

the iafor

# journal of cultural studies

Volume 7 — Issue 2 — 2022

Editor-in-Chief: Holger Briel



ISSN: 2187-4905



**iafor**

The IAFOR Journal of Cultural Studies  
Volume 7 – Issue – 2

**IAFOR Publications**

**IAFOR Journal of Cultural Studies**

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Sakae 1-16-26 – 201, Naka Ward, Aichi, Japan 460-0008

IAFOR Journal of Cultural Studies

Volume 7 – Issue 2 – 2022

Published January 2023

IAFOR Publications © Copyright 2022

ISSN: 2187-4905

Online: [jocs.iafor.org](https://jocs.iafor.org)



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## Editorial

Dear Readers,

According to one calendar, the year 2022 is already close to fading into the past and 2023 is quickly becoming reality. This reality, however, is prone to a large amount of baggage carried over from the previous year. New crises arose and older ones continue. It seems there is not much respite. To reflect this larger picture, IJCS issue 7.2 is closing out the year with a mix of cultural studies interventions. Several of them point out areas of longed-for and arguably necessary improvement while others demonstrate how individuals reflect on their own creative work in order to make it more relevant to social changes and their own journeys.

The issue starts with Jytte Holmqvist's "Strength through Poetry as We Regain Our Balance in the COVID-19 Aftermath: Literary Insights from Ted Hughes and Seamus Heaney Read from a Naturalist and Existentialist Perspective." In this article, COVID-19 is very much present, and frames the approach to two of the 20th century's most celebrated poets, Hughes and Heaney. Holmqvist presents a selected new reading of Heaney's "The Cure at Troy" (1990) and "The City" by Ted Hughes. She invites her readers to re-examine the long-neglected evaluation of both the past and the present along the lines of the poems. Lastly, she demonstrates how the "Age of Uncertainty", proclaimed by Zygmunt Bauman in 2007, finds a valid response in the poetry analysed.

Next is Kyung Lee Gagum's article "*Grimms Manga* as a Transcultural Product" which examines how Kei Ishiyama's *Grimms Manga* series from 2007 onward created a transcultural narrative by retelling selected Grimm brothers' fairy tales while adding Japanese visual perspectives at the same time. It also tells the story of a gifted Japanese Manga artist travelling to Germany to be closer to a Grimmian culture and how her work there was creating particular entanglements between the two cultures, both in visual as well as in textual ways.

Charles Amone, Joseph Okware and Zebrone Wangoa's "Inter-ethnic Conflicts, Counter Raids and Widowhood in North-Eastern Uganda" interrogates social practices among the nomadic Karamajong in Uganda. They hail from one of the poorest areas in Uganda, and their central cultural practices of bride pricing and widow inheritance and their relationship to commonplace cattle rustling are examined. Amone et al. count the social and individual costs of lives these practices continue to have and suggests possible ways of symbolising their underlying features in order to make these practices less deadly for both sexes.

The last two articles, "If There Were a Single Bahian (Brazilian) Dance Culture..." by Flaviana Xavier Antunes Sampaio and "Craft as Rhizomatic Learning" by Harald Bentz Høgseth, reflect on individual artistic practice and assess the tools needed in order to perform particular kinds of crafts. Sampaio discusses her performance piece *Sombreiro* (2018) in terms of locality and cultural transference between a dance performer and her audience. She also describes her own cultural journey she embarked upon due to her craft, in the process also highlighting the audience's role in the process.

Harald Bentz Høgseth discusses the Norwegian concept of “innlevelse”, so important for artistic work. While difficult to translate, he gives its possible meanings in English as sensibility, sensitivity, affinity, awareness, or empathy. He then proposes to use it as a "tool" for learning craft or design and describes the chiasmic relation between this mode of apperception and its manifestations in and as actual (wooden) artefacts.

Enjoy reading the issue!

Holger Briel  
Editor-in-Chief

## Notes on Contributors

Article 1:

### **Strength through Poetry as We Regain Our Balance in the COVID-19 Aftermath: Literary Insights from Ted Hughes and Seamus Heaney Read from a Naturalist and Existentialist Perspective**

#### **Dr Jytte Holmqvist**

Jytte Holmqvist lectures at the HBU-UCLan School of Media, Communication & Creative Industries. She holds a PhD in Screen and Media Culture and Literature in Spanish from University of Melbourne and is editor of the interdisciplinary volume, *The Patient-Doctor Dynamics: Current Trends in the Global Healthcare Sector* (Brill 2018). She is increasingly interested in psychology and philosophy, as well as mental health, human resilience and connection in the face of adversity. In May 2022, Dr Holmqvist was conferred the International Award for Excellence by The International Journal of Technology, Knowledge, and Society for her interpretation of Orwell's 1984 analysed in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and its effect on people and societies. She values Heaney and Hughes for providing real insight and "saying it as it is" in existentialist times that concern all of us.  
**Email:** JHolmqvist@uclan.ac.uk

Article 2:

### ***Grimms Manga* as a Transcultural Product**

#### **Dr Kyung Lee Gagum**

After receiving her PhD in Transcultural German Studies from the University of Arizona in 2017, Kyung Lee Gagum joined the Department of Germanic & Slavic Languages & Literatures at UNC at Chapel Hill as a Teaching Assistant Professor. In August 2019, she was appointed to her current position as Assistant Professor of German in the World Languages and Cultures Department at Midwestern State University Texas, Wichita Falls. Her research focuses on the transculturation of German literature in the Japanese and Korean visual culture of manga and manhwa, with a particular interest in how German Romanticism prompted the creation of new genre fusions with distinct educational goals in contemporary Japanese and Korean popular culture. Her research interests lie in multi-literacy approaches in the German language classroom and in an inclusive curriculum with the focus on German-Korean literature and culture, and here in particular Korean guest workers in Germany.  
**Email:** lee.gagum@msutexas.edu

Article 3:

### **Inter-Ethnic Conflicts, Counter Raids and Widowhood in North-Eastern Uganda**

#### **Dr Charles Amone**

Charles Amone is a Professor of History in Kyambogo University. He is a former Fulbright Scholar of the University of Millersville in USA, a former Fellow of the Institute of Languages and Communication at the University of Southern Denmark, a former Fellow of the Institute of Development Policy (IOB) of the University of Antwerp, Belgium and former Fellow of the Global Health Institute, Belgium. He specializes in cultural and ethnic studies. His research interests include ethnicity, conflicts and cultural stereotypes with their ramifications in wellbeing and livelihoods. His research aims to ensure a fair world without prejudices and manipulation or marginalization of minority and weaker groups in society.  
**Email:** camone@kyu.ac.ug

**Mr Joseph Okware**

Joseph Okware is an Assistant Lecturer of History in the Department of History, Archaeology and Heritage of Kyambogo University. He holds an MA History degree from Kyambogo University and a BA in Education of Makerere University. His area of research specialization is Social and Economic History. Currently, he is engaged in a research on Traditional African Medicine among the Iteso of Eastern Uganda.

**Mr Zebrone Wangoa**

Zebrone Wangoa is an MA History student in the Department of History, Archaeology and Heritage of Kyambogo University. He holds a First Class degree as a Bachelor of Arts Education from Uganda Christian University. He has a passion for historical research and has been involved in several fieldwork activities in ethnic and cultural studies.

Article 4:

**If There Were a Single Bahian (Brazilian) Dance Culture...****Dr Flaviana Xavier Antunes Sampaio**

Flaviana Xavier Antunes Sampaio is Adjunct Professor at the Bahia Southwest State University (Brazil). She completed her PhD at the University of Chichester, UK. Her research interests lie in Dance, Visual Arts, and Cultural Studies. Flaviana has been researching dance lighting since 2004. Her written work has been published in international journals and *The Routledge Companion to Music and Visual Culture* (2013). Flaviana also has two single-authored books: *Dança de Luzes* (Edições UESB, 2014) and *Lighting Dance: A Study of Technical, Philosophical and Psychological Shadows* (Routledge, 2020). Flaviana's performance pieces have been presented in the UK, Japan, Brazil, and the Czech Republic.

**Email:** fxasampaio@uesb.edu.br

Article 5:

**Craft as Rhizomatic Learning****Dr Harald Bentz Høgseth**

Harald Bentz Høgseth holds a position as Professor in Arts and Crafts education at the Department of Teacher Education, Faculty of Social Sciences and Educational Sciences at NTNU – Norwegian University of Science and Technology. He has a background in skilled carpentry and archaeologist and is very interested medieval craftsmanship. His writing is very much inspired by phenomenology and hermeneutics. Recent works of his include the co-authored articles 'Notations on Craft: Movement, Gesture and Bodily Expression (2022) and Craft as more-than-human practice-led research in a posthumanist perspective (2021). He is also the author of the 2006 book *Håndverk og kunnskap*.

**Email:** harald.hogseth@ntnu.no



**Strength through Poetry as We Regain Our Balance in the COVID-19  
Aftermath: Literary Insights from Ted Hughes and Seamus Heaney Read  
from a Naturalist and Existentialist Perspective**

Jytte Holmqvist  
HBU-UCLan School of Media, Communication & Creative Industries

### Abstract

Drawing on Seamus Heaney and his symbolic reference to a great sea change or tidal wave in epic poem “The Cure at Troy” (1990) – much referred to in these gradually post-pandemic times and indicating that a new chapter is about to begin – and “The City” by Ted Hughes, where a life is read like a poem and in the many depths of the urban space the writer roams “my own darkness”, this paper looks at human resilience in the face of an interrupted COVID reality that has brought a fundamental shift to the way we view the world and our role in society. In our era of a New Normal, the idea that “less is more” is quickly becoming a mantra for our times, a time characterised by a gradual distancing from material hype while we turn to nature for solace and guidance – as importantly advocated by Heaney and Hughes who illuminate our path as we gain a greater understanding of what really matters at the core. We likewise begin to see commonalities between people and cultures, and we open up a space for a greater sense of authenticity. As we are now stepping into the initial stages of 2023, entering a new chapter; have we gained existential insights from the COVID-19 pandemic and will this lead to new beginnings where the written word helps us along the way?

*Keywords:* COVID-19 pandemic, culture, nature, poetry, Seamus Heaney, symbolism, Ted Hughes

We live in an unpredictable and highly cinematic reality. Only four years ago our increasingly globalised world was spinning fast, full of activity and human interaction, as we were drawn into a vortex of media frenzy and media hype. It appears we generally lacked the ability to ask questions, and we let ourselves be dragged along by, and into, the larger social machinery. Carefree urbanites in need of constant entertainment, people in the technocratic western world engaged in traveling for traveling's sake and were driven by a need to explore foreign territories while obsessively sharing their holiday snaps on a range of social media sites. Private memories were turned public and collective in an instant and the narcissistic aspects of 21st century individuals were on full display. Boarding a plane at short notice was a normal, and as we shuttled across the sky for holiday or business purposes we engaged in constant dialogue on a both personal and professional level – always moving and involved in what Bauman calls a postmodern hunt with no clear aim or future plan in place: “We are all hunters now, or told to be hunters and called or compelled to act as hunters do” (Bauman, 2007, p. 100).

It was a dynamic yet materialistic and self-obsessed globalised society that prioritised individual pleasures and immediate satisfaction above human connection on a collective level; a world of commerce and trade, of communication across borders – one of extreme contrasts, of fear and excitement, of excessive wealth and stark poverty, a world of euphoria and tragedy all at once. “Fake news” hit the headlines as an almost viable option to be taken seriously and pay heed to, confusing audiences and the public across the globe. In disbelief we watched leaders rise to power but not rise to the occasion; inept, unqualified for the job yet let to enter centre stage with ideas and convictions that would jeopardise not only the United States in a dark age of Trumpian ideals<sup>1</sup>, but the world at large. Social media posts and Twitter feeds travelled fast and as we obsessively consumed different types of media texts it was not so much in search for real insight or to engage in critical discernment. Rather, as readers we found ourselves exposed to mental clutter at a time of information overload. Seeking a sense of relief and driven by a parallel escapist mindset we turned to film and media for entertainment, taking it all for granted and not reflecting much on the possibly deeper meaning behind verbal and visual messages. The world was spinning fast and there was no time for standing still, no time for reflection, and no time for solace. Noise was the norm in a highly consumerist western society where the more we had, the more important we became; icons, gadgets and status symbols ruling the day. Frenzied speed defined our lifestyles, as did a parallel existence where we had one foot in a world supposedly more real than the other, while the other was steadily anchored in a virtual space or reality as we quickly alternated between being, simultaneously, citizens and netizens; cyberspace calling our attention away from our physical reality. Face to face interaction had become increasingly artificial as we hid behind mobile screens, barely noticing one another. We had become robots in a world of technological breakthroughs come about at the sacrifice of interpersonal contact and connection. We faced a loss of self and a loss of other, unable to interact effortlessly; dependant on gadgets and gizmos to add a silver lining to the day.

Until it all suddenly came to a grinding halt and the world watched in disbelief. Wuhan, China, 10 December 2019: the first known Coronavirus patient falls ill and is admitted to Wuhan Central Hospital 6 days later. An official connection is made between the new virus and a

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<sup>1</sup> Bauman calls Trump “a quick fix for existential anxiety” (Bauman, 2017, 150).

Chinese wet market.<sup>2</sup> Initial dates were followed by a more complete timeline – the virus since having branched into new strands and variants as we witness history unfold. As, during the height of this most recent pandemic the Great Contagion held us captive, the existentialist aspects of our times became more apparent than ever. The Coronavirus has laid bare the vulnerability of human existence and the brevity of it all. How do we move from here? Where do we turn? We are but driftwood in a sea of uncertainty – “How could fate stage a scenario so symbolic?” This is the “batlight” we are “living in: death” (Hughes, 1998, p. 74).

### Methodological Approach and Shamanic Elements in Hughes’ Prophetic Poetry

Literature and poetry now shine a light in our cultural and existential darkness, providing a lens through which we may begin to interpret our unpredictable and challenging new reality that calls for a radical shift in the way we view the world and our role in it. We have lost control during a pandemic period that has further conditioned our human condition. There are poets and poems that come to mind more readily than others as we seek guidance and words to hold on to. This paper draws on English writer Ted Hughes (1930-1998) and Irish Seamus Heaney (1939-2013) and illustrates how, through words, symbols, and metaphors, they highlight the vital role of nature in shifting our focus from our own immediate issues to the deeper meaning of our existence. With that, we gain a greater appreciation for the world at large and the roles we play. Both healers in a sense, Hughes and Heaney have in common their focus on myth, but also pain and suffering while they ultimately propose that there may be a way out, into the light. Dark and realistic at times but also allegorical and metaphorical, even metaphysical in style, they speak of what lies beneath, of human misery, human compassion and interconnectedness, of people been and gone, some of them corpses protected against the decay of time by natural acids – as in Heaney’s take on the mummified Iron Age bog people in his bog poems<sup>3</sup>, including, “The Tollund Man”<sup>4</sup>, “Bog Queen”, and “The Grauballe Man” (the poet’s interest in Danish and Scandinavian history and culture is likewise apparent in his 1999 book *Beowulf: A New Verse Translation*, where he translates into verse the supposedly oldest epic English language tale written between the 7th and 10th century”<sup>5</sup>). Heaney dedicated *Beowulf* to Hughes and said of his fellow writer that he had “a soothsayer’s awareness that facing a destiny was bound to involve a certain ordeal” (Hart, 2012, p. 76). In *Ted Hughes: From Cambridge to Collected* (Hart, 2012), Heaney, who coedited several collections of poetry with Hughes, declares that “no death had been as devastating to poetry as Hughes’ death, and no death outside his family had hurt him as much” (Hart, 2012, p. 76).

No stranger to death or the thought of it, Ted Hughes saw our ending as a pathway to new beginnings. In poem “A Green Mother” (*Cave Birds*, 1978), he writes:

<sup>2</sup> Ebrahimian Allen, Bethany (March 18, 2020). *Timeline: The early days of China’s coronavirus outbreak and cover-up*. <https://www.axios.com/timeline-the-early-days-of-chinas-coronavirus-outbreak-and-cover-up-ee65211a-afb6-4641-97b8-353718a5faab.html>

<sup>3</sup> Miller, Tim (June 3, 2016). *Heaney’s Bog Poems*. <https://wordandsilence.com/2016/06/03/heaneys-bog-poems/>

<sup>4</sup> This text is included in the edited collection of poetry *Seamus Heaney: 100 poems* (2018).

<sup>5</sup> We are informed, in the introduction to the book, that “[t]he poem was written in England but the events it describes are set in Scandinavia, in a ‘once upon a time’ that is partly historical. Its hero, Beowulf, is the biggest presence among the warriors in the land of the Geats, a territory situated in what is now southern Sweden, and early in the poem Beowulf crosses the sea to the land of the Danes in order to rid their country of a man-eating monster called Grendel” (Heaney, 1999, ix-x).



Why are you afraid?  
 In the house of the dead are many cradles.  
 The earth is a busy hive of heavens.  
 This is one lottery that cannot be lost.<sup>6</sup>

Hughes here seems to suggest that we should look at death reassuringly; as an encounter with other realms where we have a real possibility to approach divinity. At the same time, he reminds us that our time on Earth already grants us the possibility to embrace the divine elements of daily existence as we become aware of the magical aspects of reality and forge connections with other beings (human and otherwise). In doing so, we may start to envisage the spirit world. It is not for nothing that he has been called a “shaman of the tribe” (Heaney as quoted in Scigaj 1992, p. 64)<sup>7</sup>, with a tendency to address his readers in animal disguise. Ewa Panecka importantly elaborates on the shamanic elements in Hughes’ poetry. She highlights Hughes’ exploration of myth and his references also to animals, with a multilayered poetry that interweaves culture with nature:

In his poems he called for the destruction of the artificial, sterile personality created by Western culture and thus offered a way of liberating man’s true, instinctual self. In doing so he performed a healing, regenerating ritual, often likened to shamanistic practitioners’ magic. Poetry is a natural vehicle for the expression of feelings and emotions, and the shaman-poet can transcend the constraints of ordinary language. Hughes claimed that in human language, ‘animal music’ in which the poet can evoke the spirits, is present (Panecka, 2018, p. 2).<sup>8</sup>

This resonates with words from The Poetry Foundation where it is similarly held that “Hughes’s work speaks to his concern with poetry’s vatic, even shamanic powers. Working in sequences and lists, Hughes frequently uncovered a kind of autochthonous, yet literary, English language”.<sup>9</sup> As we peel away the layers of reality, read between the lines and look beyond the words we begin to discern the essence of Hughes’ work and, likewise, that of Heaney – a poet who was perhaps more readily in touch with reality: concerned with Irish history and politics, society and culture and less prone to exploring the symbolism in nature and the animal world. And yet, Heaney also brings us words to abide by metaphorically and shows us the path forward, inspiring “common folks” and politicians alike – as we shall see in relation to the 2020 US elections. The darkness and apparent despair dealt with not always so indirectly by both Heaney and Hughes ultimately provide us with a sense of relief at a time when we must confront our own fears in order to regain the hope needed to get through these troubled times.

<sup>6</sup> Beshara Magazine (2020, June 14). Poems for These Times: 12: A Green Mother by Ted Hughes. <https://besharamagazine.org/newsandviews/poems-for-these-times-12/>

<sup>7</sup> According to Britannica, “the term *shamanism* comes from the Manchu-Tungus word *šaman*. The noun is formed from the verb *ša-* ‘to know’; thus, a shaman is literally ‘one who knows.’ The shamans recorded in historical ethnographies have included women, men, and transgender individuals of every age from middle childhood onward.” Eliade, Mircea. *shamanism: religion*. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/shamanism>

<sup>8</sup> Panecka here makes partial references to Neil Robert’s interview with Hughes in the Times Literary Supplement 1, October 1971.

<sup>9</sup> Poetry Foundation: *Ted Hughes (1930-1998)*. <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/ted-hughes>

### Major Works – Major Thoughts – Major Breakthroughs

Heaney and Hughes are considered two of the finest poets to see the literary light and break through during their own lifetimes. They amassed an extensive critical following, reputation, and acclaim, with Heaney (his first collection of poetry was *Death of a Naturalist*, 1966) conferred a number of awards – his greatest accolade the Noble Prize in Literature in 1995. Versed in poetry and prose, Heaney heralded what became known as the Nordic School of Writing, and counted *Preoccupations: Selected Prose 1968-1978* (1980), *The Government of the Tongue* (1988), *The Redress of Poetry* (1990) and *Finders Keepers: Selected Prose 1971-2001* (2002), as his main prose collections.

Hughes, in turn, was appointed Poet Laureate in 1984 and the Order of Merit, and his “most characteristic verse is without sentimentality, emphasizing the cunning and savagery of animal life in harsh, sometimes disjunctive lines”<sup>10</sup>. He has left a legacy on a both personal and professional level. As a poet, Hughes reached fame and reputation with *Lupercal* (1960), *Wodwo* (1967), *Crow: From the Life and Songs of the Crow* (1970), *Remains of Elmet* (1979), and *Wolfwatching* (1989). He went through the motions when his private life became a matter of public interest after his marriage to Sylvia Plath went from romance and poetry, to heartbreak and tragedy. Plath’s sudden suicide in 1963 triggered a period of expressive hiatus for Hughes. Short collection of poetry *The Hawk in the Rain* (1957) is dedicated to Plath, or, simply, “Sylvia”, and forty years and many memories later, *Birthday Letters* (1998) saw the light. Uncommonly candid, raw, and honest, this book dedicated to Frieda and (likewise ill-fated) Nicholas Hughes was published shortly before Ted Hughes’ passing and 35 years after the death of their mother – Hughes’ spiritually lingering, long term muse Sylvia Plath. The collection features 88 poems about this woman who would leave a lasting impact. He writes: “You are ten years dead. It’s only a story. Your story. My story” (Hughes, 1998, p. 9). The narrative that they carved out for themselves would be paralleled, if not entirely matched by, that of Hughes and extramarital lover Assia Wevill, who like Plath ended her own life – in 1969, exactly seven years after her relationship with Hughes had officially begun. Wevill would bring her and Hughes’ daughter Shura, with her in death.<sup>11</sup>

Personal tragedy swayed public opinion about Hughes and made him “not famous but infamous”<sup>12</sup>. Nevertheless, it would later be an experience to draw from by a poet whose texts reflect a lasting appreciation for life and love, children, nature, and the power of the elements and with that likewise an honouring of ‘less is more’<sup>13</sup>. The a forementioned first collection of poetry *The Hawk in the Rain* was the result of Plath’s persuasive efforts, and *The Iron Man* (1968), *Cave Birds* (1978), and *Selected Poems 1957-1981* (1982) count as other masterpieces.

Hughes’ spirit lives on not only through The Ted Hughes Society – with a wealth of information about the writer, his life and work – but also the Modern Poetry in Translation (MPT) journal

<sup>10</sup> Britannica. *Ted Hughes: British poet*. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Ted-Hughes>

<sup>11</sup> For further references, see <https://www.theguardian.com/theguardian/1999/apr/23/features11.g21>

<sup>12</sup> Wagner, Erica (October 1, 2015). *Ted Hughes and Sylvia Plath: partners in martyrdom*. The New Statesman, <https://www.newstatesman.com/culture/2015/10/ted-hughes-and-sylvia-plath-partners-martyrdom>

<sup>13</sup> Wagner highlights “Hughes’s extraordinary appetites, for art, for nature, for learning, for friendship and for women” (2015).

that Hughes funded with Daniel Weissbort in 1965 “as an act of European cultural solidarity with writers from behind the Iron Curtain, whose work they wanted to bring to a wider readership, and in the hope of challenging the narrowness of British poetry.”<sup>14</sup> Moving with the times, MPT operates with a continued awareness of what matters also from the perspective of today:

The Covid19 pandemic has led to communities across Europe turning inwards. Geographical borders have been closed, and the sense of openness and curiosity that exists amongst the many different cultures across the continent is now under threat. MPT’s ongoing mission is to enable and foster cross cultural understanding and solidarity.<sup>15</sup>

Emphasising the importance of the arts at a time of increased focus on bare necessities while the arts and humanities sector has suffered across the board, the annual Ted Hughes Award likewise keeps the poetic spirit going from past into present and future, and is awarded a “living UK poet for new work in poetry”<sup>16</sup>. Perhaps this award can serve as a source of inspiration for boards and organizations also outside the United Kingdom, and highlight the need to nurture our mind and soul with words that matter, that enlighten and comfort us on our collective road into a shaky, possibly post pandemic future – unless COVID-19 (or what remains of it) is here to stay?

### **Narrative and Existentialist Themes that Inform and Unite Us Cross Culturally**

Poetry matters. It appears now more than ever before. And poetry, through symbolism and metaphors, also bears witness to our current times, with all the trials and tribulations. While we have sought escape routes away from our pandemic reality through film, television, and the media, we are likewise inspired by the written word and find comfort and consolation in poetry as one of the most compellingly expressive literary genres. Words of wisdom, insights gained from lived experiences, tales and myths fuelled by a vivid imagination and a curious and alert mind, but which are also steeped in the poet’s own interpretation of history, culture, and English and Irish reality, come our way, step out and away from the page and into our own lives, guiding us when we ourselves lack the capacity to express our feelings. The poet turns to us with words that move us but that also challenge our prior beliefs and force us to explore painful topics and emotions. Heaney’s aforementioned bog poems are based on real facts, but they still speak to us from a place of lingering in-betweenness. They touch on universal themes relating to life and death, fear of living and loving, longing and heartache, human connection, physical consummation and decay. The powerful poems of both Heaney and Hughes point to

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<sup>14</sup> Cultural Foundation. *Poems to translate the Covid-19 crisis*. <https://culturalfoundation.eu/stories/cosround2-modern-poetry-in-translation>. Clare Pollard, editor of MPT, explains further, “We aim to give voice to the silenced, exiled and excluded, and create a diverse and creative community of translators, poets and readers. The act of translation is in itself an act of solidarity and sharing because it gives the possibility to everyone to enjoy different content.” (same website).

<sup>15</sup> Cultural Foundation. *Poems to translate the Covid-19 crisis*. <https://culturalfoundation.eu/stories/cosround2-modern-poetry-in-translation/>

<sup>16</sup> Poetry Society. Ted Hughes Award. <https://poetrysociety.org.uk/competitions/ted-hughes-award/>

the capacity of human beings to resist the passing of time by delving into literature and the arts, and our lasting presence beyond death.

### Seamus Heaney: “The Cure at Troy”

As today we still struggle to make sense of a disrupted reality that forces us to look within and reprioritise our lives, we turn to Heaney and book and poem *The Cure at Troy* (1991). As if understanding our external ordeals turned private pain and likewise pointing to the cruelty that we are all capable of, Heaney draws on Trojan myth to highlight the flaws of man yet, at the same time, our possibility to change things for the better:

Human beings suffer.  
They torture one another.  
They get hurt and get hard.  
No poem or play or song  
Can fully right a wrong  
Inflicted and endured.

And still, there is hope – if we choose to believe there is:

History says, Don't hope  
On this side of the grave,  
But then, once in a lifetime  
The longed-for tidal wave  
Of justice can rise up,  
And hope and history rhyme. (Heaney, 2018, p. 100)

An eloquent poem that bears commonalities with Martin Luther King's ground-breaking 1963 speech, it is similarly rich in metaphors and contains both poetic and musical elements – and famously inspired Joe Biden in his 2020 US presidential election speech. Heaney speaks of a “great sea-change on the far side of revenge”, of “a farther shore ... reachable from here” (Heaney, 2018, p. 100), of the miracle of self-healing and of a god speaking from the sky. His likewise current and pertinent line turned motto – a quote from an interview given in 1972, where Heaney spoke of the troubles in Northern Ireland<sup>17</sup> – “If we winter this one out, we can summer anywhere” (later included in *Wintering Out*, 1972)<sup>18</sup> has also sent readers into a frenzy, with an article establishing that the poem got “hundreds of re-tweets and quickly took off, being referenced by people in relation to the ongoing Covid-19 situation”<sup>19</sup>. Indeed, it has become a

<sup>17</sup> Seamus Heaney: The Estate of Seamus Heaney. (April 10, 2020). *If we can winter this one out, we can summer anywhere*. <https://www.seamusheaney.com/news-and-events/2020/4/10/if-we-winter-this-one-out-we-can-summer-anywhere>

<sup>18</sup> Heaney is said to have first uttered this line in an interview article with the *Cork Examiner* on 22 November 1972. With regard to the renewed interest in Heaney's 1972 poem during the recent pandemic, Frank McNally informs us that in 2020 “Seamus Heaney's line saw him replace Yeats as the most quoted Irish poet”. McNally, Frank (December 25, 2020). *'If we winter this one out, we can summer anywhere': The year Heaney helped us through*. <https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/if-we-winter-this-one-out-we-can-summer-anywhere-the-year-heaney-helped-us-through-1.4438422>

<sup>19</sup> McGrath, Dominic (April 5, 2020). *The story behind the Seamus Heaney quote guiding people through the crisis: If we winter this out, we can summer anywhere*. <https://www.thejournal.ie/seamus-heaney-quote-winter-this-one-out-summer-5065553-Apr2020/>

mantra to abide by in troubled times. Heaney's words were first uttered with reference to cattle in bleak Irish landscapes that, as he explained at the time, could be likened to "[b]easts standing under a hedge, plastered in wet, looking at you with big patient eyes, just taking what came until something else came along." And he added, "Times were bleak, the political climate was deteriorating. The year the book was published was the year of Bloody Sunday and Bloody Friday."<sup>20</sup>

Fast-forward to today and Heaney's mantra that encapsulated difficult sentiments at the time and were uttered with a specific cultural and societal Irish context in mind, now likewise guide and help us mentally survive the pandemic as we both collectively and individually face our own Angst: mind over matter.

### The Crow as a Symbol of Suffering and Resilience

#### Figure 1

Ted Hughes' "The Crow". stashmedia.tv<sup>21</sup>



In a similar vein, even if he may generally be less politically specific than Heaney, Hughes writes in the poem "Two Legends" (included in *Crow: From the Life and Songs of the Crow*):

To hatch a crow, a black rainbow  
Bent in emptiness  
over emptiness  
But flying. (Hughes, 1972 ed., p. 1)

With that Hughes, the poet, again opts for the animal guise, moving us closer to the spirit world while through his words he steps up to the level of the mythical shaman. Robert Shaw declared that Hughes "marshaled a language of nearly Shakespearean resonance to explore themes which were mythic and elemental"<sup>22</sup>. The crow is a recurring theme or element in Hughes' poetry and signals both our own suffering and boldness or perhaps, rather, boldness in suffering, our refusal to stay within our presumed boundaries and our desire to break through and away even if the road to a more luminous existence may be through profound darkness. The crow, its originally white feathers scorched by the sun while it attempts to blacken the sun's whiteness to make way for a relieving darkness, could in multilayered poem "Crow's

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.stashmedia.tv/ted-hughes-the-crow-animated-poetry-by-playdead/>

<sup>22</sup> Poetry Foundation: *Ted Hughes (1930-1998)*. <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/ted-hughes>

Fall” (included in the previously mentioned collection of poetry) be symbolic of our own dogged attempts to conquer difficulties (“When Crow was white he decided the sun was too white. He decided it glared much too whitely. He decided to attack it and defeat it”), our ultimate resilience in the face of adversities (“But the sun brightened – It brightened, and Crow returned charred black”), and our need to query whether what we have been led to believe is ‘the truth’. Hughes ends his poem with an apparent paradox: “Where white is black and black is white, I won” (Hughes, 1972 ed., p. 28). With that, the poet seemingly urges us to look beyond immediate appearances and to challenge preconceived notions and ideas.

Eighteen years later, Hughes, whose father survived the carnage of Gallipoli in 1915 (Meyers, 2013, p. 30) and who would make war and warfare recurring themes in his poetry – sometimes disguised in animal symbolism – proposes, while transporting us to “a valley overshadowed by war”<sup>23</sup>, that we may be able to return “from no man’s land.” (*Wolfwatching*, 1989). If as readers we allow ourselves to, at least momentarily, defend the idea of the ‘death of the author’, excerpts of poetry can be read in isolation, and when applied to our own context, individual words and phrases become powerful in their own right.

## Figure 2

*Illuminated cobbled street in old city by night*<sup>24</sup>



## Ted Hughes: “The City”

This paper takes a specific cultural interest in Hughes’ poem “The City”, where references to Plath appear to be constant and the personal spills over into the broader context of a city void of life but which is all the more filled with nostalgia. Moving away from the no man’s land of war-torn lands and the symbolic elements in animals and nature, and the link between nature and mankind, in “The City” Hughes transports us from natural habitats into an urban space that is dystopic and nostalgic all at once. The oppressive city environment in the poem is also tainted by Hughes’ memories of a love gained and lost. Hughes calls forth the absent presence of a special someone whose being is felt in the many arteries of the urban space. A potential memory is juxtaposed with the real possibility of the loss of that same memory: “to remember — or suddenly not to remember”. He writes:

<sup>23</sup> Ted Hughes Society. *Poetry by Ted Hughes: Wolfwatching* (London: Faber and Faber, 1989). <http://thetedsociety.org/new-page-2>

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.shutterstock.com/image-photo/illuminated-cobbled-street-light-reflections-on-706424317>

Your poems are a dark city centre.  
 Your novels, your stories, your journals, are suburbs  
 Of this big city. (Keegan ed. 2005, p. 1179)

It is no doubt a reference to Plath, but this is also a poem that speaks straight to us at a time when history is revised, in part forgotten, most definitely rewritten without our consensus. The dark city centre of Hughes' poem translates into an opaque sensorial experience of pandemic years that have erased from our memory what was before and have left us questioning what may be in store for us. The urban space becomes both a focal point and a catalyst for groundbreaking changes and massive upheavals; changes triggered by a global malaise that cleanses the earth and effectively separates the strong from the weak. In Hughes' words, "[y]our" poems are dark". Likewise, our lives are dark. It seems we have hit a point of no return. And yet, from the dark crevasses of the Earth we appear, exiting, and we may with luck or fate on our side rise like a phoenix from the ashes – many of us gone, some still left standing. In even darker poem "Your Paris", with references to artists and artworks, the Occupation, the Holocaust and "SS mannequins", Hughes talks of Paris as "a post-war utility survivor" (Hughes, 1998, p. 36). The city referred to:

[w]as a labyrinth  
 Where you still hurtled, scattering tears.  
 Was a dream where you could not  
 Wake or find the exit or  
 The minotaur to put a blessed end  
 To the torment. (Hughes, 1998, p. 36–37)

What do we make of this? Can we apply this wartime poem to our current context, or is that too presumptuous? Suffice to say that poetry, like films, has the capacity to penetrate deep into our psyche and touch us at the core. As readers we have the choice to approach a poem from different angles. In the case of Heaney and Hughes, if we do so, their poems are conferred multiple layers and we are left with multiple revelations and discoveries.

### **Final Reflections – With a Brief Reference to Films that brought Viruses to the Screen Long before the COVID-19 Pandemic Hit**

Both Heaney and Hughes spring forth as poets and literary and cultural flame bearers of our times. Just like many readers and critics today have interpreted our authoritarian, and also autocratic, world from an Orwellian perspective, the two British poets provide guidance that not only explains the human condition but illuminates our path and points to a way forward from the darkness into the light. On a soul level, human to human, we crave emotional connection to compensate for the emotional scarcity that defines our (post)pandemic (sur)reality. The late Zygmunt Bauman's assessment of our postmodern society and beyond suggests an uncomfortable departure from the past and a new trajectory into a shaky new existence – in which Leonard Cohen's famous last words in album *You Want it Darker* (2016) ring truer than ever. Contemporary TV series and films likewise do their best to keep up with the artist's efforts to capture our bewildering new existence – with *Contagion* (2011) reiterating that "no one is immune to fear". The rapid transmission of a virus that could be SARS, MERS, COVID-19, or any one of them, in *Contagion* becomes a nightmarish reality that leaves the world in shatters – with lives lost and the individual at the mercy of a harsh environment and

the relentless all-pervasive sickness. If we move from fiction to reality, one wonders if the COVID-19 pandemic may have been lurking in the shadows all along; ready to break out 8 years after Steven Soederbergh's film was released.

Earlier Sci-Fi thriller, *Outbreak* (1995), similarly carries eerie undertones and proposes a scenario that could easily travel from the screen into our own off-screen realities. An Ebola type virus spreads across the world and here monkeys become the fictional carriers of the disease. Only four years ago it was supposed to be bats, pests turned delicacies, or was it various species of wildlife caged up in intolerable conditions? Or could it be a gigantic political conspiracy where the COVID-19 virus was invented in a lab? We may never know the exact origins of the pandemic and as we now deal with the tragic aftermath, we must be stoic, face our own fears, conquer them best we can, and remain hopeful. Vaccines now provide light in the tunnel, and we have finally regained some of the lost control.

### Concluding Comments

Our surreal and often nightmarish pandemic existence has turned the world upside down, delivered a punch to the collective solar plexus and entered our individual and global consciousness. At the same time the COVID-19 pandemic has, importantly, revealed the flaws in the system, the crack in the wall – and yet, as Leonard Cohen maintains, it may be that's how the light gets in. Poetry is the key and poetry is power – or, put differently, with reference to Bauman, “the focus on subjective experience is ... the distinguishing characteristic of the new individualistic spirituality” (Motak, 2009, p. 136). Poetry offers us new perspectives without being prescriptive. It is ultimately up to each and every one of us to interpret a text that reflects deeper queries, tackles conundrums, and speaks of higher truths, according to our needs and preferences at any given time. We may not find a concrete answer or solution, but we will find a way forward and gain new insights to draw from.

As men of their time, Seamus Heaney and Ted Hughes, steeped in tradition and concerned with the politics of their contemporary Ireland and England, were also visionaries who imagined a world where there was light and hope and possibilities to start over. As we now likewise enter a new chapter, we would be wise to bring the poet's many insights along for the ride. And we may finally be able to, as Hughes predicts, “return from no man's land”. Less is more. Love and respect human to human, the appreciation of animals and nature, allowing ourselves to identify with our own cultures yet learning from past mistakes, and to live with fear yet let darkness and light coexist in perfect balance: that is where we may find the key to a more sustainable existence and future. As Seamus Heaney concludes perceptively “[w]hy should the joyful affirmation of music and poetry ever constitute an affront to life? The achievement of a poem, after all, is an experience of release.”<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Heaney as cited in <https://www.rte.ie/brainstorm/2020/0331/1127523-poetry-pandemic-coronavirus/>



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**Corresponding Author:** Jytte Holmqvist  
**Email:** JHolmqvist@uclan.ac.uk



## ***Grimms Manga* as a Transcultural Product**

Kyung Lee Gagum  
Midwestern State University Texas, USA

### Abstract

This research examines how Kei Ishiyama's *Grimms Manga* series create a transcultural product by retelling selected Grimm brothers' fairy tales, and by incorporating Japanese visual language. Ishiyama's *Grimms Manga* has its own transcultural beginning, and its inception began when Ishiyama was temporarily living in Germany and encountered the Tokyopop publisher of Germany. Ishiyama Grimm's fairy tales retellings use various modes with contemporary visual styles, such as commercialized and domesticated notions of exaggerated cuteness, which are very common in manga targeting young female readers. Due to the success of *Grimms Manga* Volume 1 (2007) and Volume 2 (2008), a special volume titled *Grimms Manga Sonderband* (2011) was published, which contains retellings from German and Japanese manga artists. These retellings not only celebrate the success of Ishiyama but reflect the important influence of German literature to display a product of a contact zone and an artifact of transculturation.

*Keywords:* fairy tales, manga, moral education, transcultural, visual language

### The Transcultural Beginning of Kei Ishiyama's *Grimms Manga*

In 2004, while living outside Düsseldorf, Germany, Kei Ishiyama went to visit the world-renowned Frankfurter Book Fair. Her sister, Misaho Kujiradou, is a manga artist who came from Japan to attend the signing of her manga, *Princess Ai*, at that same book fair. It was there that Ishiyama met a translator and the marketer of Tokyopop for Germany. Meeting the translator was vital, since Ishiyama admits in her *Grimms Manga Fanbuch* (2012) that she couldn't speak German. After expressing her interest in working with Tokyopop, Ishiyama was invited to submit her application and a manuscript upon the condition that the content must be accessible to a German audience. Thus, the result of the 2004 Frankfurter Book Fair was that both sisters would be working for the Tokyopop publishing company. Both sisters did not speak the language of the companies they worked for but communicated through translators and also through their manga. Ishiyama decided to illustrate a variation of the Grimms' fairy tales based on two reasons. One was the fact that she was residing in Germany, working for the Germany division of Tokyopop, and had to illustrate a manga for a German readership. She already knew the Brother Grimms' fairy tales from Japan, thus she herself had access to the fairy tales before illustrating her own version of them in a manga. The second reason she chose to revisit the fairy tales was that their readership preceded the storytelling, because it is a fundamental concern of delivery as Will Eisner (2008) claims that, "[t]he reader's profile – his experience and cultural characteristics- must be reckoned with before the storyteller can successfully narrate the tale. Successful communication depends on the storyteller's own memory of experience and visual vocabulary" (p. 47).

Eisner mentions the visual vocabulary in comics and in reference to manga, Ishiyama would have to apply the Japanese visual language to communicate her narration to the readers. To establish communication with her German audience, and to deliver a story that was comprehensible in the German-speaking community, Ishiyama read a manga given to her by her publisher. That manga was written by German manga artist Christina Plaka, who had won a Manga talent contest in 2002. Ishiyama studied Plaka's manga to learn the visual language the contemporary German manga artists were using to tell their stories. To her surprise, she discovered that the German manga, illustrated by Plaka, was set in Japan. German manga readers wanted authentic Japanese manga, and even though Plaka was a successful manga artist for the German division of Tokyopop, her manga belonged to what Heike Jüngst (2007) called the "fake Japanese" group, which was a group of German manga artist mimicking Japanese manga in Germany. At this cross-section of culture, the dominating culture is Ishiyama's own Japanese culture. The culture she wanted to suppress was the very one desired by her readership. Her future employer at Tokyopop assigned Ishiyama to read one of the most successful German manga because its success was due to manga-specific symbols. This cultural crossing points to the soft power of Japan. According to Joseph Nye (2004) "Soft power rests on the ability to shape the preference of other" (p. 5). He goes on to add that soft power is, "an intangible attraction that persuades us to go along with others' purposes without any explicit threat or exchange taking place" (p. 6–7). At this contact zone, there were no exchanges but rather knowledge and acknowledgement. Knowing that German readers were interested in Japanese settings and plots, Ishiyama incorporated Japanese cultural elements into her manga, along with the language of manga, to fulfill the contract of a storyteller to her readers by presenting a tale that the readers would be interested in and understand.

In her *Grimms Manga Fanbuch*, Ishiyama reveals that she knew several popular Grimms' fairy tales that are well-known in Japan. Ishiyama could have adopted the popular and well-known of Grimms' fairy tales into her own retelling, but she decided to select fairy tales that were less

known. She nevertheless followed the trend of the Grimms' boom's by retelling original and unknown fairy tales. Thus, already in the preparation for illustrating *Grimms Manga*, she knew that she wanted to create a retelling that was original and in her own manga narrative voice. Ishiyama spent Easter vacation traveling the *Märchenstraße* (*Fairy Tale Route*) in order to personally gain insights. This German fairy tale road is a tourist attraction that connects numerous sights closely associated with the folk stories collected by the Brothers Grimm. She traveled the *Märchenstraße* to encounter the fairy tales in the respective cities in which they were supposed to have originated. She thus participated in literary tourism and travelled the road the Grimms had also journeyed in order to also experience what they experienced. She intensively researched Germany, from its landscape and castles to its historical artifacts of the Middle Ages. She also visually documented all of her research.

There were previous manga publications in Japan that adapted Grimms' fairy tales before *Grimms Manga*. The earlier fairytale-themed manga were published in Japan for Japanese audiences, and then were later translated into other languages depending on their popularity. Ishiyama's manga was intended for German audiences but was also published in Japan for a Japanese audience. Later, in 2017, due to popularity and success, her manga were also translated into English. The question of readership is specifically addressed in the preface to the *Grimms Manga Sonderband*. It states that Ishiyama's style of retelling the Grimms' fairy tales through the narrative voice of manga is in fact universal, whereas the origin of the tales is questionable as to them coming from Germany when they have also been contributed to by Ishiyama's origin of experiencing them in Japan. By addressing the readership in advance, the German readers are directed to the Japanese visual language of manga that is intended for them. The Japanese visual language of manga, to give somewhat superficial examples, are according to Neil Cohn (2009) reading manga pages "right-to-left and that human faces are drawn with large eyes and pointy chins" (p. 188). The purpose of the preface is two-fold, in that it first informs the reader that the retellings are in a Japanese visual language as retold by a German manga artist – except for one retelling by a Japanese artist – to honor and celebrate the worldwide success of Ishiyama, who wrote the first two volumes of *Grimms Manga*. This is an attempt to eliminate what Heike Jüngst (2007) identified in her research on German manga as having the status of simulacra or pseudo-translation. Secondly, the preface identifies the cultural crossing of German literature and the German manga artist of retelling the Grimms' fairy tales using a Japanese visual language in manga, a Japanese comic format, to point to the tales' transculturation.

### **Ishiyama's *Little Red Riding Hood***

In his article, "When Little Red Riding Hood married the Wolf," Bernd Dolle-Weinkauff (2012), a leading comic researcher in Germany, argues that Japanese manga contain multicultural influences. Dolle-Weinkauff, presents *Grimms Manga* as an exemplum for this (p. 44–47). He also claims that manga mirrors the influences on Japan that came from Europe and the United States. His claim is validated as contemporary manga indeed developed through western influence including American comics styles. Dolle-Weinkauff and other researchers attribute the global success of manga to characteristics that can only be found in them, notably the reading direction from right-to-left and the decoding of the illustration style. At first glance, it may appear that *Grimms Manga* is simply another manga that is westernized with western names; however, the following close textual analyses reveal that it is not just a product with multicultural influences. Rather, it is a transcultural product which influenced and infused German literature with contemporary topics. It is also a transcultural product that reflects back

on the topics from the beginning of the reception of the Grimms' fairy tales during Japan's Meiji period, an era in Japan during 1860s to 1910s.

The first fairy tale from *Grimms Manga* examined is *Little Red Riding Hood*, henceforth *Red*. Since the original French version of *The Little Red Riding Hood* was adapted by the Grimms into their collection, other various international versions of Red have appeared. Even a cinematic adaptation of Little Red Riding Hood, the American romance and horror movie *Red Riding Hood* (2011), has contributed to the continued popularity of Red as a pop cultural icon. Retellings are not only of global interest, but scholarly research and criticism of Red is abundant. Ann Martin argues that Red and the wolf are conspiring secretly together. This becomes a fact if one considers that in a fairy tale, there must be a villain; countering the represented evil power, there must also be a hero/ine. Martin contends that there is a place, which she claims is a bed, where Red and the wolf coexist. They represent the power and the powerlessness, and when they meet and the powerless Red learns from the wolf how superficial items such as outer appearance, through clothing, can be controlled (via power) to produce desired reactions in the beholder. In sum, Red learns that the outer appearance of a body can be manipulated to create new meaning. The same applies to a text, which can be written over with new meanings. Martin (2006) explains that the foregrounding of children's responses to a fairy tale points to the ability of the individual to use narrative in unscripted ways and interact with the discourse of his or her society. Ishiyama makes use of this and retells the story of Little Red Riding Hood in such a way as to allow readers to arrive at a new meaning. The many adaptations of Red have made it one of the best-known fairy tales worldwide. Red is also first on the list of fairy tales that Ishiyama compiled when she wrote the fairy tales known to her. She chose this fairy tale because the wolf resembles her favorite animal, dogs, as she mentioned in her *Grimms Manga Fanbuch*, and also because the wolf is the villain, and it is her preference to retell fairy tales using their villains. Also, during her research, Ishiyama discovered that in Red, the wolf was originally a kidnapper, meaning he is not only a villain but also a criminal. It thus becomes apparent that Red plays a significant role in the corpus of Ishiyama's manga.

In Ishiyama's *Grimms Manga Fanbuch*, Red and the wolf continue their original adventure in the chapter titled *1000 Blumen (1000 Flowers)*, which is an original fairy tale by Ishiyama. In this fairy tale, the wolf travels into the worlds of other fairy tales. Before beginning his journey, he feels misplaced in the human world of Red, and he travels to the worlds of other fairy tales in search of a place he belongs. The feelings of disconnect occurred when the two worlds of wolf and Red collide. She strips the wolf of his own comfort zone, and he is assigned a role with which he struggles – that of a lover of humans and a protector of the weak. This struggle also applies to cultures as each grapple with and struggles for order. Ishiyama points to this struggle through the world of the wolf and Red. This represents a phenomenon in transculturation in which cultures clash with each other and different phases of the process of transition from one culture to another occur. The consequent creation of new cultural phenomena is – in the case of Red – that wolf and Red stand united in paving their own way in their worlds. Ishiyama thus presents the outcome of transculturation as a process of trial and transitions, and ultimately of retuning to one's place of origin. Having gained experience and knowledge outside of his own safety zone, the wolf, in this case, is strengthened by this journey and becomes better equipped to accept his new role.

### **The Narrative Component in *Red***

In the original Grimms' version of Red, the wolf is presented as the villain, and he is punished for his evil deeds. In fact, there are two wolves in the Grimms' version, and both die for their

deceptive acts. In Ishiyama's version, there are also two wolves. One is the older wolf father, who is instructing his young pup on how to become a real wolf, which is by eating a virgin. This is the opening, which the American cognitive scientist and comic theorist Neil Cohn (2016) identifies as an establisher setting up the situation. In a traditional fairy tale, this is the beginning of the quest the hero must undergo. The young pup, unaware of the meaning of the word "virgin," sets off to discuss this matter with his friends, who are little goats. The villain aspect is already put into question since the wolf as a predator is friends with his prey. This also presents the otherness of the wolf and how he does not fit into the stereotypical profile of a bad wolf. The kids advise him against finding a virgin, since they believe that attacking a human will lead to his death. Ishiyama juxtaposes visual innocence in the baby animals with the worldly awareness of death and adult reasoning. The kids' discouraging of the cub from hunting down a human empowers him to search for an alternative solution, which comes when he encounters Red. What distinguishes Ishiyama's narrative from its Grimms source is that the pup falls in love with Red. His heart literally jumps out of his chest in the visual narration of this experience. Furthermore, when Red meets the pup, she is not scared of him because of his humanized appearance with a little boy's overalls and hat that distract from his ears and tail, which are still evident even as a pup.

As mentioned already, Ishiyama utilizes a particular Japanese manga-specific visual language to communicate and to direct the reader, such as the commonly used device to display extreme emotions, which is the background use of lace or flowers to symbolize and enhance the mood. Red's huge eyes and oversized head display her innocence, and her emotion is emphasized by the non-narrative sign of lace in the background of the panel surrounding her. This is a sign used to display emotion that is unique to *shōjo* manga, a manga targeting female adolescent readership. The oversized head and huge circular eyes are commonly used visual symbols in manga that represent the innocence of a child - which is also presented as a *chibi* (Japanese slang for short) form, which displays cuteness but also purity. Ishiyama uses this manga-specific imagery of innocence to emphasize Red's character without using text because certain human characteristics, such as Red's innocence, are recognizable by physical appearance. According to Eisner (2008) "[t]he art of creating a stereotypical image for the purpose of storytelling requires a familiarity with the audience and a recognition that each society has its own ingrained set of accepted stereotypes" (p. 13). The *chibi* form is an accepted communicative tool in the manga genre, and Ishiyama displays her ability to converse with what is universally valid in the manga community, ergo displaying her ability to employ manga-specific images to retell a fairy tale that is influenced by German literature. Ishiyama makes use of the stereotypical images from *shōjo* manga in her retelling since, according to Eisner (2008), "in graphic storytelling there is little time or space for character development [so the] use of stereotypes ... speeds the reader into the plot and helps the storyteller gain the reader's acceptance for the action of his characters" (p. 14). Like many manga artists, she also avoids using gutters, which are spaces between panels that are commonly found in western comics. According to McCloud (1993), the gutter, "plays host to much of the magic and mystery that are the very heart of comic" (p. 6). It is in the gutter that the two images from the panels are combined into one idea. By eliminating the gutter, Ishiyama has full control of the reader's idea and directs the reader to her version of a closure. McCloud (1993) also states that, "comic panels fracture both time and space, offering a jagged, staccato rhythm of unconnected moments. But closure allows us to connect these moments and mentally construct a continuous, unified reality" (p. 67). By directing the closure, Ishiyama stays in the tradition of manga style to allow the flow of the story to continue without the reader having to connect two or more panels to create a meaning.



Red is presented visually in a very childlike and innocent fashion, and this is intensified by her curiosity since she notices that the wolf is different from other humans. She asks about his ears, which she notices as soon as she faces him. But she is still not scared of him, nor does she distance herself from him; rather, she approaches him to take a closer look at his ears. She answers all of his questions honestly, like a child would, and tells the wolf exactly what her plan is, which is to visit her sick grandmother with her mother's apple pie and some wine to make her feel better. She even tells him where her grandmother lives. The use of soft lines and oversized facial features cites the global canon of manga kitsch. Ishiyama's visual depictions participate in a deliberately child-oriented genre that prizes innocence and purity. According to Martin (2006), that innocence, here presented in an image, asks the readers to recall their childhoods.

This innocence also becomes a tool that circulates *ad infinitum* in popular culture. Ishiyama's Red has the same innocence as the Red in the Grimms' version. Both Reds' key characteristic is their innocence, as well as their ignorance of the danger in the forest. Like the Red in the Grimms' version, Ishiyama's Red also tells the wolf about her journey and the location of her grandmother's house. The characteristics of Red in both versions are the same, but the characteristics of the wolf are very different. Ishiyama's wolf is still a pup and is considered as such by others, although he is perceived by the hunter to be a deceptive wolf, whereas the wolf in the Grimms' version is in fact deceptive and wants to eat both the grandmother and Red. In the Grimms' version, Red kills the wolf by placing rocks into his stomach once she is freed by the hunter; in Ishiyama's version, Red saves the wolf. The hunter points his gun at the young wolf and the wolf reacts by changing from the human form into that of a full-fledged wolf. The hunter perceives this as the wolf revealing his true face, but Red jumps in front of the gun to stop the hunter from shooting the wolf. She diffuses the hostile situation by explaining to the hunter that the wolf hasn't done anything, and that the hunter is scaring the wolf. After she reveals his fear, even to the wolf himself, the wolf's facial expression changes from a hostile expression to a tame expression. Red also explains that a pointed gun would frighten anyone. Red becomes the mediator between the hunter and the wolf. This is crucial, since Red is deciding the fate of the wolf. Such is the case in the Grimms' version, since it is Red who reacts quickly and retrieves the rocks that ultimately kill the (first) wolf.

In Ishiyama's version, Red's kind words move the wolf, and he returns to his human form. Her words also save the wolf from the hunter, and he responds to her kindness with a marriage proposal and a promise that from now on, he will protect her. She replies with a smile and laughter, as well as a proposal to begin their relationship as friends first. This foreshadows the ending, since in the next panel, a girl is sitting in the meadow and two evil-looking men are planning to attack her. Just then, the wolf, now older but still a youth, scares the two evildoers off with a roar in his wolf form. The wolf doesn't attack the humans and only scares them off because they were planning to do evil to Red. Unintentionally, he also scares a little goat and its mother comes to protect it. The mother goat recognizes the young wolf and asks him if he did in fact become a full-fledged wolf, to which he responds that he is not sure, but he now has someone whom he wants to protect. Thus, the little wolf realizes that what makes a "real" wolf is the desire to protect someone he loves.

Ishiyama sheds a different light on the wolf's character, making him the main protagonist, whereas in the Grimms' version the wolf is as a clear antagonist. Ishiyama also involves the readers by allowing them to see the kindness of the wolf, which is a side not even Red is able to see. Going back to the beginning of the story, when the young wolf is told that he needs to eat a virgin to become a full-fledged wolf and he discusses his situation with his seven little

goat friends, one of the goats reveals during that conversation that a wolf had once wanted to eat them. Another goat replies that it was a horrible experience, and another chimes in that it was a good thing that the little wolf was there to help them during the danger. In this scene, Ishiyama presents the wolf as a friend to the little goats. He also questions his own identity, since he asks himself if he would one of these days also eat his friends. His internal question is presented in a thought speech bubble, visible only to the reader. The goats advise the wolf against eating a human, since the result would be that a hunter would kill him. It is also the goats who question the condition for becoming a full-fledged wolf of eating a virgin and encourage the wolf to think of an alternative way, since he is determined to become a full-fledged wolf.

In the next panel, the wolf is sitting high up in a tree and looking down at the village. He questions the injustice of being killed by the humans when wolves or foxes devour sheep and cows, but the humans themselves eat sheep and cows. Another scene in which his kindness is shown comes immediately after the first encounter with Red. Once she tells the little wolf where her grandmother's house is, he takes off to find the house. Once he arrives there, he simply stands outside until the grandmother hears him and invites him to come inside, since she thinks he is Little Red Riding Hood's friend. Before entering the house, he does hide his ears by wearing a bucket, which she finds amusing. After waiting a while for Red's arrival, the grandmother explains that her back is hurt, so she is unable to take care of firewood for the fireplace. The wolf immediately notices that the fire in the fireplace had died out, and without being asked, he starts to chop the wood for the fireplace, carries it inside, and attempts to light a fire. He even has to carry in water, since the fire grows too large and sets the bucket on his head on fire. All of the wolf's actions are drawn in a very small key, in one large panel, and this causes the readers to read his actions quickly, just as the wolf is performing the acts. The grandmother, who takes his hands and notices their roughness from hard labor, notices his devotion as a dedicated worker. She praises his hard work. The endearment for him, a little boy she just met, is shown to the reader because he took it upon himself to help her without being asked. This also shows that the wolf, who thinks it is unjust that humans kill wolves and foxes for the same deeds that they themselves do, would not hesitate to help a helpless person.

The second wolf, the young wolf's father, appears at the beginning of the story and at the end. Unlike the little wolf, who appears only in wolf form when he shows emotion, Ishiyama draws the father only in his wolf form for two reasons. One is to show that the father is a full-fledged wolf, and second to show the evil, true nature of the wolf. The two wolves are set in contrast to one another. In the first scene, the father in his gigantic full wolf-form is sitting on a throne looking down at his son, whom he is lecturing on how to become a full-fledged wolf. The way his figure is composed displays full confidence, as he sits with his legs crossed and leans back in his seat, in his domain. Juxtaposed to this poised ruler is the pup who simply looks tiny and insignificant in his almost-human appearance, in human clothing with his wolf's ears and tail. When the little wolf asks his father what a "Jungfrau" (virgin) is, he replies, "Ach, schnapp dir einfach ein junges Mädchen" (Ishiyama et al., 2007, p. 9). (Oh, just take yourself a young girl) which shows that the almighty wolf father himself does not know what he demands of his son. This opening scene is intimidating, with the enormous wolf looking down from his throne at the little wolf, but the mood changes when the little wolf asks his father for the definition of a "virgin." The little wolf is presented in his super-deformation or chibi form. This form is used to display the cuteness of a character, but also its helplessness and innocence. The father remains in his form, and only his frustrations and anger are shown through the iconic "anger" symbol, drawn as cruciform popping veins above an eye. The father returns at the end of the story in the final panel. He is looking out of his cave with a sigh of relief. His sigh is intensified

by him actually stating, “Puh!” (Ishiyama et al., 2007, p.23), with a cloud shown exiting his mouth. This is the visual sign for sighing relief.

Maria Tatar (2003) states in her book that the tale of Red “suffered more interpretive trials and tribulations than any other fairy tales” (p. 39). Tatar begins her analysis of the Grimms’ fairy tales with Red as her first example. Ishiyama also begins with Red as her first retelling. It is due to the simplicity of the plot of Red that the fairy tale lends itself to analysis, such as in the case of Tatar, but also in reinterpretations. Red has a basic fairy tale structure, which, according to Tatar, is the confrontation between weakness (Red) and strength (wolf) that can be replaced with any other figure. This is presented in Ishiyama’s Red when the roles are reversed. The carrier of weakness in Ishiyama’s retelling is the wolf when confronted by the strength of the hunter, but also by Red, since it is she who saves the wolf from the hunter. Ishiyama’s retelling challenges the stock character of fairy tale figures. The wolf is not the villain; instead, the villain is the hunter who frightens the wolf with his gun, thus assuming the role of the villain from Red’s standpoint and arguably also from that of the reader. The grandmother remains in the role of the weak, and the wolf, when interacting with her, is the strong – but this is only in reference to physical aspect. The wolf accomplishes the physical labor the grandmother is unable to perform due to her back injury. In terms of the lived experience, she is superior due to her ability to recognize the wolf’s key characteristics. Ishiyama reverses the roles of weak and strong in her fairy tale structure and places them in binary oppositions.

Ishiyama deconstructs the common characteristics of the fairy tale figures, which are rooted in their roles by the original Grimms’ fairy tales, and she challenges to reposition those roles. Based on the Grimms’ version of Red, the wolf is a cunning, savage creature whose aim is to devour not only Red, but also the grandmother. Due to the wolf’s evil nature, the fairy tale ends with a happy ending when the wolf receives his punishment. In Ishiyama’s fairy tale, the wolf remains a savage beast since it is his given task to devour a human virgin in order to become a full-fledged wolf. But he is softened by his humanlike appearance: he stands like a human and wears clothing. What remains of his wolf appearance are his ears and tail. The father of the wolf, a full-grown wolf, remains in his savage, beast form, and his size overshadows the little wolf. This displays the hierarchy of the position the father wolf holds regarding his son. The father’s position and his size overwhelms, and he is massive in contrast to his son, thus displaying the authority he holds over the cub. According to Yoshiko Noguchi (2015), it was a common practice during the early phase of translating the Grimms’ fairy tales into Japanese to display the authoritative position of the father, also presented in Ishiyama’s retelling. By returning to the roots of this early phase of the Grimms’ fairy tales in Japan, which Ishiyama does only at the beginning, she sets the stage for the birth of her very own retelling that is rooted in tradition but also questions the archetypal form with modern thinking.

According to Italo Calvino (2012), every tale, regardless of its origin, “tends to absorb something of the place where it is narrated” (p. 18), thus attaining a flavor of its locality. The locality in Ishiyama’s retelling is the return to the original function of the Grimms’ fairy tales. Vital to note is that the purpose of the Grimms’ fairy tales, in the beginning of the nineteenth century in Japan, was to support the Confucian teachings and traditional role of the authoritative father figure, which in Japan referred not only to the father as the head of the family, but also to the members of the monarchy with the emperor as the father of all Japanese citizens. Thus, in returning to the origin of the Grimms’ fairy tales, Ishiyama’s retelling of Red challenges the role of the father and places his role in opposition to the younger generation, represented by the young wolf. By challenging the role of the father, Ishiyama also presents a contemporary issue in her retelling: the role of the father figure. In the Grimms’ fairy tale,

Red's mother sends her off to the woods to deliver the cake and wine to her sick grandmother. In Ishiyama's version, the father sends the wolf out into the woods. Like the mother in the Grimms' fairy tale, the father in Ishiyama's tale only gives him directions for the task but fails to explain the danger – which in this case is the definition of a virgin. In the Grimms' fairy tale, the mother only warns Red not to stray from the path, because she may break her grandmother's wine bottle, but she does not warn her daughter about the danger hiding in the woods. Brigitte Steger et al. (2013) states that, "[t]he home as a narrative structure in moral education textbooks is the scene for introspection and regaining one's innate qualities, while the world outside the home is where the protagonists learn how to become a different sort of person" (p. 108). Ishiyama takes the content topic from the moral educational textbook and represents it in her retelling of Red. The opening scene of her retelling begins with the young wolf at home facing his father. The father prepares his son for departure – a metaphor for learning to live in society – by giving him guidelines on how to become a full-fledged wolf. The young pup leaves his home and enters the outside world, but he is filled with doubt. This results in his search for comfort, which he finds among his friends.

The daunting outside space that the wolf enters is a place where he will be shot because of his true nature – a hunting beast that devours sheep and cows. The challenge of hunting a human virgin in order to become a full-fledged wolf is a task he has to face in order to be accepted into wolf society. In the space outside the home, the wolf undergoes a moral change. He is confronted with his morals that are rooted in his home, and those of the outside world. In the outside world, it is deadly to devour a human; but in his home, it is a requirement to become a member of wolf society. The young pup must enter the outside world in order to face his challenge, thus leaving the comfort zone of home to undergo a transformation. Ishiyama's representations of the human world and the wolf world are mirror-images of past events during the translation of the first Grimms' fairy tale. During that phase, Confucian ideas were at odds with liberal western ideas, but the Grimms' fairy tales were well-suited for adaptation to Confucian ideas as westernization was gaining popularity among Japanese citizens. The father in Ishiyama's Red stands in for Confucian ideology, because Confucian ideology placed the father figure – the Japanese emperor – in the highest position as the supreme ruler. The pup, like the Japanese citizen, is faced with a task given by his superior and challenged to follow a tradition that goes against the social norms of the human world, which represents eastern ideology. This confrontation reflects the debate about moral education during the Meiji period. Expressed in this debate is the ongoing struggle of the need to westernize Japanese society and its citizens with the need to also maintain traditional Confucian morality. A compromise was made and Brigitte Steger and colleagues (2013) state that a "government-sanctioned syllabus was created in order to limit the perceived harm caused by the influence of liberal ideas and educate children on Confucian morality" (p. 91). The struggle of this debate is displayed in Ishiyama's manga when the cub is confronted with the challenge of obeying his superior/father and he turns to his goat friends for advice. The goats are harmless and non-threatening to wolf society. The authority of the father-figure displays the pup's strong focus on reverence, which was a desired outcome of moral education during the Meiji period. The problems of individual liberal thinking and modern individualism were resolved by a focus on the self as an imperial subject and a member of Japanese society. In Ishiyama's retelling, the pup is the self-challenged one to obey the ruling law of the father to become a part of the society. At the end, the pup must decide on his own which path he will follow, which in this story is ultimately decided by the female protagonist.

## Conclusion

Ishiyama returns to the original function of the fairy tales as educational tools during the inception of the Grimms's fairy tales' circulation in early nineteenth-century Japan to challenge contemporary issue of the father figure role. She applies specific visual forms, such as chibi, to keep the reader's interest and to give the Grimms' fairy tales a new birth in the narrative form of manga. Ishiyama stayed close to the original Grimms' fairy tale by including two wolves but focused on the visual language of manga and manga-specific forms in particular. She positioned a universally recognized villain, in the case of Little Red Riding Hood the wolf, as a kind-natured protagonist, thus weighing the morals of seeing hunting as an evil act of devouring humans, but also as a means of survival. By adding a coming-of-age struggle and finding one's own place in society to her retellings, Ishiyama has produced not simply a manga version of the Grimms' fairy tales, but transcultural product that transcends cultural boundaries of literary genres and resonates globally due to its reworked, yet still easily recognizable, topoi and visual icons.

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**Corresponding author:** Kyung Lee Gagum

**Email:** [lee.gagum@msutexas.edu](mailto:lee.gagum@msutexas.edu)





## **Inter-Ethnic Conflicts, Counter Raids and Widowhood in North-Eastern Uganda**

Charles Amone  
Kyambogo University, Uganda

Joseph Okware  
Kyambogo University, Uganda

Zebrone Wangoa  
Kyambogo University, Uganda

### Abstract

North-Eastern Uganda is a semi-arid region where inter-ethnic conflicts, cattle raids and violence are common. The nomadic Karamojong are the inhabitants of this region. A typical Karamojong man is socially defined by the number of his wives and cattle. As cattle, sheep, goats and camels are required for the payment of the bridal price, a Karamojong man spends most of his time raiding them in order to acquire more wives. Often, many warriors die in those raids, leaving behind young widows who, by age-old tradition, have to be inherited by the husband's brother or clan mate. This article discusses the centrality of women, widows and widowhood in the inter-ethnic conflicts, raids and counter- raids that have characterized north-eastern Uganda for centuries. Using a qualitative approach involving key informant's interviews, we analyzed the series of socio-cultural practices and customary laws that many Karamojong women and widows are subjected to during their struggles for basic needs, human rights, and dignity. The interviews were conducted from March to August 2021 in Karenga, Nakapiripirit and Amudat Districts of Karamoja, and in the suburbs of Mbale and Kampala Cities where a number of Karamojong women now live.

*Keywords:* cattle rustling, ethnic conflicts, Karamojong widows, widow inheritance

Although marriage is known to hold emotional costs for both men and women, social scientists now believe that the trauma for the loss of a spouse is greater for women than men (Umberson, Wortman & Kessler, 1992, p. 11). For Karamojong women of North-eastern Uganda, the stake is even higher since the loss of a husband means greater struggles for basic needs, human rights and dignity (UNPF, 2018, p. 6). The agony of Karamojong women begins right at childhood when the girl child is taught to be obedient to her brothers, father and uncles, and to labor for their basic needs of food, water and shelter when they are out raiding the culturally much needed cattle from neighboring communities (Interview with Jane, a Karamojong woman, aged 49 in Namwongo, Kampala).

The Karamoja region of Uganda covers an area of 27,200 sq. km., roughly 10 percent of the country's total land area. It is a semi-arid plateau of 3000 to 4000 feet above sea level (Gourlay, 1970, p. 114). The population of this region in 2018 was 1.2 million (UNPF, 2018, p. 2). There are a number of ethnic groups that live in this region, all belonging to a people collectively called the Karamojong. These are the Matheniko, the Tepeth, the Bokora, the Pian, the Pokot, the Jie and Tobur (sometimes called the Acholi Labwor). Others are the Dodoth, Nyangia, the Napore, and the Ik (Powel, 2010, p. 2). Their unifying language is NgaKaramojong (Ogalo 2017:48) except for the Acholi Labwor who adopted a Lwo language learnt from their Acholi neighbors to the west of Karamoja. Today, the Karamoja region consists of eight districts in northeastern Uganda, Kaabong, Kotido, Abim, Moroto, Napak, Amudat, Nakapiripirit and Karenga. The Karamojong don't believe that they are one united ethnic group or tribe (Ogalo, 2017, p. 48). The name "Karamojong" is a British colonial creation. A Karamojong sees himself or herself foremost as Dodoth, Bokora, Matheniko, Pian, and so forth, other than a Karamojong (Interview with Piyan in Nakapiripirit).

The Karamoja region suffers from chronic poverty and has the worst development indicators in Uganda (UNPF, 2018, p. 1). Protracted inter-and intra-clan conflicts over cattle and access to pasture and resources, cross-border incursions by groups from neighboring Kenya and Southern Sudan and a high level of small arms proliferation and violence have all negatively affected the region's socio-economic development (Powell, 2010, p. 1). Yet, Karamoja region is one of the major tourist attractions of Uganda as it boasts the Kidepo Valley National Game Park and beautiful mountain scenery: Mt. Morungole to the north; Mount Moroto in the east; Mount Kadam to the south while Mount Napak lies west of Karamoja.

Like many pastoralist societies of Africa, the Karamojong are patriarchal and sexist (Musubika, 2017, p. 65). From birth to death, a Karamojong woman is under the chauvinistic control of a male relative. Unequal power relations between men and women begin right at the family level. Hence:

A young, unmarried woman is, by custom, the property of her parents, who are entitled to choose her husband and force her to marry if she refuses. Brides frequently are very young relative to their husbands, who may already have other wives (Hopwood, Portor, & Nangiro, 2018, p. 144).

When their husbands die, they are inherited by a brother or clan mate of the deceased without the consent of the wife (Mkutu, 2008, p. 237). Widow inheritance is deeply entrenched in the culture of the Karamojong. All the women interviewed in Nakapiripirit confirmed the rampancy of widow inheritance in their region.

This research highlights the centrality of women and widows in the culture and daily life of the Karamojong. It has been stated that Karamojong women experience a “two-fold” discrimination, at the national level and within their own society (Powell, 2010, p. 23). Our research focused on the discrimination and the unprivileged position of women and widows within Karamojong society. We conducted extended interviews with Karamojong women and leaders in Karamoja, but also in the cities of Mbale and Kampala where many of them now live, having fled from socio-cultural and political injustices back home (Stites, 2020, p. 32).

According to oral tradition, the name “Karamojong” is derived from two Ateker words; “aikar” meaning “to tire” and “imojong” denoting “old men”. Hence, Karamojong means “the tired old men who remained behind” (Okoboi, 2016, p. 64). The Karamojong lived together with the Iteso and other Nilo-Hamitic peoples as one group of pastoralists in southern Ethiopia, then moved to North-Eastern Uganda (Okoboi, 2016, p. 74). Other groups the Karamojong lived with, in the Horn of Africa are the Lango and Kumam of Uganda. The Teso was the last group to separate from the Karamojong.

When the migrating Nilo-Hamitic group reached what is now Karamoja, the young and agile people separated from the group of old people that couldn’t walk fast enough. The old men and women remained behind while the young men migrated with the main cattle stock of the migrants. This young group never went back to what was perceived as old and tired community. Instead, they founded what is now the Teso ethnic community of Uganda. Their attempt to go back and get their wives became futile. Meanwhile the elderly people who remained behind attempted in vain to secure their cattle from the young people. Unable to move farther and convinced that the land they found was suitable for cattle rearing, the elderly migrants settled and formed the Karamojong society (Interview with Mr. Olam in Namwongo, Kampala). To date, the Karamojong have great respect for elders who are thought to interact with God. Disobeying elders spells misfortune and doom for the young and women. “Elders bring prosperity and if you obey elders, you will have fortune” (Dyson-Hudson, 1963, p. 382). For women, the mentioned fortune includes chances of producing many children.

Respect for elders is on the wane today, partly due to the growth of gun culture in Karamoja. When in 1979 the Ugandan government of Idi Amin fell, defeated soldiers fled from Moroto barracks leaving behind a large cache of weapons. The Karamojong broke into the Moroto armory and armed. Since then, the Karamojong have been well armed, violent and confident of themselves. In the next section, we will illustrate how this history has impacted gender roles in Karamoja.

### **Gender roles in Karamoja**

Gender roles can be described as the specific activities and codes of conduct deemed appropriate for men and women in a particular culture. They are malleable and, therefore, change as the needs of society change (Tino, 2017, p. 7). Traditionally, Karamojong men’s roles are hunting, rustling and grazing animals while women are in charge of building huts, farming, caring for children and doing all house chores (Musubika, 2017, p. 70; Ssenkaaba, 2015, p. 20).

Farming is a daunting task in Karamoja. There is only one rainy season and the Karamoja region experiences both drought and flooding (Sundal, 2010, p. 74). In years of rainfall which recently has been once every three years, Karamojong women engage in sorghum production (Gray, Sundal, Wiebusch, et al., 2003, p. 5; Hopwood, Portor, & Nangiro, 2018, p. 141). They

practice slash-and-burn agriculture (Mamdani, 1982, p. 67). The responsibility of feeding men, children and all members of the household rests with the Karamojong woman. Cattle, which the man raises and grazes, only provide milk and occasionally blood, which by all standards are inadequate for entire family to depend on.

Even when a Karamojong family migrates to an urban setting, the responsibility of feeding members of the household is still borne by the wife. This is one reason there are female Karamojong beggars on the streets of Kampala, Mbale, Jinja and other cities of Uganda. None of the Karamojong beggars are male. One Karamojong beggar had this to say:

It is my husband who encourages me to join fellow women to beg. He says to me that if I do not go begging, we will go hungry...otherwise I don't like it. There are so many problems on the street (Musubika, 2017, p. 70).

Karamojong men living in urban centers are known for drinking and working as security guards. Their income however is not for feeding the family. It's for drinking, betting, buying clothes, and so on, while the wife begs and takes care of the family diet (Interview with Mary in Namwongo, Kampala).

Karamoja has the highest level of adult illiteracy in Uganda (Muhereza, 2010, p. 61). It follows, therefore, that the Karamojong women who migrate to urban centers mostly cannot access adequate employment. They can only earn by begging while the men engage in low-paying jobs like security guards. This is the reason it has become very difficult to remove Karamojong beggars off Kampala streets. They survive on begging whenever out of Karamoja and it is done exclusively by women because Karamojong culture stipulates that feeding members of the household is the responsibility of the wife.

It has, indeed, been an uphill task to remove Karamojong women from Kampala City except during the Common Wealth Heads of Governments' Meeting (CHOGM) in 2007 when the authorities orchestrated a fear mongering strategy among them by spreading the rumor that "somebody called 'the Queen' will chop off the head of any beggar on the street of Kampala" (Sundal, 2010, p. 79). This meeting was held at a time when the influx of Karamojong had just started following the disarmament process there. When this rumor spread, Karamojong beggars hastily left the streets of Kampala and only returned when the "Queen" left Uganda.

Traditionally, Karamojong value their women mainly for the natural role they play in childbirth. Children of both sexes are important. Daughters are needed because they attract considerable wealth (cows) as a bride-price upon marriage. In the same way, boys are highly valued because as soon as they turn eight, they are deemed dependable cattle herdsman and cattle raiders upon becoming 14. Hence, among the Karamojong, childbirth is eagerly welcomed because children represent the future. Children are an insurance against loss of cattle. They earn cattle through bride prices or raids depending on their sex. But children also form a network of younger people to care for the elders (Graham & Davis-Floyd, 2021, p. 4). Hence, an important wife among the Karamojong is one who has produced children, and the more children, the higher her value in society (Interview with Dorah, not real name, in Mbale City, Eastern Uganda).

Traditionally, the Karamojong live in gated homesteads called *Manyatta*. A *manyatta* houses many families and is built for the security of its members. The task of building the *manyatta* and thatching each of the houses in it are borne by women. Karamojong men don't know how to build a hut because culturally it's not their responsibility. Nobody can alter or question the

traditional household roles and responsibilities because they were determined by the elders a long time ago (Tino, 2017, p. 41).

While the Karamojong woman is caught in a web of responsibilities as mentioned above, the man has one role and that is to secure cattle. In modern times, it means acquiring modern rifles. Men have power over women because they are the owners of weapons (Mkutu, 2008, p. 238). In fact, a Karamojong man without a gun is considered not to be a man at all (Knighton, 2006, p. 281). This explains why as soon as the government of Uganda undertook the disarmament of Karamojong warriors, many of them had to migrate to the urban centers including Kampala City. Small arms trafficking has been able, however, to supply Karamojong warriors with weapons. There is much gun trafficking in Karamoja from South Sudan, Ethiopia and from Somalia mainly via the Turkana region (Muhereza, 2010, p. 62).

Karamojong informal education replicates their traditional gender roles, with boys taught how to be effective raiders and herders while girls learn how to look after the home and family (Powell, 2010, p. 23). This indigenous education of the Karamojong takes the form of natural life experiences with the learners being actively involved in what they learn. Young boys of fourteen to eighteen years take part in grazing and raiding of animals to learn from parents and elder brothers while young girls are always involved in thatching huts, gardening, cooking food and caring for infants and the elderly. Karamojong informal education has thereby been able to perpetuate traditional gender roles including cattle rustling. Although cattle rustling is the most important occupation of a Karamojong man, it is done to secure women, as analyzed in the next section.

### **Women and Cattle Rustling**

To a Karamojong family, cattle represent wealth, both economically and symbolically (Ssenkaaba, 2015, p. 1). Cattle keeping and cattle raiding are, therefore, central to Karamojong culture:

Cattle's importance as a central feature of the Karamojong culture influences every facet of life...The number of animals owned represents a family's wealth and every effort is made to increase the size of the herd, by whatever means. This pursuit of wealth results in frequent cattle raiding among tribal groups that undermine social stability in the region (Graham & Davis-Floyd, 2021, p. 4).

Since 1979 when the Karamojong looted Moroto arsenal (Knighton, 2006, p. 271), armed cattle raiding has exacted a mounting toll on the human population in terms of mortality and morbidity. This, in turn, greatly impaired the capacity of the Karamojong to ensure the health and survival of their children (Gray, Sundal, Wiebusch, et al., 2003, p. 3).

Karamojong men stay away from their wives for as long as half a year raiding or grazing cattle far away from home (Gourlay, 1970, p. 114, Graham & Davis-Floyd, 2021, p. 4). Raids happen within Karamoja as well as outside the region, to neighboring non-Karamojong communities like the Acholi, Lango, Kuman, Teso and Sabiny and the border regions in Western Kenya and Southern South Sudan (Knighton, 2006, p. 272). So involved are the Karamojong and so prevalent is the practice that young men who don't take part in cattle rustling are called *aburu* meaning "women" and shunned by potential brides (Muhereza, 2010, p. 69).

Although there are many motivating factors for raids and counter-raids in Karamoja, it is women that are generally seen as the instigators of such violent behavior. Supposedly, they apply pressure on men to prove their manliness by raiding. The inability of most men to meet this expectation is seen as a source of “psycho-social problems” which can manifest themselves in domestic violence and substance abuse (Powell, 2010, p. 23). Karamojong women compose songs to praise their husbands after a successful raid. Women also compose songs to despise their husbands seen to contemptibly lack courage for cattle raids. Thus:

If a husband does not go for raids while his age-mates go and bring raided animals frequently, the woman nags the man continuously to provoke him to go for a raid. The woman may sing songs, indirectly telling the man he was a coward like a woman (Mkutu, 2008, p. 242).

Cattle raids and counter raids led to the Karamojong being given the title of a “warrior race”. They are, as such, seen as a security threat to the whole country. Braveness and masculinity in this region are proven by the number of successful raids one has participated in and how fierce the battles were. It’s for this reason that Karamojong women prefer men who raid (Knighton 2006:280). Be that as it may, overall this perceived warrior tradition of the Karamojong is thought to have contributed to neglect and underdevelopment in their region (Ssenkaaba, 2015, p. 1).

From another view, cattle raids forge unity among the *Karachuna* (Young male warriors) who depend on each other for the planning and execution of each raid whether outside Karamoja or within (Lorelle, 2010, p. 483). In case of casualties, the property of the fallen warrior such as his gun, stool and stolen cattle is returned to his father or brother. The widow is simply told that “We got scattered on our way back and your husband took a longer route. He will return later”. The widow will only know that her husband is dead when preparation for widow inheritance begins (Interview with a Yolanda, Karamojong widow in Kabong). But even when she learns that her husband is dead, she will not leave the marital home because the bride price ties her to the family and clan of her late husband as seen in the proceeding section.

### **Bride Price in Karamoja**

Generally, the bride price system is a common practice in much of rural Africa. Over 70 percent of the Karamojong live in rural areas (UIA, 2016, p. 1). According to Karamojong custom, women are “married with cows”, whereby the husband’s family gives a large number of cattle to the girl’s family as a bride price. Since settling in Uganda, bride price has been the greatest driving force behind large-scale raiding by the Karamojong. Following such a payment, a traditionally married woman is the property of her husband, family and clan. A bride price and other customary payments to secure a wife are well documented in Karamoja’s oral tradition (Group interview with Karamojong widows in Nakapiripirit).

Additionally, polygamy is common among the Karamojong (Lorelle, 2010, p. 488). First, it’s a show of masculinity as one can prove how manly he is, relative to others, by the number of wives he has. But having many wives is also a show of wealth. Today, the Bride price in Karamoja consists of 100 to 150 heads of cattle (Lorelle, 2010, p. 488) and only a rich man can afford this. Whereas in many parts of Uganda, highly educated girls are feared because of their high bride price, it’s the reverse in Karamoja. Here, educated girls fetch a much lower bride price than uneducated girls, which has the effect of their enrolment dropping off during primary school (Powell, 2010, p. 23). The fact that 60 percent of Karamojong women are unable to read

and write (UNPF, 2018) is attributable to this factor. Among the Karamojong, educated girls are thought to more easily disobey their husbands and fathers-in-law and hence, few men want to marry them. Parents fear sending their children to school because they will earn a smaller bride price.

Consequently, eighty-six percent of children in Karamoja have never been to school and are either not working or are in precarious employment compared to only five percent in Kampala (UBOS, 2017). There exist cases of violence against girls who attend school. They are seen as defiant of their parents, elders and the overall Karamojong tradition. Many school-going girls are therefore victims of courtship rape and forced marriage. Rape is a capital offence in Uganda but in Karamoja, courtship rape is tolerated (interview with Piyan in Nakapiripirit). When a man identifies a girl, he approaches her politely and proposes love. If the girl agrees, the relationship typically leads to marriage but in case of rejection, many men will attempt rape, even organizing a group of boys to help them overpower the girl and rape her. Once raped, the young girl has no choice but to marry the rapist. Matters are further complicated by the preference of men to only marry virgin girls. A known rape victim will not be taken as a wife by another Karamojong man. Yet, an unmarried woman in Karamoja is seen as a misfit in society. Even some children will abuse unmarried women and call them names (Mkutu, 2008, p. 243).

There is no doubt, though, that the local leaders such as the Local Council officials, elders, the army and even police are aware of the harmful practice of courtship rape but no attempt has been made to punish the perpetrators. The silence of local leaders over this socially sanctioned practice equals complicity. Instead of condemning such men, they are seen and praised as strong physically, because they can subdue women easily and economically due to their ability to pay the bride price after first raping a young woman. Overall, there is little concern about the rights of a Karamojong girl of when and how to marry and have sex.

Furthermore, Powell (2010, p. 23) points out the prevalence of widow inheritance among the Karamojong. If a married man dies, relatives will force his brother, even against his will, to 'inherit' the widow (Mkutu, 2008, p. 248). "The person who inherits takes away your entire husband's property. If you cry they beat you, torture you, you have to surrender everything or die, there is no negotiation", said a woman to Mkutu (2008, p. 248). Widows cannot turn down this practice because culture dictates that once married, women are subject not just to their husband's authority but also to that of his family (Hopwood, Portor, & Nangiro, 2018, p. 144). Generally, marriage in Karamoja is seen in terms of clans rather than individuals, so children and wives belong to the clan (Mkutu, 2008).

There also exists the phenomenon of "half-marriage" among the Karamoja. This happens when a man starts the process of marriage but does not complete it. He may be allowed to live with the woman but unless he pays the agreed bride price, the wife and her children will be property of the woman's clan. Women often tell the man to whom they are half married "why are you still sitting here? Go for raids and marry me" (Mkutu, 2008, p. 242). During marriage ceremonies, the bride's father anoints the groom's face and chest with a sacred clay called *emunyem*, blesses his daughter and tells the couple "go and multiply" (Knighton, 2006, p. 140). This identifies child birth, and not love, as the most important reason for marriage. If the bride does not produce children, the man will send her back to the parents and demand half of the bridal price back.



Although the government of Uganda has outlawed female circumcision (clitoridectomy), among the Karamojong, another common practice, it has proven very hard to eradicate because of the issue of the bride price and the love for cattle. Among other serious physical and psychological health implications, clitoridectomy is believed to reduce libido and thereby also any possible promiscuity. For the man, the only thing that counts is that he is aware of staying far away from his wife either due to raiding or grazing cattle. “No one can give you their cows if your daughter is not circumcised” (Muhereza, 2010, p. 59). Symbolically and literally, female genital mutilation and bride price portray Karamojong women as subordinate individuals existing on the margins of an already marginal system (Powell, 2010, p. 23).

To add even more complexity to the mix, of recent there have been media reports about child trafficking of especially Karamojong girls (Sundal, 2010, p. 72). Continuing disarmament drives of Karamojong warriors by the Government of Uganda has made it difficult for the Karamojong to acquire animals through raids. This means that girls can no longer fetch as much wealth as they used to through marriage, but parents still see their daughters as sources of revenue. To this effect, many parents send their girls to beg, or work as maids to send money home regularly. Often though, this practice might lead to their human rights being violated, but it also exposes girls to the risk of sexual abuse, enslavement by rich men and prostitution (UNPF, 2018). The precariousness of Karamojong girls’ lives therefore continues, and this includes also women’s roles as widows as seen in the next section.

### **Widowhood in Karamoja**

While cattle raiding with automatic rifles may have augmented the Karamojong’s collective wealth and ensured their cultural survival as pastoralists, it has, at the same time, given rise to thousands of widows and orphans in the region (Gray, Sundal, & Wiebusch, et al., 2003, p. 3). Karamoja has the highest total fertility rate in Uganda (UNPF 2018:2). Women within the reproductive age of 15 to 49 years give birth to an average of 8 children per woman (UNPF, 2018, p. 3). It is therefore ironic that the Karamojong have the lowest male to female ratio in Uganda (Knighton, 2006, p. 281). The reason is that Karamojong people lose disproportionately more men than other Ugandan communities and cattle raiding is the number one cause of male mortality in this region. Since women don’t take part in cattle raids, Karamoja has the highest number of widows of any region in Uganda.

The plight of inherited Karamojong widows was addressed by many of our interlocutors in Karamoja, Mbale and Kampala cities. No one expects a man who was forced by his father or clan mates to inherit a widow to cater adequately for her needs. Inheritance is not out of love, but a cultural dictate meant to prevent men from other clans or tribes from ‘taking over’ the widow. Sometimes co-wives insult the inherited widows telling them, “You killed your husband, now you have come to kill mine” (Mkutu, 2008, p. 248). There exists belief that a woman who has lost many husbands has a “hot chest” so whoever takes her may also die. In some cases, the married wives of a man may gang up against an inherited woman and beat her when the husband is out grazing cattle or raiding (Interview with a Karamojong widow in Namwongo, Kampala).

Matters are not any better for those widows who have not been inherited. Most of them live in poverty since wealth in Karamoja is acquired and owned by men. Karamoja is the least socially and economically developed region of Uganda with 61% of its 1.2 million living in poverty (UNPF, 2018). Widows don’t own cattle, so they miss out on everything from milk to finances accrued from cattle. As has been observed:

Increasingly unequal access to the herds within the Karamojong population severely constrained the ability of the most vulnerable segment of the population—women and young children—to buffer themselves from abrupt fluctuations in environmental quality (Gray, Sundal, & Wiebusch, et al., 2003, p. 3).

Cattle are a source of pride for the Karamojong, so without any cattle to their name, widows are the most financially depressed individuals in the culture.

There are many un-inherited Karamojong widows. Normally, inheritance takes place within age-sets. The person inheriting does not only have to be a close relative of the deceased husband or clan mate, but he also has to belong to the age-set of the late husband. So strong is the age-set system in Karamoja that adjacent sets are considered related as father to son (Dyson-Hudson, 1963, p. 58). Courtship, even courtship rape planning and execution, is done within age-sets. Inter-age-set inheritance is therefore discouraged. Hence some widows remain un-inherited due to lack of matching age-set members of the late husband's age-set. In one case, a widow had this to say:

Last year my husband had gone for a raid in Acholi and he was killed there. The brother then inherited me. Later, the Jie went to raid the Turkana from Morulem grazing areas. There were two casualties in the raid, my husband being one of them. His gun was not recovered. They were only two brothers in the family and only my mother in law is left. I am not ready to be inherited by another man again. I might get someone who will take me for granted (Mkutu, 2008, p. 237).

A typical diet of the Karamojong is sorghum porridge, milk and blood. Animal blood in milk is the preserve of men (Mamdani, 1962, p. 72). Denied milk and finances from cattle, the widow in Karamoja has to depend entirely on sorghum as her food. She cannot afford meat because hunting is the domain of men. In Karamoja, only old and infirm cattle are slaughtered for food (Graham & Davis-Floyd, 2021, p. 3). So, the meat supply of Karamoja is mainly from hunting which is done by men.

When a woman is not inherited, she not only lacks food supplies including milk, meat and income, but she also runs the risk of frequent sexual and physical abuse by men (Stites, 2020, p. 39). The risks of murder and rape by other warrior groups are also high among Karamojong widows. The first reason for this is that women in this region are forced to rely on firewood collection as a means of survival for themselves and their families (Hopwood, Portor, & Nangiro, 2018, p. 143). Firewood is the major source of fuel for cooking and warming the huts. The need for firewood takes women far into the bush where they may meet other warriors who rape, beat or murder the vulnerable women. But rape may also take place at home since the widows don't own guns and lack protection which is normally provided by men.

Gender-based violence is also common in Karamoja and widows suffer at the hands of their male family members including their sons and fathers-in-law. The most common factor for gender-based violence is the cultural practice of women being required to provide food for the family including old fathers and mothers-in-law (UNPF, 2018, p. 4). Men publicly humiliate and even divorce wives that fail to provide food to their parents. Here one particular case:

I had a problem with my wife because she was not serving my parents with food yet they are the ones that got for me the cattle for marrying her. I decided to call a meeting

with the elders of our clan and they decided that I should divorce her (Lorelle, 2010, p. 495).

There exist numerous other cases where husbands and sons are reported to have beaten women on account of failing in their responsibilities of providing food and water yet the harsh climatic conditions in Karamoja make it very hard to acquire vegetables, firewood and water. Widows who don't provide for their in-laws are beaten or chased away from the *manyatta*. To make matters worse, the *ameto* or traditional court where disputes are settled are also male-dominated so women have limited chances of a fair hearing.

Many Karamojong women who are widowed, abandoned and mistreated find their way to urban centers where many then live in squalid conditions. Thousands of Karamojong women and children moved to Uganda's cities after the initial disarmament process undertaken by the Government of Uganda (Sundal, 2010, p. 72). Towns in Karamoja like Kotido, Abim and Moroto have witnessed unprecedented growth in recent years due to the influx of women (Stites, 2020, p. 32).

### Conclusion

The Karamojong society is male dominated and women, especially widows, bear the lifelong brunt of male chauvinism until today. The *Akiriket* or sacred assembly that decides everything for everybody in Karamoja is for male elders of the respective clan only. The *karachuna*-young warriors on whom the Karamojong society depend for protection and wealth (by raiding) is exclusively for male youths. Likewise, the judges at the *ameto*-the court process of bringing wrongdoers for punishment are all males. Women have no forum and no voice in Karamoja. They are heard through their husbands meaning that widows are never heard at all.

The power of the Karamojong man is derived from the bride price of more than one hundred heads of cattle that he pays to acquire a wife. But men also own guns and when they lack AK 47 assault rifles, they locally manufacture the *amatida* Karamojong guns which are used for raids, and rapes. Men spend months away from home raiding and grazing cattle while women remain at the *manyatta*-the traditional semi-permanent habitat of the Karamojong, consisting of huts and granaries. Forced by harsh ecological conditions and cultural norms to travel far away from their *manyatta* in search of water, firewood and vegetables, Karamojong women and widows continue to run the risk of being exposed to warriors from rival clans and other ethnic groups that may rape, kill or maim them.

In order to avert the perilous conditions of women, children and widows discussed in this article, the Government of Uganda, development partners and Karamojong leaders should undertake deliberate steps to end transhumant culture of the people and their dependency on livestock. New forms of livelihood should be introduced including crop farming and the service industry. This also means changing the land tenure system to introduce paddocking and private land ownership to replace the current communal system that encourages nomadism.

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**Corresponding author:** Charles Amone

**Email:** [camone@kyu.ac.ug](mailto:camone@kyu.ac.ug)



## **If There Were a Single Bahian (Brazilian) Dance Culture...**

Flaviana Xavier Antunes Sampaio  
Bahia Southwest State University, Brazil

### Abstract

How might culture be embedded in artworks? As a Brazilian artist performing abroad, I often receive feedback suggesting that my solos are deeply related to my “roots”. Such experience led me to three reflections: 1. It is tempting to reduce a dance experience by seeing only; 2. It is ambitious to pinpoint someone’s culture through a dance; 3. Stereotypes prevent the exchange and flourishing of innovative ideas. In this paper, I will refer to my performance *Sombreiro* (2018) to explore how shadows can be used to connect people to culture. By sharing dance, psychology, history, and anthropology references, I will discuss how shadow aspects of Bahia served as choreographic strategies to suggest a sense of unknowing and otherness in the audience.

*Keywords:* Brazil, Bahia, culture, dance, shadow



Brazil is a nation of 27 states with different cultural backgrounds and practices. Five regions compose the country which serves as a parameter to draw some similarities and differences between the states. Even with globalization, some foreigners find it difficult to understand Brazil's diversity and multiculturalism. This paper discusses how some characteristics of Bahia, a north-eastern state, can be culturally integrated into a dance piece. Rather than suggesting an immutable way of doing so, the effort is to draw a discussion on the strategies developed by a Bahian dancer to signify its culture artistically.

The northeast of Brazil is formed out of nine states: Bahia, Pernambuco, Sergipe, Maranhão, Rio Grande do Norte, Alagoas, Paraíba, Recife e Piauí. All of them face the Atlantic Sea and have beautiful beaches, which contributes to the population's way of living and attracts national and international tourists. However, the Brazilian northeastern states also suffer from dry seasons in the countryside.

Bahia is a state that attracts people for its natural beauty, culture, and history. It was at Cabralia, Bahia, where in 1500 the Portuguese arrived in Brazil. There they encountered native people and soon started to exploit the goods of the region. They brought also brought in African slaves from Angola, Benin, and Mozambique. Daniel Shafto states that:

Salvador was the center of the slave trade during Brazil's slavery era, which lasted from the mid-16th to the end of the 19th century. As a result, the city's culture reflects African traditions much more than other Brazilian cities (Shafto, 2009, p. 56).

When in 1888 slavery was abolished, the slaves were set free without any opportunity to ascend in society. This unfairness has been present in Bahian society ever since, especially visible in Salvador, its capital, where there is a concentration of white wealth, whereas the majority of dark-skinned people, have little. This despite the fact that Salvador is the city with the highest concentration of black inhabitants outside Africa. The influence of Africa in Bahia is ever present in the colourful way people dress, their cuisine, music, dance and more.

In the following, a focus on dance is apt because of the scope of the article and the background of its author. Bahian Afro Dance is popular in dance centres in Salvador. It mixes elements of Orishas, goodness and entities full of symbolism and movement emphasis. This paper has not been written by a Bahian Afro Dance specialist, but by a Bahian dancer and researcher who has extreme respect for that dance and believe in the power and value of cultural exchange and dissemination. It is split into three sections. In 'Culture and dance' I explore choreographic ideas in the analysis of *Ondine* (1843) by Jules Perrot. In particular, I draw connections to my production *Sombreiro* (2018) which refers to cultural shadows. This solo is approached in "a dance, many shadows". Lastly, in "the unsettled", I present the findings of a study and discuss possible ramifications following from them.

### **Culture and Dance**

The frictions of a society can differ depending on the transient characteristics of the culture shared. To support this idea, a text by anthropologist Christoph Brumann is helpful. As he notes:

Cultures can have no "natural" boundaries but only those that people (anthropologists as well as others) give them, and delimiting a certain set of elements as a culture can

therefore be only more or less persuasive, never ultimately “true” (Brumann, 2005, p. 55).

The concept of culture in the plural form, as “cultures”, works to highlight its characteristic of flow and movement. A consideration of West is also valuable for the analysis of the possible cultural dimensions of dance performances. As she notes:

Parts of what Jung calls the cultural shadow - qualities a culture suppresses, denies, or ignores - are clear to those outside the culture (West, 2007, p. 35).

Following West, shadows in dance performances can be analysed as a process of representing qualities suppressed within a culture. In the analysis of *Ondine* (1843) by Jules Perrot,<sup>1</sup> the use of shadow serves as a form of fascination and distraction. In considering culture to be mobile, I refer to its aspect of moving forward that, at times, does not invite people to reflect on themselves as special individuals, but rather as collective actors in a performance.

Before delving into the use of shadows in *Ondine* (1843) by Jules Perrot, it is relevant to give an overview of this piece. *Ondine* is part of an oeuvre of ballets choreographed by Perrot which historically belongs to the romantic era from 1830-1840s. Dance historian Susan Au argues that Perrot took inspiration from a fantasy book to create *Ondine*. In her words:

Since early times man has populated the waters with imaginary half- human creatures. The ancient Greeks had their naiads and nereids, the Hindus their apsaras, and the Germans their nixies. Although belief in these fantastic folk waned with the centuries, people in the early nineteenth century still found the notion of water sprites charming and appealing, and thus a popular literary heroine, *Undine*, was born. Her tragic story, told by the German author Baron Friedrich Heinrich Karl de la Motte Fouqué in the novel *Undine*, in turn inspired one of the most famous Romantic ballets, Jules Perrot’s *Ondine, ou la Naiade*, first produced in London in 1843 (Au, 1978, p. 159 – original emphasis).

Amongst many similarities with the book, the ballet *Ondine* also takes place outdoors, in nature, telling stories of villagers. Two skilled ballet dancers play the parts of the protagonists: Fanny Cerrito<sup>2</sup>, as Ondine, and Perrot, the director himself, as Matteo, Ondine’s lover. Au summarises the development of the piece:

The ballet consists of six scenes that are confined to two locales: a Sicilian fishing village and the naiads’ undersea realm. The action is continuous and takes place within two days. The ballet opens with the villagers’ preparations for the Festival of the Madonna. After several dances they depart, leaving Matteo alone on the shore. As he casts his nets into the water, a large shell rises bearing the alluring form of Ondine. She entices him to a precipice and beckons him to leap after her into the water, but he is saved by the timely arrival of friends (Au, 1978, p. 161).

<sup>1</sup> Jules Perrot (1810-1892) was a French ballet dancer and choreographer. His pieces include *Die neapolitanischen fischer* (1838), *Alma* (1842), *Ondine* (1843), *La Esmeralda* (1844), *Eoline* (1845), *Kaya* (1845), *Catarina* (1846), *Lallah Rookh* (1846), and *Faust* (1848). See: Garafola, L. (1997) *Rethinking the Sylph: New Perspectives on the Romantic Ballet Studies in Dance History*. Middletown: Wesleyan University Press.

<sup>2</sup> Fanny Cerrito (1817-1909) was an Italian ballet dancer and choreographer. She became popular in England in ballets she performed with Perrot. See: Lee, C. (2002) *Ballet in Western Culture: A History of its Origins and Evolution*. New York: Routledge.

Out of the six scenes mentioned by Au, one is remarkable in *Ondine* because of the use of shadows. As is common in other romantic ballets such as *La Sylphide*<sup>3</sup> and *Esmeralda*<sup>4</sup>, a triangle of lovers is evidenced here. Matteo loved Ondine, but he was engaged to Giannina, another villager. In an attempt to attract Matteo, Ondine takes shape of Giannina with a shadow:

Ondine then assumes Giannina's form and leaps ashore to dance the famous Pas de l'Ombre, or Shadow Dance, in which she revels in the novel sensation of having substance and a shadow (Au, 1978, p. 164).

### Figure 1

*Ondine* (1843) by Jules Perrot – Fanny Cerrito in the Pas de l'Ombre (Au, 1978, 163- Photo by Ivor Guest)



The image above (Fig. 1) shows the Pas de l'Ombre scene in which Ondine dances with her own shadows on the floor. Ondine was fascinated with her double figure, and was curious about her newfound, shadow-producing materiality. A similar sense of curiosity was sought in the process of developing *Sombreiro* which is described in the further session of this article.

Lynn Garafola, a dance historian, provides an alternative view to consider the use of shadows in *Ondine*. Garafola outlines that Perrot took inspiration from the visual arts for the creation of *Ondine*. As she argues, Perrot's production aligned with other choreographers of his time:

<sup>3</sup> *La Sylphide* was a ballet created in Paris in 1832 by Filippo Taglioni. Garafola. It is considered the main representation of the dance romantic era. Garafola lists *La Sylphide*'s characteristics: "Its themes of the supernatural, exotic folklore, and the quest for the ideal were skillfully realized in the union of scenic effects, diaphanous costumes, shadowy gas lighting, and above all, the expressive use of dance technique, in particular the pointework and lightness of the female dancer." See: Garafola, L. (1997) *Rethinking the Sylph: New Perspectives on the Romantic Ballet Studies in Dance History*. Middletown: Wesleyan University Press.

<sup>4</sup> *La Esmeralda* was a ballet created in London in 1844 by Jules Perrot. See: Garafola, L. (1997) *Rethinking the Sylph: New Perspectives on the Romantic Ballet Studies in Dance History*. Middletown: Wesleyan University Press.

Some choreographers went so far as to imitate specific paintings, in the manner of tableaux vivants, such as Perrot's representation of Léopold Robert's celebrated "La Fête de la Madonne" in his ballet *Ondine* (Garafola, 1997, p. 23).

The connection between a scene of *Ondine* and painting is interesting for making a link with the use of shadow in this ballet. Art-history literature relates the studies on shadows in the visual arts to the origins of painting itself. Already Pliny the Elder suggests that the first practices of painting used shadow as both inspiration and representation. As Romanian art historian Victor Stoichita cites Pliny:

[The origin of the art of painting] began with tracing an outline around a man's shadow and consequently that pictures were originally done in this way (Pliny XXXV, in Stoichita, 1997, p. 11).

Reflecting on Pliny's considerations, I read the Pas de l'Ombre scene in *Ondine* as representing Perrot's interest in pictorial design. Taking into consideration that *Ondine* is a piece related to romantic ballets, which are known by their characteristic theme of divertissements, the use of shadows amongst other fully lit scenes was useful to create contrast.

As an emblematic ballet, especially because of the use of the shadows, *Ondine* inspired cartoonists to produce graphic pieces from it. The editors of *The Punch*<sup>5</sup>, a British magazine, took the Pas de l'Ombre scene as a motivation to criticize an influential politician.

## Figure 2

*Daniel O'Connell in Punch, v. (1843), 69. Image from the book: Williams and Williams (2005, p. 61)*



<sup>5</sup> *Punch* Magazine was a British caricature magazine founded by journalists Henry Mayhew, Mark Lemon, and Stirling Coynem engraver Ebenezer Landells and printer Joseph Last in 1841. It had a liberal bent and criticised royal habits. The publication of *Punch* Magazine ran for 141 years. Petersen points out that, "The primary title, *Punch*, was based on the name of the offbeat lead character in the Punch and Judy puppet theater that entertained middle-class audiences along seaside resorts" (p. 79 – original emphasis). See: Petersen, R. S. (2011) *Comics, Manga, and Graphic Novels: A History of Graphic Narratives*. Santa Barbara: Praeger.

The image above (Fig. 2) depicts Daniel O’Connell,<sup>6</sup> a determined Irish politician who established the Repeal Association to abolish the union with Britain in 1839. The cartoon in *Punch* illustrates a bouncing male figure dressed as a female. In the background, on the right, a blurring figure resembles the face of a bold male. I interpret the satirical drawing as revealing O’Connell’s feeling as a tangled politician who suffers due to separatist thoughts – the shadows on the tree’s roots also facilitated my reading.

My interpretation of the drawing found support in a reading by Lawrence J. McCaffrey, a political science specialist. McCaffrey explains that O’Connell invested in the Repeal for believing that Ireland was being treated as inferior in the Union. McCaffrey affirms that in time the Westminster Review contacted O’Connell to say that his ideas were not good. As he mentions,

the *Westminster Review* told O’Connell that he was wrong in his claim that the English people hated the Irish people. Apathy, not hate, best described the British attitude toward Ireland and the Irish (McCaffrey: 1966, p. 111).

In combining McCaffrey’s consideration with my interpretation of shadows in the satirical drawing (Figure 2), I picture O’Connell as lonely and unsupported. The details of the hand-shadows, which do not match with O’Connell’s right hand, suggest horror, as if the shadow revealed the dangers of chasing Repeal.

Leslie Williams and William Williams, an art historian and a historian respectively, compare the similarities between a poster of *Ondine* and the cartoon in *Punch*:

The main difference is that while the dancer is posed *en point* with her right hand over her head to balance herself while her left gestures towards her shadow, O’Connell reaches madly for his shadow with both hands, threatening to throw himself off balance. The uncooperative shadow, labeled ‘Repeal,’ thumbs its nose at the over-eager Liberator. O’Connell is depicted as victim of his own delusions (Williams and Williams, 2005, p. 61 – original emphasis).

Following Williams and Williams, the representation of O’Connell’s shadow is associated with an error, a mistake that he could have prevented by controlling his own shadows as a person with a side that is not appropriate to share with the rest of the society. For example, O’Connell could have given up of the Repeal if he had heard the suggestions of the Westminster Review, as described earlier in this section in the text by McCaffrey. In 1844, three years after establishing the Repeal Association, O’Connell was imprisoned. This consequence reinforces a reading of shadows as repulsive, which relates to Jung’s the primal concept shadow as something a person does not wish to be.

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<sup>6</sup> Daniel O’Connell (1775-1847) was an Irish nationalist leader who managed to change the British government to guarantee a seat in the House of Commons in 1828. At that time, Roman Catholics, such as O’Connell, were ineligible as candidates to the House. Available at: World Dictionary: <https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803100244944?rskey=w9tMSG&result=2>.

More recently, in 1958, Ecuadorian-born British choreographer Frederick Ashton<sup>7</sup> directed a new version of *Ondine*. Music scholars William E. Studwell and Bruce R. Schueneman link the German composer Hans Werner Henze (1926-2002) with Ashton in the creation of *Ondine*:

The Henze/Ashton work was based loosely on the novel by Friedrich de la Motte Fouqué. *Ondine* had been staged several times in the 19th century, and while Ashton went back to the novel for inspiration, he did retain Jules Perrot's earlier staging idea: the *pas de l'ombre*, in which Ondine, catching sight of her shadow for the first time, dances with it (Studwell & Schueneman, 2012, pp. 48-49 – original emphasis).

The fact that Ashton chose to invest in the *pas de l'ombre* demonstrates how shadows continue to be a rich stimulus for choreography. In this regard, Perrot's piece has contributed to dance pieces across different centuries. In trying to continue the studies of shadows in dance practices, I developed practice-led research through experiments in the studio with light, shadow and darkness (chapter four) valuing not only a scene, but looking for strategies of producing an entire performance with shadows, *Sombreiro* being the result of the investigation (chapter five).

The analysis of *Ondine* was relevant for the development of *Sombreiro* because I could thereby connect it to the studies on cultural/political shadows. The reach of *Ondine* as influencing cartoonists of the nineteenth-century and a choreographer of the twentieth-century, contributed to my desire to pick up ideas from Bahian society to frame *Sombreiro*, a dance piece created in the twentieth-first century. Whereas *Ondine* featured the Festival of the Madonna, I drew inspiration from two Brazilian festivals, one of which was held in honour of Yemanjá, a feminine, Afro-Brazilian mythological figure. Furthermore, the interplay of light, shadow and darkness in *Ondine*, inspired my series of experiments in the studio, before the conception of *Sombreiro*.

### A Dance, Many Shadows

*Sombreiro* was presented in different venues in the UK and in Prague, Czech Republic. One motivation I had to create the piece was connections from home while living in a post-colonialist country (UK). An author who is important for me in these analyses is Rinda West (2007), a Jungian specialist, through her book *Out of the Shadow*. West takes into consideration novels by American Indian writers to discuss shadow linked to the negative effects of colonialism. A text by West on cultural shadow is useful to picture my experience of producing *Sombreiro*:

Like the construction of ego, the construction of culture engenders shadow: some beliefs and behaviors must be suppressed, and these make up the unconscious, repressed, and denied shadow of the culture. Early in evolutionary history people must have understood that survival required suppressing impulses to kill members of the clan. As cultures developed, taboos became more elaborate, requiring individuals to conform to complicated codes of desire and behaviour. These moral codes carry emotional charges, have the force of divine sanction, and are enforced by collective power (West, 2007, p. 14).

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<sup>7</sup> Frederick William Mallandaine Ashton (1904-1988) was the principal choreographer and director of the Royal Ballet in England. He had a prestigious career directing around thirty ballets. See: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Frederick-Ashton> Accessed: 29 October 2019.

By “collective power”, West refers to cultural shadows as shaping the moral codes of cultures. An example she gives is that for Christians, the collective shadow is the devil. For the creation of *Sombreiro* I took a field study in Brazil attending the 2017 Maragojipe Carnival and the Yemanjá festivity in Salvador looking for shadows. In both events, I noticed few protesters carrying signs. They went to the streets to denounce corrupted politicians and highlight the presence of the shadow of moral bankruptcy in Brazilian society.

My reading of the protesters in street festivities of Bahia as shadows mobilized more studies on the colonization processes. In analysing *Heart of Darkness*<sup>8</sup> by Joseph Conrad (1899) and *The Oregon Trail*<sup>9</sup> by Francis Parkman (1872), both describing the process of colonization in the USA, West reflects on shadows. She states:

[The two books] expose the psychological dynamics of conquest. In both cases the invaders believed themselves possessed of higher culture, intelligence, and virtue. Conflating native people and the land they inhabited, they split from consciousness their own viciousness, greed, power lust, and cruelty, projecting these qualities onto the people and places they overran and thereby rationalizing their conquest (West, 2007: 36).

The racist idea of hierarchy, i.e. that colonialists were more valuable and intelligent than natives, can also be described as a way of projecting shadows. In Brazil, for example, the Portuguese’s conquest was mobilised by the idea that the Indians’ customs were inferior. The result of this thinking was the massacre and exploitation of native people.

### Figure 3

*Sombreiro* (2018), Flaviana Sampaio. Photo by Solomiya Lekhiv



In reflecting on possibilities to link cultural shadows into *Sombreiro*, I planned the solo aiming to offer to the audience a remarkable experience though connections between my body and my shadows (figure 3). Following Grobras, Reason, Tan, Kay and Pollick dictum that “The

<sup>8</sup> *Heart of Darkness* (1899) describes Conrad’s work on a steam-boat in the Congo in 1890. This trip was planned by the King Leopold II of Belgium that aimed “to conquer the native population, harness them for labor, and strip the continent of its ivory and rubber” (West, 2007: 33). See: West, R. (2007) *Out of the Shadow: Ecopsychology, Story, and Encounters with the Land*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia.

<sup>9</sup> *The Oregon Trail* (1872) describes Parkman’s observations on a trip by land in wide parts of the United States. He often refers to Indians as savages while making racist comments on them: “Parkman fantasizes about shooting the man ‘to see how ugly he would look’. He sees these people as images, the focus of his aesthetic gaze, objects rather than subjects” (West, 2007: 48). See: West, R. (2007) *Out of the Shadow: Ecopsychology, Story, and Encounters with the Land*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia.

appreciation of art is a subjective process often linked to motional/hedonic experiences (2017: 57), I intended to reach my audience emotionally. I wanted the public to engage with my piece in a deep and unique way. This aim can be connected to a statement by American choreographer Sean Dorsey:

As a dance maker, it's my job to create work that people can be impacted by (Dorsey in Smith, 2016: 31).

In looking at strategies to make *Sombreiro* impactful, I considered the location of the audience as a relevant area for investigation. Through video recording, placing the camera at different levels of the raked seating, I noticed that a standing position was best for my performance because it would make it easy for the audience to see my shadows on the floor. This strategy challenges the traditional seating arrangement in theatres, which tends to make the audience comfortable and passive for a receptive response guided mainly by the motion of the dancer. This idea is also engaged by dance scholar Susan Foster, who stated that,

I argue that any notion of choreography contains, embodied within it, a kinesthesia, a designated way of experiencing physicality and movement, that, in turn, summons other bodies into a specific way of feeling towards (Foster, 2011, p. 2)

By “other bodies” Foster means the audience, which I took as a stimulus to define the exact location of my audience. In general, I have recorded myself during rehearsals mostly from the raked seating, and the existence of a small balcony in the studio raised my interest to test how a person would engage with my performance from there. The balcony was around six meters wide, three meters high, and located on one side of the studio. If the audience were to look directly down on my performance from this asymmetric position, I would need to define my performance space on one side of the stage. I restricted my performance space to an area of approximately five by five meters. By placing the audience on the balcony overlooking the performance area, they were positioned in a high position but close to me, something not possible in the standard seating and stage plan. In fact, a standing position in the raked seating would have appeared “fake” as the seats were still present and the highest possible location was further back the room, with empty seats between the audience and the performing area. In the chosen arrangement, all the seats were removed, enabling me to configure parts of the piece very close to the audience, which I perceived as positive to motivate the audience's attention.

The diverse locations of the choreographic units across the stage invited the audience standing on a balcony, to engage with *Sombreiro* using their entire bodies. The necessity of keeping body balance and at the same time moving one's head to follow my movement in space throughout the twenty-minute performance, engaged the viewers' whole bodies in the act of paying attention to the performance. In particular, the standing position *per se* required some energy of the public, a condition that challenged their usual spectatorial practice when seated.

Another passage from Foster is also pertinent to reflect further on the standing position of the audience in *Sombreiro*. She points out, from a mental perspective, how audiences engage with dance pieces:

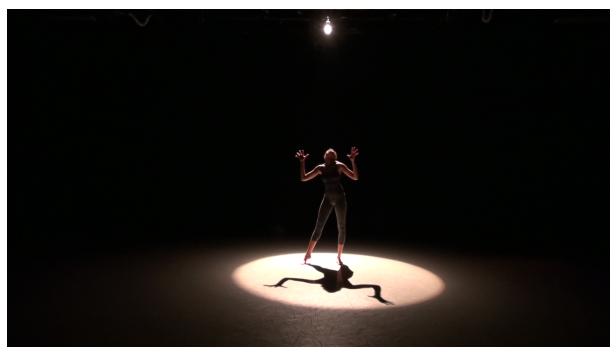
Functioning at an unconscious level, proprioceptors participate in spinal-level reflexes that primarily assist in maintaining posture and balance, and they also contribute to the learning and remembering of physical activities such as sports (Foster, 2008, p. 48).



Following Foster's considerations, I propose that in *Sombreiro* the audience's location contributes to activate proprioceptors that assist posture. The inclination of the head that the audience must achieve in order to view the performance involves body balance as well as physical remembering of previous instances of elevated spectatorship. One image I have of the motion of the audience watching my solo was that they were looking down as if from a precipice.

#### Figure 4

*Sombreiro (2018), Flaviana Sampaio. Photo by Solomiya Lekhiv*



In an expansion of Foster's belief that proprioceptors facilitate physical learning, I suggest that they also contribute to artistic learning. The main choreographic key theme of *Sombreiro* is the shadow and the audience's raised location was designed to emphasise this occurrence on the flooring (Figure 4). The audience's position enabled them to look straight down onto the stage, valuing the perception of shadows on the floor as a horizontal plane, rather than my frontal shape, viewed vertically. This arrangement was intended to work as an invitation for the public to engage deeply with my shadows.

A text by psychologists Corinne Jola and Shantel Ehrenberg, and dance specialist Dee Reynolds considers how dance audiences are immersed in choreographies during spectatorship. They explain:

Rather than purely personal and private, experience is treated as socially mediated. Audiences are considered as active agents in constituting the meaning of the performance through articulating their experiences. In describing and discussing their responses to dance performances, the spectators we dialogue with have the opportunity to tease out what they themselves consider to be important about what they have seen (Jola, Ehrenberg and Reynolds, 2011, p. 28).

The notion that audience members can individually consider what is important in a dance performance is the basis for the interpretation of shadows in *Sombreiro*. I believe that the arrangement of the solo allows audience members to individually interpret shadows as symbols. Similarly, McKinney concludes in her study of the nature of communication between scenography and its audiences that "[s]cenography can easily manipulate the viewer's attention but audience members are also capable of making their own choices about what to focus on" (McKinney, 2008, p. 84). In the personal journey of watching *Sombreiro*, each person reads the piece according to his/her embodied experiences which frame the ways of identifying themselves within the piece.

As explained by Jola, Ehrenberg and Reynolds, the process for a dance audience to engage with a piece is connected to “what they have seen” on stage. In the case of *Sombreiro*, ideas of colonialism and protest, can be noticed in the performance. Taking into consideration that my solo was observed mostly by British people, I propose that my Brazilian background was something that could be noticeable and significant. A text by Foster facilitated reflection on this point:

The dancer’s performance draws upon and engages with prevailing senses of the body and of subjectivity in a given historical moment. Likewise, the viewer’s rapport is shaped by common and prevailing senses of the body and of subjectivity in a given social moment as well as by the unique circumstances of watching articular dance (Foster, 2011, p. 2)

Following Foster’s comments, I present the idea that in *Sombreiro* my Brazilian background is noticeable not only because it exists, but also because I chose to highlight it as a choreographic theme. In this sense, one interpretation of my shadows could be to place the audience in a (post)colonial context, as it is a subject that sometimes is avoided and the interplay of dark and light in my piece can be seen as a symbol of it.

Colonialism is an important, though conflicted, part of British cultural memory. Although Brazil was colonized by the Portuguese, colonial history might be a way for British audiences to engage with *Sombreiro*. The elevated position of the spectator, which often is related to power, might also be a key factor to link the performance with colonialism. Theatre scholar Christopher Balme reflects on *The Road* (1965), an African play written by Wole Soyinka,<sup>10</sup> which deals with colonial domination and how the audience access it:

They are outside the house, looking through the windows into the interior space, observing the officer and wife at their recreation. In a sense, Soyinka establishes a fifth wall between the audience and the action, instead of creating a conventional living room scene. This scenographic device places the audience in the position of the Yoruba subjects of colonial domination (Balme, 1999, p. 261).

Whilst Balme refers to the creation of a “fifth wall” as a symbol to approach colonial domination, in *Sombreiro* the positioning of the audience on the balcony raised their spatial position (and, symbolically, their social position) while simultaneously requiring them to stand and observe the performance from behind a balcony rail, which might have the effect of a “fifth wall”. If colonialism is connected to exploration of “unknown” terrains, in an authoritarian and manipulative way, in *Sombreiro* the capacity to influence the action is denied to the audience by their containment on the balcony. An ambivalent sense of disempowered colonial power might be read in the hierarchy of the audience being on a higher level than the dancer while not exercising any power over her, as the performance evolves with me not making any eye contact or engagement with the audience. During the whole performance, I, as a dancer, look straight ahead or down at my shadows. It is only at the end of the piece that I look up, to the ceiling, but the lighting does not value this positioning, leaving room for the audience to play multiple roles based on embodied experiences and their engagement and identification with the piece.

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<sup>10</sup> Wole Soyinka (1936 -) is a Nigerian playwright, poet, novelist and political activist. His influences include Yoruba culture, Shakespeare and the Greeks. More information can be found at: <https://www.oxfordreference.com/search?q=Wole+Soyinka&searchBtn=Search&isQuickSearch=true> Accessed: 01 February 2020.

The audience of *Sombreiro* might alternatively relate the piece to a form of protest. Their standing position and/or my movement onstage may be reminiscent of riots in the past and recent times. In my movement vocabulary, I often dance abruptly, moving my arms and torso violently, which can be linked with anger, a kind of emotion that motivates people to fight for changes by mobilizing protests in the streets.

Through the standing position, the audience may have perceived themselves to be mirroring the Bahian protesters I observed in the street festivities. This link serves to expand the readings of the piece: As a protester, what kind of connection would the audience draw with me? Would they see me as a protester myself or as playing the role of a suffocating form of power? With me being a protester, would the audience feel sympathy, as if fighting for the same cause, or would they demonstrate a lack of empathy? Instead of considering the answers to these questions, I believe that it is most relevant to acknowledge that they exist and other interpretations can also be inferred.

An important approach to the symbolism of shadows for theatre spectators is found in already mentioned research by McKinney's scenographic. Interested in the communication between scenography and audiences, she analyses the allusive effect of shadows. By reflecting on her piece *The General's Daughters* (2003), McKinney argues:

The performers appeared first outside the room as large shadows, surrounding and disorientating the audience making them conscious of their own physical presence in the scenography (McKinney, 2008, 21-22).

As described by McKinney the role of the shadow in the piece facilitated the audience's disorientation. This reinforces the symbolic meaning of shadows also present in *Sombreiro*, in which the stated questions above might serve to inspire the process of the audience disorientation. Another important reflection on audience interpretations of shadows is documented in McKinney's thesis via a comment by a spectator herself:

[a female spectator] writes of the same performance that the woman in black standing in the shadows holding the boots made her feel sick although she did not know why (McKinney, 2008, p. 51).

Although audience response was not a research theme per se in *Sombreiro*, McKinney's thesis serves to defend the idea that shadows can greatly affect an audience's interpretation of a performance. Reason and Reynolds also reinforces this thought by acknowledging how people are selective in the act of watching choreographies:

Audiences' emotional responses to dance movement, therefore, are produced by the *process* of engaging with the work rather than elements found within the work alone. In other words, spectators' responses to movement are not produced in a singular manner by the movement alone—a particular quality of movement always producing a particular kind of response—but also by the interpretative strategies with which individual spectators engage with that movement (Reason and Reynolds: 2010, p. 68).

Whilst in Reason and Reynolds "movement" seems to strictly refer to dancers' movement, in *Sombreiro* I attribute it to the movement of lighting and shadow in relation to sounds and

silence. For this, I mixed silence, live sound and recorded music,<sup>11</sup> to emphasise the interplay of shadows, lights, blackouts and the surrounding darkness of *Sombreiro*.

### **The Unsettled**

The cultural and political aspects connected with the implicit aesthetic of the solo contributed as a driving force to shape the piece symbolically. The studies on colonialism informed my reading of the street festivities of Bahia as events allowing the performance of collective shadows. As I result, I reflected on the protesters in the streets as a shadow, a feeling that affected my body movement, and facilitated the creation of the lighting and the atmosphere of the solo. The reflection on cultural shadows can be used by other artists not only to signify culture but also to feed new strategies to create art.

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<sup>11</sup> Part of *Sombreiro* (2018) is available on Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/274889126> Password: IJCS.V7

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**Corresponding author:** Flaviana Xavier Antunes Sampaio

**Email:** [fxasampaio@uesb.edu.br](mailto:fxasampaio@uesb.edu.br)

## **Craft as Rhizomatic Learning**

Harald Bentz Høgseth  
Norwegian University of Science  
and Technology (NTNU)

### Abstract

This article is about the Norwegian term “innlevelse” perceived as a “tool” for learning craft or design. When someone activates innlevelse, perhaps best understood as sensibility, sensitivity, affinity, awareness, or empathy in English, as tools, the person opens up parts of reality that are not accessible “objectively”. You could say that each of us then becomes the tool of innlevelse. If I have innlevelse in something, I enact it through my experience, feelings, and reflections, perhaps also the ability to imagine possibilities. It is human and subjective and is also based on the prejudices or preconceived notions that people have. In the following, I define innlevelse as “the ability to empathize”. I primarily want to see innlevelse as a process that is constantly evolving and in progress, something that through training, experience and reflection we can become steadily better trained in. Innlevelse can also be directed towards one’s own sensibility, awareness and thoughts through actions and reflections. The paper will cast a spotlight on how a craftsperson integrates himself into situations, things, and events, and how to interpret traces of people, their actions, tradition, and practice of knowledge through the physical remains, the product. As an artisan, archaeologist, and researcher, I use different methods and theories to investigate and reconstruct past crafts. This example starts with a phenomenological hermeneutic practice, oriented toward new materialism in which I, as a practitioner, examine the actions of craft manifested in processed timbers from the past.

*Keywords:* craft science, craft research, embedded learning, embodied cognition, empathy, hermeneutics, phenomenology, multiple ontologies, new materialism, rhizomatic learning



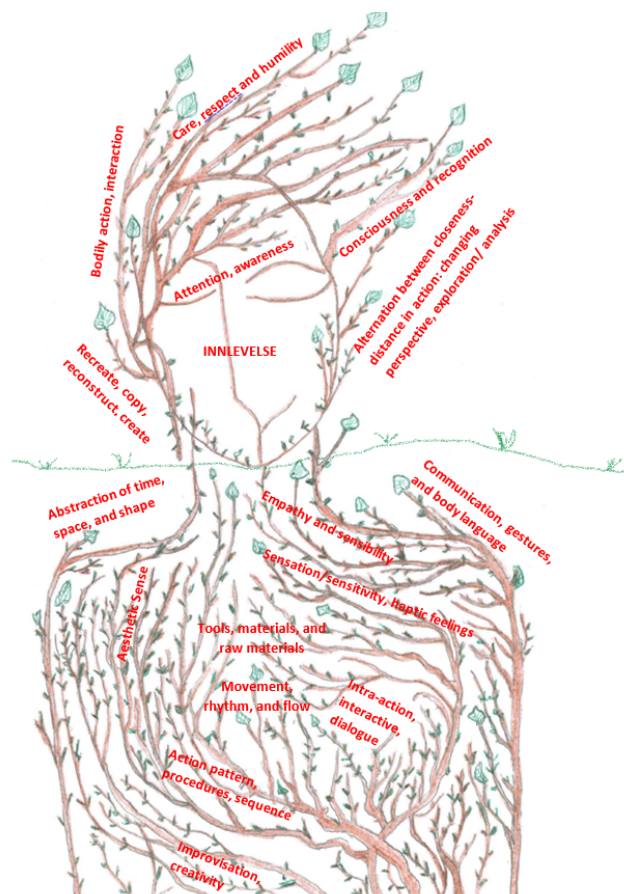
My education, background and identity are carpentry but I'm also a researcher, and teacher. I started up as an artisan working with traditional crafts and ended up as an archaeologist specializing in medieval crafts. In my opinion, training as an archaeologist developed my skills as a craftsperson and my ability to document, explore and reflect upon craft. But also vice versa, the skill and understanding of craft developed my skills as an archaeologist and aided me in interpreting knowledge and embodied cognition behind objects and practitioners. In this, I discovered the ability to be aware, and sensible: to enter into a world with practice, objects, and nature outside of myself, with an aim to interpret and understand tentatively without prejudice.

First, a concretization. In this article I will reflect upon the Norwegian term “innlevelse” as a tool in rhizomatic learning (rhizomatic learning based on Deleuze & Guattari 1994, 2004, 2015, 2016). It is somehow difficult to translate directly into other languages, but for me, “innlevelse” is crucial when we learn a craft. Innlevelse is about attention and the ability to sense. At the same time, innlevelse could be linked to affinity, closeness, care, respect, awareness, or presence. The old Greek word “empathia” has much in common with innlevelse. It relates to “pathos” and describes the ability to empathize with the emotional life of others (Cuff, Brown, Taylor, & Howat, 2016). Felt experience affects the degree of innlevelse: tactile, sensory experiences are crucial in its manifest form of cognition and learning.

Figure 1 intends to illustrate a landscape where innlevelse as embodied learning is central. To learn craft can be compared to such root system where the roots constantly find new directions and connections depending on where they find nourishment or meet problems. In a learning process they grow separately, together and spread all in constant motion.

**Figure 1**

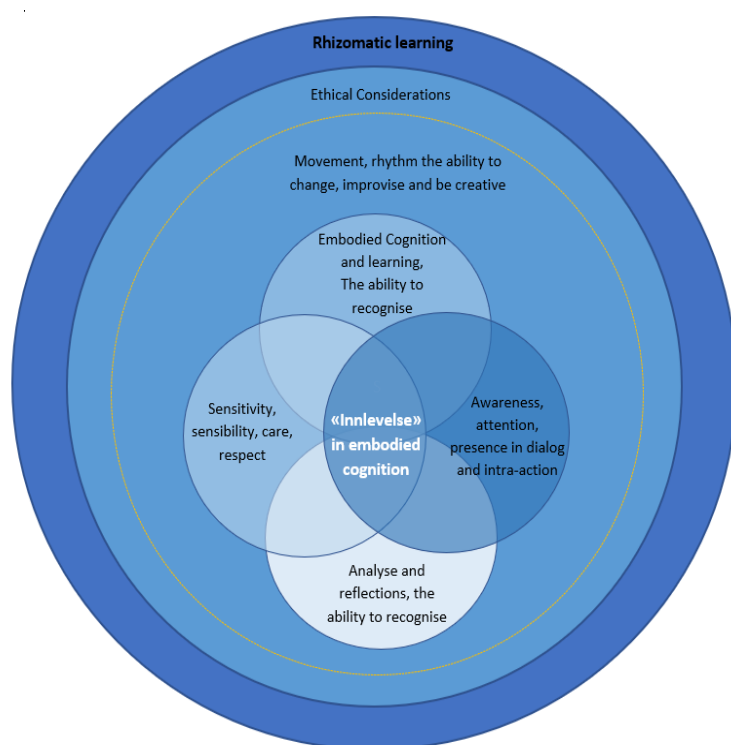
*Innlevelse as Embodied Cognition in Rhizomatic Learning (Høgseth, 2022)*



In a craft context, innlevelse is about the motivation to act and understand. As a practitioner I relate to something outside myself, but at the same time also to my inner self (Figure 2). In this lies both a phenomenological approach through the immediate experience and nearness, that is, to explore through the senses, but also, a hermeneutic dimension in approaching without prejudice something outside oneself, in a hermeneutic circle. In new materialism on the contrary, things and humans are connected, like a root system where we already stand in an intra-action vis-à-vis each other. Innlevelse is fundamentally important for our experiences of practice. It is about the motivation to act and understand. The craftsperson's experience of their own body in interaction with tools and the thing being shaped is always connected to innlevelse in some way. It is in this context this article will reflect upon innlevelse as a tool in rhizomatic learning.

**Figure 2**

*Innlevelse as Embodied Cognition in Rhizomatic Learning (Høgseth, 2022)*



Embodied cognition and embedded learning are being enacted in diverse forms of interplay between various practitioners/agents in multiple practical contexts (Mol, 1999; Vennatrø & Høgseth, 2021a–b).

### **Innlevelse as Tool for Learning and Reconstructing Past Craft**

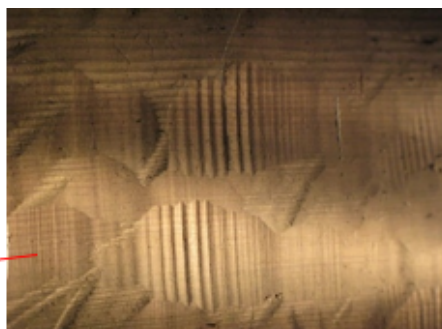
Figure 3a shows Tångeråsa Church in Sweden, dated to 1250 AD in a single photo of the church trapezoidal sill beam (details from the log to the right), taken by an experienced colleague. I will now reveal how I, as a craftsman and researcher, activate innlevelse through this detailed photo. I will demonstrate how I (and my colleague) read “sense making” – or felt craft experiences behind a making process that affects tactile, sensory, and bodily experiences in the sill, which once had been processed. I will go from part to whole in order to convey how I have innlevelse and understand methods, technique, movement patterns or rhythm behind the “sense making”.

**Figure 3a**  
*Tångeråsa Church*



(Photo: Roald Renmælmo, 2015)

**Figure 3b**  
*Sill beam which reveals details in sense Making*



The detailed photograph of the sill log (Figure 3b) documents a “universe” of important details of sense making and embodied cognition: from the properties in the wood and the craftsperson’s ability to choose timber with specific properties to details in the technique and procedures in the working process revealing indirect insight in the carpenter’s embodied cognition and the dialogue with the tools and object.

## **Embodied Cognition and Sense Making**

### ***The Characteristics of the Timbers***

The understanding of the materials’ potential is actively used in craft. The craftsperson is dependent on the ability in sense making and embodied cognition. It’s a feeling for the raw material and the object, which is crucially important before using well-suited, sharp-edged tools to design the timber. Craftspersons thus stand in a relationship, or intra-action, with the material. They are engaged in a dialogue with the physical materiality when they examine, analyze, or reconstruct the roughness of bark, twisting, and twigs, the color of the wood, the shape of trunk and tree crown or the width of annual grain pattern.

The understanding of the materials’ potential is actively used in craft (Figure 4).

**Figure 4**

*Detailed Photo of the Annual Ring Pattern with Summer Wood and Winter/Spring Wood which Reveals the tree's Characteristics and Development*



The first thing I look for in the photo is which type of wood is used and which inherent properties the timber has. I look at grain patterns, twigs, branches, and twisting, I look at heartwood, roughness of bark, color of wood and tapering on the trunk.

In the picture we have a pine tree; the light, broad summer wood zones and the dark, denser winter wood zones reveal the tree's growth pattern throughout the seasons, and this is important to know about and understand because it gives information about hardness, softness and, through that, which tools would be suitable, how they should be set and sharpened – and what kind of technique and procedure should be followed. The density of annual rings and wood color reveal which properties and qualities the timber possesses in relation to what I as a craftsperson will exploit and how easy it will be to form and shape it. The last annual rings tell me about the time of felling in the year and by analyzing the annual ring pattern and seeing it in the light of tapering, I see how fast or slow the tree has grown up, again providing information about the timber's properties and quality. Dense annual rings indicate slow growth, which for a pine means good quality. The tree's annual rings, marrow ray, twigs and branches also reveal growing conditions and the environment it has grown up in. Traces of a crack pattern in the wood tell me about the drying process.

As a craftsperson, I can immerse myself in, yes, feel, wood's anatomy and where the sill has taken from the tree, whether the log is right-twisted, left-twisted or straight-grown. From the craft tradition I learned that left-twisted timber is usually more "rebellious" than right-twisted



and straight-grown which is more conservative. I know that left-twisted timber is more tense which allows the timber to twist out of a joint.

The age together with the ring pattern, twigs, branches, and the taper reveals how fast the timber has grown. A tree with a strong taper has grown quickly. A carpenter from 800 years ago would rather not have a fast-growing tree because it does not have the same quality as a tree growing slowly. Traditional craftsmanship prefers a stable, durable timber that can withstand pressure. The annual ring pattern should be tight and grown steadily and slowly throughout life and the pine's age should be from 150 years and upwards.

But the image tells me also the story behind the craft and which tools have been used. It contributes to my thinking about a carpenter's movements, technique, rhythm, and flow. The image gives me insight into various procedures and sequences of the craftsperson's actions designing the sill.

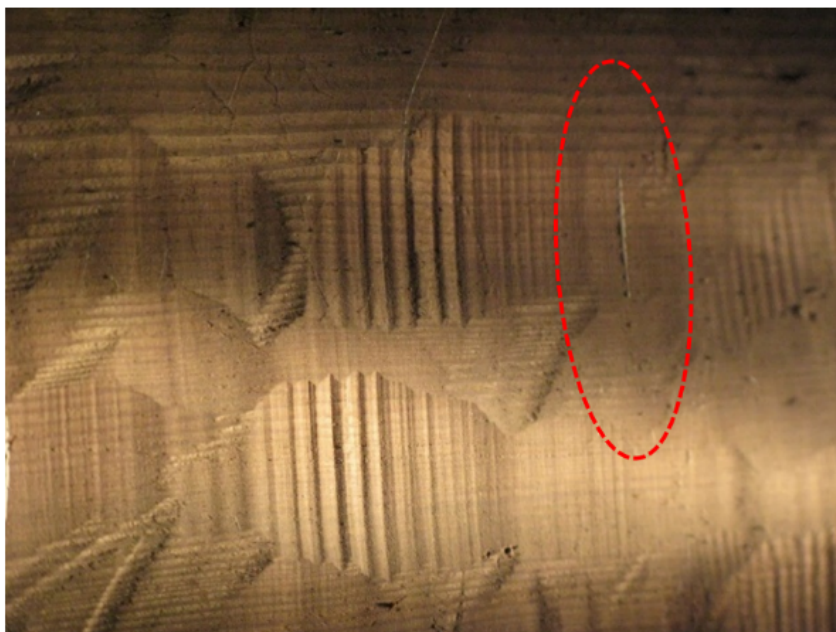
### ***Sense of Making***

Innlevelse is the sense of making through my experience as carpenter and archaeologist. I try to follow and reconstruct the design of the sill beam through patterns in form of tool marks based on human-made traces and how these affect the timber. The picture affords me embodied cognition and associations in the sense of inner mental images, or abstractions, of the rhythmic sound of an axe chopping steadily into the timber with the help of the carpenter's movements and I can sense the smell of wood.

When I examine the tool marks in Figure 5, I first note that the craftsperson has used at least one axe in two different procedures designing the timber. The first process involves rough-hewing. The red marking demonstrates traces of this through the notch that occurs deepest into the log after the axe. The detail reveals how the carpenter first started to form the round timber into a trapezoidal shape.

### **Figure 5**

*Details of Tool Mark from First Process of Rough-Hewing*



I can see traces of the first rough hewing-process through the notch that occurs furthest into the log after the axe and which tells how the carpenter first started the design process by hewing the round timber into a trapezoidal shape (see red marking). The photos below (Figures 6a, 6b, & 6c) demonstrate the first chopping process (in Norwegian called “ry”, “telgje”, “klamphugge”).

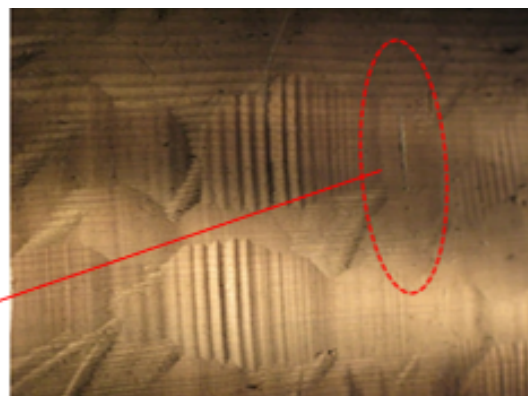
**Figure 6a**  
*The Chopping*



**Figure 6b**

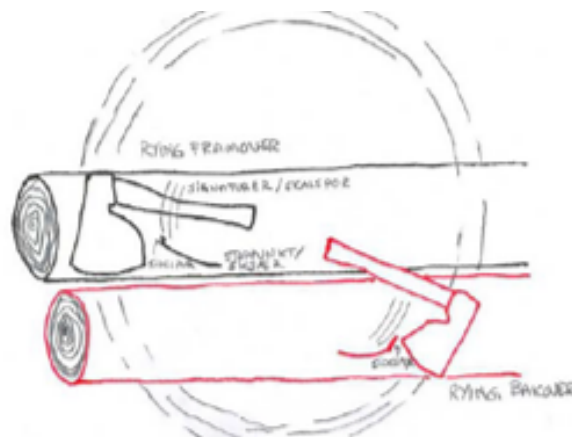
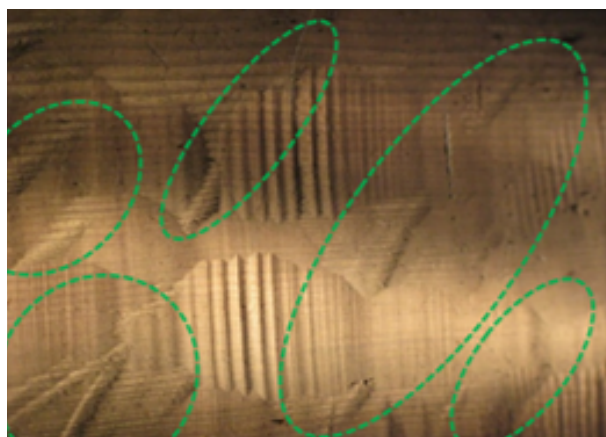


**Figure 6c**



The photo and illustration below (Figure 7) reveal a series of toolmarks after further interventions through the chopping process. The toolmarks display bow-shaped furrows and ridges (see green marking) appearing simultaneously and serially. The tools' edges always leave characteristic patterns that can be described as thin, small curved or bent stripes that run parallel in the tool mark. Such signatures of a cutting tool can be compared to a human fingerprint or its wrinkles. Irregularities or notches in the edge such as ridges and furrows leave distinctive traces or stripes in the tool mark, which I call signatures, and which betray characteristics that enable different tools to be identified. The signatures after the axe edge also indicate the axe rotation patterns and by this the craftsman's movements, rhythm, and flow.

**Figure 7**  
*Signatures Demonstrating the Axe and the Craftsman's Movements, Rhythm, and Flow*



The last procedure in the making process (Figure 8) takes place in the final stage of the process where the craftsman has made the surface smooth and fine with a tool called “pjal” (or “skjøve”) in Norwegian. A common tool found throughout Europe in the Middle Ages (Eng:

Spokeshaves, German: Schabhobel, or in Latin, Runcina). The tool marks (marked with blue) are the last traces of the craft process, because they overlap the signatures from the axe. They remind me of waves in the surface of the timber and are traces after vibrations from the tool because the edge-angle was not correctly applied when the sill was planed in the end.

### Figure 8

*The Movement of the Pjål with Wave Pattern after The Tool's Vibrations*



These abstractions challenge me, and I attempt to activate innlevelse by shifting from examining one part only to the study of the whole. This would be much harder to achieve, if not be impossible, without having any practical experience myself. The experience of having worked with wood gives me a closeness to the timber, to embodied cognition and the working processes behind the craft. Through intra-action, and through a trained ability to pay attention, I let the wood as a material and its inherent properties guide and control me. I am in a dialogue with the timber. It gives me constant messages in the process of shaping it. In some way it controls me or gives me advice. This is embodied cognition and learning through action. There are many academic terms developed to describe this activity and knowledge, what it is about and how it is exercised or why it is important in everyday life. Some call it “knowledge in action”, others “Know-How” or “tacit knowledge” in methodologies such as “Embodied Cognition and Embedded Learning” (cf. Høgseth, 2007). As a carpenter and through my own practice-led research, I can experience what it is like to touch and feel a material which, through its inherent properties, influences and guides me in the choice and use of tools, techniques, and procedures in designing something (Høgseth, 2007). This happens in a dialogue or intra-action with the physical world outside myself and around me, but also inside myself.



## Embodied Cognition and Embedded Learning

When I use innlevelse as embodied cognition and immerse myself in a physical manifestation to learn and understand the exercise of knowledge behind the craft, I use my training and combine this with felt experience that affects my tactile and sensory experiences.

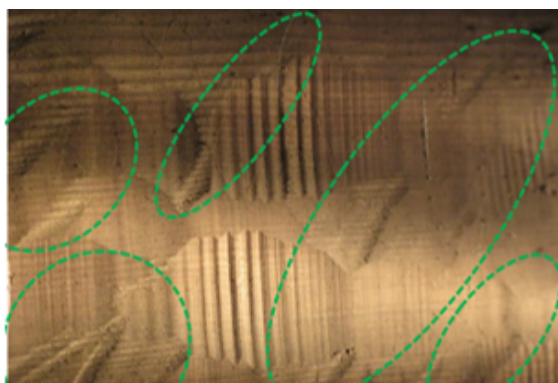
First, I put the spotlight on which tools made the toolmarks in the surface of the timber and how the work was carried out. I focus on movement patterns behind the tool marks because this gives me an insight into the craftsman's technique and movements, rhythm, and flow.

The details of the tool marks (Figure 9b) tell me that the carpenter stood on the right side of the timber and worked rhythmically when the sill was hewn (Figure 9a). The practitioner must have felt flow in his rhythmic hewing, which reveals that the axe must have been sharp and well suited for the job. Based on the details in the tool marks, the same axe was probably used to first “klamphugge” (Norwegian craft term for a specific chopping process) and then “telgje” (another kind of chopping process) the sill (process 1 and 2). The angular relation and distance between the signatures indicate that the movements were made in a steady rhythm and flow. The signatures' regular bow indicates the path and rotation of the axe as it hit the surface of the timber.

**Figure 9a**  
The Chopping



**Figure 9b**  
The Pattern after the Axe Rotation and Rhythm



The craftsman probably used long movements in the process. It is easy to sense the sound of the axe chopping rhythmically against the timber like waves beating rhythmically against a rock. The last procedure with the “skjøve” (Eng: Spokeshaves, German: Schabhobel, or in Latin, Runcina) on the other hand reveals vibrations after the tool, telling us that in this phase of the work the tool was not as fine-tuned and adjusted, which may have resulted in the craftsman's losing the same rhythm and flow and having to adjust the tool.

When I examine the image with a spotlight regarding the materials' inherent properties, the timber tells me that it was carefully chosen in accordance with what craft traditions in Norway define as good quality. The sill is well suited for its purpose. Through innlevelse, the craftsman has immersed him- or herself in the timber's characteristics and selected the right wood with suitable properties and then designed the round timber into a sill on the construction site.

A successful craftsman builds up experience through embodied learning, experience and sense making which arises in a connection between the carpenter's body, tools, material, and



surroundings. A knowledge that makes the craftsperson aware of choice of materials with certain properties and the use of adapted tools suitable for the design of the timber. An intra-action which depends on the carpenters “innlevelse” as sense making. Carpenters and artisans make and use tools to design a material. It requires knowledge of the relation between body, tools, and timber in the shaping process. To achieve the right rhythm and flow, the tool must function and feel like a natural extension of the body.

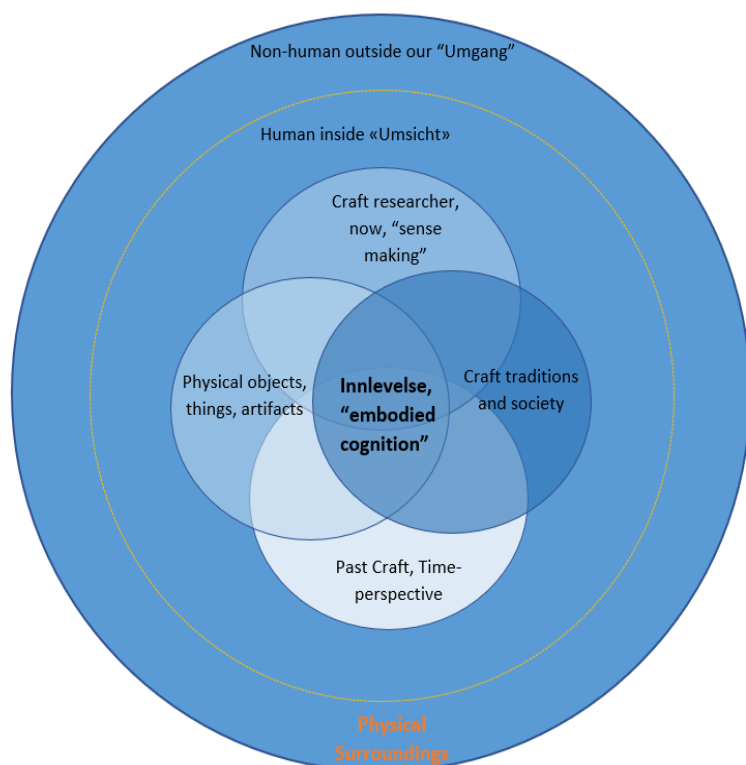
The hermeneutic circle explains how one can change perspective between details and whole, and how to use experiences and traditional craft knowledge in the process of interpreting past craft. Additionally, the phenomenological approach and analysis related to felt experience and sense making allow one to posit certain abstractions of the craftsperson’s embodied cognition throughout the intra-action between the carpenter’s body, tools, and material.

### The Toolbox

I like to understand the totality of embodied learning as human practice as a toolbox (Vennatrø & Høgseth, 2021a–b). The toolbox encompasses our entire practice-generated reality; our practical understanding, our tools and aids, the raw materials, and the material world we use, as well as what we manufacture or conceptually make sense of (Høgseth, 2007). Another side of this is what our practice, and objects, do to us. The content of the toolbox is an embodied practical human world. But at the same time, the toolbox is related to and controlled by a physical outside (Figure 10). By the things and the physical outside of ourselves which human practice takes place in. Practice is an alternation between human body and things confronting reality.

**Figure 10**

*Illustration of the Toolbox Inside and the Outside*



The tools must not be considered isolated. They are closely connected and constantly influence our physical interactions with reality. In practice, the tools function as integral parts, tightly intertwined and mutually dependent. Heidegger postulates that being-in-the-world implies our empathy, presence, and commitment in a reality where people and things co-exists (*Umgang*) (Dreyfus, 1991, p. 60–61; Heidegger, 2007/1927 p. 68–72/p. 110–111). This presumes a sensitivity, care, and empathy in what lies around us. Through our daily practices and dealings with things, we are in a state of conscious and unconscious recognition of the world. Humans relate to the environment, materiality, climate, nature, and things by using them in trying to achieve something. Heidegger also refers to this materiality as *Zeug* (Heidegger 2007/1927, p. 91–101) which can be translated as items for certain purposes or tools. But tools are more than materiality: tools become part of the world as interconnected.

As George Harman argues, Heidegger's term *Zuhanden* must be understood as not just the grip of the hand on the tool, but something more basic and existential; being a practitioner in the world (Dreyfus, 1991, p. 103; Harman 2002, p. 21). The carpenter will not necessarily see the thing (for example, the axe in relation to the timber) when working with it, but still be skilfully involved with it: An acquired characteristic and condition based on experience and innlevelse. The axe is in readiness for the hand only when the carpenter holding it intentionally uses the axe. In *Umgang*, the axe is an effect of the carpenter's intention and purpose. But, also, the carpenter is an effect of the axe. They are linked together in practice. Worked as an axe, the axe affects both the craftsperson and the situation that arises as well as the practical reality they make.

**Figure 11**  
*Tactile Approach*



Figure 11 illustrates this in a practical way. A crucial point for the craftsperson selecting appropriate timber is to put his hand on the tree. This is a tactile approach. It can be difficult to experience or convey specific material knowledge needed here other than by direct contact. The bark tells the craftsperson about the wood's properties. The tactile control also includes the direction, length, and dimension of the tree roots. The chainsaw and the tree are both given haptic attention. Experiences come into play; the reflective practitioner, the saw, the tree, and

the surroundings are in a dialog. At the crucial moment, the tree will sway. To do this the tool should be useful and functional. Filing the tooth shape correctly requires skill. Laying on the file is crucial. It is a question of building muscle memory and trained experience. The tree tells the artisan how the tooth shape must be adjusted in relation to how raw, dry, or oily the wood is – and the tool tells when the tree starts to sway. The craftsperson's knowledge is based on procedures and patterns of action based on tradition and practice acquired through sensitivity, empathy, and recognition. Tools are activated through our daily practice and handling of things. In the process cutting the tree, we also must consider practice or craft as care and sensitivity. Heidegger call this "*Umsicht*". In our sample image, the artisan does not necessarily see the saw in the course of his work process but will practically and skillfully be closely involved with the saw and the timber. Haptic skills, tactile abilities, balance, movement pattern or rhythm are based on the interaction and dialogue with something outside himself. He learns through attentive, and sensitive encounters with something physical outside and inside himself. He learns through active dialog with both humans and non-human entities.

### **Innlevelse in Embodied Cognition as a Tool in Rhizomatic Learning**

Taking the growth patterns of certain plants as an example, rhizomatic learning is a way of learning where skills and understanding are developed in an improvised way, through interaction or, more precisely, intra-action, with constantly changing actors. In this, learning in craft may then be compared to a root system (rhizomes) where the roots (those seeking knowledge) constantly find new directions and connections depending on where one finds nourishment, and where one encounters difficulties.

According to Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994; 2004; 2015; 2016), I see myself as a totality of body, thoughts, feelings, senses, experiences, desires, qualities, and ideas. My toolbox is an assemblage that consists of various properties for practice and learning which is constantly changing or in a movement where various tools are activated and combined with each other.

When it comes to craft as rhizomatic learning, there are no single tools in the toolbox that are activated in isolation when a craft is learned or practiced. Instead, there are individual tools which are constantly moving in relation to each other. The tools are not fixed, they do not stand alone, or work independently, but are in constant motion and always intra-acting with others. Therefore, "innlevelse", activated as tool in embodied cognition and embedded learning also is a tool for Rhizomatic Learning. We activate it together with other tools when we learn in the sense of making.

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**Corresponding Author:** Harald B. Høgseth

**Email:** harald.hogseth@ntnu.no



