

Beste lezer,

Welkom bij de derde editie van Ongehoord

Als redactie van Ongehoord is het altijd maar de vraag hoe ieder nummer eruit gaat zien qua inhoud. De veelzijdigheid van de honoursstudenten en docenten wiens werk is ingediend geeft Ongehoord een multidisciplinair, maar bovenal onvoorspelbaar karakter. Er zijn echter een aantal waarden die Ongehoord graag in het oog houdt, namelijk interdisciplinariteit en dialoog.

De stukken gepubliceerd in deze uitgave weerspiegelen deze waarden. Zo gaat Patrick van Oosterom de dialoog aan met de meertaligheid van T.S. Elliots meesterwerk *The Waste Land* terwijl Merel Hol de gevaren van Nabokov's Lolita onder de loep neemt en Max Trommelen zich in de dialoog rond de stereotypering van de Ieren mengt.

Jan Broersen, hoogleraar logische methoden in de artificiële intelligentie, doet een licht schijnen op de inherente interdisciplinariteit van Kunstmatige Intelligentie en wat wij hier als geesteswetenschappers van kunnen leren. Ook biedt honoursdirector Koen Ottenheym de goede geesteswetenschapper een les over vermetelheid aan.

In deze uitgave vindt men echter niet alleen academisch werk; ook de creatieve kant van honoursstudenten wordt onthuld met de winnaar, en haar twee opvolgers, van de gedichtenwedstrijd rond het thema 'schijn'. Het blad is aangevuld met afbeeldingen van redactielid Angèle Jaspers.

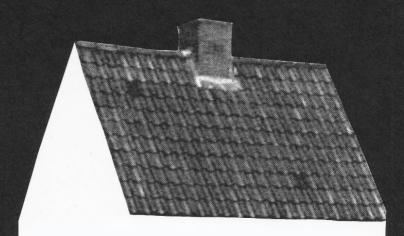
De redactie heeft de afgelopen maanden hard gewerkt aan deze editie en het eindresultaat mag er zijn. Ongehoord III is als het ware een weerspiegeling van het HHP geworden; onvoorspelbaar maar immer diepgaand. Veel leesplezier!

De redactie van Ongehoord

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Dissociation

I see fears.

I see tall men blue hands dark clouds.

Four instead of five.

One instead of none.

I see anything but real.

Find the moon in one place.

Find

me

all

over.

Find the moon in one place.

'Vermetelheid', nog zo'n typische HHP competentie

Op 25 maart 1436 werd in Florence de nieuwe Dom van Santa Maria del Fiore plechtig ingewijd door Paus Eugenius IV, onder begeleiding van de fraaie klanken van het complexe, vierstemmige motet 'Nuper rosarum flores' dat de toen wereldberoemde Vlaamse musicus Guillaume Dufay speciaal voor deze gelegenheid had gecomponeerd. Het was dan ook een heel bijzonder moment, zo'n 140 jaar na het begin van de bouw was dan eindelijk de grote, 91 meter hoge koepel boven het koor voltooid. Die koepel is het kunststuk van Filippo Brunelleschi die mede hierom in Italië als de eerste architect van de Renaissance wordt beschouwd.

De vorm en constructie van die grootse koepel heeft op zich weinig met antieke koepelconstructies te maken. Die van het beroemde Pantheon in Rome (uit c. 125 n. Chr.), heeft een enkele, haast monolithische gewelfschil gemaakt van een soort beton, terwijl de achthoekige koepel van Brunelleschi eerder als een 'gotische' skeletconstructie is te begrijpen, met zware ribben op de hoeken en een dubbele schil en allerhande interne verbindingsbogen. Toch werd deze koepel gezien als een herleving van antieke bouwkunst, en eigenlijk alleen vanwege de afmetingen want met een doorsneden van 45,5 meter (binnenmaat) is deze koepel zelfs twee meter breder dan die van het Pantheon, tot dan de grootste stenen overspanning op aarde. Alleen al vanwege het feit dat men nu, in de vijftiende eeuw, in staat was net zo groot en monumentaal te bouwen als eertijds de Romeinen, ja, hen zelfs had overtroffen, dat maakte de koepel van Florence tot een icoon (afb. 1 en 2).

Maar het gaat mij nu niet om die ingenieuze constructie die Brunelleschi in 1418 –'20 had uitgedacht om deze enorme koepel te kunnen construeren, het gaat me nu om de ontwerpers en opdrachtgevers die in 1296 hadden bedacht dat deze koepel er moeten komen, zonder te weten hoe dat nu eigenlijk daadwerkelijk gerealiseerd kon worden. Tot die tijd stond er in Florence een Romaanse kathedraal van relatief bescheiden afmetingen. Om met de vaart der volkeren mee te gaan en niet onder te doen voor concurrerende steden in de buurt, zoals Pisa en Siena met hun prachtige kathedralen ('keeping up appearances'), besloot men in 1296 in Florence ook tot de bouw van een nieuwe hoofdkerk die in een keer alle andere kathedralen in de schaduw zou stellen. Daarom begon men direct met de aanleg van de funderingen van een



Afbeelding 1: De Dom van Florence, gebouwd 1296 – 1436 (bekroning op de koepel zelfs pas 1472). Foto: auteur.



Afbeelding 2: Het interieur van de Dom van Florence. Foto: auteur.

153 meter lange kerk, met een langwerpig middenschip en zijbeuken en een monumentale achthoek als afsluiting aan de oostzijde. Met de aanleg van een dergelijke zware fundering lag direct het bouwplan voor de komende eeuwen vast, en alleen in details van het opgaande muurwerk zouden de er nadien nog aanpassingen van het bouwplan mogelijk zijn. En zo verrezen in de loop van de veertiende eeuw, met de nodige onderbrekingen (zoals vanwege de pest van 1348), de buitenmuren, de pijlers van het schip en de acht zware pijlers van de koorpartij aan de oostzijde. De kruisgewelven van het middenschip zijn van formidabele afmetingen maar deze vielen nog binnen het gangbare van de middeleeuwse bouwtraditie. De achthoek aan het oosteinde was een ander verhaal. Er verrezen vier zware pijlers op de diagonalen van de achthoek, die hoog in de lucht door middel van bogen met elkaar werden verbonden. Toen was het ondertussen 1410 en niemand wist eigenlijk hoe het nu verder moest: men had al ruim een eeuw gebouwd aan een 45 meter brede koepel zonder te weten hoe die eigenlijk gebouwd moest worden. Al met al een vermetel plan.

Om de pijlers meer constructieve samenhang te geven besloot men toen eerst maar om er achthoekige ring boven de pijlers te bouwen (de zgn. 'tamboer'), dat was bovendien een mooie manier om de beslissing over de koepel zelf nog eens uit te stellen. In 1418 was het dan echt zo ver en ten einde raad besloot men een internationale prijsvraag uit te schrijven. Berichten hierover van Vasari dateren van ruim een eeuw later en zijn niet allemaal even betrouwbaar. Er is sprake van een ontwerp waarbij het koepelgewelf een extra ondersteuning zou krijgen door middel van een extra pijler in het midden, vergelijkbaar met de constructie van sommige Engelse chapter houses (afb.3). Maar men wilde in Florence blijkbaar toch echt één grote koepelruimte, zonder verstoring van de binnenruimte. Het grootste probleem voor de constructie van een dergelijke koepel was de manier van ondersteuning van die koepel tijdens de bouw. Binnen de traditionele bouwmethoden zou zo'n koepel geheel van onder gestut moeten worden door een houten stellage waarop het koepelgewelf zou worden gemetseld (het zgn. 'formeel'). Pas als het koepelgewelf tot boven toe voltooid was zou het zelfdragend worden en kon die stijgerstellage worden afgebroken. Maar de hoeveelheid hout die voor een koepel van dergelijke afmetingen met deze bouwtechniek nodig zou zijn, was eigenlijk niet aan te slepen. Iemand anders schijnt bedacht te hebben om dan maar geen houten maar een aarden contramal van de koepel op te werpen. Hierin zouden dan ook hier en daar muntjes verstopt moeten zitten zodat de bevolking, na voltooiing van de koepel, die enorme berg aarde wel snel zou afgraven.



Afbeelding 3: Chapter House van Lincoln Cathedral. Foto: Wikimedia Commons.



Afbeelding 4: De onvoltooide uitbreiding van de Dom van Siena (1339-'57). Foto: Wikimedia Commons.

Brunelleschi bedacht uiteindelijk de oplossing met de twee gewelfschillen en de constructiemethode waarbij het gewelf al tijdens de bouw zelfdragend zou zijn en er dus geen ondersteuning vanaf de grond nodig was. Ook dat was een vermetel plan want een dergelijke nieuwe bouwtechniek was niet eerder toegepast, zeker niet op zon schaal en op zo'n hoogte. Om de heren van de bouwcommissie van de Dom te overtuigen, schijnt Brunelleschi tijdens een van de voorbesprekingen de truc met het ei te hebben uitgehaald om te laten zien hoe eenvoudig een oplossing kan zijn als je antwoord weet ("hoe kan een ei rechtop staan op een marmeren plaat?") – een trucje dat later ook aan Columbus is toegeschreven.

De bouwgeschiedenis van de Dom in Florence is daarmee een mooie parabel om de sfeer binnen het honours programme te omschrijven. 'Vermetelheid' is ook echt een HHP deugd, zou ik willen stellen, nu ik zo'n klein half jaar bij dit programma betrokken ben. Stoutmoedig plannen maken zonder te veel mits-en en maar-en, zonder je creativiteit direct in te perken door gepieker over de praktische uitvoering, maar vol goede moed je eigen idealen achteraan. En pas oplossingen bedenken op het moment dat er daadwerkelijk een probleem in zicht komt. Met een kleine kanttekening: bij zelfoverschatting kan vermetelheid ook in overmoed stranden, zoals de wat zielige, onvoltooide nieuwe kathedraal van Siena laat zien, die weer als 'antwoord' in de overtreffende trap op de nieuwbouw in Florence was gedacht (afb. 4).

Aantekeningen:

*Het motet van Dufay is o.m. te beluisteren op https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hGW2HL35kqY

*Het bericht van Giorgio Vasari over Brunelleschi's ontwerp van de koepel is te lezen in diens bundeling van kunstenaarsbiografieën, *Le Vite*, uit 1550 / 1568. In een mooie Nederlandse vertaling van Anthonie Kee uitgegeven door Uitgeverij Contact als *De levens van de grootste schilders, beeldhouwers en architecten*, (1990) 2010 (de scene met het ei staat op pag. 169).



Between dark and dawn, her domain transient Eos looks down but can't quite see The darkness of a filthy alley Where needles dive and people die Where drunks pass out, morality is a lie An uncaring world, only out to kill

Gates opened, task complete
Eos looks down and only sees
A mother's smile, a lover's caress
Good natured grumbling, a coffee shared
A dawning world of love
So Eos sees, only hope

– Jacqueline Zonkaap

Merel Hol

The Danger of Nabokov's *Lolita*: Humbert Humbert's Manipulation

Nabokov's publishing of *Lolita* in 1955 raised an international controversy, from where it was originally published to every country it was eventually exported to after the ban was lifted. Struggling to publish the "obscene" novel in the United States, where he himself resided, Nabokov resorted to Olympia in France. In accordance with a French law that called to repress all obscene writings, Lolita was banned. As the publisher fought for its republication, finding loopholes in laws and making cases for the literary quality of the book, it was banned and unbanned several times. Eventually, the book became freely available in France and was exported to other countries in Europe and the United States, where it was published in 1958. What shocked readers and critics the most, and often still does, is the "erotic element" of the book. Some have even dismissed the more sensual scenes of the story as plainly pornographic. In his review in *The Sunday Express* in 1955, Gordon, one of the first to utter the most frequent criticism of Lolita's, calls the novel "the filthiest book I have ever read. Sheer unrestrained pornography" (qtd. in Ladenson 210). In 1958, Prescott said similarly, "[Nabokov] writes high-brow pornography" (qtd. in Grazia 253). These days the book is said to be a succès de scandale, but these criticisms are not just matters from its publishing days more than 60 years ago. In current times, as the book is still widely read, similar responses arise. In its reviews on the popular book recommendation site Goodreads, it is evident its readers still struggle with its content. One user plainly states: "Can't do it. Vile. Offensive. Obscene. DNF [Did Not Finish]" (Steve). Another user, Sara, explains her issue with the book a bit more in detail: "I know I am in the minority in not seeing the brilliance of this novel. It was far too repulsive a subject matter ... to allow me to admire it". There are 22,668 1-star reviews of Lolita (in comparison, there are 203,030 5-star reviews), and the negative experience is nearly always due to the readers' confrontation with the book's obscenity and sexual content.

Still, there is arguably no explicit sexual content in the novel. Nabokov uses clever euphemisms and metaphors to describe Humbert Humbert's excitement and the eventual sexual acts in the story, but it barely reads as a vile description of sex. Modern critics generally agree that the book should not be

defined as pornography because of this reason. Its obscenity is uncertain, as well, since it contains no explicit words for genitalia or offensive descriptions of Humbert's intercourse with an underage girl. Its obscenity seems to lay fully in the implication of the novel's plot – the idea of Humbert's intercourse with an underage girl. Despite its lack of explicit sexuality, however, it is undeniable that the book is sensual, perhaps even more so because of its implicative euphemisms. This looks to be the primary issue that readers have with the novel throughout history. This essay, however, will attempt to shed light on how the protagonist's character, rather than his actions, make *Lolita* problematic.

One of the issues with Humbert Humbert is the complexity of his character. As readers, we learn of his charm, intelligence, humor, attractiveness, artistry, and of his excellent knowledge of classical texts as well as contemporary literature, before Humbert even mentions his pedophilia. Humbert's rounded character is problematic because it lures the reader to forget, or disregard, his pedophilia next to the selection of other traits that are introduced. In the first few chapters, we learn of the protagonist's childhood, of his educational background, and of his first love interest, described without any mention of Humbert's criminal disposition, though he hints to it. It is only in chapter 5 that Humbert introduces his definition of "nymphet": "Between the age limits of nine and fourteen there occur maidens who ... reveal their true nature which is not human, but nymphic" (Nabokov 15). Humbert's introducing of his sexual preferences almost comes as a shock to the casual reader, who has been enjoying his prosaic words and pleasing style, and now reads of his problematic situation. But even within this section, Humbert's pedophilia is not problematic. Instead, he speaks of his deviant inclination in clear, analyzing tones: "All this I rationalize now. In my twenties and early thirties, I did not understand my throes quite so clearly" (Nabokov 18). The reader can relax, now, because he is not swept away by his passion, but instead rationalizes, and "under no circumstances would he have interfered with the innocence of a child, if there was the least risk of a row" (Nabokov 19). Despite the disturbing constraint, the "risk of a row" that keeps Humbert from harming children, he seems to show restraint here as well as compassion and humanity, seducing the reader to forget about his crime.

Throughout the novel, Humbert justifies his behavior by referring to his spiritual searching for understanding of his nymphets. During the climax of the novel, Humbert claims that the description of the actual experience, having sex with Lolita, is irrelevant: "I am not concerned with so-called 'sex' at all. Anybody can imagine those elements of animality. A greater endeavor lures me

on to fix once for all the perilous magic of nymphets" (Nabokov 151). Once more, Humbert's seemingly sensitive, artistic perspective induces him to speak of the physical act of sex as animalistic, beastly. The imagery he uses implies that he finds the act repulsive, and suggests to the reader that his intercourse with Lolita, the sexual assault of a minor, the crime he committed, is not actually what he intends. For the inattentive reader, Humbert is able to hide behind his poetics and apparent sensitivity to rationalize, justify, and disregard his raping of a small child. As he says himself: "Poets never kill" (Nabokov 98).

An additional danger to Humbert's manipulation is that the cause of Lolita's assault will then automatically become Lolita's own behavior, as Humbert cannot be blamed. This opinion did indeed arise, according to a study conducted in the fifties, shortly after *Lolita*'s publication: "... reviewers depicted Dolores Haze as both morally unworthy and at least partly responsible for her own victimization" (qtd. in Goldman 86). Especially when considering the presently ongoing discussions surrounding victims of assault, who are often blamed for what has been done to them, these interpretations are dangerous. Evidently, it is incredibly significant to realize that even though Humbert is an artist, intellectual, and nothing but human, he has still taken advantage of a young child.

An interesting phenomenon that rose from the publication of this novel is the definition of the word "Lolita". In 1966, *The Random House Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language* defined "Lolita" as "a girl's given name, form of Charlotte or Delores. Also Loleta." By 1992, *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* offers a very different definition for "Lolita": "A seductive adolescent girl. [After Lolita, the heroine of *Lolita*, a novel by Vladimir Nabokov]". (Patnoe 82)

This curious change in definition and, assumedly, perception of Dolores' name seems to confirm the interpretation in which Lolita is the cause and reason of Humbert's crime, instead of the victim. Readers have empathized and sympathized with Humbert Humbert to such an extent that "critics sometimes see Lolita exclusively from Humbert's perspective—as an archetypal temptress, a modern-day femme fatale" (Goldman 87). When going along with Humbert's narration without second thought, this perception is explainable, and yet objectionable. Patnoe asks, rightfully: "Why isn't the definition of 'Lolita' 'a molested adolescent girl' instead of a 'seductive' one?" (83). This partially has to do with Humbert's successful manipulation techniques, as a result of which the readers feel more sympathy for the narrator than for his victim.

In a sense, Lolita as a novel acts towards its readers as a pedophile towards a small child. Humbert Humbert "grooms" us, as well as Lolita. Child grooming refers to the building of trust and emotional connection with a child for the purpose of sexually assaulting them. We can see this happening in Lolita with the interaction between Humbert and Lolita, and Lolita's admiration for Humbert, Lolita becomes infatuated with Humbert, which is arguably best seen in the poster in her room: "A full-page ad ripped out of a slick magazine was affixed to the wall above the bed ... It represented a dark-haired young husband with a kind of drained look in his Irish eyes. ... Lo had drawn a jocose arrow to the haggard lover's face and had put, in block letters: H.H." (Nabokov 76). By living in the Haze household. Humbert is able to groom not only Lolita but her mother as well, which is so successful that they get married. As mentioned previously, there are many characteristics to Humbert Humbert that function to portray him as a sensible human being, albeit with a small predicament. Out of the several aspects of his complex character, his self-awareness and his apparent helplessness are arguably his most effective means of grooming the readers of *Lolita* into eventually forgiving him. In the very first chapter of the novel, Humbert states: "You can always count on a murderer for a fancy prose style" (Nabokov 7), exhibiting the self-awareness and humor that often collide in Humbert's narration. Because of Humbert's clear and disconnected descriptions of his behavior, in combination with his acknowledgement of his own evil, the reader disconnects as well and thus finds his actions to become understandable. A large component of this disconnection is Humbert's helplessness in his pedophilia. From the start, he explains how his sexual deviance, and thus his crime, is something that happens to him, outside of his control. As Whiting puts it: "... [nymphets are endowed] with a certain agency; through it they are capable, indeed given to, acting upon Humbert, bewitching him, mounting an assault against which he is defenseless" (842). Humbert claims "Humbert Humbert tried hard to be good. Really and truly, he did" (Nabokov 19), strongly suggesting that he is not to blame for the times that he was bad. This way, Humbert steps away from the responsibility of his crime and partially puts the blame on the 'magic' of nymphets, instead - and encourages readers to believe he is uncontrollably lead on by his passion, unable to resist the assault he commits. Humbert grooms his readers, calling upon their empathy by suggesting that despite being aware of his evil, he has no control over it. In a sense, it could happen to anyone, no matter how good of a person they are.

Lolita could potentially help its readers understand the ins and outs of a pedophile's mind: and yet, it remains disputable whether or not this is the desired effect. Arguably, as a society, there is no need to understand or sympathize with the actions of a pedophile. Instead, these actions are rightfully condemned. Behavior like that of Humbert Humbert should not be disregarded in light of his personality, which is precisely the danger of Lolita when it is casually read. To prevent Humbert from manipulating his readers, the novel should always be read critically. A type of resistant reading must be applied to the story in order to inhibit a sense of sympathy for the pedophile and his crime. "Resistant reading" refers to a way of reading that consciously goes against, and resists, the text's "dominant reading"; in a sense reading the text against itself. This particular technique does not disrupt the reader's pleasurable experience of the novel, as it is still entirely possible to enjoy the literary quality, the friction between the beautiful style and beastly subject, and even the characterization of the pedophile and its victim, but it additionally proposes to continuously be aware of the reality of the fiction. An aspect of this is the realization that Humbert Humbert is an unreliable narrator, and since the story is told from his perspective only, there is no way to know whether what he recalls truly occurred in that sense. Still, this condition is not as simple as it may seem, as Booth puts it: "Can we really be surprised that readers have overlooked Nabokov's ironies in Lolita when Humbert Humbert is given full and unlimited control over the rhetorical resources?" (qtd. in Phelan 222). Evidently, it takes a concentrated, critical, and resistant reading of the novel for any reader, attentive or casual, to not fall into the manipulative traps set by Nabokov's narrator.

Any reader of Nabokov's classic *Lolita* should be aware of the implications of the novel and resistant to being manipulated by Humbert's charm. Some might find it significant to understand that Humbert Humbert is, despite his crimes and insensitive treatment of a child, above all human. Through that reading, a sense of understanding and empathy seems unavoidable for the "poor doomed" Humbert, since what happens to him could happen to any unfortunate human being. However, there is a considerate danger to reading the narrative this way: forgiving Humbert Humbert's revolting rapes, disregarding his capital crimes, and characterizing Lolita as the conductor of her own assault. With the current rise of the "#MeToo" movement, and the growing number of women speaking out about the assaults they have experienced, it is more important than ever to understand the effects of victim-blaming. Humbert should be held responsible for his actions despite his

sympathetic humanity. Any reader should strongly resist the pedophile's pleas for understanding, like these:

Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, the majority of sex offenders that hanker for some throbbing, sweet-moaning, physical but not necessarily coital, relation with a girl-child, are innocuous, inadequate, passive, timid strangers who merely ask the community to allow them to pursue their practically harmless, so-called aberrant behavior, their little hot wet private acts of sexual deviation without the police and society cracking down upon them. (Nabokov 98)

Instead of taking Humbert's words in agreement, readers should realize the reality of the plot: Humbert's pursuits are not "practically harmless". In reading *Lolita*, there should never be a moment in the reader's mind where the pedophile's crimes towards a small child are forgotten or disregarded.

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BOY AND GIRL AT CAHERA

Boy and Girl at Cahera, Illustrated London Nws, X, 1847



Young Ireland in Business for Himself," Punch, 1846



Illustrated London News, December 22, 1849

Max Trommelen

Paddy and the Irish Famine: The influence of English stereotypes of the Irish on aid during the Great Famine, 1845-49

--The Irish are the niggers of Europe, lads.

They nearly gasped: it was so true.

--An' Dubliners are the niggers of Ireland. The culchies have fuckin' everythin'. An' the northside Dubliners are the niggers o' Dublin.

-----Say it loud, I'm black an' I'm proud.

While this quote from Roddy Doyle's book *The Commitments* can hardly be seen as the most reliable academic source, it does hint at an overarching issue: the Irish people have been victims of oppression by the British colonial empire, much like non-white people. The tradition of seeing the Irish as "white barbarians" has become a fairly popular topic of discussion in academia but can become problematic, as Doyle's quote aptly demonstrates. G.K. Peatling, a critical voice in this debate, stated that equating the Irish to non-white oppressed populations demeans the struggles, present and past, of both groups.² Additionally, this racialisation comes with a generalisation that neglects differences within a group, as well as with certain anachronisms. Following these problematic properties of the debate, this paper will not focus on how English stereotypes about the Irish tie in to discussions about race but will rather focus on the image and stereotypes the English had of the Irish embodied in the idea of the Paddy, a nickname derived from the Irish name Pádraig.

In a similar vein, it is important to discuss the use of colonialism in this context. A heated debate rages on whether or not Ireland was truly a colony of Great Britain. The term "colony" and its derivatives have been adopted by Irish nationalist movements and as such are endowed with strong political and negative connotations. These connotations have been strengthened by the evolution of how colonialism came to be seen in modern academic discourse. In the past, colonialism was a political process that did not engender any specific values. Colonialism was seen as the spread of Western civilization and

¹ Roddy Doyle, The Commitments, (New York: Penguin Books, 1992), 13.

² G.K. Peatling, "The Whiteness of Ireland Under and After the Union", *Journal of British Studies*, 44, (2015): 1, 116.

peace to areas that were not able to civilize themselves. Needless to say, this narrative was popular in, and carried by, the colonizing empires of Europe. The connotations of "colonialism" shifted when the debate on decolonization became more present and subaltern voices came to be heard. In this discourse "colony" implies the existence of a nation guilty of causing this situation, and hence, one that should formally apologize and, in some cases, pay reparations or take other measures to make up for this nation's colonial past. As such, very few western nations formally admit to their imperial past. Colonialism has, like the idea of the barbaric Irish, become a political tool.

However, despite there being no popular nor academic consensus of Ireland having been a colony, in this essay I will use the terms "colony" and "colonialism" to refer to English exploits in Ireland throughout the nineteenth century. This decision was made to induce clarity of a kind in this essay. Constantly re-defining and nuancing the concept would be detrimental to the argument made in this paper. The definition of "colony" used throughout this paper is the one given by Robert J.C. Young in his work *Empire, Colony, Postcolony*. He defines a colony as a territory controlled by a foreign power and colonialism as "the system, practice, and principles of administration of colonies under colonial rule". Following these definitions, the concept of colony and colonialism can be applied to Ireland.

English colonialism in Ireland goes back some eight centuries with the English presence in Ireland tracing back to the Norman conquests in the twelfth century, though it only intensified in the early seventeenth century with the establishment of the Ulster plantations under King James VI and I. Throughout this time, divisions of a political, religious and cultural nature have come and gone between the native Irish and the settling English, oftentimes accompanied with violence. This paper will focus on English colonialism in Ireland in the first half of the nineteenth century. This period was chosen for two reasons. Firstly, because Ireland officially became part of Great Britain in this time period. While the English had significant influence over Ireland through the nominally independent Irish Parliament in the centuries before, the Acts of Union of 1800 and 1801 marked the formal rule of the English Crown and the Parliament of Westminster over Ireland. This transition from informal to formal domination is a watershed in Irish history. Secondly, the first half of the nineteenth century is significant because of the Great Famine of Ireland from 1845 to 1849. Mass starvation and mass emigration to industrial cities in England and Scotland or

³ Robert J.C., Young, Empire, Colony, Postcolony, (Wiley Blackwell, 2015) 15, 54.

to the United States, decimated the Irish population. The English government failed to provide sufficient relief for the starving Irish population, leading to Irish nationalists framing the Famine as a (cultural) genocide.

At the dawn of the nineteenth century the Irish, or Paddies, had accumulated a number of negative stereotypes connected to their barbarity and their lack of civilisation. They were seen as violent, extremely poor, primitive and Catholic, amongst other things. The seeming contradiction between Catholicism on the one hand and the sense of primitivism on the other requires some explanation. Therefore this paper will first explain how the Irish stereotypes present in the nineteenth century evolved. After this theoretical framework is given, I will move on to an analysis of English thinking about the Irish during the Great Famine.

The origins of Paddy

To fully understand the anti-Irish racism present in nineteenth century Great Britain, a more comprehensive discussion of the origins of these sentiments is necessary. The dichotomy between barbarism on the one end and civilisation has been present throughout the eight centuries from the first Norman invasions of Ireland to the current status of Northern Ireland as part of the United Kingdom. Irish history is rife with conflicts with the English but in this chapter, I will describe this dichotomy at the hand of key moments in Irish history before the Acts of Union of 1800 and 1801. These moments will be the Norman invasions of the twelfth century, the beginnings of the Ulster Plantations in the end of the sixteenth century, the Rebellion of 1641, and the Irish migration to England that increased after said rebellion.

Robbie McVeigh and Bill Rolston argue that this dichotomy goes back to the writings of Gerald of Wales and the twelfth century Norman invasion of Ireland.⁴ Gerald of Wales (L. Giraldis Cambrensis) was a Christian monk and clerk to King Henry II of England. That the Irish were not considered civilized was due to their lifestyle and general historical context. At the time, Ireland was home to semi-nomadic tribes who for part of the year followed their herds around, each ruled by a king with a high king presiding over all. England, on the contrary, was a strictly regulated, feudal kingdom. The feudal system had connections to Continental Europe, then considered to be the civilized world, but the connection to the Roman Empire also played a role. Ireland had, unlike England and France (the homeland of the Normans) escaped Roman conquest

⁴ Robby McVeigh and Bill Rolston, "Civilising the Irish", Race & Class, 51, (2009): 1, 9

and thus had no connection to the ideas of civilization that the Roman Empire had carried.⁵ The popes described the Irish as an "ignorant and barbarous people" that had to be civilized.⁶ Thus, the Norman English had an ideological cause for invading Ireland. Cambrensis, who had visited Ireland during one of these military expeditions, solidified this ideology in his book *Expurgnatio Hibernica* (Conquest of Ireland). In this work he states that "[the Irish are] indeed a most filthy race, a race sunk in vice, a race more ignorant than all other nations of the first principles of the faith."⁷

Cambrensis' work retained its value when in the following centuries a "civilizing" process took place in Ireland. Gaelic lords were persuaded to surrender to the English and this group, later to be known as the Old English. became the new elite. Christianity spread through Ireland and while there were still followers of the old religions, the Catholic Church became increasingly important. Yet, when the Plantations were set up at the end of the sixteenth century, there was still talk of the Irish being uncivilized.8 There were two main streams of thought as to how this was still the case: firstly, the Irish could improve but needed strong English guidance or, secondly, Irish barbarism was an inherent characteristic of the Irish populace. The first view was to become the most popular view: major supporters included the Catholic Church, Sir John Davies and Edmund Spenser. Edmund Spenser was a poet who came to Ireland while in the employ of the Lord Deputy of Ireland and stayed there as one of the new Plantation settlers. His work A View of the Present State of Irelande is a dialogue that demeans anything Irish. The Irish people were described as "being a poeple altogether stubborn and vntamed and, if it were once tamed, yet now lately having quite shaken of ther yoke and broken the bands of ther obedience", the Brehon laws, the Irish law system, was "a most wicked lawe" and speaking the Irish language was the "cause of many evills".10 Where Spenser promoted eradicating Irish culture, even going as far as to

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⁵ W.L. Warren, (2000). Henry II, (New Haven, U.S.: Yale University Press, 2000) https://books.google.nl/books?hl=nl&lr=&id=C8KrkVOxaToC&oi=fnd&pg=PP18&dq=warren+king+henry&ots=Qqxzz8t5YP&sig=_vdsi1MdGRx_KzWHFc1kbS-mEXY#v=onepage&q&f=false accessed on June 9, 2019.

⁶ McVeigh and Rolston, "Civilising", 10

⁷ Gerald of Wales, *The History and Topography of Ireland* (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1988 [1185]), p. 134: as cited in McVeigh and Rolston

⁸ McVeigh and Rolston, "Civilising", 11-12

⁹ McVeigh and Rolston, "Civilising", 11-12

¹⁰ Edmund Spenser, *A View of the present State of Ireland*, (1596) https://celt.ucc.ie//published/E500000-001/ accessed on June 9, 2019.

propose a scorched earth tactic, John Davies, the later Attorney General of Ireland, spoke scathingly over the Old English who failed in subduing the Irish: "Ireland long since might have been subdued and reduced to civility if some statesmen in policy had not thought it more fit to continue that realm in barbarism." Indeed, Davies cites Cambrensis in his work as well.

Spenser and Davies were not the only persons who believed that harsh action was the key to Ireland's becoming civilized: a series of harsh new laws was implemented to prevent all Irish habits that were considered uncivilized.¹³ The idea that English colonialism brings civilization, so common in the studies of the other English colonies, became more clearly present in Ireland as well. The repression of Irishness through these laws led to another Irish rebellion in 1641 which was brutally put down. Interestingly enough, this Rebellion was not represented as barbarians rising up; rather it was a conflict of religion.¹⁴ The death counts of the Ulster Massacres that marked the first months of the Rebellion were immensely inflated: English propaganda claimed that Irish Catholics murdered more than 150,000 English Protestants, despite the fact that there were only about 20,000 English settlers in Ulster. 15 These massacres were said to be caused by Catholicism, "the mother of treason and rebellion, the sin of witchcraft, murder, and all other abominations, and will shortly appear, even to themselves, to be the daughter of Anti-Christ" as some pamphleteers made it out to be.¹⁶ It was at this time that the image of the Irish barbarians made an interesting turn: Irish Catholicism became part of the reason why the Irish were considered barbarians. This was largely a consequence of *The Irish* Rebellion, a book written by Sir John Temple. In this book he describes the events of the Rebellion of 1641, including the massacres, at the hand of depositions. With eyewitness accounts to guide him, the image he paints of the Irish was that of a crazed religious fanatic.¹⁷ This image was strengthened by

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¹¹ McVeigh and Rolston, "Civilising", 13; John Davies, A Discovery of the true causes why Ireland was never entirely subdued, (1612), 218,

https://celt.ucc.ie//published/E610003/index.html, accessed on June 9, 2019.

¹² Davies, A Discovery, 218

¹³ McVeigh and Rolston, "Civilising", 11-14

¹⁴ Patrick J. Cormish "The Rising of 1641 and the Catholic Confederacy, 1641-5", in *Early Modern Ireland 1534-1691, Vol. 3, A New History of Ireland* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), 289.

¹⁵ McVeigh and Rolston, "Civilising", 14-15

¹⁶ Ethan Howard Shagan, "Constructing Discord: Ideology, Propaganda, and English Responses to the Irish Rebellion of 1641", *Journal of British Studies* 36, (1997): 1, 9 ¹⁷ McVeigh and Rolston, "Civilising", 15

Oliver Cromwell mainly dispossessing Catholics during his time in Ireland and by the conflicts the English had with the Catholic nations of Spain and France. Temple even went as far as to describe the Rebellion of 1641 as a popish conspiracy against England.

In the period from the Rebellion of 1641 to the Acts of Union, Irish migration to England and Wales became an important factor in how the stereotypes of the Irishmen developed. Fleeing poverty in their home country, the Irish ended up in the slums of cities like Liverpool and Manchester. 18 Their flight had little positive effects for the Irish became outcasts of English society, living in the worst slums of the English industrial cities.¹⁹ Soon the nicknames Paddy and Mick came into being to describe all stereotypes associated with the Irish. The Paddy was a hard-drinking, dirty, violent, Catholic, primitive and extremely poor Irishman.²⁰ Perry Curtis argues that the negative characteristics of the Paddy were also present in how they were portrayed, namely as brutish apes.²¹ The Report on the state of the Irish poor in Great Britain, released in 1836, stated that the Irish "[were] an example of a less civilised community spreading themselves (...) beneath a more civilized community, and, without excelling in any branch of industry, obtaining possession of all the lowest departments of manual labour".22 The idea of the Irish barbarian synergised with the stereotypes related to the extremely poor.

Early stereotypes about the Irish were connected to barbarism because they were semi-nomadic and had no connection to the Roman Empire, the great civilization that medieval society longed back to. An additional factor was that the island had not yet been Christianized. At the time of the Ulster Plantations, the Irish had increasingly become Christian but not yet civilized. The English who had settled in Ireland after the Norman conquests had not sufficiently civilized the Irish and had instead become more barbarous themselves by assimilating into Irish society. To civilize the Irish increasingly harsh measures were instituted leading to the Rebellion of 1641. Through pamphlets and texts released about this Rebellion and its horrors, Catholicism became an integral

¹⁸ Roger Swift, "The Outcast Irish in the British Victorian City: Problems and Perspectives", Irish Historical Studies, 25, (1987): 99, 264.

¹⁹ Swift, "Outcast Irish", 265

²⁰ Swift, "Outcast Irish", 265.

²¹ Kevin Kenny, "Race Violence and Anti-Irish Sentiment in the Nineteenth Century", in *Making the Irish America: History and Heritage of the Irish in the United States*, ed. Joseph Lee and Marion R. Casey, (New York: New York University Press, 2006) 364-365.

²² Cited in: Swift, "Outcast Irish", 266.

part of the image of the uncivilized Irish barbarian. When Irish immigration to industrial England started, this image, now nicknamed the Paddy, was further expanded to include the stereotypes of the extremely poor.

Paddy and the Great Famine

When in 1845 the potato blight struck Ireland, it was the start of a four year period that would reduce the Irish population by a quarter. ²³ It is estimated that of the 8 million inhabitants of Ireland, 1 million died of starvation and disease while another million emigrated to the United States and England. With Ireland officially a part of Great Britain since the Acts of Union, the English government were forced to act. Yet, as explained earlier, the Irish had accumulated quite a bad reputation and were considered lesser people in England. The response of the English government and the public response varied between two points: on the one hand there was a feeling that the English should help the Irish, on the other hand there was a sense of unwillingness to help because the Famine might solve the "Irish question". This chapter will focus on the different views on aiding the Irish during the famine and how they relate to the stereotype of the Paddy as described earlier.

The initial response to the failing potato harvests was one of pity and giving aid and was indeed reasonably successful in aiding the Irish.²⁴ Robert Peel, the premier at the time, had arranged to buy maize from the United States to be brought to Ireland.²⁵ He also lobbied for the repeal of the Corn Laws, as this would reduce the price of bread in Ireland. The lack of support for this move cost him his ministry, but since the Opposition was not able to make their own ministry, he stayed on as premier. In a speech made on January 22, 1846, Peel again argued for the repeal of the Corn Laws.²⁶ In this speech he makes a moral argument that Britain should help their sister kingdom, to serve the Sovereign and their country and to help the laborious classes. This moral argument to help was carried in other places in England. The inhabitants of Birmingham, a city with Irish slums, figured that the situation in Ireland "demands the warmest and most active sympathy of every Christian and benevolent heart" while the

²³ Michael de Nie, *The Eternal Paddy: Irish Identity and the British Press, 1798-1882*, 2004, 82 [Ebook]

²⁴ De Nie, The Eternal Paddy, 82.

²⁵ De Nie, The Eternal Paddy, 82.

 $^{^{26}}$ "Sir Robert Peel's speech on the repeal of the Corn Laws: January 22, 1846", last modifier March 4, 2016 http://www.historyhome.co.uk/polspeech/corn.htm , accessed on June 10, 2019.

Observer told the story of a rich officer visiting the poor district in Oughterard, Ireland, and being moved to kindness and pity by what he saw.²⁷ This theme of pity very much lends itself to a colonial interpretation of the English bringing peace and prosperity to a lesser people. The Famine as a divine sign was carried broadly in politics and media at the time. Peel described the Famine as "a great visitation of Providence" and the meeting in Birmingham was led by members of the clergy. In these instances, the English were given a task by God to help out the Irish. Yet in certain newspapers, noticeably *the Times*, a providentialist approach was used to frame the Famine as God's way of punishing the Irish for failing in their faith.²⁸

The pity the English had for the Irish also speaks to an aspect of the Paddy, namely their immense poverty. In pictures drawn for contemporary newspapers, the Irish were dressed in rags and looked dirty. A popular example of this is the sketch of *A boy and girl at Cahera*, published in the *Illustrated London News* (See Appendix).²⁹ The subjects of the sketch are two children scavenging for potatoes to quiet their hunger. The dishevelled hair, torn clothing and smudged faces show the immense poverty and the artist notes in the commentary that "not far from the spot where I made this sketch, is another of the many sepulchres above ground, where six dead bodies had lain for twelve days".³⁰ The children do not yet look emaciated yet. In another drawing in the same newspaper, a mother and her two children are depicted in a further stage of malnourishment (See Appendix).³¹ *Bridget O'Donnel and her Children* shows a mother with thin limbs because of malnourishment who was evicted from her house.

The disgust of the Irish strongly came to the fore in the thoughts of Charles Trevelyan. He was put in charge of relief management in Ireland under

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 $^{^{27}}$ "The Famine In Ireland." Times, February 9, 1847, 8. The Times Digital Archive, http://link.galegroup.com.proxy.library.uu.nl/apps/doc/CS135822409/GDCS?u=utrec ht&sid=GDCS&xid=6ea9c902. accessed June 10, 2019.; "FAMINE IN IRELAND." The Observer (1791-1900), Jul 05, 1824. https://search-proquest-com.proxy.library.uu.nl/docview/473868465?accountid=14772 . accessed June 10, 2019.

²⁸ De Nie, The Eternal Paddy, 86-87

 $^{^{29}}$ "Boy and Girl at Cahera", $Illustrated\ London\ News,$ X, 1847, https://viewsofthefamine.wordpress.com/image-index/boy-and-girl-at-cahera/ , accessed on June 10, 2019.

^{30 &}quot;Boy and Girl at Cahera"

³¹ "Bridget O'Donell and her Children", *Illustrated London News*, XV, 1849, http://carmichaeldigitalprojects.org/ireland/items/show/2, accessed on June 10, 2019.

the Whig government that followed Peel's resignation in 1846.³² Trevelyan was a proponent of *laissez-faire* economics and believed that the Relief Works he was assigned to were doomed to fail: "If the people were retained on the works, their land must remain uncultivated; if they were put off the works, they must starve." Trevelyan believed that the Relief Works "threatened to become a gigantic system or permanently supporting one portion of the community at the expense of the remainder" and so he shut down the Relief programmes Peel had instituted in 1846.³⁴ He did not have much hope for Ireland to begin with, after all "[w]hat hope is there for a nation that lives on potatoes?" For Trevelyan, Ireland's need of potatoes and the characteristics of its inhabitants, namely "poverty, discontent, and idleness, acting of his excitable nature, produced that state of popular feeling which furnished the material for every description of illegal association and misdirected political agitation", were the reasons the Famine was as bad as it was.³⁵

Trevelyan was not alone in believing that the Irish became dependent on governmental aid. *The Times* claimed that the Irish peasants "had tasted of famine and found that it was good."³⁶ The image of the violent Paddy was influential during the famine, with some people believing that the Irish would use the money from the Relief Works to buy weaponry.³⁷ *Young Ireland in Business For Himself*, a *Punch* cartoon, visualised this fear in a cartoon of two apelike Irishmen, selling and buying guns (See Appendix).³⁸ The "little pistols for pretty little children" suggests that the violent nature of the Paddy was an inborn trait, a statement that is supported by the Irishmen's visual features. Young Ireland was an Irish nationalist movement active in the mid-nineteenth century who believed they could reach their goals of an independent Ireland without violence.³⁹ That the movement was depicted as being equally violent as past movements shows both ignorance of the Irish political climate as well as how set the English were in their views. Followers of this view would have thought themselves vindicated when the Young Irelanders rebelled in 1848 in a

³² De Nie, *The Eternal Paddy*, 82-83, 109

³³ Charles Trevelyan, The Irish Crisis, (1648) 63-64,

https://celt.ucc.ie/published/E840001-002/text001.html, accessed on June 10, 2019.

³⁴ Trevelyan, The Irish Crisis, 67

³⁵ Trevelyan, The Irish Crisis, 6

³⁶ Times, 22 Sept. 1846. Cited in: De Nie, The Eternal Paddy, 109

³⁷ De Nie, The Eternal Paddy, 109-111

^{38 &}quot;Young Ireland in Business for Himself," Punch, 1846

³⁹ D. N. Petler, "Ireland and France in 1848." *Irish Historical Studies* 24, (1985): 96, 494. http://www.jstor.org/stable/30008757.

rebellion that never came off the ground.⁴⁰ That by this time Relief Works had been shut down for two years and that the most prominent members of the movement were of the higher classes rather the famished labourers who in reality received the aid, did not matter.

The stereotypes of the Paddy outed themselves in two major ways: pity and distrust. Some Englishmen saw it as their moral duty to help the Irish. This moral obligation came from the fact that the English considered it their task as a civilized people as well as the fact that it was considered a Christian demand to do so. The Famine was also a confirmation that the Irish had failed in their faith. When Robert Peel resigned, aid to Ireland landed in a downward spiral. The following Whig government, represented by Charles Trevelvan in Ireland. believed in the philosophy of *laissez-faire* and believed that supporting the Irish with monetary aid would result in them becoming lazy and dependent on the government. There was also the fear that the Irish would use the money for violent purposes. Thus, English politics and its press made use of the stereotypical Paddy in different ways, depending on their political views but the image of a violent, lazy and poor Irish barbarian had once again outed itself.

Conclusion

English sentiments on the Irish never were very positive. Even before the Normans set foot in Ireland, the Irish were considered uncivilized and savage. The Christinization of the Irish did not impact this stereotype greatly: the barbaric attributes of the Irish merged with Catholicism to transform the Irish into crazed religious fanatics, a prejudice that the English saw realised in the many Irish rebellions, most prominently in the Uprising of 1641. That Catholicism, in other areas of the world considered a civilizing force, became a negative character trait becomes clear when looking at the historical context: England was engaged in conflict with Catholic nations and believed their Irish catholic neighbours to be a threat. When these neighbours emigrated to England to become staple inhabitants of industrial slums, Catholicism became vet another signifier of difference between the English and the Irish. No longer pure religious fanatics, the Catholic Irish instead were poor, drunk, violent, and generally considered primitive and backwards by English standards.

It is no small wonder that when the Great Famine came around, the English reaction was divided. Was it the moral obligation of the civilized, Christian English to help their less fortunate neighbours, much like the English

40 Petler, "Ireland and France in 1848.", 505.

had sought to bring civilization to other colonies, or was the Famine the embodiment of divine retribution, brought about to punish the Irish for their wicked ways? Whether one considered the Irish to be pitied or as the object of disgust, it became clear that the Irish were not quite as civilized, as good, as the English. Poor Paddy, caught in Catholic backwardness, ruled by the vices of alcohol, utterly unable to civilize himself and thus stuck in his violent barbarism was a passive actor, the object of the English subject, only there to highlight English moral, political, and social superiority. Or so the stereotypes would have you believe.

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Gescheiden door louter lucht Klimmend naar fruit, licht of geluk

De appel van Adam Het gemis van Eva Rijp van binnen dood van buiten

Wortels rottend in het zuur van de twijfel

De witte duif werpt al vluchtende Een schaduw op zij die vallen

De grond bereikend barst het gekreun Als een eerste liefde zonder enige steun

In de bitterzoete helderheid na de laatste zucht

Mis ik je

Maar groei ik als hout gewoon terug

– Daniel van Wyngaarden

Patrick van Oosterom

A Very Short Introduction: What is T.S. Eliot's "The Waste Land" exactly?

Eliot's "The Waste Land" is one of the most important works in English literature and was published in 1922. It is notoriously difficult to read because it constantly shifts between different speakers, locations, and times, and contains many (now obscure) allusions to other works of literature and mythology. The poem is divided into five sections, and, although the poem lacks a traditional, coherent narrative, the main tone of the poem is one of mourning. It discusses the demise of a civilisation and the destruction of a landscape. Important returning elements in the poem are a multitude of spiritual and pagan symbols, such as the Holy Grail, the Fisher King, Arthurian legends, and Tarot cards. Eliot was highly influenced by Jessie L. Weston's "From Ritual to Romance" and James George Frazer's "The Golden Bough," which are studies in comparative religion and mythology. The texts that are studied in these two works observe a recurring pattern of death and rebirth that is part of a long line of cultural heritage. In "The Waste Land," the Fisher King has become impotent, and because he represents the land, the whole land has become infertile. According to the myth, the Fisher King needs others to perform a very specific ritual in order to regenerate the land, and what "The Waste Land" seems to suggest is that non-Western cultural influences are needed for regeneration. The poem famously ends with three Sanskrit words from the Upanishads (which will be discussed further in this paper): "Shantih shantih shantih" (T.S. Eliot line 434).

"I sat upon the shore Fishing, with the arid plain behind me Shall I at least set my lands in order? London Bridge is falling down falling down falling down Poi s'ascose nel foco che gli affina *Quando fiam uti chelidon*—O swallow swallow Le Prince d'Aquitaine à la tour abolie These fragments I have shored against my ruins" (T.S. Eliot lines 424-30).

¹ The speaker is the voice behind the poem, the one who produces the verse.

Heteroglossia: The Linguistic Amalgam of T.S. Eliot's "The Waste Land"

Modernist poet Ezra Pound influenced T.S. Eliot's "The Waste Land" in uncountable ways. Pound helped to revise Eliot's draft of "The Waste Land" until it looked like the poem that was finally published in 1922. The original epigraph to the poem was a citation from Conrad's Heart of Darkness, but Pound remarked: "I doubt if Conrad is weighty enough to stand the citation" (qtd. in V. Eliot 125). Eliot changed it to an excerpt from Petronicus' Satyricon: "Nam Sibvllam quidem Cumis ego ipse oculus meis vidi in ampulla pendere, et cum illi pueri dicerent: Σιβνλλα τι θελεισ respondebat illa: αποθανειν θελω" (Τ. S. Eliot 834). This half-Latin and half-Greek quote roughly translates to: "[flor once I myself saw with my own eyes the Sibyl at Cumae hanging in a cage, and when the boys said to her 'Sibyl, what do you want?' she replied, 'I want to die" (T. S. Eliot 834). Petronius' Latin serves as an eve-witness report of the decaying Sybil of Cumae doomed to old age and trapped in her jar. Her own words, being Greek, are more deeply encoded compared to the relatively transparent Latin, and with this her desire of being released from temporality always recedes. This despairing epigraph accurately forms a mise en abîme for the poem it introduces.3 "The Waste Land" is concerned with the decay of Western culture, and the sense of fragmentation and chaos that is so prevalent in the age of modernity (Crews 19). Thematically, the Sibyl can be interpreted as a metaphor for the state of Western culture in the beginning of the twentieth century, as both are bound to live long, yet increasingly more ugly, old and forgetful as the years go by. Stylistically, the use of both the Latin and Greek languages and alphabets signify a kind of fragmentation and cultural diversity. The poem itself is extremely linguistically diverse, as it contains six different languages (English, Latin, Greek, French, German, Sanskrit), multiple variants of English speech types (formal, ungrammatical, slang, archaic), and several instances of contrived words such as onomatopoeias and glossolalia.4 Paul Douglass argues that the "The Waste Land" addresses "fears of deracination and corruption" of

² An epigraph is a short quotation or saying at the beginning of a book or chapter, intended to suggest its theme.

³ Mise en abîme is a formal technique of placing a copy of an image within itself.

⁴ Onomatopoeia: The formation of a word from a sound associated with what is named (e.g. cuckoo, sizzle).

Glossolalia: The phenomenon of (apparently) speaking in an unknown language.

a culture through the chaotic linguistic amalgam the poem presents, which he calls a "modern aesthetic of wreckage" (144). However, this fragmented aesthetic is not the cause of the decay of Western culture. The problem is not that the culture is fragmented, but that the origins of these fragments are on the brink of being forgotten by the whole upcoming generations. "The Waste Land" addresses the problem that is the disappearance of the awareness of the diverse cultural roots in the collective memory of society, to be specific, the Western European society at the beginning of the 20th century. The solution that the poem hints at through its deliberately diverse linguistic composition is regaining an awareness of the heteroglot and multilingual nature of our culture, which allows us to rediscover just what makes up the peculiar nature of individuals influenced by Western culture.

In order to fully understand the influence of the curious linguistic composition of "The Waste Land" it is necessary to examine the theoretical approaches to this composition. Every approach falls somewhere on a spectrum between the internal interpretation of the meaning of the composition (historical, etymological, contextual), versus the external interpretation that disregards the meaning of the composition and analyses external factors such as how it sounds and what it looks like. This dichotomy in reactions flows logically from the text: the text presents the reader with a plethora of words and phrases they either do not understand at all or can probably only faintly gauge the meaning of. This leaves the reader with roughly two options: either look up a translation of the phrase in question to try to understand the function of the reference on the one hand, or to investigate how the words feel, what they look like, and what kind of connotations they have on the other.

The latter approach to the poem can be investigated from multiple perspectives. D. C. Fowler approaches the foreign language quotations at the most elementary level, and describes them as having the gravitas of ancient spells (235). He compares them to the incantations used in Grail romances, where the protagonist was expected to "speak the proper words" in order to "bring about the restoration of life in himself and his environment" (235). Steven Kellman looks at the use of foreign languages from the same surficial, elementary level but from a different angle, namely that of translingualism, which he describes as "moving with if not through languages" (18). On the function of the diverse linguistic composition of "The Waste Land," Kellman writes that it aims "at a synoptic vision that transcends the limitations of any particular language" (22). He illustrates this statement with a more general description of the relationship between Modernism and translingualism, that

is, Modernists aspire to surpass their native language and to "transcend language in general, to be pandictic" (22). What Kellman thus suggests is that a necessity to know the meaning of all the words in Eliot's poem does not exist (22). It is enough to feel them, to know that these words express similar feelings, but in a way the reader cannot literally translate them. Kellman's translingual perspective and Fowler's incantation perspective are both rather radical in that they almost completely ignore the content, meaning, and context of the foreign language quotations. Kellman's own theory, however, can be applied in order to approach the poem from a slightly more meaning-oriented perspective.

Kellman discusses in his work authors who are in their own way involved with translingualism, such as authors who migrated to another country but still wrote in their native language. A type of author he did not discuss is one like Eliot, who moved from one part of the English-speaking world (Missouri, U.S.) to another (England, U.K.), and thus engages with differences within one language. Lesley Wheeler dissected a recording of T.S. Eliot reading "The Waste Land," and noticed the curious presence of Eliot delivering parts of the poem in a striking Cockney accent (470). Wheeler discusses how Eliot must have had a good understanding of the different English accents as he had had many lessons in elocution and he changed his accent from distinctly American to a placeless Transatlantic accent over the course of his lifetime (470). The part where Eliot performs line 138 to 173 in Cockney, and this interestingly coincides with a change in style. Eliot starts using slang words such as "demobbed" (line 139) and ungrammatical vernacular constructions such as "there's others will" (149) and "them pills" (159). This stylistic detail gives the reader further insight into the linguistic origins of the speaker of that particular part in the poem.

Another striking linguistic feature is the use of made-up words such as onomatopoeias and glossolalia. Examples of this are "ta ta" (171), "twit twit twit" (204), "[w]eialala leia" (276), and "la la" (306). Juan Suarez examined instances of this "obstreperous matter that will not yield meaning" (758). He concluded that these incorporations of noise of the outside world in the poem go beyond understanding, and that it becomes a moment of "pure externality, not a pathway to interiority" (759). Suarez concludes that these words are signifiers of sound, and pure sound only, used in the poem at moments that exemplify how, in the period of modernity, accompanying sounds of the hustle and bustle of daily life take precedence over the message of a desired act of communication. He argues that these words certainly signify something (the humming of a song, a chirping bird, etc.), but that it is not necessary to examine

further what they mean. The fact that they are there in the poem is enough (759).

While these four analyses that externally examine the languages and linguistic features in question are all valid critical interpretations, they all seem to overall fit rather strangely and poorly in juxtaposition to the thematic material of the poem.⁵ Consider the following: why would a poem that is principally concerned with the general public's increasing unawareness of cultural milestones from the past favour an analysis that mainly looks at the surface and exterior of its linguistic composition and disregard the context of said composition? From Eliot's point of view, an approach that prioritises an internal interpretation of the meaning of the linguistic composition would seem far more logical. Eliot added extensive footnotes to the first edition of "The Waste Land," and he did this for a valid reason. These detailed notes explain the source material which the poem is referencing. They seem to endow the privileges of a meaningful understanding of this complex poem on the learned reader who perhaps already understood the references or the active reader who wants to put the effort in and enlighten themselves with regards to the source material.

As an example of how the internal approach is much more rewarding than an external approach to linguistic variation in "The Waste Land," we can take the Sanskrit words Eliot uses from line 396 to the end of the poem. G. Nageswara Rao describes how these words "proved to be a stumbling block to the critics" (531). Multitudes of (predominantly Western) critics who did not possess an adequate amount of background knowledge of Indian literature tended to either "pass by" (Rao 531) their meaning (because to them it was already obvious that the Sanskrit words were part of some ancient ritual) or assumed that the Sanskrit words were part of the speaker's madness or hallucinative vision. One example of such a critic is A.D. Moody, who firmly stated that "the Sanskrit is meant not to be readily understood" (qtd. in Rao 532). However, Rao notices and neatly summarises an important issue most critics failed to explain in two questions: "Why should Eliot use the original Sanskrit words? What exactly do the words convey?" (532).

The main explanation Rao offers is that these words have characteristic associations and meanings integral to them which they acquired through their original use in the Upanishads, a famous set of Sanskrit texts that

 $^{^{\}scriptscriptstyle 5}$ Juxta position: The fact of two things being seen or placed close together with contrasting effect.

forms the basis of Hinduist philosophy (532). Rao elaborates on this when he remarks that had "Eliot translated [the Sanskrit words], they would not only have lost their scriptural identity and the air of specific origin of a great tradition, but also forfeited their whole wealth of evocative power and emotive value so appropriate to the texture of the verse and so indispensable to the intention of the poem" (532). In short, Eliot not only wanted them to literally mean these particular things, but he wanted to mean them in a specific way. Rao proceeds to describe the use and function of the Sanskrit words in the Upanishads (534). In this text, the offspring of Prajāpati, having completed their education, asks for the final secret that leads to a meaningful life on earth. Prajāpati then only utters the syllable da to the gods (devas), men (manuşyas), and demons (asuras), and asks them what they understood from it. For the devas it meant damyata ("control yourself"), for manuşyas it meant datta ("give"), and for asuras it meant dayadhvam ("be compassionate") (534).

Rao remarks how the most significant conclusion of this anecdote is that the same syllable communicates something entirely different depending on who is listening (534). Prajāpati's cryptic and multifaceted way of communication arguably inspired Eliot. By including them in "The Waste Land," he not only increased the linguistic diversity of the poem, but furthermore found a poetic method of communicating exactly how meaningful truths vary among individuals. After pondering on these remarkable words, the speaker of the poem thinks for the first time about setting "my lands in order" (line 436), after which he rapidly starts collecting similar fragments – all in different languages - that they have shored against their "ruins" (431). Rao argues that although these fragments may seem broken and arbitrary, they are most certainly not. He remarks how Eliot, who studied ancient Indian philosophy and literature at Harvard, said of his own poetry that it showed "the influence of Indian thought and sensibility" (qtd. in Rao 531). Eliot carefully curated and selected the literary fragments from languages around the world, and reproduced them in their original tongue and spelling with added footnotes, so they could be precisely traced to their source, yielding universal qualities in their border-transcending insights. Rao concludes with stating that "every one of these [fragments] presupposes the wisdom which dawns after realisation in a context similar, if not identical, to the present one. The fragments indicate the rebirth of hope in the decadence of the waste land" (537). Similar enlightening analyses could be performed for "Ganga" (line 396), "Himavant" (l. 398) or "Shantih" (l. 434), but for the shake of brevity, these shall be excluded from this paper.

Now that the linguistic and cultural meaning of the Sanskrit words has thoroughly been investigated and contextualised, it can be generalised that, on the whole, the implications obtained by careful examination of the origins of the linguistic variation in the poem are too import to dismiss. Their contribution to the overall tone of the poem is significant in that it elevates the poem from being a mere sombre elegy for a splintered culture to a more positive poem that, although rather confusing at first sight, provides a treasure trove of insightful, cross-cultural references. There is, however, still an undeniably sombre undertone to "The Waste Land." That undertone can be explained by the aforementioned sense of confusion that arises from a prima vista reading of the poem. For many readers, the footnotes are necessary in order to understand that Eliot quotes or adopts from Dante, Shakespeare, Wagner, the Bible, Virgil, Baudelaire, the Upanishads, and Kvd, among others. With this Eliot addresses the problem that is the disappearance of the awareness of the diverse cultural roots in the collective memory of society, to be specific, in the collective memory of Western European society at the beginning of the 20th century.

According to Brian Crews, this fits in with a general tendency in English poetry at that time (17). Crews describes how, in the shift towards Modernism, there was a "general loss of the historical sense or the sense of tradition of Western culture, that great repository of texts that each era has selected in order to give itself a foundation of predecessors. Tradition has in the West been a matter of actively seeking an intertextual relation with past text or texts" (17). Crews argues that Eliot's hyper-engagement with other texts in "The Waste Land" can be interpreted as a recognition that we "live in a world constituted by multiple kinds of discourses that both interfere and obliterate each other as well as compliment and complete each other" (18). This dependence on and engagement with intermingling systems of language and hybridisation certainly finds expression in Eliot's poem. As has been examined above, "The Waste Land" is a hybrid mix of social speech types, different languages, and other linguistic phenomena, and it expresses a diversity of individual voices. This notion was described in the 1980s by philosopher Michael Bakhtin, who termed it heteroglossia (Greek hetero – 'different', qlōssa - 'tongue, language') (Maher 17). Bakhtin poses that language contains voices of many others, and this concept of the mixed nature of speech defies the straight juxtaposition of monolingual versus multilingual: every utterance is aware of and mutually reflects another (Maher 17). Heteroglossia is a prominent feature in "The Waste Land," and in the text we find a set of individual voices and tongues that ideologically and mutually interact with each other.

In order to understand what the function of heteroglossia in "The Waste Land" is, we need to connect it with the overall theme of the poem: the decay of Western culture. Modernists like Eliot became aware of that what we know of the past is text, embodied in history and literature (Crews 18). Although the age of modernity may feel fragmentary, meaningless, and chaotic, Crews argues that "once this state of affairs is understood in terms of the heteroglot nature of language, literature, and culture, the artist is able to provide the text which can re-establish the links with the past and restore its significance" (18). A greater knowledge of the world in terms of texts, mythologies, recurring patterns, and allusions that correspond to contemporary experience can provide meaning to the present. It denies that the individual's current experience is radically different from the past and any past actions. The exact function of the striking heteroglossia is that it makes us painfully aware of our forgotten links with our past. The text infuses contemporary culture, which has largely cut itself off from the past, with said links, and this draws attention to, as Crews writes, "the fact that the present can be made significant by dramatizing the presentness of the past" (19). The poem wakes the readers out of a slumber of forgetfulness, and emphasises the importance of being aware of both collective and individual roots. Crews concludes there is a "cultural heritage that we have in common that can overcome fragmentation and isolation if our memory of it can be restored," and this cultural memory is represented through the wide variety of heteroglot voices in Eliot's poem (20).

All the theories that have hitherto been discussed surrounding heteroglossia, linguistic diversity, and cultural memory reverberate deeply in Eliot's literary and cultural criticism. In his essay "Tradition and the Individual Talent," published two years before he started drafting "The Waste Land," Eliot discusses the role of the poet (Cooper 147). He believes that a poet should not express their individual personality at all through their poetry, but rather become an objective medium that expresses a collective mind, to be specific, "the mind of Europe" (qtd. in Cooper 147). This mind of Europe is characterised by a transnational, multilingual tradition of thinking that originated on the continent in question, bound by the glue of mutually influencing languages that cut across national differences of thought (Cooper 147). In 1948, Eliot published a collection of cultural criticism called *Notes Towards the Definition of Culture*, in which he emphasises the importance of the unity of a shared European culture and literature (with some further cross-continental influences allowed,

for example Indian literature) (Cooper 153). As to the reason why this is so important, Eliot writes:

[t]hat no one nation, no one language, would have achieved what it has, if the same art had not been cultivated in neighbouring countries and in different languages. We cannot understand any one European literature without knowing a good deal about the others. When we examine the history of poetry in Europe, we find a tissue of influences woven to and fro. (...) The possibility of each literature renewing itself, proceeding to new creative activity, making new discoveries in the use of words, depends on two things. First, its ability to receive and assimilate influences from abroad. Second, its ability to go back and learn from its own sources (qtd. in Cooper 153).

Again the theme of cultural roots is distinctly present, and the argument made above stresses the interaction between and synthesis of sources shared in common and well-known across Europe (such as classical Latin and Greek literatures) and sources that are peculiarly its own (such as French symbolist poetry by Baudelaire and Verlaine). Eliot concludes that there must be "variety in unity" (qtd. in Cooper 155): Europe should avoid cultural isolation in order to keep its "spiritual organism" alive, that is, the interaction and development of similar ideas in different languages in Europe which allows for heterogeneous interpretations around a similar cultural framework (Cooper 155). It is precisely this paradox-like combination of linguistic separateness and cultural semi-homogeneity that thrives in "The Waste Land," in which ideas, sounds, and citations from all ages and linguistic backgrounds are incorporated.

In conclusion, "The Waste Land" addresses the disappearance of the awareness of the diverse cultural roots in the modernist era through its emphasis on the heteroglot and multilingual nature of culture, and its use of untranslated citations. The text presents cultural and individual identity as invariably linked, as a multifaceted system of overlapping, underlying, and mutually influencing discourses. Although "The Waste Land" is undeniably sombre and gloomy in tone, it is nonetheless a positive response to an environment which is perceived as sterile, chaotic, meaningless, and fragmented by providing a solution to a more meaningful existence, remarkably echoing the aforementioned anecdote from the Upanishads. This solution is grounded in reconstructing how, through all these different literary and

linguistic voices and tongues, one's own thoughts and personality were formed. When Eliot wrote in 1925 that "[n]eglect of Greek means for Europe a relapse into unconsciousness" (qtd. in Douglass 143) he not only addressed the mind of Europe and a shared translingual culture, but simultaneously all the individuals affected by it. Being aware of the heteroglot and multilingual nature of our culture allows us to rediscover just what makes up the peculiar nature of individuals influenced by Western culture.

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In gesprek met Jan Broersen over de plaats van Kunstmatige Intelligentie in de Utrechtse geesteswetenschappen

Wij als geesteswetenschappers hebben eigenlijk bijna geen verstand van Kunstmatige Intelligentie (KI). In Utrecht hoort de bachelor KI wel bij de geesteswetenschappen en in Nijmegen wordt de discipline onder de sociale wetenschappen geschaard.

Dat ligt iets gecompliceerder. KI heeft hier een meervoudige persoonlijkheid, omdat de bachelor een onderdeel is van de geesteswetenschappen, terwijl de master is aangesloten bij Informatica – een exacte wetenschap. De oorzaak kent een lange geschiedenis.

Jan Bergstra heeft de KI in Utrecht 'opgericht'. Hij was hoogleraar Informatica aan de UvA en hoogleraar toegepaste logica bij filosofie in Utrecht. Logica staat centraal in de filosofie en is tegelijkertijd de basismethode om over KI na te denken. KI is dan ook ontstaan uit het initiatief van vier hoogleraren uit de verschillende broedgroepen van Taalwetenschappen, Filosofie, Psychologie en Informatica, die allemaal iets met logica deden. Dit sluit aan bij 'Good Old Fashioned AI', waarbij een computer kennis over de wereld kan vergaren door middel van formules die in een computer worden gestopt. Bij het indelen van de vakgebieden is de logica thuis in de Filosofie, wat verklaart waarom KI hier tot de Geestenwetenschappen behoort.

Toch blijft het vreemd. De Utrechtse KI-afdeling begon in 1989 – als eerste KI-opleiding van Nederland. De professoren hebben nog geruzied over de vraag of KI niet altijd bij Informatica thuishoort, maar door Bergstra is uiteindelijk gekozen om de KI, met al haar filosofische proponenten, bij Filosofie te plaatsen. Op andere universiteiten is het inderdaad doorgaans onderdeel van Informatica, maar dat is niet per se de regel. Recentelijk zien we ook dat KI steeds meer op ons afkomt en ethische vraagstukken opwekt. Eigenlijk zitten we in Utrecht dus wel goed!

Toch zijn er weinig KI-studenten – ook bij het Honoursprogramma – die de filosofische kant op gaan. Wij zien daarmee een kloof ontstaan tussen KI'ers en de klassieke 'papieren' geesteswetenschappers. Maar er zijn dus meer draagvlakken dan we zien?

Ja, allereerst vanuit de logica, dus. Maar andere raakvlakken zijn de 'Philosophy of Mind' en sinds nog niet zo lang, de ethiek.

Dan zou je je ook kunnen afvragen: in hoeverre is er dan een connectie tussen KI en de taalwetenschappen? Hoewel papers erg fundamenteel zijn in de geesteswetenschappen, zijn ze dat vooralsnog niet bij KI. Maakt dit de kloof tussen beiden niet te groot?

Dat komt voornamelijk door de technische component van KI. Studenten hebben vaak alleen gewerkt met de formele en technische kanten van KI, waardoor zij weinig schrijfervaring hebben wanneer zij aan hun scriptie beginnen. Het programma van KI biedt eigenlijk te weinig ruimte om KI-studenten een gedegen paper te leren schrijven.

Is dat niet reden genoeg om te zeggen dat KI niet bij de geesteswetenschappen hoort?

Dat zou ik erg jammer vinden. Misschien wel, maar dan zou je ook zeggen dat logica niet bij de geesteswetenschappen hoort. Daarbij denk ik dat de positie van KI bij alfa juist steeds natuurlijk wordt, omdat de 'geesteswetenschappelijke' aspecten van KI belangrijker worden. Het vakgebied is natuurlijk in ontwikkeling. Tegelijkertijd moet je vaak ook de techniek begrijpen om sociale of ethische papers over KI te kunnen schrijven.

Een moeilijkheid van KI is juist dat het erg interdisciplinair is; je moet eigenlijk overal iets van af weten. Denk maar aan de vier bloedgroepen waar KI op is gebaseerd. Volgens mij is het goed dat er voornamelijk vanuit een filosofische invalshoek naar wordt gekeken in de Bachelor, want als het technisch wordt wil men niets van ethische vraagstukken weten; "Filosofen praten over KI, maar doen het niet" – is dan het verwijt. Toch zou een enkel technische insteek een verarming van het vak zijn. Je hebt die bredere blik nodig: wat is KI? Waar dient het toe? Waar gaat het heen?

Veel informatici kijken vooral naar de volgende 'benchmark' die behaald moet worden. De machine moet zo goed mogelijk presteren, maar wat dat betekent? Bij de praktijkgerichte master begrijp ik dit perspectief, maar in de bachelor is het niet wenselijk. Ik zou er zelfs voor pleiten die sociale en ethische aspecten in de Bachelor uit te breiden.

We hebben het nu over hoe KI zich naar de geesteswetenschappen beweegt. Er kan ook gesteld worden dat de andere geesteswetenschappen zich juist naar KI bewegen.

Ik denk dat de belangstelling vanuit de geesteswetenschappen voor KI groter is dan andersom. We zijn in Utrecht begonnen met 'Human-Centered AI'. Er wordt dus wel degelijk gekeken naar de maatschappelijke toepassingen van KI, maar dat is niet hetzelfde als contact tussen wetenschappers. De bewering dat informatici meer naar geesteswetenschappen kijken kan een vorm zijn van 'window dressing', waarmee onderzoek acceptabel wordt gemaakt voor wetgevers, geldverstrekkers en de samenleving.

Ik associeer Human-Centered AI met de Digital Humanities (DH). De grootste kritiek daarop is dat geesteswetenschappen uitsluitend door mensen kan worden uitgevoerd. Dus door voor een groot deel klassiekere geesteswetenschappers wordt waarschijnlijk sceptisch naar die DH gekeken, wellicht zelfs als bestaansrecht ontnemend.

Dat geloof ik direct. Binnen DH wordt KI gebruikt als een methode en bestuurd door een mens. Het is dus niet de robot die het onderzoek uitvoert. Anderzijds snap ik het scepticisme ook wel; we moeten niet de indruk wekken dat KI-tools het helemaal zelf zullen kunnen.

Is dat wel zo? De gemiddelde KI-er lijkt te geloven in een wereldwijde 'overname' van superieure KI; bij anderen speelt dit idee wat minder.

Dit conflict heb ik natuurlijk aan den lijve ondervonden. In de informatica deelt men veelal de gedachte dat computers dezelfde capaciteiten als mensen konden ontwikkelen. Bij Filosofie is de ontkenning daarvan doorgaans het geval. Dat is wel interessant, om in twee vakgebieden te zitten waar de mogelijkheden van KI compleet tegenovergesteld benaderd worden.

Zelf ben ik vrij sceptisch over de mogelijkheden van sterke KI. Voor mij volgt daar ook uit dat ik niet geloof in 'doomsday'-filosofen zoals Bostrom die het hebben over 'superintelligence'. Dat is soms lastig in interacties met studenten, want ik merk sterk dat veel KI-studenten erg optimistisch zijn over de mogelijkheden van KI – en dit neemt ook toe. Ik probeer ze daarover aan het twijfelen te brengen. Het is waardevol om ook kritische filosofen bij dit debat te betrekken.

Heeft KI niet veel eerder een dubbele lading? Beelden over de vervanging van mensen door robots roepen ook angsten op.

Dat maakt het ook complex! We moeten nadenken over hoe we KI positief kunnen inzetten. Maar je opvatting over hoeveel optimisme gerechtvaardigd is, hangt af van je filosofische metafysische positie. Het punt daarvan is dat je inziet dat er anders over gedacht kan worden: heel veel studenten hebben dat helaas nog niet, wat een beetje zorgwekkend is.

Ik begrijp dat KI-studenten zouden kunnen leren van de geesteswetenschappelijke twijfel. Zouden geesteswetenschappers ook iets van KI kunnen leren?

De methode: logica. Het gaat dan op het kunnen bewijzen van uitspraken, om concepten te kunnen formaliseren. Als je dan iets beweert, probeer dat dan via een theorema [red. bewijzen in wiskundige/logische term] dat het terrein waarover je het hebt reflecteert. Natuurlijk kun je ook vanuit taal een argument opzetten (zoals geesteswetenschappers dat doorgaans doen), maar hierbij is vaker onduidelijk wat er wordt bedoeld. Formele methoden geven je toch een handvat om anders met je studie om te gaan.

Ook kan een geesteswetenschapper argumenten explicieter maken door deze in een argumentatiestructuur te verwerken. Deze kan je eigenlijk zien als een model, met een 'bolletje' voor elk voor- en tegenargument. Door zo'n model worden argumenten duidelijk. Dit hoeft eigenlijk niet eens volgens de taal van de logica; visualisatie kan al helpen. Eigenlijk pleit ik nu voor een vorm van DH waar nog weinigen voor gepleit hebben.

Dit sluit aan bij waar we het al over gehad hebben: de kloof die we moeten dichten. Een groot deel van de klassiekere geesteswetenschappers zal toch vasthouden aan de hermeneutische, kwalitatieve manier van onderzoek doen? Is dit ook niet haar essentie?

Als je dat zegt komen we er ook niet uit. Je zegt dan eigenlijk: de geesteswetenschappen gaan over die methode, die interpretatie van taal en tekst. Als dat is hoe de geesteswetenschappen zijn, dan formuleer je het eigenlijk als complementair aan formele wetenschappen. Dan is het inderdaad triviaal dat KI en de geesteswetenschappen elkaar iets te bieden hebben, maar ik denk dat we best ruimer naar geesteswetenschappen kunnen kijken.

Ik kijk in wat ruimere geest naar de geesteswetenschappen. Ik ben niet getraind als geesteswetenschapper en vind dit dan ook een interessant vraag: wat hebben we elkaar te bieden?

We hebben het anderzijds ook wel gekscherend gehad over KI als 'infiltrant' van de geesteswetenschappen die ons naar DH hersenspoelt.

Ik zie dit anders. De maatschappelijke tendens is dat de wetenschapper niet meer op een voetstuk wordt geplaatst. Zij moeten zich rechtvaardigen, maar dat is juist een wapen. KI kan de geesteswetenschappers helpen met het rechtvaardigen van wat ze zijn. We zien grote veranderingen tegemoet met betrekking tot KI, maar het denken daarover moet je niet alleen aan informatici overlaten. Geesteswetenschappers moeten over die consequenties nadenken. Hoe passen we de techniek in, in onze maatschappij?

Denk maar aan een complex begrip als autonomie. Wij mensen zijn autonoom en computers zijn dat niet. Toch bepalen sociale media die we dagelijks gebruiken en computers of games steeds meer wat wij doen, waardoor we een slaaf worden van de technologie. De gemiddelde informaticus heeft geen idee hoe daarover na te denken. Waar mensen het gevoel hebben de controle te verliezen – zoals bij de introductie van de auto bijvoorbeeld ook gebeurde – ontstaan nieuwe kansen voor kritisch (geesteswetenschappelijk) onderzoek.

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