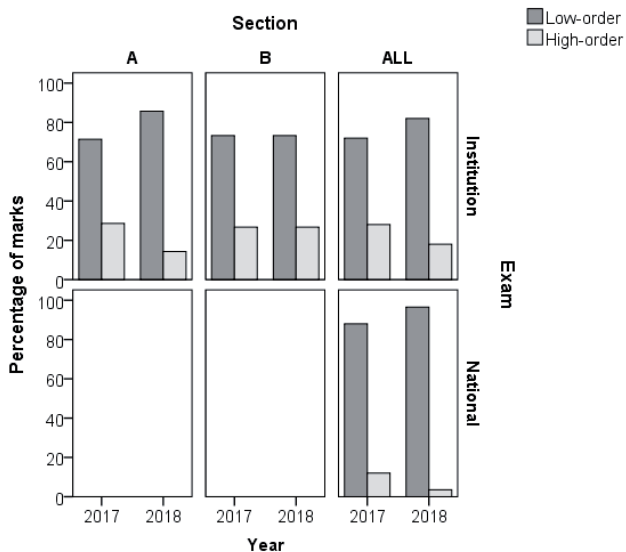
Cognitive objectives	2017						2018					
	Institution					National	Institution					National
	Section A		Section B		All	All	Section A		Section B		All	All
	(/70)	(%)	(/30)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(/70)	(%)	(/30)	(%)	(%)	(%)
Remembering (LO)	17	24.3	7.5	25.0	24.5	60	33	47.1	4	13.3	37	68
Understanding (LO)	21	30.0	3	10.0	24	16.5	15	21.4	5	16.7	20	24.5
Applying (LO)	12	17.1	11.5	38.3	23.5	11.5	12	17.1	13	43.3	25	4
Analysing (HO)	2	2.9	6	20.0	8	4	5	7.1	0	0.0	5	1.5
Evaluating (HO)	18	25.7	2	6.7	20	8	5	7.1	0	0.0	5	2
Creating (HO)	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	8	26.7	8	0
Low order	50	71.4	22	73.3	72	88	60	85.7	22	73.3	82	96.5
High order	20	28.6	8	26.7	28	12	10	14.3	8	26.7	18	3.5

Figure 4: Graph showing the percentages of marks from Institution and National examinations (2017-2018), classified according to the Bloom's Revised Taxonomy (Anderson, Krathwohl et al. 2001). Values are worked as a percentage for each section
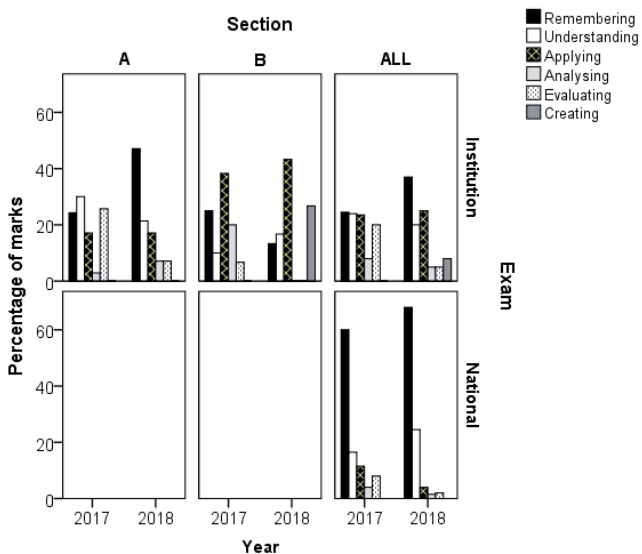

Figure 5: Graph showing the percentage of marks allocated to low- and high-order question Institution and National examinations (2017-2018). Values are worked as a percentage for each section.

Table 5: The percentage of the cognitive objectives and the marks per cognitive objective for the Institution and National examinations

Year	Exam	Section	Question/Marks	Low-order	High-order
2017	Institution	A	%Q	87.1	12.9
			%M	71.4	28.6
		B	%Q	83.0	17.0
			%M	73.3	26.7
		All	%Q	85.1	14.9
			%M	72.0	28.0
	National	All	%Q	89.2	10.2
			%M	88.0	12.0
2018	Institution	A	%Q	86.4	13.6
			%M	85.7	14.3
		B	%Q	82.0	18.0
			%M	73.3	26.7
		All	%Q	85.7	14.3
			%M	82.0	18.0
	National	All	%Q	94.9	5.1
			%M	96.5	3.5

Figure 6: Graph showing the percentage of questions and marks allocated to low-order (LO) and high-order (HO) cognitive objectives in Institution and National examinations (2017-2018)
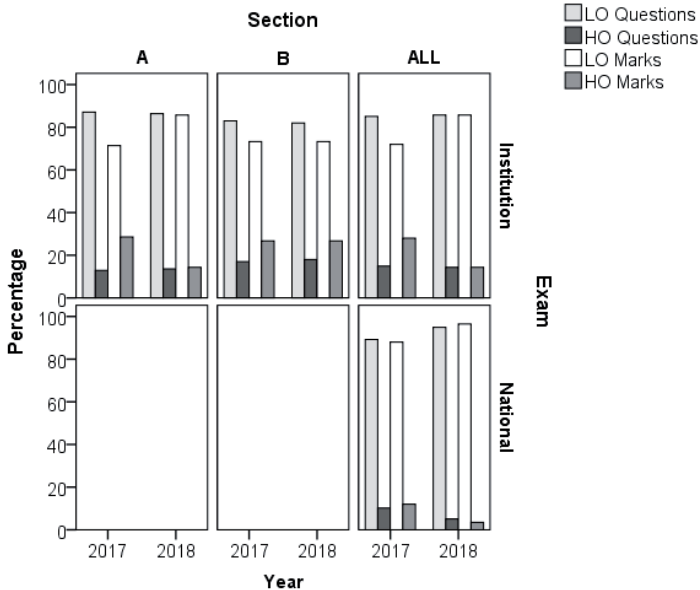
Conclusion

The research questions are answered in this part:

1. What is the proportion of low-level (knowledge, comprehension, application) or high-level of cognitive domain (analysis, synthesis and evaluation levels) questions in Advanced Biology level examinations at a public post-secondary Institution and the National ones between 2017 and 2018?

   The study highlighted that not all objectives were present on every examination paper. The highest percentage of questions in the National and Institution Section A examinations were from the remembering objective type while they were from the applying type in Institution Section B. The percentage of questions in the cognitive domain, remembering, were higher in the National examination.

   It was observed that low-order questions dominated in both examination types, being more pronounced in the National paper. A higher percentage of low-order questions were recorded from the institution Section A compared to Section B. The percentage of low-order questions could actually be higher than that reported in this investigation; certain verbs categorised as being in the high-order domain were actually recall since the material asked is covered in lectures.

2. Did the examinations challenge the students intellectually?

   The question levels asked in the examinations have an important role while assessing students' achievement and developing their critical thinking skills. According to Brualdi (1998), high-level questions can make students think more creatively and multi-dimensionally. Low-level questions do not improve student conceptual development; on the contrary, they direct students to memorise knowledge. Comparing the results obtained from 1998-2011 National examinations by Mercieca (2014) with those in 2017-2018, there seems to be no variation in the cognitive structure of the questions. The assessments to determine student achievement are slow to change. The results of this analysis, considering analysis of examination papers with a two-decade difference, are proof of this.

3. Were the Institution examinations preparing students for the National Biology examination?

   Results from the findings suggest that the Institution examinations not only prepare students for the National examination to be taken a year later, but are even better in various aspects. To mention a few, the questions set at the Institution are more open-ended, having a minimal number whereby each has two parts (for example, 'list and explain') and a higher percentage of marks compared to the percentage of high-order questions.

Pedagogical Implications

As most of the questions in the Institution are based on lower learning levels of Bloom's Revised Taxonomy and this prevents students from accessing higher learning levels, paper setters can improve by formulating more questions from the higher learning levels.

Recommendations for further research
1. Another study can be conducted on comprehension and essay-type of questions in Paper 2 Institution and National papers.
2. Bloom's Revised Taxonomy could be applied to Paper 3 that tests the practical aspect of Biology and compare it to Section B in Institution papers.
3. Although the majority of the questions examined were of the low-order cognitive domain, this does not mean that they are easy. Investigating the difficulty level of the low and high-order questions is the next project.

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Surviving the Democratic Deficit: the Contribution of Young Citizens in the 21st century

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Abstract

Democracy has always been a debated concept but even more so in the 21st century when we are faced with a crisis in democracy and citizens have overlooked the democratic values and responsibilities in society. Citizens have lost faith in democratic values as they see their countries facing economic problems and high unemployment, and are influenced by what they read on the media. Citizens are turning to populist and far right movements in order to seek resolution to the problem of immigration. This paper commences with a theoretical analysis of the changes that have occurred in the definition of democracy, their effect on society in recent decades and how democracy is now in crisis. Reference is then made to a longitudinal study administered by the author in January 2019 focusing on the students' understanding of 'democracy' and 'citizenship' in the 21st century using the same research instrument employed in 2004 to compare and contrast the progress or shortcomings related to the understanding of the concept of 'democracy' and 'citizenship' of young Maltese students attending the Junior College of the University of Malta. Keeping the findings in mind, the study proposes a number of recommendations to better prepare young Maltese citizens to face the challenges they will definitely meet throughout their life and also in defence of the value of democracy.

Keywords: *democracy, crisis, citizens, populists, education, Europe*

Introduction

The definition of democracy has always been an ongoing debate since the birth of the concept in ancient Greece. The challenge throughout the years was not only to survive the 'competition' with other forms of government but also in its development. When it started in ancient Greece, with all its good intentions, it was never very popular especially with philosophers like Plato who was more interested in promoting his ideal state or utopia where everybody fulfilled their role and kept one's place for the sake of harmony. Others argued that one of the reasons for the fall of Athens was the result of democracy, the political system in place at that time, thus sending the system into hibernation for hundreds of years.

Democracy has gone through a lot of challenges, and still is today, while continuing to develop into its current definition. Many countries in the world, especially after the two world wars, were aspiring to adopt democratic ways of government to rid the world of far right or far left ideologies. In the 21st century, citizens seem to have overlooked or taken for granted the importance of democratic values in society.

Democracy is in crisis both as a concept and in the way it is defined, as a system of government and perhaps of most concern, in the preparation of citizens, young and old, to become active democratic citizens who are ready, willing and able to nurture and safeguard democracy in these difficult times to improve their life and country. It has been said for years that even if the safeguards or 'guardrails' are in place, according to Levitsky and Ziblatt (2018) it is the citizens themselves or their representatives who should safeguard democracy for future generations.

The populist movement, especially in the first part of the 21st century, has hijacked countries in Europe and even in America and is promoting intolerance and racism. Unfortunately, citizens in democratic elections all over the world have elected populist leaders with undemocratic views and agendas. These actions lead one to rethink the role of education and schools that should promote and nurture a democratic citizenry. Rapid developments have occurred in different societies, and curricula should aim at preparing citizens to face the challenges of this century.

This study will first refer to some of the changes that have taken place in the last decade with respect to the concept of democracy. Then it will delve into the present situation where political theorists are arguing that democracy is in crisis and it will also seek to explore what they mean by this. Reference will be made to the findings of a study among a number of young Maltese citizens attending the Junior College of the University of Malta carried out in January 2019 as a longitudinal study compared to part of another similar study administered by the same author in 2004 in order to see if there were changes in the students' understanding of the concepts of 'democracy' and 'citizenship'. Furthermore, with reference to international literature, the study aims at suggesting ways to argue in favour of democracy considering how politics is evolving and keeping in mind the challenging global situation, especially the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, and the international crises in economy and immigration. This is discussed within the context of the author's preoccupation that one of the most important causes of this state of affairs is the fact that citizens are not adequately prepared to live and contribute as democratic citizens. This is said while keeping in mind the participation of sixteen-year old Maltese citizens in local and MEP elections in May 2019 and the implications of whether these young citizens were prepared or not to participate in these elections.

Changing definitions and perceptions of 'democracy' in the 21st century

Up to the beginning of the 20th century, changes that occurred in the world and in the definitions of concepts largely survived and remained in force for a number of years. A characteristic of modern life in every aspect including political science is the fact that nowadays, everything is in a state of flux and can change instantly from one day to the other. Mounk (2018) argues that there are long decades in which history seems to slow to a crawl:

Then there are those short years in which everything changes all at once. Political newcomers storm the stage. Voters clamour for policies that were unthinkable until yesterday. Social tensions that had simmered under the surface erupt into terrifying explosions. A system of government that had seemed immutable looks as though it might come apart. This is the moment in which we now find ourselves (p. 1).

Who would have thought that in Italy, the old parties would slowly make way for new populist parties with a technocrat as a prime minister? In the House of Commons in the United Kingdom, on one day the Prime Minister lost a vote in favour of the Brexit deal offered by the EU with a big majority (15.01.19) and then the day after the same Prime Minister won a vote against a no confidence motion proposed by the opposition (16.01.19). While criticizing Trump's government, Levitsky and Ziblatt (2018, p. 2) argue that 'American politicians now treat their rivals as enemies, intimidate the free press, and threaten to reject the results of elections'. One can apply directly this statement to the events that happened in America in January 2021 and the storming of the Capitol.

Unprecedented developments have taken their toll on democracy. Papadopoulos (2013, pp. 2-3) affirms that 'governability was preserved and restored but this happened at the price of declining democratic accountability. The classic – standard or 'textbook' – model of democracy based on the model of political parties and representative institutions no longer adequately describes our political systems'. Populist parties are dismantling this idea and far right parties who are in power in certain countries in the West are introducing policies and ideologies, amongst others, that promote anti-immigration sentiments and xenophobia, and encouraging the building of walls to keep 'others' out. Critiques point to democracy's inadequacy such as the fact that it fails to capture the changing circumstances of contemporary democratic struggles and it wrongly assumes that all western societies are democratic or at least pluralist.

Grugel and Bishop (2014, p. 96) propose an alternative definition that includes the state, civil society and the global political economy. They adopt a broad approach that combines elements of different theories including amongst others, structural explanations, the significance of social structures, state institutions and forms of economic production. The nurturing of democracy has to be seen as an ongoing process and one that requires adequate preparation of up and coming generations who should be encouraged to contribute more actively to strengthen and positively develop the democratic process.

Democracy in Crisis?

Although democracy has spread throughout the world in successive waves and the number of democracies has tripled in the last 30 years, we are seeing the resurgence of right and left elements in new parties. When Dalton (2008, p. 251) concluded his book *Citizen Politics*, he asserted that 'by some measures, the present may be considered the golden age of democracy'. Crozier et al. (1975) in *The Crisis of Democracy* use the word 'crisis' as too much democracy or an excess of it. Papadopoulos (2013. p. 2) gives a diametrically opposed criticism when analysing world politics and states that we are experiencing a weakening of democratic politics on political decisions and a declining democratic accountability. Papadopoulos argues that this is not the result of a 'democratic deficit' or of a supranational integration as it takes place in the EU. It is not the result of the malevolent role of economic globalization and financial capitalism.

Democracy continues to be defined and judged according to the old definitions, the most important being the legitimacy of democratic regimes on the delegation of power from the citizens to their representatives. But are citizens fully prepared to choose the best representatives and do representatives really and truly work in the interest of the citizens and the state? This is what many asked after the results of the May 2019 EP elections were published.

One can also question the extent of the outcomes of participation by citizens and NGOs and what decisive effects they have on collectively binding decisions. Papadopoulos (2013, p. 7) argues that the 'growth of cynicism, distrust in politicians, and anti-establishment feelings, …partisan straight-jackets, or even the reorganisation of political parties themselves in response to media pressure' are a few of the reasons that contribute to the present crisis that we are experiencing. The changes to the level of education, where it is happening, as a solution to the present crisis make citizens better informed and more critical.

Citizens are more ready to challenge authoritarian alternatives and as Mounk (2018, p. 124) affirms, 'populists who have little or no attachment to basic democratic norms are gaining immense power' and are ready to use it for their own ends. Until recently, politics and life in general in the West and in other democratic countries were relatively positive. They were mainly hit negatively by the financial crisis of 2008. Now it seems that things are getting rough again. It seems that in many countries across the globe, there is political unrest and citizens are protesting for one thing or the other, but mainly for personal gain rather than for the common good.

Crouch (2004, p. 5) asks 'are the voices of ordinary people being squeezed out again, as the economically powerful continue to use their instruments of the influence while those of the *demos* become weakened?' In post-democracy, 'virtually all the components of democracy survive' (p. 22) 'yet many citizens have been reduced to the role of manipulated, passive, rare participants' (p. 21) and

'politics and government are increasingly slipping back into the control of privileged elites in the manner characteristic of pre-democratic times' (p. 6). There should be more experiments where citizens are involved after being trained and prepared to do so from an early age through education. These should not be symbolic exercises. Reforms along these lines would empower ordinary citizens and politicians and would affect positively the policy process.

Another important point is the fact that the opposition, especially where there is a vast majority vote in favour of the government, may be seen as toothless especially when taking an important or controversial vote in parliament. One cannot dismiss the importance of an active opposition that one day may be elected as the government and the important work performed through sub committees of the house of representatives.

Levitsky and Ziblatt (2018) refer to everyday life situations that have weakened democracy and pushed it into a crisis. Some democracies in the world are not functioning as such even though they are still called a democracy. They question: 'Are we living through the decline and fall of one of the world's oldest and most successful democracies?' (p. 2). Referring to Juan Linz's *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes* (1978), Levitsky and Ziblatt (2018, pp. 24-26) list four behavioural warning signs that can help us identify an authoritarian politician when we see one. We should worry when a politician rejects in words or action the democratic rules of the game; denies legitimacy of opponents; tolerates or encourages violence or indicates a willingness to curtail the civil liberties of opponents including the media.

Levitsky and Ziblatt (2018, p. 92-93) affirm that

one of the great ironies of how democracies die is that the very defence of democracy is often used as a pretext for its subversion. Would-be autocrats often use economic crises, natural disasters, and especially security threats – wars, armed insurgencies or terrorist attacks – to justify antidemocratic measures.

Now we can also add the effects of the pandemic. Citizens are ready (e.g. after 9/11) to accept authoritarian measures in security crises, and some rulers create crises themselves.

The above developments are some of the reasons why Western democracies have continued to decline. Other reasons are weak economies, growing scepticism of the EU, with Brexit instigating other anti-EU parties to militate in favour of leaving the Union, and the failure to solve the rise of anti-immigration political crisis. Racial and religious intolerance are also reasons for the difficulties being encountered in European politics. Democracy was never seen as multi-ethnic. In Europe, we have witnessed anti-immigration protests but also demonstrations against slow economic growth that decreased job security (Yellow Vests in France), longer working hours, fewer prospects of upward mobility and more social resentment. Protesters want more social policies. Other claims are for comprehensive health insurance, paid leave for working parents, prekindergarten education for everyone and child care centres for mothers who wish to go back to their work. According to Levitsky and Ziblatt

(2018, p. 231), the most important and challenging change is to 'restore democratic norms and extend them to increasingly diverse societies... Our generation, which grew up taking democracy for granted, now faces a difficult task. We must prevent it from dying from within'.

The crisis of democracy has been the main reason and preoccupation of the author, and one of the reasons for carrying out a study among a group of Maltese students attending the Junior College of the University of Malta. The study seeks to explore the changes experienced by young Maltese citizens, if any, in the understanding of the concepts of 'democracy' and 'citizenship' that may have occurred in the last fifteen years, when compared to another similar study administered in 2004 at the same College. One must keep in mind the rapid changes that have taken place in the Maltese society including that of becoming an EU member state and the introduction of the 16+ legislation where sixteen-year old voters participated in the MEP elections for the first time in May 25, 2019 and for the second time in local council elections. The most challenging argument is not about giving the vote to sixteen-year old citizens through legislation but to ensure that these young voters are prepared to take on this responsibility and to use this opportunity in the best possible way to deliver the right message in a truly democratic spirit and to be ready to contribute actively as a citizen.

Maltese young citizens as active democratic citizens: findings, discussion and recommendations

Reimers (2018) points out that 'free and fair elections, rights of minorities, freedom of the press and the rule of law - are under attack around the world'. These are some of the main reasons that stimulated the need for the research administered in January 2019 in order to compare and contrast findings with the survey administered by Caruana (2008) in 2004, in order to detect if there were significant changes in the way students attending a post-secondary institution understand the concept of 'democracy' and their role as active citizens. Indirectly, the research aimed at analysing whether the students have been equipped with the necessary knowledge, attitudes, skills and understanding to fulfil this role, and also whether the content and pedagogy used in schools and at tertiary level are appropriate to fulfil this aim.

The questionnaire used in this study was the same as the one used in the first research, apart from question 18 (*How do you feel now with the introduction of legislation of 16+?*) as this has now been introduced in Malta. Maltese citizens who are 16+ voted for the second time in the Local Council and for the first time in the MEP elections on May 25, 2019. As has been stated in the *Research Design* in Caruana (2008, p. 87), this study should not be taken *a priori* as a generic analysis of the students' understanding of their role as active Maltese, European and global citizens in all post-secondary schools in Malta. At the same time, the researcher

does not exclude that the findings might refer to a same or similar situation with other students at the same level, and can be used on a national level for further research.

Two hundred and forty-five students (245) out of a population of around one thousand seven hundred students (1700) at post-secondary level at the Junior College, mainly 16 to 18-year olds, participated in the study. With respect to the aim and scope, this study seeks to explore what the researcher and colleagues had been feeling for a number of years through the observation of different groups of students when answering questions in assignments, tests and end of year examinations regarding the concepts of 'democracy' and 'citizenship'. This study further aimed at investigating whether after fifteen years and with the introduction of so many different ways of acquiring information and participation, students have a different way of looking at the concepts themselves and their role as active democratic citizens, not only during elections but throughout their lives. The questions focus on the first module of the Systems of Knowledge syllabus. After fifteen years from the administration of the first study and the continuous improvements of lecturing methods by colleagues (Gatt 2018), and the introduction of a new Systems of Knowledge syllabus, the study therefore aims at studying the students' understanding of the concepts and also their level of participation to improve the state of democracy in Malta.

The overarching aim and the most important one is to explore whether our students who represent a sample of the Maltese young population are ready, willing and able to act as democratic citizens on the local, national, European and global level, keeping in mind what has been discussed in this paper about the state of democracy globally, with its definition changing according to the whims of different politicians, the situation in the US, Brexit and Venezuela, protests in France and the rise of populism within the EU in Italy, Poland and Hungary. One may rightly argue that today it is very important to expose young Maltese citizens to democratic values, and for young citizens to be able to take important decisions that might change the course of events of their country and of countries in the world. We are living in difficult times when populist governments are pointing at democracy as the reason for so many negative elements such as the economic crisis of the 21st century. The following is a concise analysis of the main questions and responses of the questionnaire, followed by reactions of the author to these findings. The responses will be divided into three main themes: defining 'democracy', democracy in practice and finally active citizenship.

Defining 'democracy'

When asked to define 'democracy', the respondents chose responses that emphasize the participation of citizens in elections rather than participating actively, or the

rule of the people through the participation of the representatives. Only a few (7%) chose the response that in a democracy, as illustrated in Figure 1, everyone is considered the same in front of the law. When asked how much power do citizens have in a democracy, 29% of the respondents argued that the citizens are allowed to vote in elections and 45% said that citizens can decide certain issues. These responses show that students participating in this longitudinal study, after fifteen years and following all the changes that happened in Maltese politics, still believe that the most important thing in a democracy is the ability to participate in elections. Furthermore, 14% of the respondents believe that Malta is a 'direct democracy', and not a Representative democracy.

For 66% of the respondents, defining 'representative democracy' means that all citizens are involved in politics. This is another significant negative development as in 2004, only 9% gave this response. This shows that students do not understand that democracy is managed by representatives who are given the power to govern by the people for a number of years and that they have to put into practice the programme that was proposed by the party. Students should remember that during those five years or more, representatives have to take decisions that were not listed in the programme and that the people have no say in these decisions. This raises concern as respondents would have explored these issues during lectures at Junior College. One wonders even further what other Maltese students who do not have the same experiences think of this issue. But then there are instances especially the present situation with Covid-19, when one understands that these are special times and that all over the world radical measures had to be taken to safeguard as much as possible the lives of citizens first and foremost, then the economy.

Figure 1: Comparison in findings between 2004 and 2019 related to defining 'democracy'
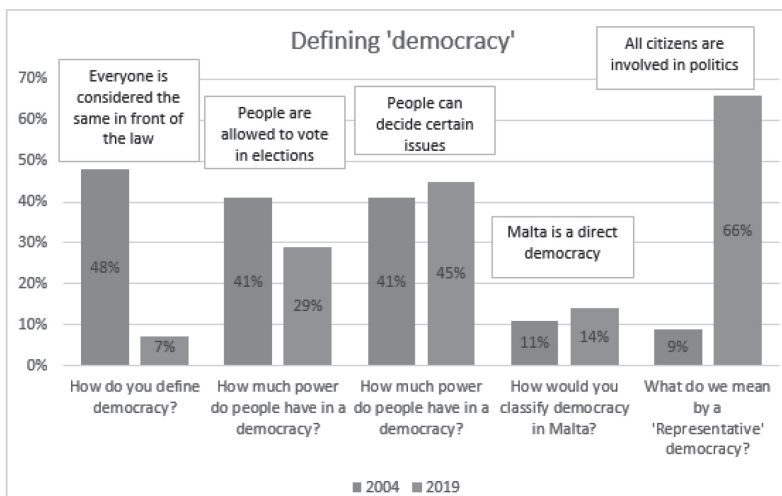
Democracy in Practice

When analysing responses about the theme of democracy in practice, as illustrated in Figure 2, another significant finding is that 40% of the respondents believe that democracy in practice refers to representatives deciding for the electorate and do not refer to active citizenship; the rest (60%) believe that the majority is always right when this might not be the case especially when the majority opts for something that is not intended to the common good. There are citizens who argue that democracy is the best system available but the majority of the respondents (70%) affirm that one can criticize democracy especially where there is corruption. This is a positive development since it seems that corruption is conditioning every aspect of life.

In the study administered in 2019, 59% of the respondents believe that women have equal rights as men. Respondents might not be informed that there are still instances where there is a difference between what is written in laws and what exists in reality. As an example one can mention the current discussion in Malta and other EU countries regarding inequality in pay between genders and also the protests in Switzerland in June 2019 for the same reasons. When asked why this is so, respondents referred to cultural restrictions that do not let the democratic process function properly.

When asked about numbers in a democracy, respondents argued that age as a number (18+ or 16+) makes it easier to decide between a majority and a minority, and that it is a form of control. Even when one refers to the majority as 51%, this gives the impression that if the majority agrees, then it is a fair decision. But who is the majority, Plato would ask? Questioned about the importance of pluralism in a democracy that is seen as a symbol of liberty, respondents think that pluralism enhances liberty and that it gives people the opportunity to promote different opinions. A significant improvement in this regard is that respondents are appreciating more the use of the media, the different ways of informing citizens and the possibility of views of more than one ideology or party or religion. The same improvement was also seen in the responses in two questions about freedom of expression and expressing one's opinion freely in a democracy. The media, whether mass or social, was seen as the most appropriate medium that would best function for the purpose, compared to trade unions, NGOs and religion.

Figure 2: Comparison in findings between 2004 and 2019 related to democracy in practice
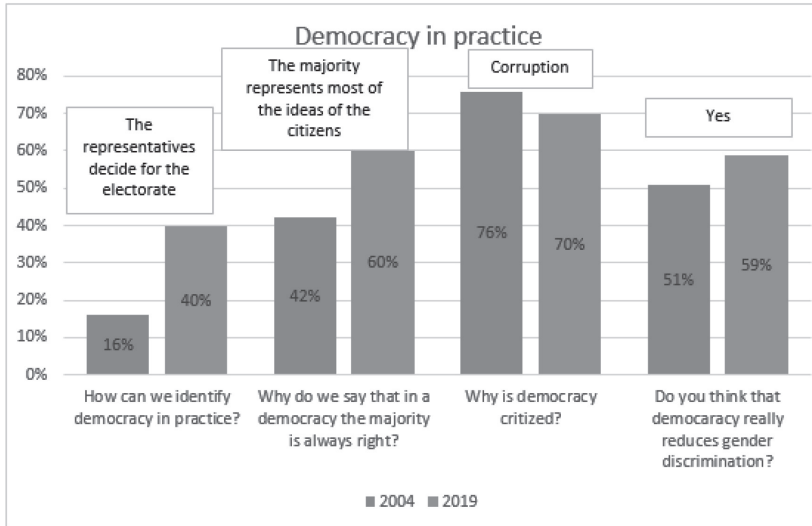

Active Citizenship

When analysing the responses about whether students are ready to take an active role if there is an issue against plans proposed by the government, as illustrated in Figure 3, 47% (2019) as against 16% (2004) of the respondents are ready to participate in active campaign, 17% are prepared to criticize while 24% responded that they would not do anything. Participation in the electoral process is what Patrick (2000, p. 4) defined as 'minimal democracy' and Crick (1999, p. 338) argues that 'where a state does not have a tradition of active citizenship deep in its culture or cannot create in its educational system a proclivity to active citizenship, that state is running great risks'. Miller (2000, p. 26) points out that citizenship is not something that people learn spontaneously. Hess and McAvoy (2014) argue that being able to talk about politics is a skill that needs to be learnt. It just does not come by itself: you are either taught or self-taught, or you simply parrot away what the masses are saying. Miller (2000, p. 69) argued that it is good to be active citizens but emphasizes the importance of being informed, critically responsible and reflective.

Figure 3: Comparison in findings between 2004 and 2019 related to active citizenship
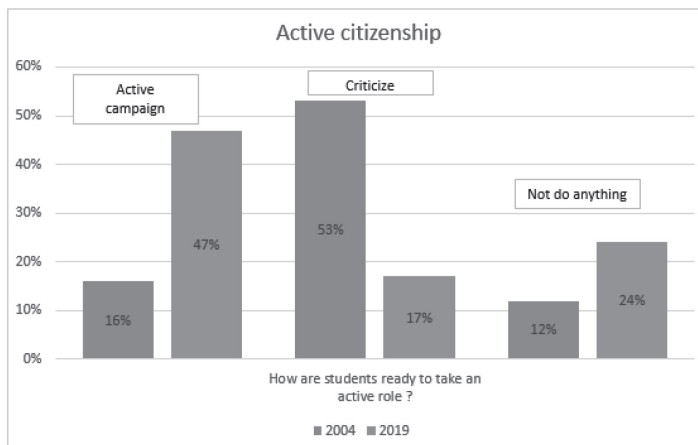
When respondents were asked how they feel about participating in the MEP election for the first time and in the Local Council election for the second time on May 25, 2019, following the right to vote given to citizens who are 16+, 34% answered that they feel their opinion is respected but 24% feel it is a lot of responsibility; 21% have not thought about it and only 16% would take an active role. These findings are illustrated in Figure 4. It would be interesting to keep these findings in mind and to compare them to statistics that were published by the Electoral Commission in Malta after the vote of May 25, 2019, where there were 38,737 (10.4%) uncollected votes for the MEP elections and 92,398 (21.9%) uncollected votes for the Local Council elections (*Times of Malta*, Saturday, May 25, 2019, p. 3). Furthermore, 72.6% *(Times of Malta,* Monday, May 27, 2019, p. 1) of those voters who collected their voting document decided to vote for the MEP election and 60.4% for the Local Council election.

Figure 4: Illustration of the answer selected by the respondents on how they feel about participating in the MEP and Local council election
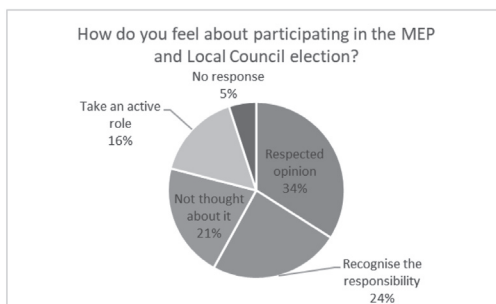
This data is more striking when local research has shown (Vella 2018, p. 407) that there is still a high turnout of Maltese citizens in elections when compared to the EU turnout of 51% in the MEP elections in May 2019 (described as the highest in the last twenty years!) and argues that unless we want to assume that Maltese citizens are civic-minded, there must be other underlying features contributing to such high turnouts, such as pervasive partisanship and concentration of competitive elections, amongst others. Young Maltese citizens who participated in the study may have a narrow definition of democracy and not see it as a way of life, or see it as a conflict between a political system and living in a democracy.

At this point one asks whether education is an appropriate medium for preparing young citizens. Education is not the only medium that can be used. The process of socialization and rapid change at times catch everyone by surprise and one may find that it becomes increasingly challenging to at least minimize the positive or negative effects of that situation. New methods are usually used by different individual lecturers as suggested by Gatt (2018) to support the education process. It was also a good initiative taken by the Systems of Knowledge department to organise lectures with Agenzija Żgħażagħ about the 16+ legislation and the importance of the MEP elections for Junior College students. The president of the Kummissjoni Nazzjonali Żgħażagħ (KNZ) (The National Youth Commission) Sean Ellul in *The Malta Independent* (February 24, 2019) argues that nobody is prepared to vote, irrelevant of their age. Young Maltese students questioned by *The Sunday Times of Malta* (March 17, 2019) in preparation for the 2019 European Parliament elections emphasize that voting is an integral part of the democratic process and they affirm the importance of tolerance to diversity, equal pay and the environment. Kristina Chetcuti in her article 'Politics should be taught in school' in *The Sunday Times of Malta* (May 5, 2019), refers to the need for Civic Education classes or workshops on Citizenship Education. Caruana (2008) had already made this clear in the first study and now would still like to further promote the idea of a National Strategy for Citizenship Education.

Giroux (2018a) suggests a critical pedagogy that can change how people view the world by creating critically engaged students and intellectuals who are ready to hold power accountable. Furthermore, Giroux suggests inclusion and social responsibility, a deep respect for others, a keen sense of the common good as well as an informed notion of community engagement. Critical pedagogy is not a method but a moral and political practice that does not mould but inspires, while it produces young people capable and willing to expand and deepen their sense of themselves, to think the world critically and imagine something other than their own well-being. Creasey (2018) disagrees with the idea that educating people for the workforce should be the only purpose of education. Unfortunately, another negative aspect is that the things that children are taught in schools typically bear no relation to the world in which they live – a world that is heavily influenced by social media, popular culture and mainstream media. In this way, even schools may seem irrelevant to young people.

Conclusion: The Need to Defend Democracy

While trying to understand what were the key changes that impacted negatively on the concept of democracy even recently, one might conclude that we did not nurture those values that make democracy a preferred system. Citizens were moving away from what is needed by exploiting the nation and they were more engrossed in satisfying their personal needs rather than working for the common good and the safeguarding of democracy. In certain cases, this attitude was brought about by the elected representatives themselves in order to increase their popularity and remain in power.

In his *The People vs. Democracy,* Mounk (2018, p.135) argues that 'if we want to venture an educated guess about the future of democracy, we thus have to figure out what political scientists call its 'scope conditions'. There are three major scope conditions, as set by Mounk. First, the importance and to a certain extent, the dominance of the mass media that in the past slowed the spread of fake news. The rise of the Internet and social media has since weakened the systems of control and automatically, and maybe without knowing or wanting, empowered far-right movements and politicians. Secondly, when living in a democracy during the second half of the 20th century, most citizens experienced a rapid increase in their living standards and always worked with the aim of a better future. This changed for the worse after 2008 and even more so now with the pandemic. One feels that there is little, if any, economic stability on a national or global level. It is unfortunate that in many countries economic growth has slowed down drastically in first decade of the 21st century when compared to the second half of the 20th century. The third condition is that in the past, most democracies were founded on monoethnic nations or where one ethnic group was a majority. Today it is difficult to find one group that dominates the rest: we are living in multicultural societies where talking otherwise would be verging on the racist and limiting one of the major values of democracy.

Mounk (2018, pp. 16-17) suggests 'to preserve democracy without giving up the emancipatory potential of globalization, we need to figure out how the nation state can once again take control of its own fate'... to 'rethink what membership and belonging might mean in a modern nation state... in which members of any creed and colour are regarded as true equals'... to 'start to emphasize what unites rather than what divides them'... 'to learn to withstand the transformative impact of the internet and of social media'.

Mounk (2018 p. 189) proposes a 'forward-looking strategy' that would help reduce power from the populist group. Firstly, citizens should be united around the definition of the nation without going into extreme nationalism. Secondly, the opposition should speak the language of ordinary citizens and attend to their concerns, mainly by giving hope for a better economic future while slowly emerging out of the pandemic. Thirdly, to put forward new positive ideas and solutions

without restricting free speech because this goes against the main aims and values of liberal democracy. Finally, all promises put forward in this fight have to be feasible and realistic.

Those who have lived in a democratic country for many years or from birth in relative peace and prosperity cannot imagine another system. But change can happen and we need to be more vigilant and start to safeguard what we have and try to improve what can be improved. Especially after the terrorist attack of 9/11 and after that in other countries, such as England and France, and the increasing violence by the IS, citizens all over the world should realise that democracy is not something that will remain forever. Never before have citizens in democratic countries been so critical of their political system but unfortunately without knowing the other options or realising the meaning of its loss.

In Malta, young citizens still give a lot of importance to the electoral process. They participate in elections but then allow others, such as representatives in parliament, to decide for them. Once the elections are over, young citizens become indifferent to everything around them without thinking that individual rights might be violated. They are spectators not participants in the whole democratic process. We have a duty to uphold and promote democratic institutions by persuading those around us and those who will come after us to do the same. These options can be realised if there are young democratic citizens who are willing and able to take the leap!

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The Therapeutic Value of the Sea and its Impact on Health and Wellbeing

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Abstract

This review paper synthesises the multiple theories and examines the important relationship that the sea and the coast have on the health and wellbeing of people. Through an analysis of the theories of 'therapeutic landscapes' and 'attention restoration theory', this study contributes to a better understanding of how much the contact with the sea can enable individuals to enjoy better psychological health from both international and local research. This paper also explores how the coastal environment has the potential to promote health through its connection with nature, through social interaction and through one's nostalgic memories. Moreover, the coastal environment and the blue spaces are so valuable for people that when such spaces are lost, individuals feel a deep emotional loss. This study suggests the need for greater acknowledgment of people's appreciation, emotions and shared connections with the sea since it enables them to experience multiple ways of increasing health and wellbeing. Therefore, it is important to recognise the valued therapeutic landscapes that different groups of individuals experience by the sea, and emphasise the need in preserving and protecting these natural spaces due to their universal benefits.

Keywords: *Therapeutic landscapes, sea, health and wellbeing, Attention Restoration*

Introduction

There is an established belief that the sea and the coastal environment have beneficial attributes for health and wellbeing (Kearns et al. 2014), however few studies analyse this connection. This paper will draw evidence from various theories and studies in order to emphasise how important coastal environments are for the health and wellbeing of people, and the need to preserve and protect blue spaces. It will focus on the beneficial aspects of the sea and how it can improve the health and wellbeing of individuals.

Water is considered as one of the most important aesthetical elements that can provide beneficial aspects to health (Kaplan, Kaplan 1989). However, it is only in recent years that studies are focusing their attention on this aspect. Indeed, Lianyong

and Eagles (2009) criticise researchers about why they do not always recognise the importance of 'waterscapes' as environmental attributes for health. Studies such as those of Gesler (2003) and Foley (2011) have highlighted that the 'blue space' which is highly important for people's health and wellbeing since being close to the coast has significant effects on their physical and mental health (Bauman et al. 1999; Witten et al. 2008).

Apart from the water elements, rock structures too have always been considered for their natural beauty, for their symbolic importance and for their value to people (Curtis 2010). Studies have emphasised that attractive landscapes are able to provide solace and improve one's health and wellbeing (Abraham et al. 2010). Therefore when people are in the presence of rocky landforms near the sea they are likely to experience a connection with the place and are likely to enjoy better health and wellbeing. Indeed, Wheeler et al. (2012) and White et al. (2013) found that the closer people live to the sea, the more they are likely to enjoy self-reported health and wellbeing.

Understanding Wellbeing and the Sea

The WHO (1948) defined health as 'a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity'. Gatrell (2002) argues that the WHO concept is too idealistic and if taken literally it would be unattainable. He explains that good health is contingent on the availability of personal and societal resources which would help the individual achieve his/her personal potential. This links to other definitions of wellbeing which can be described as a positive feeling about life, most particularly in relation to self-evaluation and the main motivation for living (Cummins 2010). However when relating the sea to health the WHO (2006) recognises swimming as something of concern linked to risk and safety. Therefore there is little recognition that the sea can attribute to the improvement of health and wellbeing. Thus this study together with other studies from the field of health geography tries to counterbalance the idea of risk, by emphasising the important role of the coast as it provides elements that can be beneficial for the health and wellbeing of individuals. This study makes use of Foley and Kirstemann's (2015, p.158) definition to understand that blue coastal spaces are '*health-enabling places and spaces, where water is at the centre of a range of environments with identifiable potential for the promotion of human wellebing*'(p. 158).

The Therapeutic Value of the Sea

Gesler's concept of therapeutic landscapes emerged from the studies that focused on the places known for 'healing' such as Lourdes in France and Bath in UK (Gesler

1996; Gesler 2003). However, this concept started to move from places of holy springs, wells and baths to places that can provide a daily therapeutic effect due to the contact with water, through rivers, lakes or the sea (Foley 2011; Bell 2015). This theory helps in increasing our knowledge and appreciation of how a place can promote health and wellbeing through the natural environment as it can provide significant effects on the body and mind of individuals (Satariano 2016; Satariano 2019). Gesler (2003, p. 1) interprets a 'therapeutic' place according to its possibility in developing, '*physical, mental, spiritual, emotional and social healing*'.

When individuals engage in environments that have a reputation of beauty and are experienced in a positive manner, such spaces are given value and importance and are thus places that contribute to health (deVerteuil et al. 2007; Curtis 2010). Therapeutic landscapes have been described in physiological terms matching with the idea that place can act as a facilitator that can relieve individuals from physical symptoms and assist in reducing stress (Gesler 1992; Kearns, Collins 2000).

Indeed, in their studies (Bell et al. 2015; Foley 2010, 2015; White et al. 2010; Satariano 2016, 2019) found that several individuals benefit greatly from their interaction with the sea. Some individuals benefit physically through exercise such as walking and running along the coast. Others enjoy the experience of embodiment and immersion in the sea providing them with a deep connection with the elements of water (Foley 2010). While some find swimming as highly beneficial, historically swimming has been recognized as an activity that provides relief to chronic diseases such as rheumatism, arthritis and skin diseases (Foley 2010).

Research on 'attention restoration' also identifies ways of how the natural environment can reduce stress and can enable the improvement of health of individuals at a faster pace (Herzog 1984; Kaplan 1995; Harting, Staats 2003; Velarde et al. 2007). The theory of 'attention restoration' by Kaplan (1995) is well connected to the theory of therapeutic landscapes. This is because this theory highlights that an individual can experience 'directed attention' and 'indirect attention'. During 'directed attention', an individual requires sustained focus on subjects that require attention even though they are not interesting. This therefore may result in tiredness as the individual has to block the attention on interesting subjects but of less importance. On the other hand, 'indirect attention' occurs when an individual's attention is captured, yet little cognitive effort is required. Thus the brain can restore its cognitive resources enabling persons to return to direct attention. This is connected to the important role that nature has and its ability to restore the attention of individuals through the green environment and blue coastal environment.

The Coast as a Place that Provides Attachment and Identity

When people enjoy daily contact with the sea they are likely to develop 'place attachment' which offers a positive, emotional connection with the coastal place.

This deep bond with the coastal area enables individuals to feel a sense of 'place identity' since the coast that they frequently visit has a symbolic importance in their lives, enabling them to experience a sense of relationship with the place (Beery, Wolf-Watz 2014).

Place attachment develops because individuals make a strong connection with its physical, socio-cultural, symbolic and psychological aspects (Relph 1976). Moreover, Fried (1963) also observed that if a person is required to relocate from his place of residence to which he is attached, the individual experiences feelings of grief. Environmental psychologists greatly emphasize the concept of connecting with nature that enables individuals to feel a powerful, transformative experience (Beery, Wolf-Watz 2014). Also due to the collective emotions developed within a place, individuals consider this experience as related to the idea of '*topophilia*' (Tuan 1961), which is defined as love of place. Indeed, besides attachment individuals experience feelings of affection towards a place. Furthermore the daily experiences by the sea as described by studies of Bell et al. (2015) and Satariano (2019) explain how individuals develop increased conservational attitudes and a sense of emotional protection of the place. This results from their feelings of rootedness and their personal values as well as their memories and emotions of the place (Kearns, Collins 2012).

Research on therapeutic landscapes thus emphasises the emotional connection, reputation and experiences of particular places by the sea that are beneficial for health (Milligan et al. 2004; Conradson 2005; English et al. 2008; Laws 2009; Rose 2012; Foley, Kistemann 2015). The emotions that people can experience when in contact with a natural place are highly important for the identity of a person (Davidson, Milligan 2004). Therefore the coastal environment is a therapeutic blue space that can facilitate deep, positive, emotions between people and places (Gastaldo et al. 2004).

The Coast as a Place that Provides a Connection with Nature

The connection with nature is also described in the theory of '*biophilia*' (Wilson 1984) where it is claimed that the relationship of people with nature is intensely profound. Consequently, together with human's innate instincts of breathing and emotions of love or hate towards others, people also developed a love towards nature, including the sea. The sense of '*biophilia*' is further developed since the human being also has a sense of inquisitiveness and a sense of exploration. This therefore explains why the dynamic features of coastal landscapes are considered as eternally beautiful and attractive for people to enjoy.

The Coast as a Place that Restores Mental Health and Wellbeing

An important theory that is related to the emotions and wellbeing of people, through the engagement with the coast and the sea is 'Attention Restoration Theory'. According to this theory the natural settings and the environment have a high concentration of features that are able to enhance and provide solace and rehabilitation to one's psychological wellbeing (Kearns, Collins 2012). The sea and the coastal environment have increasingly emerged as important aspects that can restore attention and re-enable individuals to function and focus better in their daily lives. Satariano (2019) explained that when some of the individuals feel stressed, they seek to spend time near the sea and attribute their contact with the sea as an agent that helps them feel better. In fact, the Attention Restoration Theory is a psycho-evolutionary model which explains that one's contact with nature can help in the recovery from diverse forms of stress (Ulrich et al. 1991; Ashbulby et al. 2013).

The Coast as a Place of Socialisation

The coastal environment, apart from providing individuals with beneficial physical and mental health and wellbeing, can also improve and support people's need for social interaction (Curtis 2010). A large proportion of the literature focusing on therapeutic spaces discusses the 'social' relations which can lead to the formation of places that affect health (Gesler 1993; Milligan et al. 2004; Tonnellier, Curtis 2005; Curtis 2010; Foley 2015). Bell et al. (2015) and Satariano (2019) through narratives, emphasised how much the coastal environment is a place that can provide people with opportunities of social interaction and the formation of social cohesion.

Therapeutic spaces can be considered as those locations that are able to provide vital opportunities for experiencing a sense of community and involvement in social networks and activities (Milligan et al. 2004; Milligan et al. 2015). In fact, Satariano (2019) and Foley (2015) found that several individuals enjoy spending time near the sea during summer time as it provides them with opportunities of social interaction. Some narrated how much this social interaction enables them to form bonding ties and social networks with family and friends. Being part of a community and experiencing feelings of social cohesion is highly important as this buffers ill-health. The level of bonding that is developed during such interactions, enables individuals to receive support during difficult times. The coast facilitates individuals to form bridging ties with new acquaintances. Thus coastal areas make it possible for people to encounter resource rich individuals who may not be part of the community but still provide them with help. Daily interactions by the sea between friends, relatives and passers-by enable individuals to enjoy positive, social interactions which are highly beneficial for health and wellbeing. In fact persons who spend time near the sea with friends and relatives buffer ill-health through feelings of bonding and social

cohesion (e.g. Kawachi, Berkman 2001; Putnam 2000; Satariano, Curtis 2018), while others who interact with passers-by may buffer feelings of loneliness as well as gain information and knowledge from resource-rich individuals (Bourdieu 1986).

The Therapeutic Elements of the Sea for the People of Low Socio-economic Groups

Wheeler et al. (2012) found that the proximity to the sea has beneficial attributes more pronounced for the socio-economically deprived communities. This also matches with the findings of Satariano (2019) where Maltese deprived inhabitants narrated how the sea can improve their mental health and wellbeing. It was indicated that spending time looking at the sea or walking by the sea can enable individuals to feel better and feel relieved from stress. Moreover, some deprived individuals feel that living near the sea and spending time at the beach provides them with time for relaxation and enjoyment similar to being on holiday (Satariano 2019). Therefore the sea and the coast are highly important elements that can help and improve the health and wellbeing of people of low socioeconomic conditions.

The Coastal Environment as a Place of Nostalgia

Apart from feeling a connection with the place, some groups of people rekindle memories of the coastal place that they enjoyed in the past. In their study Satariano and Gauci (2019) explain how several persons expressed feelings of nostalgia by rekindling memories and narratives of their experiences in Dwejra after the loss of the Azure Window. Nostalgia indeed is an important resource that helps in promoting and maintaining psychological health. According to Wildschut et al. (2006) when something negative occurs individuals revert to nostalgic memories in order to strengthen and restore their wellbeing. People give importance to their nostalgic memories as they are likely to help them experience a positive mood, strengthen a sense of connection and give an existential meaning to life (Routledge et al. 2011). Therefore when people visit a place and renew the memories they experienced in that place in the past, they are using their memories as protective and restorative means for their health and wellbeing.

Fear of Coastal Loss and Solastalgia

The aspect of place attachment and place identity can also be linked to the fact that the coastal environment is dynamic and is always likely to change both due to the natural processes of erosion and deposition and also due to human intervention. This explains why individuals may experience feelings of loss when parts of the coast changes. Indeed, when a coastline or a landform such as the Azure Window in Dwejra

is lost due to storms and erosion or when a part of the coast is taken away for public development, individuals experience solastalgia. Solastalgia is defined as a feeling of '*pain or distress caused by loss of, or inability to derive solace connected to the negatively perceived state of one's home environment'* (Albrecht et al. 2007, p. 496). Solastalgia refers to the negative, psychological consequences of environmental disasters due to climate change or other negative environmental changes. This sense of distress that the inhabitants experience in relation to a coastal landform loss was greatly narrated in the study of Satariano and Gauci (2019) in connection to the loss of the Azure Window in Dwejra as these feelings resembled the loss of an important person in the Maltese community. The expressions of sorrow and grief show that the Maltese appreciate and feel a connection with the coastal space and the memories of the coast that give them solace are important for their wellbeing. In another study Satariano (2019) found how several respondents claimed feelings of solastalgia towards coastal areas that are now occupied by private entities and due to this they cannot relive their memories spent in that part of the coast since it is now occupied. Individuals also expressed solastalgia regarding the decrease in fishing stock and an increase of pollution in the sea.

Indeed these expressed feelings of solastalgia are connected to the theory of emotional geography which explains that individuals can identify and express affection towards a therapeutic place (Rose 2012). These perspectives of nostalgia and solastalgia highlight the importance of driving attention to the landscapes near the coast and their importance for the health and wellbeing of people.

Conclusion

This study contributes to the better understanding of how the coastal environment is beneficial to the physical and mental health and wellbeing of people. It has increased in knowledge of the varied therapeutic experiences that individuals may feel when in contact with the sea. It has also showed the valuable aspect of natural landscapes and ecological relationships of people and the sea. Drawing from the theories and diverse, local and international studies, this paper has pointed out the attributes that focus on the social, symbolic, physical and emotional aspects that a person can experience when in contact with the sea and the coastal areas. Additionally, it has highlighted the ways individuals perceive, remember and interpret coastal environments and how the sea provides a deep emotional connection that enhances health and wellbeing.

This thus reflects on the UN Agenda 21 (1992) which emphasises the fact that authorities should acknowledge more the important aspects of the sea and its beneficial contribution to health and wellbeing. Therefore there is the need of protection and preservation of the coast and the sea and the need of safeguarding such spaces that can promote positive health and wellbeing for individuals.

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