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Semi-Peripheral Realism:

Nation and Form on the Borders of Europe

By Christinna Hazzard

October 2019

A Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of Liverpool John Moores University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Abstract

Despite its crucial function within the global capitalist system, the semi-periphery has received relatively little critical attention within the burgeoning field of world literature. As a transitional space between the core and the periphery, the semi-periphery is particularly sensitive to the economic, social and cultural uneveness of the world-system, making it invaluable for understanding the transformations and crises of capitalism. This thesis therefore explores the form and aesthetics of semi-peripheral literature by comparing a selection of novels from the borders of Europe. The study is structured around two case studies, both located on Europe's continental fringes: the North Atlantic island nations, Iceland and the Faroe Islands, and Turkey; a set of very different social and cultural landscapes, which each illustrate a different historical transition to semi-peripherality. Starting in the North Atlantic, the first part of the thesis will explore the form and structures of colonial domination in Iceland and the Faroe Islands, and will consider how the systematic underdevelopment of both nations has impacted the peripheral nationalist aesthetics in the works of Halldór Laxness and William Heinesen. Expanding the project's comparative scope to Turkey, the second part considers how the history of imperial decline and nation-building in the twentieth century are reflected in Orhan Pamuk and Latife Tekin's semi-peripheral city- and borderscapes. Together the two sections cover different, but overlapping aspects of semi-peripherality, including the overdetermination of historical consciousness; the thematisation of language and translation; and the dialectical tension between 'local' and 'global' perspectives, which in different ways shape the particular aesthetics of semi-peripheral literature. Through comparative analysis of how each text mediates the distinct political, economic, cultural and social relations of the semi-periphery, this thesis argues that the conflicts and contradictions of the capitalist system are registered with particular intensity in the spaces that make up the semi-periphery, resulting in an antinomic literary aesthetic which testifies both to the unevenness of the capitalist world-system and to the radical potential of the semi-periphery as a space for political and social transformation. This project thereby engages in current debates about the intersections of postcolonial, comparative and world-literature and contributes to mapping literary registrations of the capitalist world-system.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisors Dr Deaglán Ó Donghaile and Dr Filippo Menozzi for their guidance and support throughout my doctoral studies. I am immensely grateful for our many conversations over coffee and for your generosity and enthusiasm for this project. Thanks also to Dr Kate Houlden for supporting me through the initial stages of research and to Dr Sorcha Gunne for sending me funding opportunities and encouragement when I was applying for PhD programmes. Thank you, Krystina, Jennie, James, Dan, Dean, Sam, and Jan, for your friendship and for patiently listening to me talk about theory in the postgraduate office. I also want to thank my family, my mum and dad, and my sisters, Ditte and Caroline, for always believing in me, and, finally, my husband, Sam, who has been a source of love, laughter, encouragement, and support throughout.

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Introduction

> I would like to maintain and strengthen the word margins: not as the "useless eaters" who have been rejected by society, or as the spatial deserts in which no production is to be done or money to be made – but rather as "weak links in the chain," where the Real may appear without warning, and disappear again if we are not alert to catch it.
>
> (Jameson 2012: 480)

The aim of this thesis is to examine the formal and aesthetic characteristics of semi-peripheral literature and to consider what this under-theorised space might contribute to the study of world literature. In this introduction, I will outline the central theoretical and methodological concerns of this study, including its place in the current world literature debates, the relationship between the nation, nationalism, and literary form, and the cultural significance of the semi-periphery. I will also propose a definition of semi-peripheral realism, which will be expanded and explored in more detail in each of the chapters that follow. I start by exploring the idea of world literature, from its origins in the nineteenth century, to its recent iterations in comparative and postcolonial literary studies. I discuss key conceptualisations of world literature by notable critics such as Fredric Jameson, David Damrosch, Pascale Casanova, Franco Moretti, and the Warwick Research Collective (WReC), and situate my own understanding of world literature amongst the current debates. In the second section, I discuss the function of the semi-periphery in the capitalist world-system and suggest that comparing literary texts produced in this crucial space constitutes a valuable contribution to the materialist world-literature paradigm. I then address the question of peripheral aesthetics, with close reference to Fredric Jameson's controversial essay "Third World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capital," which I consider vital for understanding the dialectical engagement with the nation and cultural nationalism in peripheral and semi-peripheral literatures. In the final part of this introduction, I respond to Joe Cleary's call for new 'theories and historical atlases of twentieth-century realism' (2012: 255) and position the texts selected for study, Halldór Laxness's *Iceland's Bell* and *The Atom Station*, William Heinesen's *The Good Hope* and *The Black Cauldron*, Latife Tekin's *Dear Shameless Death* and *Swords of Ice*, and Orhan Pamuk's *Istanbul* and *Snow*, as examples of semi-peripheral realism.

The Ambition of World Literature

Writing in the mid-1980s, the American cultural critic, Fredric Jameson, suggested that as the twentieth-century was drawing to an end 'the old question of a properly world literature' was

beginning to reassert itself once again (1986b: 67). In a footnote to the essay, Jameson expanded on what such a field might look like, stating that it would demand 'a literary and cultural comparatism of a new type' (1986b: 86), one that would focus not on 'individual texts, which are formally and culturally very different from each other' but rather on 'the concrete situations from which such texts spring and to which they constitute distinct responses' (1986b: 86). It would necessarily

> include such features as the inter-relationship of social classes, the role of intellectuals, the dynamics of language and writing, the configuration of traditional forms, the relationship to western influences, the development of urban experience and money, and so forth. (1986b: 87)

Jameson's central motivation in the essay was to raise questions about how to incorporate non-canonical and non-western texts into the study of literature, 'to convey a sense of the interest and value of these clearly neglected literatures for people formed by the values and stereotypes of a first-world culture' (1986b: 68). However, Jameson did not just put forward an argument for including these texts, but in relating the question of canonicity to the issue of 'first-world cultural imperialism' (1986b: 68), he made a link between uneven literary and cultural production and the uneven and unequal capitalist world-system. Jameson thus provided the starting point for a materialist theory of world literature in which texts from disparate cultural situations could be compared without losing sight of the specific local contexts from which they had arisen. The essay set in motion a heated debate within literary studies that has intensified rather than abated in recent years. Indeed, since the start of the twenty-first century there has been a surge in debates that advocate or contest the idea of world literature. These debates have been carried out with most vigour in the disciplines of comparative literature and postcolonial studies, as a response, in part, to questions about the cultural implications of globalisation, but also to a so-called 'epistemological crisis' at the heart of both fields, which has been belatedly acknowledged in recent years (Graham, Niblett and Deckard 2012: 465).

I. Comparative Literature

As Jameson suggests, the idea of world literature is not a novel one, but dates back to the nineteenth century when literary nationalism was flourishing in Europe. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe famously coined the term *Weltliteratur* in the journal *Über Kunst und Altertum* in 1827, and he declared in a conversation with his friend Johann Peter Eckermann, that national literature is 'now a rather unmeaning term,' for 'the epoch of world literature is at hand, and everyone must strive to hasten its approach' (see Damrosch, Melas and Buthelezi 2009: 23). With this

proclamation, Goethe anticipated a move away from literary nationalism towards a transnational literary modality (Pizer 2000: 216), which still resonates strongly with the renewed interest in world literature today. Later, in the mid-nineteenth century, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels recycled Goethe's term when discussing the cosmopolitan character of the *Weltmarkt* (world-market) in *The Manifesto of the Communist Party*. They predicted that with the rise of transnational patterns of production and consumption, '[n]ational one-sidedness and narrow-mindedness' would 'become more and more impossible', and 'from the numerous national and local literatures' there would arise 'a world literature' (2008: 39). However, despite the early transnational ambitions of comparative literary studies, the field has largely remained anchored in the literary traditions of individual nation-states, with comparative projects tending to focus on a small canon of authors, usually from core European nations. This is because comparative literature developed in an era of political and cultural conflict in Europe, when 'nations engaged in a struggle for independence were also engaged in a struggle for cultural roots, for a national culture, and for a past' (Bassnett 1992:14).[1] The result, as Pascale Casanova has pointed out, is that although we might not realise it, 'our literary unconscious is largely national,' 'our 'instruments of analysis and evaluation are national', and 'the study of literature almost everywhere in the world is organized along national lines' (2004: xi).

It was Johann Gottfried Herder who first developed the notion in the late eighteenth-century that each nation had 'an irreducible cultural personality and scheme of values that met in its folk traditions and literary production' (Porter 2011: 245), which formed the basis for a philological and comparative literary scholarship that was rooted in an 'essentialist conception of national literature' (Porter 2011: 245). According to David Porter, the field subsequently developed in two distinct methodological directions, the first a 'contrastive mode of intercultural analysis devoted to the elaboration and exaggeration of national differences,' and the second, 'a genealogical approach to literary history' involving 'observation of shared features among putatively contrasting national literatures' (2004: 245). Neither, however, problematised the fact the nation served as the basic structural unit on which comparison was premised, keeping more or less in line with Herder's notion of literature as the 'embodiment of a given nation's faults and perfections, a mirror of its dispositions, the expression of its highest ideal' (see Damrosch, Melas and Buthelezi 2009: 6).

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[1]In his essay on Goethe's notion of *Weltliteratur,* John Pizer emphasises that Goethe's proclamation should not be taken as 'an announcement of the demise of discrete national literature' (2000: 215), and that it was, in fact, intimately shaped by the fact that Germany lacked a national cultural centre until the late nineteenth century. For Goethe a 'truly classical author must be infused by a national spirit' (2000: 215), but in the politically fragmented Germany, where 'both internal factiousness and a concomitant overabundance of foreign influences,' such an infusion was impossible (2000: 216). It is this situation, Pizer suggests, that made Goethe 'particularly aware of and open to the possibility of a transnational literary modality' (2000: 216).

In her essay on "Comparative Literature in the Twenty-First Century: A View from Europe and the UK," Lucia Boldrini draws attention to another criticism which has been wielded against comparative literature in recent years: the fact that what constitutes 'Europe' tends to have 'a rather restricted sense when we speak of comparative literature' (2006: 14). The range of nations included for comparison has been notoriously limited, due in part to the emphasis on linguistic competency and the privileging of original language texts. Because students are expected to speak at least two modern languages, usually French, English or German, in practical terms comparative literature syllabuses have been restricted to canonical works in these three languages (Boldrini 2006). In his essay on comparative literature in the twenty-first century, "Without and Beyond Compare," Thomas Docherty highlights another 'logistical issue' as a result of the emphasis placed on reading texts in their original language: the fact that all comparatists do not necessarily share the same linguistic competences, which means that despite their best intensions 'there is a strong chance, indeed a likelihood, that an act of translation will be required' (2006: 28). Docherty highlights that most of this translation is carried out in English, making it 'the ground – spoken or unspoken – on which all Comparative Literature stands' (2006: 29). It reveals, he suggests, a problematic assumption that all linguistic differences can be resolved 'into superficial differences' (2006: 29), but also the assumption that English itself is 'internally homogenous, and not subject to an internal or intrinsic logic of translation' (2006: 29). Docherty argues that such assumptions evidence the fact that comparative literature has broadly been driven by 'an essential 'lessening' of the differences among people's ways of thinking and living' (2006: 31). He concludes the essay with the suggestion that the proper aim of comparative literature should be a focus on contrast, rather than commensurability; a recognition of difference that enables an 'encounter' between two distinct literatures to be staged, 'without one 'containing the other' and against 'containment under the general sign of a totalising 'English'' (2006: 34).

In response to these criticisms of comparative literature, several scholars have argued for a reinvigorated comparative literature that moves beyond the eurocentrism and nation-centered confines of the traditional discipline. In *Death of a Discipline*, for instance, Gayatri Spivak proposes a move away from 'a politics of hostility, fear, and half solutions' (2003: 4) towards a 'politics of friendship to come' (2003: 13), and she suggests that a consolidation of comparative literature with area studies would lend 'real interdisciplinarity' (2003: 7) and 'linguistic rigour' (2003: 8) to the discipline and release it from its imprisonment 'within the borders it will not cross' (2003: 7). Writing against the 'timid and placatory' (2003: 72) liberal multiculturalism advocated by the 1992 Charles Bernheimer's report for the American Comparative Literature Association (ACLA), published in 1995 as *Comparative Literature in the Age of Multiculturalism,* Spivak suggests that

comparative literature ought to strive for a 'planetary, rather than continental, global, or worldly' (2003: 72) perspective, grounded in the linguistic specialism of area studies, in order to rectify the eurocentrism of traditional comparative approaches and offer an alternative 'to the arrogance of the cartographic reading of world lit. in translation as the task of Comparative Literature' (2003: 72). Her notion of 'planetarity' is thus intended both as a challenge to the eurocentrism of comparative literary studies, but also as a way to go beyond the homogenising impulses of globalisation.

It is worth noting here, that accounts of comparative literature in the US tend to recall a different origin to those in Europe, namely 'the founding role held in the middle of the twentieth century by immigrant scholars arriving from a Europe devastated by totalitarianism and war' (2006: 14). This is the case in Spivak's *Death of a Discipline*, in which she suggests 'Comparative Literature was founded on inter-European hospitality' (2003: 8), but also in an essay by Emily Apter, where it is used as a defence of comparative literature against the critique of eurocentrism. Reminding us that foundational figures of the discipline, such as Leo Spitzer and Erich Auerbach, 'came as exiles and émigrés from war-torn Europe with a shared suspicion of nationalism' (2006: 41), Apter suggests that comparative literature was therefore 'in principle global from its inception, even if its institutional establishment in the postwar period assigned Europe the lion's share of critical attention and shortchanged non-Western literatures' (2006: 41).[2] However, despite attempts by scholars to reimagine or defend comparative literature, the fact that even Nobel laureates such as Halldór Laxness and Orhan Pamuk, let alone lesser-known European authors such as William Heinesen and Latife Tekin, along with a wealth of authors from eastern Europe, the Baltics and the Balkans, are rarely included on comparative literature syllabuses attests to just how narrow the parameters for comparison continue to be. Furthermore, with the increased movement of people, both within and from outside Europe, intensified in the twenty-first century by global conflicts, decolonisation, and economic crisis, the very meaning of what constitutes formations such as 'Europe' are necessarily being disrupted. It is comparative literature's inadequate response to the reality of a transnationally mobile but profoundly unequal world, which ultimately has led to the 'sense of crisis or of paradigmatic shift' within the discipline (Docherty 2006: 25). On this note, I want to return briefly to Docherty's essay as he makes what I consider to be a particularly valuable comment on the idea of a 'crisis' in comparative literature. He suggests that any such claims ought to be 'measured against what crisis might mean in Baghdad under occupation, or Louisiana under

[2] See also Spivak, who suggests in *Death of a Discipline* that where 'Area Studies were established to secure U.S. power in the Cold War,' 'Comparative Literature was a result of European intellectuals fleeing "totalitarian" regimes' (2003: 3).

water, or Orhan Pamuk under the threat of imprisonment for his description of an event in Turkey's fraught history as essentially an act of genocide' (2006: 26)[3] in order to productively raise questions about what comparative literature might have to offer 'to that realm of decision-making that is known as comparative politics; or what might a revived *Weltliteratur* offer to world politics or world affairs' (2006: 26). I take this line of questioning to be essential to the development of a world-literary comparatism that seeks to move beyond the discipline's canonical confines and narrow eurocentrism, and that is motivated to reclaim literatures, and culture more broadly, as 'a site of emancipatory struggle' (Majumder 2017: 9).

II. Postcolonial Studies

Like comparative literature, the field of postcolonial studies has been the subject of vigorous debate and materialist critics such as Neil Lazarus, Benita Parry, and Aijaz Ahmad have wielded numerous criticisms against the field since its inception. According to Aijaz Ahmad, the term "postcolonial" originally came into use in the political and social sciences in the 1970s with reference to the type of states that arose after postwar decolonisations, and was initially a 'periodising' term, 'an historical and not an ideological concept' (Lazarus 2011b: 6). However, as postcolonial studies became a consolidated field of study the term increasingly became used as a replacement for the term 'third world', which Ahmad suggests signalled a shift in the 'governing theoretical framework from Third World nationalism to postmodernism' (1991: 1). In the introduction to *The Postcolonial Unconscious*, Neil Lazarus explores this paradigm shift in more detail. He suggests that because the emergence of postcolonial studies in the 1970s coincided with a historical moment when imperial dominance was being reasserted following 'the historic challenge from the 'Third World' that had been expressed in the struggle for decolonisation in the boom years after 1945' (2011a: 9), the field was shaped by a broadly anti-liberationist sentiment, despite, paradoxically, being 'a self-consciously *progressive* or *radical* initiative' (2011a: 10). The emerging field therefore

> offered, in the scholarship that it fostered and produced, something approximating a monumentalisation of this moment – not, indeed, a celebration, but a rationalisation of, and pragmatic adjustment to, the demise of the ideologies that had flourished during the 'Bandung' years. Especially after the collapse of historical communism in 1989, it was disposed to pronounce Marxism dead and buried also. (2011a: 10)

[3] Docherty is referring to the 2005 criminal case against Pamuk for "insulting Turkishness" after he commented on the persecution of Armenians and Kurds by the Turkish state during an interview (Göknar 2013).

The result, Lazarus argues, has been a failure within postcolonial studies to situate colonialism in relation to the history of capitalist imperialism, which is 'wrongly supposed by postcolonial theory to have come to a close *circa* 1975' (2011a: 15). A corollary to this has been the structuring of the field around a narrow set of 'assumptions, concepts, theories, and methods' (Lazarus 2011a: 17), broadly poststructuralist in nature, which have served both to mystify the "postcolonial" and limit the range of literary texts included for study. In "The Institutionalization of Postcolonial Studies," Benita Parry further argues that this dominance of poststructuralist modes of critical analysis has led to a theoretical position in postcolonial studies that is 'wholly neglectful of the political economy' and has had the effect of further 'disengaging colonialism from historical capitalism and re-presenting it as a cultural event' (2004: 74). This is also reflected in the selection of texts that make up the postcolonial canon: modernist and postmodernist texts are privileged over realist ones and themes of migration and exile are prioritised over 'the developments and realities in post-independence nation-states' (Parry 2004: 73). This is accompanied by a sense of 'indifference to social explanation' and a general lack of engagement with 'the conditions and practices of actually existing imperialism' within postcolonial literary studies (Parry 2004: 74).

In their introductory essay for the special issue of *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* on "Postcolonial Studies and World Literature," James Graham, Michael Niblett, and Sharae Deckard highlight a further restriction to the postcolonial canon: the tendency to privilege writing from 'anglophone sites of empire, particularly South Asia and the Caribbean' (2012: 468), which has had

> the insalubrious effects not only of reifying the importance of anglophone empire to the exclusion of other European empires, thus Balkanizing postcolonial studies, but also of contributing to the marginalization of literary production from other regions or national traditions and effacing new forms of imperialism and capitalist domination arising throughout the 20th century. (2012: 468)

Furthermore, because much work in the field of postcolonial studies has been directed towards the project of challenging Eurocentrism, categories such as "the West" and "Europe" have been 'conflated in the postcolonial discussion' and there has been a 'widespread tendency to generalise the dominant western European states – typically, Britain and France – to 'Europe' as a whole' (Lazarus 2011b: 15). Postcolonialism's tendency to homogenise "the West," we see it, for example, in Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978), has meant that analysis of the complex structures of power within and between the European countries has been a task largely left out of the postcolonial project. Denmark, for example, although part of the central European landmass, is peripheral enough to the major metropolitan centres to be excluded from the debates on European

imperialism, despite contributing to the ideological and material production of Europe as the global centre and profiting from it (Jensen and Loftsdóttir 2012). At the height of the Danish Empire, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Denmark, in union with Norway, possessed colonies both in Europe (Greenland, Iceland and the Faroe Islands) as well as in, Africa, Asia and the Caribbean (Jensen and Loftsdóttir 2012), and Denmark has historically participated actively in a range of colonial enterprises, from trade and exploration, to the development of colonial and race science, and the transatlantic slave trade (Blaagaard 2010). Despite this, Denmark is rarely thought of as a colonial power in Europe and literary works that deal with the Nordic colonial experience, such as the early novels of Halldór Laxness and William Heinesen, are rarely studied on postcolonial courses. I see this as directly related to the tendency within postcolonial studies to think of Europe as a homogenous space, which flattens out uneven power dynamics in places such as the Nordic region and the British Isles, as well as to the anglocentrism of the postcolonial canon, which restricts the kind of texts and contexts selected for study.

In *Colonization: A Global History* Marc Ferro also suggests that our understanding of what constitutes colonisation has been skewed by a narrow focus on the west European experience. Unlike in other historical traditions, such as that of Russia, where 'territorial expansion and colonization' are more or less synonymous, in the western historical tradition 'sea space' is emphasised as the distinguishing feature between the two (1997: 2). This distinction has led to an emphasis in postcolonial studies on overseas territories and to an inaccurate periodisation of colonisation as beginning with the search for a sea passage to India (Ferro 1997). Ferro stresses that colonisation is a 'phenomenon which cannot be dissociated from imperialism, that is, from forms of domination which may, or may not, have assumed the appearance of colonization' (1997: vi). In a similar vein, Ahmad reminds us that in countries

> such as Turkey which has not been colonised, or Iran and Egypt, whose occupation had not led to colonisation of the kind that India suffered – […] the onset of capitalist modernity and their incorporation in the world capitalist system brought about state apparatuses as well as social and cultural configurations that were, nevertheless remarkably similar to the ones in India, which was fully colonised. (1995: 7)

Ahmad, suggests that we ought therefore to 'speak not so much of colonialism or postcolonialism but of capitalist modernity, which takes the colonial form in particular places and at particular times' (Ahmad 1995: 7). In this regard I consider Rosa Luxemburg's *The Accumulation of Capital* vital, in which she defines imperialism as 'the political expression of the accumulation of capital in its competitive struggle for what remains still open of the non-capitalist environment' (Luxemburg;

see Parry 2018: 59). The value of Luxemburg's theory to fields such as postcolonial studies, as Benita Parry has recently highlighted, is her recognition of the fact that the 'non-capitalist environment extends beyond colonised countries to include southern Europe, Russia, Turkey, Persia, India, Japan and China' (2018: 59), which transcends the 'popular equation of imperialism with colonialism, a mistake given academic credence by those postcolonial critics whose narratives of colonialism exorcised the spectre of capitalism' (2018: 59).

III. World Literature

Having rehearsed some of the longstanding and more recent criticisms of both postcolonial studies and comparative literature, I want now to turn to recent interventions, which present world literature as a solution or response to the disciplinary failures of postcolonial studies and comparative literature. At the turn of the twenty-first century three significant interpretations of world literature were published almost contemporaneously: Pascale Casanova's *The World Republic of Letters*, Franco Moretti's essay "Conjectures on World Literature," and David Damrosch's *What is World Literature?* Although very different, they each propose a reinvigorated notion of world literature, and consider the methodological consequences of expanding the comparative study of literature beyond the borders of the European nation-state. In *What is World Literature?* David Damrosch, Director of the Harvard Institute for World Literature, proposes a tripartite definition of world literature as '*an elliptical refraction of national literature,*' as '*writing that gains in translation,*' and as '*a mode of reading: a form of detached engagement with worlds beyond our own place and time*' (2003: 281).[4] He takes world literature to be the direct descendant of comparative literature, sharing a genealogy with early transnationally comparative works, such as Eric Auerbach's *Mimesis*. However, he admits that the transnational ambition of comparative literature never quite came to fruition, and that literary scholarship and teaching has continued to be carried out largely along national lines. What is necessary, he suggests, is a perspective that recognises the fact that 'works continue to bear the mark of their national origin even after they circulate into world literature' (2003: 283), but one sensitive to how they change and 'become ever more sharply refracted' as they travel farther from home (2003: 283). Damrosch suggests that the main challenge of world literature is to select and introduce a greater variety of literatures into the canon. He proposes anthologies as the solution to this problem of scale, the result of which is the *Longman Anthology of World Literature* series, edited by Damrosch, which presents a vast selection of translated literary works, from the ancient world to the twentieth century.

[4] All emphases are in the original unless otherwise stated.

Several criticisms have been wielded against Damrosch's conception of world literature, many of which rest in his notion that only a text that 'gains in translation' can be considered world literary and included in his anthologies:

> The balance of credit and loss remains a distinguishing mark of national versus world literature: literature stays within its national or regional tradition when it usually loses in translation, whereas works become world literature when they gain on balance in translation, stylistic losses offset by an expansion in depth as they increase their range. (2003: 289).

He uses the example of the stylistic differences between James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* and *Dubliners* to illustrate the point, suggesting that because the latter is more easily translated and circulated it is more "world literary" than the former, even though it is a 'far more localized work' (2003: 289). The consequence of this line of reasoning is, however, ultimately to restrict the kind of literary works that are selected for inclusion in the new, expanded literary canon, which, despite Damrosch's best intensions to promote a 'more detached engagement, […] a genuinely reviving encounter' with the world's literatures (2003: 303), results in a presentation of world literature as an anthologised canon of elite "global" texts; an 'invaluable form of cultural capital' easily accessible for students in elite North American universities (Graham *et al* 2012: 465). The value of Damrosch's notion of world literature, however, is his emphasis on the residual tension between a text's national origin and its global circulation, which places emphasis on the fact that world literature does not necessarily prescribe a strictly post-national approach to literature. This emphasis is also evident in both Moretti's and Casanova's understandings of world literature, although in somewhat different formulations.

In her Preface to *The World Republic of Letters* Pascale Casanova opens with a series of questions, which, almost two decades after its publication, continue to be pertinent to the ongoing debates about the scale and scope of world literature:

> Is it legitimate to speak of world literature? If so, how are we to take in so huge a body of work and to make sense of it? Must one speak of literature, or of literatures? What theoretical instruments are available for analysing literary phenomena on this scale? Does the comparative study of literature help us think about such things in new terms? (2004: xi)

In answer to these questions, Casanova suggests that there exists 'a literary universe relatively independent of the everyday world and its political divisions, whose boundaries and operational

laws are not reducible to those of ordinary political space' (2004: xii), and that the study of this 'literature-world' (2004: xii) constitutes one way to make sense of the 'gigantic complexity' of world literature (2004: 5). Renaissance Italy was the first literary centre in this 'literature-world', followed by France in the mid-sixteenth century, 'which in challenging both the hegemony of Latin and the advance of Italian produced a first tentative sketch of transnational literary space' (2004: 11):

> Then Spain and England, followed by the rest of the countries of Europe, gradually entered into competition on the strength of their own literary "assets" and traditions. The nationalist movements that appeared in central Europe during the nineteenth century – a century that also saw the arrival of North America and Latin America on the international literary scene – generated new claims to literary existence. Finally, with decolonization, countries in Africa, the Indian subcontinent, and Asia demanded access to literary legitimacy and existence as well. (2004:11)

Although Casanova recognises the impact of the nation-form and nationalism on the production, circulation and translation of literature, she proposes 'a non-national history of strictly literary events,' which focuses on 'the rivalries and competitions, the subversions and conservative reactions, the revolts and revolutions that have taken place', between the centres and peripheries of the literary world-system (2004: xii). She also launches a methodological challenge to the primacy of close reading in literary studies, suggesting that the 'ambition of international literary criticism' requires new conceptual tools to

> overcome the supposedly insuperable antinomy between internal criticism which looks no further than texts themselves in searching for their meaning, and external criticism, which describes the historical conditions under which texts are produced, without, however, accounting for their literary quality and singularity. (2004: 4-5)

She has suggested elsewhere that fields such as postcolonial studies tend to posit a too direct link between 'literature and history, one that is exclusively political' and 'runs the risk of reducing the literary to the political, imposing a series of annexation or short-circuits, and often passing in silence of the actual aesthetic, formal or stylistics characteristics that actually 'make' literature' (2005: 71). She argues that 'shifting the ordinary vantage-point on literature' to focus on 'literature *as* a world' (2005:73), will enable us to view the larger patterns and designs of that world whilst also giving us an understanding of 'each text, each individual author, on the basis of their relative position within this immense structure' (2005: 73); her solution to the problem of balancing scale with detail in the study of world literature. However, a key criticism of her work has been that she abstracts 'too strongly from the world of politics', creating too solid a demarcation between her

literature world and the real world, meaning 'that questions concerning their intersection – questions as to the terms of their relationship – find themselves being deferred' (WReC 2015: 9). One of the effects of this, as Joe Cleary has highlighted, is also that she fails to properly unpack the relationship between cultural and political power in the colonial peripheries and semi-peripheries of the world-system, making 'little systemic or structural sense of how the waves of decolonization that dismembered the European empires over the last century have affected this literary-world system' (2006: 203).

Not unlike Casanova, in "Conjectures on World Literature," published in the *New Left Review* in 2000, Moretti argues that we need to rethink the way we study literature in order to capture the scope of our 'unmistakably […] planetary' literary system (2000a: 54). World literature, Moretti suggests, 'cannot be literature, bigger; what we are already doing, just more of it. It has to be different. The *categories* have to be different' (2000a: 55). Moretti suggests that we replace the nation with the capitalist world-system as the central organising category of literary studies; a system he describes as

> simultaneously *one*, and *unequal*: with a core, and a periphery (and a semiperiphery) that are bound together in a relationship of growing inequality. One, and unequal: *one* literature (*Weltliteratur*, singular, as in Goethe and Marx), or perhaps, better, one world literary system (of inter-related literatures); but a system which is different from what Goethe and Marx had hoped for, because it's profoundly unequal. (Moretti 2000a: 56). [5]

Alongside his singular, but unequal literary world-system, Moretti proposes 'distant reading' as a solution to the methodological challenges of world literature, as it allows us to expand the canon and include a greater range and diversity of texts than would be possible with traditional close reading.[6] To illustrate his method of distant reading, Moretti takes a comment made by Jameson in his introduction to Kojin Karatani's *Origins of Modern Japanese Literature,* that 'the raw material of Japanese social experience and the abstract formal patterns of Western novel construction cannot

[5] Matthew Eatough suggests that '[s]omewhat surprisingly, given the prominence of place world-systems theory has enjoyed in leftist academic criticism, literary studies has been rather slow to engage with such claims. Much of this delay has likely been a side effect of postcolonial criticism, which during the 1980s and 1990s maintained a near-monopoly over the interpretation of "non-Western" texts' (2015:595).

[6] Moretti expands on what distant reading might involve in "The Slaughterhouse of Literature", published shortly after his "Conjectures" essay in *Modern Language Quarterly.* He suggests that tackling the 99.5% of unread literature cannot rely on 'the very close reading of very few texts—secularized theology, really ("canon"!)—that has radiated from the cheerful town of New Haven over the whole field of literary studies. A larger literary history requires other skills: sampling; statistics; work with series, titles, concordances, incipits—and perhaps also the "trees" that I discuss in this essay' (2000b: 208-209).

always be welded together seamlessly' (see Moretti 2000a: 58), as a '*law of literary evolution*' (2000a: 58) stating that

> in cultures that belong to the periphery of the literary system (which means: almost all cultures, inside and outside Europe), the modern novel first arises not as an autonomous development but as a compromise between a western formal influence (usually French or English) and local materials. (2000a: 58)

To tests this law, Moretti surveys the diffusion of the novel from the late eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth century in a range of literary histories, from Eastern Europe and Southern Europe, to the history of Latin American, Yiddish, Arabic, Filipino, Turkish and West African novels, and in each case he observes that 'when a culture starts moving towards the modern novel, it's *always* as a compromise between foreign form and local materials' (2000a: 60), a contention that challenges the perceived history of the rise of the novel, gleaned from the narrow focus on west European literary history. Extrapolating from this, and drawing on the work of Brazilian critic, Roberto Schwarz, Moretti suggests that literary forms can productively be understood as 'abstracts of social relationships' (2000a: 66), meaning that the uneveness of the world-system is not just external to literary texts, but embedded in the tension between foreign form and local content that Jameson's law prescribes. Moretti's formulation, drawing on the critical vocabulary of world-system theory and emphasising both the singularity and uneveness of that system, lays the foundation for a world literature that takes into account the vast difference between different national literatures, whilst also allowing them to be read comparatively through a focus on literary form. Moretti concludes his essay modestly, with the admission that distant reading can only do so much of the critical legwork, and that what is needed is a 'division of labour' (2000a: 66) between national literature specialists and world literature comparatists, to account for the composite nature of cultural history which is shaped by both local and global factors.

What the three very different approaches to world literature discussed above have in common, is their emphasis on the necessity for methodological reorientation and rethinking to tackle the 'problem' of world literature (Moretti 2000a: 55). I want to round off this section with an extended discussion of *Combined and Uneven Development: Towards a New Theory of World-Literature*, by the Warwick Research Collective (WReC),[7] which builds on the ambition of these earlier works to propose a materialist paradigm for studying world literature that balances close engagement with

[7] The Warwick Research Collective is comprised of Sharae Deckard, Nicholas Lawrence, Neil Lazarus, Graeme Macdonald, Upamanyu Pablo Mukherjee, Benita Parry and Stephen Shapiro, colleagues or former colleagues at the Department of English and Comparative Literary Studies at the University of Warwick.

specific literary texts with the broader ambition of a systemic world-literary analysis. Taking Moretti's formulation of world literature as their starting point, WReC define world literature as '*the literature of the world-system* - of the modern capitalist world-system,' and to distinguish their paradigm from those that take world literature simply as all 'the literary writing that happens to exist in the world' (WReC 2015: 8), they suggest that we should 'speak of 'world-literature' with a hyphen, derived from that of 'world-system''.[8] They argue that '[t]o describe the world literary system as 'one, and unequal' is to reactivate the theory of combined and uneven development' (2015: 10), first developed by Engels, Lenin, and more specifically by Trotsky, to describe the 'effects of the imposition of capitalism on cultures and societies hitherto un- or only sectorally capitalised' (2015: 10). Neil Davidson has explained that '[s]tarting from the imperialist stage of capitalism, which opened during the last third of the 19th century, advanced forms of capitalist production were introduced into otherwise pre-capitalist societies', and that in this context "uneveness" refers to the fact societies 'reach particular stages of development at different historical times' and "combination" means 'that, under certain conditions, societies can leap over aspects of one or more of these stages to create new hybrid formations' (2006). The central aim of WReC's world-literature project is 'to resituate the problem of 'world literature' […] by pursuing the literary-cultural implications' of combined and uneven development (2015: 6).

WReC also draw on the work of Fredric Jameson, particularly his suggestion in *A Singular Modernity* that 'the only satisfactory semantic meaning of modernity lies in its association with capitalism' (2002: 13). One of the central tenets of the world-literary comparative model they propose, is that 'modernity' is neither a 'chronological or geographical category,'

> [i]t is not something that happens – or even that happens first – in 'the west' and to which others can subsequently gain access; or that happens in cities rather than in the countryside; or that, on the basis of a deep-set sexual division of labour, men tend of exemplify in their social practice rather than women. Capitalist modernisation entails development, yes – but this 'development' takes the forms also of the development of underdevelopment, of maldevelopment and dependent development. (2015: 13)

By 'de-linking' modernity from 'the idea of the 'west' and yoking it to that of the capitalist world-system' (2015: 15) the Warwick Research Collective challenge the notion that 'the modern' is fixed

[8] In "Postcolonial Studies and World Literature" Graham, Niblett and Deckard suggest that '[w]ithin this understanding, "world-literature" with a hyphen might refer specifically to those works in which the world-system is not a distant horizon only unconsciously registered in immanent form, but rather consciously or critically mapped – that is, to literature that is in some way world-systemic in its perspective. Correspondingly, we might use the term "world-literary criticism" to denote a deliberately world-systemic inflected mode of critique' (2012: 468).

to the geographical space of the Euro-American west, and instead show it to be a global experience that is nonetheless 'governed always – that is to say, definitionally – by *unevenness*' (2015: 12): '[t]o grasp the nettle here involves recognising that capitalist development does not smooth away but rather *produces* unevenness, systematically and ·as a matter of course' (WReC 2015: 12-13). In taking capitalist modernity as singular and systemic they challenge the narrative of multiple or 'alternative' modernities, popularised by publications such as Dipesh Chakrabarty's *Provincializing Europe*, which in its very attempt to 'decenter' Europe (2000: 4) has hypostatized 'the unity of the "West" or even "Europe" as the place of modernity' and thereby inadvertently recuperated 'some of the more baneful features of the very binarism that has imperially reduced the rest of the world to the status of a second term' (Harootunian 2005: 35). It is here the terminology of world-systems analysis comes in use, as the relational categories of core, periphery, and semi-periphery offer a way to navigate the systematic unevenness of capitalist modernity without losing sight of local specificity. The value of their approach is that it places capitalism's *uneveness* as central to the study of world-literature, which actively encourages comparison between texts from widely different contexts and historical moments, between capitalism's cores, peripheries and semi-peripheries, in terms of how this uneveness is registered at the level of form, content and style. WReC's theory of world-literature thus responds both to the anti-materialist tendencies of postcolonial studies and the euro- and nation-centrism of comparative literary studies by developing a new comparatism premised on the systemic nature of global capitalism and 'its structured uneveness' (Graham *et al* 2012: 468). Like WReC, in this project I take world-literature to be 'literature that 'registers' the (modern capitalist) world-system' in both its form and its content (2015: 20), that consciously or unconsciously responds to the uneveness of capitalist modernity and is world-systemic in its perspective.

IIII. A Note on Translation

With the ambition to develop a world literature that is properly global in geographical scope, the reliance on literary texts in translation has become a corollary of new world literature paradigms, to the alarm of some comparatists. Emily Apter, for instance, has been critical of what she terms, the 'translatability assumption' of world literature (Apter 2013: 3), which she sees as a direct challenge to the language skills required for traditional comparative literary study. Writing against the 'the entrepreneurial, bulimic drive to anthologize and curricularize the world's cultural resources,' Apter proposes the idea of 'untranslatability' as 'a theoretical fulcrum of comparative literature' (2003: 3). However, alongside the narrow focus on core European texts in comparative literary studies, and the Anglocentrism of fields such as postcolonial studies, in practical terms it

is precisely the reluctance to use texts in translation which has continued to see works by authors such as Pamuk, Tekin, Laxness and Heinesen omitted from comparative projects. As this study makes use of both literary and theoretical texts in translation, I want to take a moment to reflect on the role of translation in the field of world literature and outline my own rationale for using texts in translation.[9]

In "Strangeness and World Literature," Mads Rosendahl Thomsen suggests that the pressure to read literature in the original has directly limited the scope of literary studies by providing a justification for concentrating on fewer texts and is based on demands, which 'have always been flexible and illogical' (2013:1). He makes the astute observation that it has resulted in a contradictory situation where avoiding peripheral or non-European literatures can 'be excused with a lack of knowledge of the language' while 'thousands and thousands of classrooms have been filled with discussions about Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky without any access to texts in Russian' (2013: 1). There is also rarely the same critical attention paid to our reliance on critical and theoretical texts in translation, and translated works by a variety of thinkers, from Immanuel Kant and Sigmund Feud to Gilles Deleuze and Michel Foucault, for example, are taught and used widely in scholarly research and teaching without the anxieties that accompany the use of literary texts in translation. The result of this 'flexible and illogical' demand to read in the original is that vast amounts of texts written in minority or peripheral languages are ignored, despite being available in translation.

A problem with debates around the use of translated texts in world literature, particularly those focusing on discouraging the use of literary texts in translation, is that they often fail to adequately account for the complex politics of language and translation in spaces where major languages such as French, English, Spanish or German are not spoken. In the case of Iceland and the Faroe Islands, for instance, the minority status of Icelandic and Faroese – there are around three hundred thousand Icelandic speakers and seventy thousand speakers of Faroese – means that translation is unavoidable in the production and circulation of literature. Linguistic domination was also an integral part of the Danish colonial process. In the Faroe Islands, for instance, Danish was imposed as the official language from the Reformation in 1536 until 1948 (two years after Home Rule was granted), a time during which Faroese was reduced largely to a vernacular, with Danish being the

[9] I am a native speaker of Danish, with a reading knowledge of Icelandic and German. I have therefore read William Heinesen's works in Danish, as well as some newspaper articles and short stories by Halldór Laxness that were published in Danish and Icelandic newspapers. Working across four different languages, and with a different level of linguistic expertise in each, I understand the benefits and challenges of working with texts in the original, but also the necessity and value of translation. For the sake of clarity, I quote exclusively from English translations, unless none are available, in which case I provide a translation. I have indicated in the footnotes where a translation has been provided by me.

language of the church, trade and education. Icelandic fared slightly better under Danish rule and remained the majority language of the Icelandic people. However, Danish was still the language of the church and colonial administration and continues to be taught as a compulsory subject in Icelandic schools. In both countries, but particularly in the Faroe Islands, the revival of indigenous languages has played a central role in the journey towards political and cultural independence and continues to be an active political concern. William Heinesen makes an interesting case for understanding the lasting effects of Danish cultural hegemony in the Nordic region. Like many writers from the Danish North Atlantic colonies, Heinesen was educated and wrote in Danish, and his works were subsequently translated into Faroese by his friend and fellow Faroese writer Heðin Brú. His status as a 'Faroese' writer has therefore always been contested and his works are often considered part of the Danish rather than the Faroese national literary canon. Furthermore, with the global hegemony of English today, Danish, with around six million speakers worldwide, is also a comparatively peripheral language, despite being dominant in the Nordic region. This means that smaller languages such as Faroese, Icelandic, and Greenlandic are doubly disadvantaged as they tend only to be translated into Danish, read as literature of *Rigsfælleskabet* (The Danish Commonwealth), limiting their translation circulation outside the Nordic region.

The politics of language and translation in Turkey is equally complex due in part to the post-imperial nation-building project that took place in the first half of the twentieth century. When Turkey was declared a republic in 1923, the country's first President, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, enforced a series of wide-reaching reforms to modernise and secularise Turkish society. Language became a crucial site of the state's nationalising, secularising, and modernising policies, starting with the Latinization of the Turkish alphabet in 1928, which was intended to ease 'the process of Turkish language purification (i.e., the purging of Arabic and Persian vocabulary and grammar from Turkish)' in order to create a secular national language (Yilmaz 2013: 140). Alev Çinar has also suggested that in order to distance the new republic from its Ottoman past the sense of a 'historical rupture' (2001: 370) was created, and that the changing of the alphabet from Arabic to Roman letters was

> a further and powerful reinforcement of this [and] served to create the impression that the Ottomans spoke and wrote a different language, thereby inserting and enhancing a cultural and historical distance between the Turkish Republic and the Ottoman Empire. (Çinar 2001: 370)

Following the alphabet reform in 1928, a state organised translation programme was instituted, but it was mostly west-European classics and popular literature that were translated (Gürçaglar *et*

al 2015). The result was a denigration of Ottoman literary culture, which could also no longer be accessed by the new Turkish speaking population. In both the North Atlantic and in Turkey the importation and translation of texts thus played an important role in building a literary culture following the centuries of Danish colonialism in Iceland and the Faroe Islands and the state enforced 'historical rupture' in Turkey.[10]

It is worth commenting, finally, on the fact that although translated texts are an integral part of today's global publishing industry we should not be deceived into thinking that this makes for a democratic literary landscape, for half of all translations are from English into other languages and less than ten per cent of translations are from other languages into English (Brouillette 2003); a reflection of continued cultural hegemony of English, which is itself, of course, the result first of British and now American imperialism. There are also other biases, conscious or unconscious, in the publishing industry, which are worth keeping inF mind. In the case of Tekin, for instance, only three of her novels have been translated into English so far: *Dear Shameless Death*, *Berji Kristin: Tales from the Garbage Hills*, and *Swords of Ice*. Together they form an unofficial trilogy dealing with the Turkish rural-urban migrant community in the mid-twentieth century. Interestingly, unlike Tekin's other works, which primarily take the form of nature writing and for which she is perhaps better known in Turkey, these three novels all have an urban setting, reflecting the tendency to favour texts dealing with urban experiences in the translation of non-western literatures into English (Brouillette 2003). Benita Parry has also highlighted that while the 'problems with translation have often been addressed' the problems with 'reliance on specialist studies' are less frequently discussed and include the fact that 'available glosses and analyses' tend to be 'more concerned with identifying themes than with looking at *literary codes and understanding these as inseparable from social space* [my emphasis]*'* (2009: 35). Following Parry, as opposed to focusing on what might have been lost in the translation of these texts, in this study I am more interested in considering how the politics of language and translation are reflected in the form and content of each text, and more broadly, how the aesthetic terrain of the texts selected encode the material and cultural characteristics of the semi-periphery.

The Semi-Periphery

Although vital to the function of the capitalist world-system, the semi-periphery has remained relatively underexplored in world-systems research and in world-literary studies, which have tended to focus on the relationship and differences between core and periphery, both in economic

[10] Laxness contributed to this vast project, with a translation of Earnest Hemingway's *A farewell to Arms* into Icelandic in the 1920s.

and cultural terms. In this section I will explore the significance of the semi-periphery in order to outline a rationale for my selection of texts in this study. The term 'semi-periphery' draws on the vocabulary of world-systems theory, developed by Immanuel Wallerstein in the 1970s.[11] World-systems theory divides the world into zones – core, semi-periphery, and periphery – according to their function within the capitalist world-economy. Where core regions 'define the traffic in goods and commodified labor-power to their advantage,' peripheral regions 'are violently seized for the natural resources of their terrain, strategic location, and labor of their peoples' (Shapiro 2008a: 33).[12] The semi-periphery is comprised of areas

> which are in between the core and the periphery on a series of dimensions, such as the complexity of economic activities, strength of the state machinery, cultural integrity, etc. Some of these areas had been core-areas of earlier versions of a given world-economy. Some had been peripheral areas that were later promoted, so to speak, as a result of the changing geopolitics of an expanding world-economy. (Wallerstein 1974: 349)

Wallerstein suggests that when alterations of status occur in 'moments of overall downturn or stagnation' it is semi-peripheral states that usually 'decline and ascend' (1980: 179). Located in the middle of this 'hierarchical continuum' (Wallerstein 1980: 179), the semi-periphery is thus the space where changes in the world-economy are most acutely realised.[13]

In *The Culture and Commerce of the American Novel* Stephen Shapiro explores the geocultural significance of the semi-periphery. Building on Wallerstein's definition of geoculture as the 'underside' of the world-economy, 'the part that is more hidden from view and therefore more difficult to assess, but the part without which the rest would not be nourished' (see Shapiro 2008a: 35), Shapiro suggests geoculture, is the 'cultural framework within which the world-system operates' (2008: 36). For Shapiro, geoculture gives insight into the different cultural modes that operate during different phases of the world-system, and because the semi-periphery plays a vital role in what he calls the 'geocultural calibration of the world-system' (2008a: 37), he suggests 'its spaces are […] highly sensitive to global transformations' (2008a: 38):

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[11] See also Terence Hopkins, Christopher Chase-Dunn, and Giovanni Arrighi.

[12] It is worth emphasising, as Shapiro does, that core, periphery, and semi-periphery are relational categories rather than fixed geographic demarcations, and that '[e]ach spatial level (area, national, regional, urban, familial) contains its own core-periphery differences. Individual nation-states have their own internal core-like and peripheral zones (north/south and urban/agrarian divisions), and they often have a "city-system," where some cities dominate others. Cities likewise have their own "Manchester-effect" of class-differentiated regions, such as the core sectors where elites live and work and the peripheral slums housing the manual labor force' (Shapiro 2008a: 33).

[13] We might take the case of Iceland in the 2008 financial crisis as exemplary of this, where the global financial crash saw the default of Iceland's three major commercial banks; the worst financial crisis experienced by any country in economic history (Loftsdóttir 2016).

> As semiperipheries mediate the experience of violence and coercion in the periphery and in the core's institutions of cultural valorization, they become especially pressurized in times of phase transition as they bear the burden of suturing two different configurations, one emerging, the other fading. Consequently, in times of transition between long economic waves and the ensuing spatial reorganization of the world-system, the semiperiphery functions as the locale of a heightened globalizing structure of feeling, producing affects and artifacts often in advance of these experiences' concrete articulation by agents at either end of the system. (2008: 38)

Shapiro suggests that the semi-periphery can therefore be productively thought of as the 'contact zone' (2008: 37) of the capitalist world-system, a space where the economic, political and social differences between core and periphery are mediated and translated.

The semi-periphery, then, is comprised of territories, which although not peripheral, occupy a 'position of structural underdevelopment within an uneven and unequal world system,' spaces such as 'Eastern and middle Europe, Turkey, Ireland, Scotland, Spain, Iceland' (Parry 2009: 28-29). However, the semi-periphery is not a fixed geopolitical space, but involves a process of transition, of intense and rapid transformation as territories 'decline and ascend' in the capitalist world-order. We can see this process at work in the two cases studies that make up this thesis: both Iceland and the Faroe Islands, for instance, were peripheral colonies at the start of the twentieth century, systematically underdeveloped by the Danish colonial state through the imposition of strict trade monopolies between sixteenth and the nineteenth century in the Faroe Islands, and from the start of the seventeenth to the end of the eighteenth century in Iceland. Alongside national independence movements, active since mid-nineteenth century in both countries, the Second World War played an important role in Icelandic and Faroese independence, as both countries were given the power to self-rule under the occupying forces and developed rapidly due to the increased wartime demand for fish.[14] Both countries thus emerged as more politically and economically independent after the war, but as semi-peripheral within the global capitalist system, despite the rapid development that had taken place in just a few decades.

Unlike in the North Atlantic, the Republic of Turkey did not 'ascend' to a situation of semi-peripherality but reached this position through the decline of the Ottoman Empire, which began to fragment in the seventeenth century as the capitalist countries in the west rose to dominance. By the late nineteenth century, the Ottoman Empire was heavily dependent on foreign loans,

[14] The British occupied the Faroe Islands and the U.S. Army occupied Iceland after Denmark became occupied by Nazi Germany in April 1940.

which kept the region under the control of western powers in a semi-colonial fashion. The Imperial Ottoman Bank, for instance, which served as the central bank and currency issuance body for the Ottoman Empire from 1863 until 1931, was set up jointly by British and French financiers to further their interests in the region (Eldem 1999a). In *The Accumulation of Capital*, Rosa Luxemburg uses Turkey to illustrate that international lending for infrastructural projects such as railway building and military armament are 'the surest ties by which the old capitalist states maintain their influence, exercise financial control and exert pressure on the customs, foreign and commercial policy of the young capitalist states' (2003b: 401). According to Luxemburg, the purpose of international loans in the imperialist phase of capitalism was to extend the reach of the capitalist economy by diverting 'accumulated capital from the old capitalist countries to the young ones' (2003b: 401), which in Turkey created the base for a profoundly uneven capitalist development that would continue after the formation of the Republic of Turkey in 1923.[15] Thus, despite their differences, the Danish North Atlantic colonies and Turkey share 'histories which to varying degrees of magnitude had been interrupted by imperialist expansion, whether through military conquest, occupation and direct or indirect rule, or by way of gun-boat diplomacy followed by economic penetration, or through the export of capital' (Parry 2009: 27). In each case rapid but uneven development took place in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, which resulted in the coexistence of 'archaic with more contemporary forms' (Trotsky; see WReC 2015: 10) of social relations and modes of production characteristic of capitalist development in the peripheries. It is my suggestion in this thesis that as 'the locale of a heightened globalizing structure of feeling,' these spaces are particularly sensitive to capitalism's combined uneveness and therefore to the forms and structures of capitalist imperialism, which elsewhere might seem distant, abstract, and unfathomable; a sensitivity which is in turn registered in the literature produced in these spaces.

Semi-Peripheral Realism and Peripheral Aesthetics

Franco Moretti has described the semi-peripheries as 'sites of combined development: where historically non-homogenous social and symbolic forms, often originating in quite disparate places, coexist in a confined space' (1994: 50). This is evidenced in the texts selected for this study, which despite geographical, cultural, and historical differences share a number of formal and aesthetic

[15] During his time in office, Turkey's current president, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, has hailed large infrastructural projects as 'the engine of the Turkish economy' and encouraged a construction boom (McKernan 2019). However, many large-scale developments have relied on loans from international investors, and the debt-laden construction sector is increasingly faced with bankruptcy. A recent case made international headlines: the *Burj al Babas* development, near Mudurnu, a village located between Istanbul and Ankara. The plan was to build over seven hundred 'Disney-Style homes' (McKernan 2019), but when the developers went bankrupt the project was left unfinished. The result is the eerie presence of over three hundred empty miniature castles, which sit at odds with the local architecture known for its 'Byzantine buildings, traditional Ottoman wooden houses and a 600-year-old mosque' (McKernan 2019).

features, including a tendency to reconfigure traditionally realist genres, such as the historical novel, the epistolary novel, the *Bildungsroman*, the memoir, and the *kollektivroman* (the Scandinavian social realist collective novel), by including irrealist elements such as folk and fairy-tales, encounters with the occult and supernatural, and otherwise oblique or unexplainable events. In some texts, the disruption to realist representation is subtle, such as in Pamuk's memoir *Istanbul*, which is permeated by an undertone of the uncanny as Pamuk recalls his childhood fantasy of having a *doppelgänger* living in another part of Istanbul. He links this experience to a collective feeling of melancholy – *hüzün* – which he suggests is shared by all the inhabitants of Istanbul as a result of the city's decline and peripheralisation in the new Republic of Turkey. In others, such as Heinesen's *The Good Hope* for instance, the irrealist content is more overt. At the start of the novel, when the Danish priest Peder Børresen first arrives in Tórshavn, he is disturbed by the superstitious beliefs of the Faroese population, but he soon comes face to face with ghosts, demons, and a false sectarian prophet; experiences which profoundly challenge and destabilise his rational worldview. In *The Good Hope,* the irrealist content is set against detailed description of the hardship and oppression of the Faroese population under the rule of Christoffer Gabel (1617-1673), the King's treasurer and personal advisor, who was made ward of the islands in 1655, whereas in *Istanbul*, Pamuk similarly combines a non-fictional history of Istanbul with his childhood fantasies and memories of the city. The result in both texts is the sense of a realism undermined, altered, or disrupted, a formal and stylistic incongruity that is shared by all the novels in this study and which I, like Moretti, take to be both a reflection of and a response to the numerous contradictions that shape the material reality of the semi-periphery.

We might take the formal instability of the texts included in this study as an example of what Auritro Majumder has described in a recent essay as 'peripheral aesthetics' (2017: 783). In the essay Majumder suggests that we revisit two key conceptual categories put forward by Jameson in his controversial essay "Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capital": national allegory and peripheral aesthetics, each of which provide a vital contribution to current discussions around world literature. In the essay, Jameson makes the provocative suggestion that literary texts from the peripheries and semi-peripheries of capitalism are radically different to those produced in capitalism's cores. He suggests that this is most clearly articulated in the differences between the political and the psychological content of core and peripheral literatures: where in the west 'conventionally, political commitment is recontained and psychologized or subjectivized by way of the public-private split' (1986b: 71), in third world texts 'psychology, or more specifically, libidinal investment, is to be read in primarily political and social terms' (1986b: 72). Jameson argues that in literature produced on the peripheries of capitalism the political is always present in the form of

national allegories, which appear distinctly 'unmodern' (1986b: 66) to the western reader and mean that peripheral and semi-peripheral literatures are rarely included in the western literary canon. This is problematic, Jameson suggests, if we are to take the idea of world literature seriously, for 'any conception of world literature necessarily demands some specific engagement with the question of third-world literature' (1986b: 68).

For Majumder, Jameson's essay provokes 'a rethinking of the relationship, by way of the vanished third world, between the aesthetic and the political' (2017:754), and he suggests that it 'contains the crucial and much overlooked suggestion that culture is, in fact, a site of emancipatory contest' (2017: 783). He explains that

> as intellectuals and artists from the periphery acknowledge the determinate presence of the irrational in the social reality they seek to represent, the aim is to probe into the very source of the irrational – imperialism. In doing so, in probing and seeking the source of conflict, the work of art comes to articulate an explicitly political endeavour, an overcoming of the irrational through the very process of re-presentation. (Majumder 2017: 794)

Writing about Benjamin's notion of allegory in *The Origin of German Tragic Drama,* in *Marxism and Form,* Jameson made the illuminating suggestion that 'allegory is precisely the dominant mode of expression of a world in which things have been for whatever reason utterly sundered from meanings, from spirit, from genuine human existence' (1971: 71). For Jameson the 'presence of the irrational' thus reveals itself in the form of allegory, which allow the psychological and libidinal content to be seamlessly linked to the political and social reality of the peripheries.

Majumder also argues that 'the focus on a deep historical time is perhaps the most distinctive feature of peripheral aesthetics, one that contrasts sharply with the disavowal of history that we see in the master-texts of western romanticism and modernism' (2017: 793). This sense of 'deep historical time' is identifiable across all the novels selected for study in this thesis. In Laxness's and Heinesen's works, for instance, it is inflected by a particular emphasis on national history and culture, which are mobilised as a form of resistance to the economic and cultural degradation caused by centuries of Danish colonial domination. In quite different terms, Pamuk's works are permeated by a sense of loss, of a rich and multicultural cultural landscape, reduced through capitalist "modernisation," to a meagre imitation of the west. This sense of loss is central to the notion of *hüzün* in *Istanbul*, but it is equally evoked by the character Ka in Pamuk's later novel *Snow*, who proudly wears his German wool coat as evidence of his western credentials whilst simultaneously using it to hide his deeper insecurities about his status as a secular and modern Turk. In Tekin's novels on the other hand, the nation is conspicuous by its absence. In her

autobiographical novel *Dear Shameless Death,* for instance, despite their direct involvement in the process of urbanisation that took place in the second half of the twentieth century by providing a surplus source of labour for infrastructural projects, the characters feel disorientated by, and estranged from, the modernising city, and instead seek comfort in the stories and superstitions of village life, which they reimagine to suit their new urban existence. In each text a heightened awareness of national history is thus discernible, and the past often intrudes on the present evidencing the coexistence of 'historically non-homogenous social and symbolic forms' in the semi-periphery.

Majumder, drawing on Jameson, suggests that the very 'condition of possibility of peripheral aesthetics is "combined and uneven development"; that is, the juxtaposition of multiple capitalist and non-capitalist modes of production and their determinate social relations within the world-system,' and that

> [s]uch juxtaposition […] engenders a modernism, as a set of representational strategies and concerns, which corresponds to the disjunctive and discontinuous experience of modernity. In contradistinction to metropolitan modernism, peripheral aesthetics not only arises out of unevenness, but also dialectically seeks to abolish its own condition of possibility. (2017: 786)

Majumder seems to suggest that peripheral modernism is synonymous with peripheral aesthetics more broadly, and he argues that Jameson sees modernism as the aesthetic mode that 'articulates the contradictory mediations that mark lived experience, between feeling and articulation, more acutely manifested in the peripheries than in the metropole' (2017: 789). I want to recalibrate this slightly for the purpose of this study and instead argue that one of the key features of *semi*-peripheral aesthetics is a dialectical tension between realist and modernist representation, which is itself a marker of the intensity with which capitalism's combined uneveness is experienced in the semi-peripheries. Indeed, Jameson too emphasises the dialectical relationship between realism and modernism, recognising, for instance, that 'genuine realism, taken at the moment of its emergence, is a discovery process' and therefore 'a kind of modernism' (2012: 476), and that there exist 'modernistic realisms and realistic modernisms' (2012: 479), which each have their own particular features. In an essay on "Realism after modernism and the Literary World-System," Joe Cleary highlights that most of the histories of realism on which we rely have been shaped by literary examples from core Europe, without reference to the works of realism produced in the peripheries and semi-peripheries of the literary world-system. He suggests that rather than focusing on the classical works of European realism, which failed to 'intellectually grasp the totality of capitalist

social relations' by largely ignoring the 'imperialism in both its domestic and geographically distant manifestations' (2012: 259), we might productively re-read the 'whole history of realism and modernism […] from the perspectives of our current peripheries' (2012: 267). It is on this note that Jameson has commented that he

> […] would like to maintain and strengthen the word margins: not as the "useless eaters" who have been rejected by society, or as the spatial deserts in which no production is to be done or money to be made – but rather as "weak links in the chain," where the Real may appear without warning, and disappear again if we are not alert to catch it. (Jameson 2012: 480)

Cleary suggests that we 'need, but lack, comprehensive theories and historical atlases of twentieth-century realism' (2012: 255), a call to which this thesis directly responds. I argue that in each of the eight texts selected for this study there is an underlying drive, either conscious or unconscious, towards grasping capitalism as a total system, to understand its structures and mechanisms, to look beneath surface reality and seek its 'hidden symmetry' (Pamuk 2006: 166). In his essay "Realism in the Balance," Georg Lukács famously defined realism as the impulse in texts to go beyond 'the surface of social reality' (1980: 33) to grasp the dynamics and inner workings of capitalism as a totality, and, if we take world-literature as 'literature that 'registers' the (modern capitalist) world-system' (WReC 2015 20), then it might be suggested that we ought to study it for its realism as well as the ways in which techniques and devices usually associated with modernism are used to represent the reality of the peripheries. Like Lukács, I take this to be an essentially realist impulse, but one that is ultimately shaped by the irrational reality of the semi-periphery. [16]

Thesis Summary

Focusing on the North Atlantic island nations, Iceland and the Faroe Islands, and Turkey, this project seeks to explore the formal and aesthetic characteristics of literary texts produced in the semi-periphery in order to consider what this space offers to the study of world-literature. The study will be split broadly into two sections corresponding to my two case studies. The first section focuses on the representation of cultural nationalism and independence in *Iceland's Bell* and *The Atom Station* by Halldór Laxness and *The Good Hope* and *The Black Cauldron* by William Heinesen, and considers how the traditional realism of forms such as the historical novel and the

[16] WReC make a similar point in their chapter on "The Question of Peripheral Realism," in *Combined and Uneven Development*. They suggest that 'to read modernist literature in the light of combined and uneven development is […] to read it with one eye to its realism' (2015: 67).

Scandinavian *kollektivroman* (collective novel) are adapted in order to represent the disjunctive 'historical raw material' (Jameson 1986b: 311) of the semi-periphery. In the first chapter I compare the representation of national history in *Iceland's Bell* and *The Good Hope* and argue that in each novel the traditional realism of the historical novel is reconfigured in order to interrogate established historical narratives about colonialism in the Nordic region and to represent the national histories of Iceland and the Faroe Islands as resistive to colonial domination and systematic marginalisation by the Danish state. In chapter two I consider the relationship between nationalism, independence, and global capitalism in Laxness's satirical novel, *The Atom Station,* and Heinesen's collective novel, *The Black Cauldron*, and argue that both novels express a dialectical national consciousness which is registered both at the level of form and content, and attests to the rapid and uneven development of both countries during and shortly after the Second World War. Together the four novels chart the journey of Iceland and the Faroe Islands, from peripheral colonies to semi-peripheral nation-states, and across the two chapters I explore the violence entailed by colonial domination and capitalist imperialism more broadly.

In the second section my focus shifts to Europe's south eastern margin, to Turkey, and the works of Latife Tekin and Orhan Pamuk. The shift in geographical perspective is accompanied by a shift in focus, to spaces of concentrated uneveness: the city and the border. I argue that not only is capitalism's uneveness intensified in the city and on the border, but the more concentrated focus allows a closer examination of semi-peripheral aesthetics in spatial and temporal terms. In chapter three I return to the representation of national history, but this time I explore Turkey's history of imperial decline as represented in Latife Tekin's autobiographical novel *Dear Shameless Death* and Orhan Pamuk's memoir *Istanbul: Memories of a City.* In different ways both texts give insight into the impact of Kemalist nationalism on the city of Istanbul, and I suggest that the notion of *hüzün* in Pamuk's memoir and *hemşehrilik,* meaning village fellowship, in Tekin's novel can be understood as articulations of alternative forms of belonging that draw on shared experiences of the city's history of decline to counter the parameters of inclusion and exclusion that characterised the nation's founding era. In the final chapter, I explore the representation of borders in Tekin's novel *Swords of Ice* and Pamuk's *Snow*, and argue that the semi-periphery can be productively understood as the border-space of the world-system. Through comparative analysis of the act of border crossing in both novels, I propose that the mobility of the protagonists serves a critical narrative function in mapping and translating the complex and uneven terrain of the border, whilst drawing attention to contradictions and tensions that define this space.

As well as covering two very different regions, the eight novels selected for study span almost sixty years and trace the 'historical passage from a national moment of decolonization to one of helpless

market globalization' (Jameson 2012: 482), a historical process which I argue is inscribed formally and thematically in these novels. The selection of texts included in this thesis have never been studied in comparison before and by presenting them as examples of semi-peripheral literature I offer novel readings that both emphasise their engagement with the structurality of the capitalist world-system and consider their political potential as texts from the margins of capitalism. It should be noted, however, that this project is by no means intended as an exhaustive account of semi-peripheral literature, but rather to highlight key characteristics based on the texts selected for study and, more importantly, to illustrate the value of the semi-periphery for the burgeoning study of world-literature. It is my hope that this thesis will prepare the ground for future projects with a broader geographical scope and selection of texts.

1. 'A History-with-Holes'? Magic Realism and National Allegory in Halldór Laxness's *Iceland's Bell* and William Heinesen's *The Good Hope*

In May 1944, just weeks before the decisive referendum on national independence in Iceland, Halldór Laxness wrote an article for the socialist newspaper *Þjóðviljinn* (*Will of the People*), in which he addressed King Christian X of Denmark (1912 -1947) directly:

> Christian R. should not forget that the Icelandic people have a good memory. This memory has long been the strongest weapon of the Saga people. We know full well that Christian R. does not speak for the Danes; rather, he speaks as the representative of the Danish institution that spent five hundred years flogging, starving, exploiting and executing Icelanders. (3)[17]

The 1944 referendum was the final stage in a lengthy battle for national sovereignty, and the article can be seen both as a pointed warning to the Danish authorities not to challenge the Icelanders' right to sovereignty at this crucial moment and as a reminder to the Icelandic people that the relationship between Denmark and Iceland was not always as democratic and conciliatory as in living memory. Published as a trilogy between 1943 and 1946, and set during the reign of King Frederik III of Denmark (1648-1670), whose imperialist wars and strict trade monopolies led to increased oppression of the Icelandic people, Laxness's historical novel *Iceland's Bell* recalls the violence of Danish colonial rule at a time when Denmark had long since lifted trade restrictions, begun to devolve power to home rule governments, and were rebranding their influence in the North Atlantic as benign and paternalistic. The novel is structured around a series of legal cases, which tie together the lives of three unlikely protagonists: Arnas Arnæus, advisor and chief librarian to the Danish King, Snæfriður Rydalin Björnsdóttir, youngest daughter of Magistrate Eydalín, the highest legal authority in Iceland, and Jón Hreggviðsson, a peasant farmer. All three are based on real historical figures, the most prominent being Árni Magnússon (1663- 1730), fictionalised in the novel as Arnas Arnæus, an antiquarian dedicated to collecting and preserving the famous medieval texts of Iceland. Snæfriður is likely based on a woman named Þódís Jónsdóttir, whose rumoured affair with Magnússon caused a scandal at the time (Roughton 2003). There was also a real farmer by name of Jón Hreggviðsson who was accused of killing the king's

[17] My translation from the original: 'Christian R. má ekki gleyma þvi að Íslendingar hafa got minni. Þetta minni hefur löngum verið sterkasta voþn sagnþjóðarinnar. Vér vitum vel að í skeyti sínu talar Christian R. ekki fyrir hönd Dana, heldur þeirrar stofnunar í Danmörku, sem hefur húðstríkt, svelt, arðrænt og liflátið Íslendinga I fimm hundruð ár' (1944: 3).

hangman in 1683 and acquitted of the crime in 1715 (Roughton 2003). Like his historical counterpart, Jón is accused of murder at the start of the novel and his efforts to prove his innocence and escape execution takes him on a journey from Iceland to Copenhagen, catalysing a series of related court cases, which implicate most of the characters in the novel. From the complex array of lawsuits and litigations spanning over twenty years, there emerges a strong critique of Danish colonial rule, alongside which Laxness represents the stoicism and resistance of the ordinary Icelandic people.

Following the declaration of independence in Iceland, in 1946 the Faroe Islanders also voted in favour of independence and secession from Denmark. However, after negotiations with Copenhagen it was agreed that the Faroes would remain as 'a self-governing community within the Danish state' (Debes 1995: 63). Almost two decades later, when Heinesen published his historical novel *The Good Hope* (1965) the political relationship between Denmark and the Faroe Islands continued to be fractious, and the politics of independence was particularly influential in the cultural arena, with the burgeoning Faroese language revival at the heart of debates. The question of language was a personal and political problem for Heinesen, who famously wrote to the Swedish Academy in 1977 to reject his nomination for the Nobel Prize for Literature, on the grounds that he did not write in Faroese, and that 'awarding the prize to a Faroese writer writing in Danish would unavoidably devalue the unique and admirable phenomenon that is Faroese literature, and it would therefore be unjust to award such a writer with international recognition' (1999: 29-30).[18] In his novel *The Good Hope* Heinesen intersperses seventeenth century Danish with Faroese idiom, constructing a language 'that had never been spoken or written' (Jones 1974: 142), but which would have resonated clearly with the drive for greater and political and cultural independence when the novel was published in the mid-twentieth century. Like *Iceland's Bell.* Heinesen's historical novel is set during the reign of King Frederik III, in the late 1660s and early 1670s, when Christoffer Gabel, the King's treasurer and personal advisor, had complete financial control of the Faroe Islands, and his profiteering and harsh treatment of the local population made this one of the bleakest periods in the nation's history (Wylie 1987).[19] The novel follows the journey of a Danish priest called Peder Børresen, as he travels to the Faroese archipelago to take up a post in the island's capital, Tórshavn. It is comprised of a series of letters from Peder to his friend and confidante Jonas, who he has promised to give a full account of his journey to the Islands and

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[18] My translation from the original: 'at man ved at tildele en danskskrivende færing prisen ikke vilde kunne undgå at desavouere det ejendommelige og beundringsværdige fænomen der hedder færøsk litteratur', og at det derfor 'vilde være noget nær en slags litterært justitsmord at tildele en danskskrivende færing en anerkendelse af international reputation' (Heinesen, quoted in Sørrensen 1999: 29-30).

[19] The Faroe Islands remained in the possession of the Gabel family until 1709.

whatever he 'might experience and live through there' (*GH* 9). Peder is based on the historical figure Lucas Jacobsen Debes who was appointed Dean of the Faroes in 1670, and is widely known in Danish and Faroese history as 'a champion of the people in the face of the oppressors' (Jones 1974: 140). During his time on the islands Debes not only wrote an anthropological study titled *Færoæ & Færoa Reserata*, published in 1673, but he also supported the rebellion against Gabel's regime by reporting the maltreatment of the local population to officials in Copenhagen (Jones 1974). In the novel, Peder similarly makes it his personal mission to support the rebellion by collecting 'as many clear and well-expressed pieces of evidence as possible concerning the misdeeds and crimes of which the Gabel crowd are guilty' (*GH* 90), resulting in detailed descriptions of the poor living conditions, starvation and unjust treatment of the Faroese people in his letters.

Both novels are set at the height of the Royal Danish Trade Monopolies,[20] an era of economic and cultural stagnation in Iceland and the Faroe Islands, and both authors make use of this historical moment to illustrate the historical violence of Danish colonial domination. With this in mind, I want to make the preliminary suggestion that in *Iceland's Bell* and *The Good Hope* both authors position the historical experience of colonial violence, and popular resistance to it, as formative features of Icelandic and Faroese national identity and as invaluable to the political project of self-determination in the twentieth century. This mobilisation of history can be productively explored in relation to Georg Lukács' discussion of historical realism in *The Historical Novel*. Lukács argues that a new historical consciousness emerged in Europe after the French Revolution, in which the past was no longer treated as mere 'theme and costume' (1963: 19), but 'as the concrete precondition of the present' (1963: 21), and he highlights the importance of realist historical novels to the imaginative project of nation building in the years following the Napoleonic wars, suggesting that by connecting past and present, and reconciling 'memories […] of past greatness' with 'moments of national dishonour' (1963: 25), the realist historical novel was instrumental in constructing the cohesive sense of history needed to imagine a sovereign nation. With 'real life historical figures interwoven with fictional characters', 'a sense of popular life', and 'a powerful underlying narrative of progress, however halting or ambitious, towards national emancipation' (Anderson 2011: 9), *Iceland's Bell* and *The Good Hope* seem at first to adhere to Lukács' rubric for the historical novel. Indeed, in his preface to the English edition of *The Historical Novel*, Lukács suggests Laxness' *Iceland's Bell*, alongside Lampedusa's *The Leopard,* can be considered as 'new important historical novels' which confirmed the principles of his thesis 'in a positive direction'

[20] The trade monopolies were imposed between 1529 and 1856 in the Faroe Islands and from 1602 to 1786 in Iceland.

(1963: 17).[21] However, in both *Iceland's Bell* and *The Good Hope* the realist representation given such primacy by Lukács in his study of the historical novel is punctuated with magical, supernatural, mystical and surreal events, and both authors blend elements of the picaresque, parable, epic and saga traditions, with social realism resulting in a formal irrealism and generic uneveness which might more adequately be described as magic realist. The aim of this chapter is therefore to explore the ways in which Laxness and Heinesen rework the traditional realism of the historical novel in order to adequately represent the history of colonial domination.

My reading of Laxness's *Iceland's Bell* and Heinesen's *The Good Hope* will be grounded initially in the discussion of two key texts by Fredric Jameson, both published in 1986, which discuss the form and aesthetics of peripheral and semi-peripheral cultural production: "On Magic Realism in Film" and the controversial essay "Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capital". Focusing in particular on Jameson's definition of magic realism as 'a formal mode' which is 'constitutively dependent on a type of historical raw material in which disjunction is structurally present' (1986b: 311), the first part of this chapter will show that a sense of 'disjunction' is pervasive in the aesthetic and formal schemas of both novels and central to understanding the social and historical landscapes portrayed. The second part of the chapter will consider how the forms and structures of colonial domination in the North Atlantic are represented in the novels, by focusing on two examples that show the violence of colonialism to be embedded in state structures, practices and cultural forms with particular potency: the representation of crime, criminality and the legal system, and the representation of the spoken and written word, and which together illustrate the systematic marginalisation of Iceland and the Faroe Islands by the Danish state.

Magical Realism and the 'demonical flux' of History

Writing in 1925, the German art critic Franz Roh coined the term "magical realism" to describe the formal and aesthetic features of a new style of painting which emerged in Europe after the end of the First World War. Roh suggested that after the 'preference for fantastic, extraterrestrial, remote objects,' which had characterised Expressionism (1995: 16), magical realism, or 'Post-Expressionism', marked a return to the 'real world' (1995: 17), 'to a full objectivity' within artistic representation (1995: 19). Although this 'New Realism' celebrated 'mundane' subject-matter (1995: 17), it did not, according to Roh, default to a static representation of everyday reality, but,

[21] Lukács would likely have come across Laxness' works, in German translation, in the literary journal *Sinn und Form*, to which both he and Laxness were regular contributors (Philpotts and Parker 2009).

> just as with futurism, the miracle of *realistic depiction* appeared quickly in the midst of abstraction, only to lose itself again, so Post-Expressionism offers us the miracle of *existence in its imperturbable duration*: the unending miracle of eternally mobile and vibrating molecules. Out of that flux, that constant appearance and disappearance of material, permanent objects somehow appear: in short, the marvel by which a variable commotion crystallizes into a clear set of constants. This miracle of an apparent persistence and duration in the midst of a demonical flux; this enigma of total quietude in the midst of general becoming, of universal dissolution: this is what Post-Expressionism admires and highlights. (1995: 22)

Roh thereby defined magical realism in terms of an opposition between 'flux' and 'constants', between the solid appearance of objects and the sense of their 'eternal fluidity' (1995: 22), which he considered a more adequate representation of the 'fragmented and ragged' (1995: 30) experience of lived reality than previous artistic forms. Roh's idea of magical realism thus had little to do with the representation of magical content as such, but with the ability of this new style of art to capture realistically the 'magic of being' itself (1995: 20). Contrary to how the term has since been used, Roh's early conception of magical realism emphasised a return to realism, but not 'the realism which existed before Expressionism', it was, rather, 'a homecoming which carried with it the baggage from the trip through Expressionism's existential voyage' resulting in 'a mix of wild flights and anchored reality' (Reeds 2006: 178).

William Heinesen's *The Good Hope* offers a similar sense of material and symbolic worlds in continuous dialectical motion. Take the novel's opening passage for instance, a description of the first sighting of the Faroese archipelago by the novel's protagonist Peder Børrensen:

> The immense ocean is full of wondrous sights confusing to the eye and the mind. The experienced sailor knows when these visions are reality and when they are delusions, but the unaccustomed traveller for whom all these things possess the intriguing aura of novelty is ignorant of this. One morning, he sees a mountainous coast rising solid and grey towards the sky, a coast that seems to him to be as everlasting a land as anything; but behold: these massive mountains are shaken as though by the might of an earthquake; they burst into flame and become brittle as glowing ashes and launch crimson sparks and glowing plumes into the air; they fall asunder and are wafted away as easily as the wind plays with a dandelion clock, leaving nothing behind but the sun over a desolate sea. (*GH* 9)

As the mountain ranges of the Faroes dramatically appear and dissolve before our eyes Heinesen stages a confrontation between 'reality' and 'delusion', which is reconfigured and emphasised in

the passage through a series of opposing images: the mountains which are simultaneously solid and fragile, everlasting and transient, fierce and gentle; the 'experienced sailor', able to recognise any aberrations from 'living reality', and the 'unaccustomed traveller', who is more likely to be deceived, which together impart a sense of instability and uncertainty to the novel's symbolic schema from the start.

Once Peder arrives on the Islands, the dream-like quality of the opening passage is replaced with a more measured and realist narrative register; a nod, most likely, to the rational and scientific language of Lucas Jacobsen Debes' anthropology:

> The first thing by which a stranger is struck when on a ship approaching Tórshavn, the capital of Faroe, is the unremarkable appearance of this town and the vast wilderness by which it is surrounded on all sides. Right down by the naked shore, which the ocean has worn down into countless tongues and skerries, there are but extensive rock strewn heaths rising into mountain ranges in the nature of deserts, behind which there can be seen desolate mountain peaks. (*GH* 16)

Although the dream-like opening passage is replaced here with a more scientific narrative tone, the juxtaposition of the town with the surrounding wilderness of the fells, and the flat shoreline against the peaks of the mountain ranges, extend the dramatic sense of oppositionality from the opening passage to this second, more rational description of the Islands, emphasising the unfamiliarity of the Faroese landscape, even to an 'experienced' traveller such as Peder. This sense of unfamiliarity seems to recall the 'negative pleasure' of Immanuel Kant's sublime, as Peder appears to be both 'attracted' and 'repelled' by the violently oppositional form of the Faroese landscape (Kant 2007: 76).[22] As the novel progresses, Peder will continue to assert a rational and realist perspective, even when faced with the local people's 'superstitious dread and constant fear of devils and ghosts' (*GH* 53). In fact, almost as soon as Peder sets foot on the Islands, the central conflict between 'reality' and 'delusion' of the opening passage is recast in the form of a direct question: 'do you believe that *spectres* exist *in natura*? Or do you not believe?' (*GH* 23). The question is posed by the barber and surgeon, Master Olaus, who assures Peder that in the Faroe Islands 'all kinds of spectra are known to all, and everyone in this land know this so clearly from the revealed deeds of Satan that they have no doubt about it whatever' (*GH* 23). The continuous fluctuation between realist narration of supernatural, unexplainable events, and a pervasive uncertainty in what

[22] The Kantian sublime 'cannot be contained in any sensuous form, but rather concerns ideas of reason', meaning that 'the broad ocean agitated by storms cannot be called sublime' but rather that it is the recognition of 'chaos' and 'irregular disorder' of nature, that gives rise to feelings of sublimity (Kant 2007: 76-77).

is intended as rational and scientific depiction, results in an intensification of the question of reality itself, for after all, 'when the sight of living reality […] takes on such a wondrous aspect', how can one distinguish what is real from 'visions' (*GH* 9)?

Although Heinesen clearly combines 'wild flights' with 'anchored reality' in *The Good Hope* the novel is not widely known as a work of magical realism outside the Nordic region, and tends instead to be studied primarily for its historical content and language rather than its formal complexity.[23] There are a number of reasons for this, a few of which are worth considering briefly here. Firstly, in "Magical Realism a Problem of Definition" (2006), Kenneth Reeds suggests that soon after Roh's initial conceptualisation of the term, magical realism underwent two significant transferrals, a geographical move from Europe to Latin America and an artistic move from art to literature which resulted in the 'intellectual separation' of the term from Roh and the context of European post-expressionist art (Reeds 2006: 181). Reed suggests that the geographical and intellectual relocation of the term was initiated by the translation of Roh's essay to Spanish in 1927, when it was published in José Ortega y Gasset's literary magazine *Revista de Occidente*. The magazine was widely read by the Latin American intelligentsia at the time, and the arrival of Roh's translated essay coincided with the emergence of a new kind of writing. The term was adopted by literary critics, in an 'unintentional separation' from Roh, to describe what was perceived to be a specifically Latin American literary identity (Reeds 2006: 181). Magic realism was eventually broadened to describe Caribbean, Indian and Nigerian literature with the assumption that it was the third-world or postcolonial condition, rather than the Latin American context which was 'necessary to the currency' of the term (Slemon 1995: 407-8), and although it has now been applied to some first-world contexts magic realism has increasingly become affixed to what Neil Lazarus has described as 'pomo-postcolonialist […] ("pomo" as in "postmodernist")' texts and modes of reading (2002: 774). As such it has been restricted by the same theoretical 'assumptions and investments' which limit the scope of postcolonial studies more broadly, namely:

> a constitutive anti-Marxism; an undifferentiating disavowal of all forms of nationalism and a corresponding exaltation of migrancy, liminality, hybridity, and multiculturality […]; an

[23] See Malan Marnersdóttir's "William Heinesens *Det gode håb* i lyset af post-kolonial teori" (2004), and Sune Auken's "En luthersk helgen i et kosmisk rum: om fortælleren og fortællingen i William Heinesens roman "Det gode håb"" (2001) for essays in Danish which have tackled the question of magical realism and form in *The Good Hope* using 'modernist- associated terms such as hybridity, polyphony, pastiche, irony, and defamiliarization rather than realist associated conceptual categories such as historical transition, class consciousness, and totality' (Cleary 2012: 265).

> aversion to dialectics; and a refusal of an antagonistic or struggle-based model of politics. (Lazarus 2002: 771)

Indeed, in *Culture in the Age of Three Worlds* Michael Denning argues that despite the leftist radicalism of early magic realist fiction, the form now increasingly serves as 'the aesthetic rubric' for the globalised world-novel, and has become 'a marketing device that flattens distinct regional and linguistic traditions into a single world beat' (2004: 51).

In contrast to the dominant critical trends, in Fredric Jameson's essay "On Magic Realism in Film" magical realism is conceptualised in materialist terms as 'a possible alternative to the narrative logic of contemporary post-modernism' (1986a: 302). Although Jameson does not make direct reference to Roh's essay, his analysis of magic realism can be seen both as a recuperation and expansion of Roh's earlier definition. Comparing the Polish film *Fever*, to a Venezuelan film called *La Casa de Agua* and a Colombian film called *Condores no entierran todos los dias,* Jameson, like Roh, emphasises the realism of magic realism, and suggests that the 'theoretical and historical' challenges of the term, rest in how precisely to distinguish it from 'the vaster category generally simply called fantastic literature' and from the category of realism itself (1986a: 301). Drawing on Alejo Carpentier's related conception of *real maravilloso*, the marvellous real, Jameson defines magic realism as a 'transfiguration of the object world itself' (1986a: 301), not as 'a realism to be transfigured by the "supplement" of a magical perspective but a reality which is already in and of itself magical or fantastic' (1986a: 311), carrying clear echoes of Roh's description of magic realism as a 'mildly transfigured "reality"' (1995: 20). However, Jameson extends Roh's definition by linking magical realism to the material and historical conditions of the peripheries of capitalism, suggesting that:

> the possibility of magic realism as a formal mode is constitutively dependent on a type of historical raw material in which disjunction is structurally present; or, to generalize the hypothesis more starkly, magic realism depends on a content which betrays the overlap or the coexistence of precapitalist with nascent capitalist or technological features. (1986a: 311)

The pervasive sense of narrative uncertainty in *The Good Hope* can, following Jameson's definition, be read as representative of the disjunctive socio-historical 'raw material' of the Faroe Islands; not so much of the historical era represented in the novel, when the Faroes were actively peripheralised through colonial exploitation, but of Heinesen's own time of writing - the 1960's - a period shortly after home rule had been granted, when the country remained politically and economically

dependent on the Danish state; a historical moment in which the uneven mixture of 'precapitalist' and 'nascent capitalist' structures was particularly clear.

It is this particular engagement with history, complex and palimpsestic, with 'the superposition of whole layers of past within the present' (1986a: 311) and vice versa, which Jameson identifies as the aesthetic counter to postmodernism's 'enfeeblement of historicity' (1986a: 303). To illustrate the point he aligns the representation of history in what he calls postmodern 'nostalgia films' to the older system of historical representation described by Lukács in *The Historical Novel*, and suggests that, in these films, history is transformed 'into a visual commodity' for mass consumption, with only 'the surface sheen of a period fashion reality' (1986a: 303).[24] To Jameson, the magic realist films under discussion are different because they focus on modes of production rather than the generation as the organising category of history, and he suggests that the coexistence of old and new modes of production in the peripheries and semi-peripheries results in violently disjunctive social and economic conditions, and it is precisely the violence of capitalist relations in these spaces that generates the particular engagement with history in magic realist films; the sense of a 'history with holes':

> a perforated history, which includes gaps not immediately visible to us, so close is our gaze to its objects of perception. These holes may first of all be characterized as gaps in information, yet in a succession of spatial situations seen too intensely for the mind to have the leisure to ask its other questions. (Jameson 1986a: 303-4)

The result is either 'surcharged' or 'discontinuous' portrayals of history (1986a: 310-311), both of which, to Jameson, evidence a new 'privileged relationship' with history (1986a: 303). We can thus read the magic realism of Heinesen's historical novel as a response to and as an expression of the violently disjunctive relations generated by Danish colonial rule. However, rather than historical progress in the Lukácsian sense, Heinesen's represents an exaggerated movement of history – the continuous 'flux' of Roh's post-expressionist 'new realism' – in order to express the disjunctive reality of the Faroe Islands.

As a work of magical realism from the borders of Europe, *The Good Hope* certainly challenges the geographical assumption that magical realism is a specifically Latin American or even Third-World phenomenon, and the fact that the novel cannot be comfortably 'harnessed to postmodern

[24] Jameson firs introduced this idea in his ground-breaking essay "Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism," published in 1984, in which he suggests that the new aesthetic mode of the nostalgia film, 'emerged as an elaborated symptom of the waning of our historicity, of our lived possibility of experiencing history in some active way' (68).

projects' (Warnes 2005: 9), goes some way in explaining why texts such as this, and Heinesen's and Laxness's works more generally, have tended to be overlooked in discussions and critical studies of magic realism so far. However, by emphasising the historical and sociological preconditions for magic realism as rooted in the violence of imperialism, Jameson opens-up discussions of magic realism to texts such as *The Good Hope* and *Iceland's Bell,* allowing for a greater degree of comparison between different texts and contexts, without losing sight of specific local conditions. In what follows I will consider Jameson's controversial discussion of 'national allegory' in "Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capital", which builds on and expands the theorisation of peripheral and semi-peripheral cultural production formulated in "On Magic Realism in Film."

The Allegorisation of National History

Jameson's "Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capital" also deals with the politics of non-western and non-canonical forms of literature and offers an analysis which is analogous but distinct from the discussion in "On Magical Realism in Film". Jameson opens the essay with a discussion of the differences between third world literary and cultural production, and the dominant cultural forms of the first world, and suggests that 'one of the determinants of capitalist culture […] is a radical split between the private and the public, the poetic and the political' (1986b: 69), and that this split is absent, or at least very differently configured, in texts from beyond capitalism's cores. He makes the bold statement that:

> Third world texts – even those which are seemingly private and invested with a properly libidinal dynamic – necessarily project a political dimension in the form of national allegory: *the story of the private individual destiny is always an allegory of the embattled situation of the public third-world culture and society.* (1986b: 69)

What is significant about Jameson's essay in relation to the discussion in this piece is not so much his 'sweeping hypothesis' that *all* Third-Word literatures are 'necessarily' political allegories (1986b: 69), which has been source of vehement criticism since the essay's publication,[25] but rather the implications of his suggestions that 'the disrepute of social allegory' in western culture and 'the well-nigh inescapable operation of social allegory in the west's Other'(1986b: 85), is itself both a symptom and a consequence of our radically uneven global order. Jameson specifies that his use

[25] For discussions of the critiques of Jameson's essay, see Neil Lazarus' chapter "Fredric Jameson on 'Third-World Literature': a defence" in *The Postcolonial Unconscious* (2011), and Imre Szeman's "Who's Afraid of National Allegory?" (2002). Lazarus highlights the misreading of Jameson's article, in the first instance by Aijaz Ahmad in an article titled "Jameson's Rhetoric of otherness and the "National Allegory"" published in *Social Text* a year after Jameson's essay, and shows how Ahmad's initially 'Marxist critique of "Third-Worldism" has mutated into a broadly accepted "Third-Worldist" critique of Marxism' (2011: 99) and has since determined the way Jameson's essay is read.

of the term 'third-world' is intended to refer to all countries that cannot be 'conceived as anthropologically independent or autonomous', but which are:

> locked in a life-and-death struggle with first-world cultural imperialism [...] that is itself a reflexion of the economic situation of such areas in their penetration by various stages of capital, or as it is sometimes euphemistically termed, of modernization. (1986b: 68)

National allegory is, according to Jameson, the narrative response to the 'crisis of representation' (1986b: 81) caused by the violent expansion of capitalism in the peripheries, and, like magic realism, allegory relies on a reconfiguration of the 'objective real world' (1986b: 70) in order to adequately represent the disjunctive overlapping or displacement of older modes of production and social relations with those of the capitalist system. Magic realist representation is thus also allegorical, in that it is an aesthetic response to a specific set of historical and social conditions; an encoding of the disjunctive 'historical raw material' (1986a: 311) of the peripheries and semi-peripheries. Far from being absent in western literature, Jameson suggests that political allegories are merely '*unconscious*' (1986a: 79), and the dismissal of third-world texts from the western literary canon, a symptom of the 'unaccustomed exposure to reality, or to the collective totality' that such texts offer in their direct engagement with national or political themes (1986b: 85). Jameson thereby reverses the inability of the western canon to accommodate third-world texts into a critique of western reading practices and shows that this reaction is structural as opposed to a matter of quality or taste.

Published almost two decades after Jameson's "Third- World Literature", the introduction to the first American edition of *Iceland's Bell* by the author Adam Haslett illustrates the continued significance of Jameson's essay for thinking critically about the way peripheral and semi-peripheral texts are read. 'At first glance' Haslett writes,

> *Iceland's Bell* has a few strikes against it when it comes to attracting American readers. To begin with, there is the author's name. Who is Halldór Laxness anyway? And then there is that country in the title. Am I really going to settle into a long novel about Iceland of all places? And did we mention the story takes place in the seventeenth century and revolves around forty years of intractable civil and criminal litigation? Headed for the exits yet? (2003: vii)

In trying to encourage greater readership of Laxness's works in the United States, Haslett feels he must warn readers against the novel's political content and reassure readers that although Laxness's characters may seem to lack 'modern psychological depth', the work should not be dismissed as

'simplistic' (2003: xi). Despite his good intentions, Hallett's comments reveal the continued bias of mainstream readership in the west against politically and socially engaged fiction from the peripheries and semi-peripheries, and, moreover, his statement that '[n]ationalism and good literature have always been uneasy bedfellows' (2003: xiii) indicates clearly the refutation of nationalist themes and content which continues to shape the literary canon. Challenging the assumption that allegory is a transparent or simplistic representative system which can be 'quickly decoded, and once decoded, is of no further interest' (Walker 1995: 351), Jameson instead suggests that in third-world literature allegory operates more like a "floating" or transferable structure of allegorical reference' with the capacity 'to generate a range of distinct meanings or messages, simultaneously' (1986b: 74), rather than as a 'one-to-one table of equivalences' (1986b: 73).

Dismissed by Lukács in *The Historical Novel* for representing a 'too direct, unhistorical' relationship between past and present (1963: 341), Jameson's reformulation of allegory in "Third-World Literature" challenges the perception of allegory as a simplistic figurative system, and, alongside the discussions in "On Magic Realism in Film," he shows that the particular literary and cultural forms encountered in the peripheries and semi-peripheries can be directly linked to the violence entailed in the imposition of capitalism in these spaces. The idea of 'national allegory' then, rather than reducing all non-western literature to a single allegorical reading, in fact allows literary production to be linked both to the nation and national politics, and to the capitalist world-system. This proves particularly useful for unpacking the engagement with national history in *Iceland's Bell* and *The Good Hope*, where the history of colonial domination and exploitation in Iceland and the Faroe Islands is mobilised through a set of allegorical structures that connect the past with the present and vice versa.

The opening of *Iceland's Bell* gives a clear illustration of how this allegorisation of national history operates. The ancient Icelandic parliamentary assembly known as the *Alþingi*, is intricately connected with the history of colonialism and self-determination in Iceland, and it is therefore significant that Laxness opens *Iceland's Bell* at its historic site at Þingvellir:

> There was a time, it says in books, that the Icelandic people had only one national treasure: a bell. The bell hung fastened to the ridgepole at the gable end of the courthouse at Þingvellir by Öxará. It was rung for court hearings and before executions, and was so ancient that no one knew its true age any longer. The bell had been cracked for many years before this story begins, and the oldest folk thought they could remember it as having a clearer chime. (*IB* 3)

From the first recorded meeting of the *Alþingi* in 930, until the signing of the Old Covenant in 1262, which transferred the nation's sovereignty to the Norwegian King, Þingvellir was at the centre of public life in Iceland. This period has become known as the golden age of the Icelandic commonwealth and is the era explored in the late medieval Icelandic sagas. With a glorious but largely forgotten past, 'so ancient that no one knew its true age any longer', the figurative implication of the bell is clear: it represents the Icelandic nation, and the distant memory of it once 'having a clearer chime' a clear reference to the former glory of the Icelandic commonwealth. But the story of the bell continues:

> One year when the king decreed that the people of Iceland were to relinquish all of their brass and copper so that Copenhagen could be rebuilt following the war, men were sent to fetch the ancient bell at Þingvellir. (*IB* 3)

The appropriation of the bell by order of the King is not only emblematic of the exploitation of the Icelandic nation by the Danish state during the years of the trade monopoly, but also recalls to the establishment of absolute monarchy in Denmark in 1660, just before the novel is set, which concentrated state and religious power in the hands of the King and further reduced the powers of the *Alþingi* to those of a regional court of law.[26] The history of the *Alþingi*, very much one of both 'past greatness' and 'national dishonour' (Lukács 1963: 25), is represented by Laxness in the single allegorical image of the bell, and the opening location of the novel, the 'courthouse at Þingvellir', recalls a significant juncture in Icelandic political history, which would have remained symbolically potent in the battle for political and cultural independence from Denmark at the time the novel was written.

However, despite its symbolic significance Laxness begins to unravel and complicate the allegory of the bell almost immediately after its initial figuration, through the introduction of Jón Hreggviðsson. At the start of the novel Jón, one of the novel's three protagonists, is being escorted from the workhouse by the hangman Sigurður Snorrason, where he has been punished by hard labour for stealing a length of fishing rope. Jón interrupts the epic style of the opening passage, '[t]here was a time, it says in books' (*IB* 3), with his introduction of the King's hangman Sigurður Snorrason: '"That's the king's hangman from Bessastaðir. All the dogs piss on him"' (*IB* 4). He continues with a jest about the king, 'my Most Gracious Hereditary Sire has recently gotten himself a third mistress […] and she's supposed to be the fattest of them all' (*IB* 6), further deflating the

[26] Even in this weakened form the *Alþingi* continued to be at the heart of Icelandic public life, until it was abolished in 1800 by royal decree. Following an era of political impotence which gave rise to the modern Icelandic independence movement, it was eventually restored in 1843, but moved to its current location in Reykjavík (Halink 2014).

epic narrative tone of the novel's opening. The radical shift in register to Jón's crude language imparts a sense of instability and disjunction to the narrative, not unlike the sense of uncertainty encountered in Heinesen's *The Good Hope*, and a clear expression of Jameson's assertion that the 'allegorical spirit is profoundly discontinuous' (1986a: 73). Thus, rather than allowing allegory to function homogenously, where the bell neatly serves as a symbol for Iceland, Laxness continuously introduces different allegorical structures, which overlap and interact, like 'loops or circuits which intersect and overdetermine each other' (1986a: 73), to produces a myriad of different meanings.

The complexity of the novel's allegorical configuration can also be seen in the intricately connected plot strands of the three central protagonists, Arnas Arnæus, Snæfriður, and Jón, who each represents an aspect of 'the small Icelandic people—its history, its legends and its long struggle for independence from foreign domination' (Talmor 2010: 621). As the lowliest of the three protagonists, Jón stands in for the impoverished and oppressed population of Iceland, and that it is him who cuts down 'the bell of the land' (*IB* 5), is particularly significant in the complex symbolic schema of the novel. In the act of cutting the bell at Þingvellir, the national allegorical imagery of the bell, the last symbol of Iceland's former glory, is pressed on to Jón, a poor and crude famer, in the first of many 'dialectically ironic reversals' (Jameson 1986a: 85) which will occur throughout the novel. Jón's personal battle for freedom can thus be read as the Icelandic nation's battle for independence against Danish colonial rule, and his adventures, punishments and sufferings, as emblematic of the beleaguered national situation at the height of the royal trade monopolies and absolutism. As the novel progresses Laxness introduces the two other protagonists, who each serve a different symbolic function in the narrative: Snæfriður, nicknamed 'Iceland's sun' (*IB* 191), willingly sacrifices herself again and again to uphold the old heroic value of honour, whereas Arnas Arnæus, her lover and dialectical opposite, works tirelessly towards a future Iceland where such flawed ideals will no longer be necessary. Snæfriður and Arnæus thus embody the contradictory forces of the nation, past and present, which are bound together by the fate of Jón, who operates both as a force of narrative disruption and of connection in the novel.

The allegorisation of the novel's central characters results in a nuanced engagement with national history, but the use of national allegory is not the only way Laxness comments on Icelandic history. Throughout the novel Laxness represents the structures and processes which organise and administer colonial authority, and thereby highlights the historical power relations between Iceland and Denmark. Alongside the allegorical framework then, there remains a strong realist impulse to document and represent the history of colonial oppression and exploitation. We can see this combination of allegory and realism in the novel's opening, when the entire history of the *Alþingi* is mobilised through the image of the bell. It is this particular tension between allegory and

historical realism, a tension also reflected in the linguistic clash between the epic register of the narrator and crude language of Jón, which results in the dynamic representation of national history in the novel, and allows for a figural escalation between past and present that mirrors the 'demonical flux' of Heinesen's magic realism in *The Good Hope*.

The 'exceptional situation' of the Semi-Periphery

In his afterword to the *Modern Language Quarterly* special issue on peripheral realism Jameson commented that he intended his use of the word 'national' in "Third-World Literature" to refer specifically 'to the historical moment of the construction of the nation in a given geographic space' (2012: 481). I find this comment particularly interesting in relation to the representation of national history in *Iceland's Bell* and *The Good Hope*, because rather than focussing on a single historical moment, the novels instead represent national history through a series of allegorical reference points, which accumulate to produce a layered representation of the nation's past. However, rather than a 'history-with-holes' (1986a: 321), in *Iceland's Bell* and *The Good Hope* the violence of colonialism seems to result in a stratiform history, where the past is mobilised to lend significance to the fight for national independence in the present, whilst simultaneously locating the struggle for sovereignty in the historical experience of colonialism, in what might be described as an exaggeration or intensification of the nineteenth century realist historical novel's treatment of the past 'as the concrete precondition of the present' (Lukács 1963: 21). I want to suggest that this intensification of historical consciousness is not just an aesthetic response to the violence of colonial rule, but also to the particular disjunctions of the semi-periphery.

Although his argument is primarily focused on the Chinese author Lu Xun and the Senegalese writer and film maker Ousmane Sembène, in "Third-World Literature" Jameson makes some brief but valuable observations specifically about semi-peripheral cultural production. Writing on the works of Spanish writer Benito Pérez Galdós, 'the last and among the richest achievements of 19th century realism' (1986b: 78), Jameson replaces the vocabulary of three worlds theory with the terminology of Wallerstein's world-systems theory, describing Spain as 'not strictly peripheral', like the third-world countries analysed in the essay, but as *'semi- peripheral* […] when contrasted with England or France' (1986b: 78); a structural difference which he shows results in a different kind of allegorical representation. Jameson suggests that Galdós's novels are 'more visibly allegorical (in the national sense) than most of their better-known European predecessors,' but that unlike in third-world literature, in semi-peripheral texts, such as Galdós's *Fortunata y Jacinta* (1887), national allegory is 'optional', and can be used either 'to convert the entire situation of the novel into an

allegorical commentary on the destiny of Spain', or as 'metaphorical decoration for the individual drama', so that:

> far from dramatizing the identity of the political and the individual or psychic, the allegorical structure tends essentially to separate these levels in some absolute way. We cannot feel its force unless we are convinced of the radical difference between politics and the libidinal: so that its operation reconfirms (rather than annuls) that split between public and private which was attributed to western civilization earlier in our discussion. (1986b: 79)

What Jameson points to here, is that as opposed to bridging the public/private, political/poetic 'split' – unconscious in literature of the metropolitan core and overt in peripheral literature – *semi*-peripheral literature heightens our awareness of it, with its 'optional nature' allowing the public and the private, collective and individual levels of narrative to be simultaneously detached or collapsed, intensifying the already polysemic logic of allegorical and magic realist figuration. Jameson's analysis of Galdós thus seems to suggest that not only are there formal and aesthetic features which are distinct to texts produced in the semi-peripheries, but that texts from these often neglected spaces, because of their more readily available 'allegorical structures' (1986b: 79), might offer new insights into the relationship between capitalism and culture.

Although Jameson doesn't mention the semi-periphery explicitly, his later essay on "Modernism and Imperialism"[27] also contains some valuable observations about Irish literature which build on the theorisation of the semi-periphery introduced above. The essay explores the relationship between the external 'structure of imperialism' and the 'inner forms and structures' of modernist texts (1995a: 44), and suggests that modernist literature from capitalism's metropolitan cores – he uses E. M. Forster's *Howard's End* (1910) as an example – cannot adequately represent the capitalist system in totality because a significant section of the economic puzzle of imperialism takes places in the colonial peripheries, 'beyond the metropolis' and outside its daily life and existential experience (1995a: 50-51). This results in a 'radically incomplete' (1995: 58) view from the imperial centre, a 'representational dilemma' (1995: 59) that also restricts literature from the colonial peripheries because here 'the face of imperialism is brute force, naked power, open exploitation' (1995a: 59). Jameson suggests that what is needed instead is 'a kind of exceptional situation,'

> of overlap and coexistence between these two incommensurable realities which are those of the lord and the bondsman altogether, those of the metropolis and of the colony

[27] Jameson's contribution to the Field Day pamphlet, collected in *Nationalism, Colonialism, and Literature* (1995)

> simultaneously. […] a national situation which reproduces the appearance of First World Social reality and social relationships […] but whose underlying structures is in fact much closer to that of the Third World or of colonized daily life. (1995a: 59-60)

To Jameson, Ireland is one such situation and James Joyce's *Ulysses* the text which exemplifies the aesthetic potential of this 'exceptional' space. He suggests that it is the situation of being between 'two incommensurable realities' (Jameson 1995a: 50), that of core and periphery, which creates the 'uniqueness of the Irish situation' (Jameson 1995a: 60).

In his essay on "Irish Studies, Colonial Questions" Joe Cleary provides a more detailed discussion of the paradoxes that attend this historical situation. Drawing on Roberto Schwarz's discussion of the 'contrast between the ideological function of liberal ideas in Europe' and Brazil, Cleary suggests that a similar 'experience of incongruity' (2007: 23) can be identified in Irish history and culture, inflected by the peculiar experience of being at once European *and* colonial:

> [t]he suggestion is not, patently, that nineteenth-century Ireland was like nineteenth-century Brazil. What is suggested, rather, is that although Ireland belonged to the same geocultural locale, the same orbit of capital, as the major European imperial powers, it was integrated into that orbit of capital in a very different way to its main European neighbours. (2007: 23)

So, although Ireland was shaped by the same 'intellectual and cultural transformations' as western Europe, they were 'mediated through a society that was in its structural composition […] objectively colonial in character' (2007: 22), resulting in a similar 'disjunction between ideology and material reality' (2007: 22) that Schwarz identifies in Brazilian society. Iceland and the Faroe Islands share with Ireland the paradoxical experience of being part of Europe whilst also having a colonial history, and, as in Ireland, the integration of Iceland and the Faroe Islands into the European 'orbit of capital' was controlled and restricted by the Danish state, which profoundly impacted the development of both nations. It is this disconnect between historical experience and geographical location, the situation of 'overlap' and 'coexistence', of 'the lord and the bondsman altogether', which results in particularly forceful registrations of capitalism's fundamental contradictions in the semi-peripheries, and which makes this space 'exceptional' for grasping 'the way the system functions as a whole' (Jameson 1995: 51). The unstable realism of Laxness's and Heinesen's historical novels, and their overdetermined historical consciousness, to put it in Althusserian terms,

can thus be directly related to the 'accumulation of contradictions' (Althusser 1969: 67) that characterise this space. [28]

Across "On Magic Realism in Film," "Third World Literature", and in "Modernism and Imperialism", Jameson shows that the capitalist world-system poses a fundamental representational problem, leaving only its violent impression in the form of disjunctive social realities. A possible resolution to this problem of representation could therefore be to focus the imprint left by capitalism, the sense of disjunction and experiences of incongruity, and on violence itself. In *Violence* Slavoj Žižek suggests that there are three forms of violence, the most obvious of which is "subjective" violence, which include 'acts of crime and terror, civil unrest, international conflict' at the forefront of our minds (2008: 1), but that to fully understand the violence of capitalism we need to focus on the two "objective" kinds of violence that form the invisible counterpart to subjective violence: the '"symbolic" violence embodied in language and its forms' and the "systemic" violence inherent in 'the smooth functioning of our economic and political systems' (2008: 2). If semi-peripheral literature potentially has an 'exceptional' insight into capitalism, then we might expect to see forceful registrations of systemic and symbolic violence encoded in the allegorical structures of *Iceland's Bell* and *The Good Hope,* for, as Jameson has suggested elsewhere 'allegory allows the most random, minute or isolated landscapes to function as a figurative machinery in which questions about the system and its control over the local ceaselessly rise and fall' (1992: 5). In what follows I will explore two key sets of allegorical structures in *Iceland's Bell* and *The Good Hope,* the spoken and written word, and crime, criminality and the legal system, and consider how they function as 'figurative machinery' to make visible the symbolic and systemic violence of the capitalist system.

Allegorical Structures I: The Power of Letters

In both novels the written word, letters, legal documentation, contracts, and manuscripts serve a complex symbolic function. On the one hand, by transmitting power from the imperial centre to the colonial peripheries, they operate as a form of colonial domination, but on the other, the written word is also represented as a powerful tool, a weapon even, for subversion and anti-colonial resistance. Letters are introduced as a site of allegorical transformation in the opening

[28] Althusser, discussing Marx's inversion of Hegelian dialectics, explains that a contradiction is 'overdetermined' when it is 'inseparable from the total structure of the social body in which it is found, inseparable from its formal conditions of existence, even from the instances it governs; it is radically affected by them, determining and determined in one and the same movement by the various *levels* and *instances* of the social formation it animates' (1969: 68-9). Although he makes no direct reference to Althusser, Jameson's 'exceptional situation' seems to recall the "Contradiction and Overdetermination" essay, and particularly Althusser's suggestion that the Russian revolution was 'precisely a result of the intense overdetermination of the basic class contradiction' (1969:72) is echoed in Jameson's description of Ireland as 'the lord and the bondsman together' (1995: 59).

passages of *Iceland's Bell*, and are configured in different and overlapping ways as the story progresses. When the bell is cut down at the start of the novel, it is a letter from the King that gives the hangman authority to do so:

> "This bell – it has always belonged to this country."
> "Who has the letters to prove it?" asked the hangman.
> "My father was born here on Bláskógaheiði", said the old man.
> "No one owns anything unless he has letters for it", said the king's hangman.
> "I believe that it says in the old books," said the old man, "that when the Norwegians arrived in this empty land, they found this bell in a cave by the sea, along with a cross that's now lost."
> "My letter is from the king, I say!" said the hangman. (*IB* 5)

In this short exchange between the old man and the king's hangman, power is equated with the word of the king, objectified in the form of a letter of authority, and it becomes clear that those without letters are powerless. Alongside the initial allegorical image of the bell, the significance of the letter is clear: Iceland is no longer automatically the land of the Icelandic people, but, like the bell, with the right documentation it can be commodified and sold to the highest bidder. Letters and documents thus assign and demarcate legal and political power in the novel and give a material form to the otherwise abstract structures of colonial rule. It is not just the king's representatives who possess letters in the novel, for after his journey to Copenhagen Jón Hreggviðsson returns to Iceland with his own letters from the king, clearing his name of murder. However, instead of freeing Jón, as one might expect, by suggesting that his trial was unfairly conducted and declaring the verdict void, the letters implicate him in a further, more complex legal case, overseen by Arnæus against the country's jurists. To Jón, the letters have brought him nothing but bad luck, and in a moment of irony and rare self-pity, he explains that, counting even the arduous journey to clear his name, 'the only things that's [*sic*] been weighing me down all these years are the letters' (*IB* 189). The numerous legal cases that traverse the novel produce a trail of documentation for the reader to decipher and Laxness does little to simplify the complex narrative strands, using them instead to represent the absurdity of a legal system imposed by a foreign power with its own interests.

The opening conversation between the old man and the hangman also introduces another important allegorical symbol for the Icelandic nation: Iceland's medieval literature. Referred to as the 'old books' in the exchange between the old man and the hangman, Iceland's medieval manuscripts are comprised of a mixture of poetry and prose texts in Old Norse, known as the

eddas and sagas, which were composed primarily in the thirteenth century to record 'the rich course of Icelandic history', from the earliest days of the settlers until the end of the Icelandic commonwealth (Halink 2014: 210). Set between the ninth and twelfth centuries, the sagas depict a time of freedom and independence before foreign rule and provided a ready-made source for the arrival of Romantic nationalist ideas in the nineteenth century, which transformed them into the cornerstone of Icelandic culture and national identity (Halink 2014). In the story it is Arnas Arnæus's personal mission to locate and preserve 'any and all ancient tatters of writing', 'old scrolls, scraps, anything resembling a letter or a book that was decaying now in all haste in the keeping of the destitute and wretched inhabitants of this miserable land' (*IB* 19), and it is during one such quest early in the novel that Arnæus and Snæfriður first encounter Jón Hreggviðsson, having travelled to his farm in Rein in search of one of the ancient texts which is rumoured to be in his possession. After a thorough search, Arnæus finds six loosely bound pages from the *Skálða*, 'the most beautiful poems in the northern hemisphere' (*IB* 25), stuffed into the mattress of Jón's mother's bed. She is happy to give the sheets to Arnæus, for 'she had gotten nothing out of this scrap', considering it

> a poor patch of parchment that wasn't useful for something during a hard year, when so many were forced to eat their shoes – even if it were nothing but a shoe string, it could still be stuck into the children's mouths for them to cut their teeth on. (*IB* 24)

That the manuscripts have been largely lost in the novel, and the collective history and cultural knowledge reduced to 'scraps', clearly shows the cultural impact of Danish colonial rule. The image of people literally consuming the ancient calfskin vellum to alleviate starvation is also particularly stark, and Laxness's intended meaning clear: in their state of suffering and suppression, the Icelandic people have been detached from a literary heritage which is so foundational to their national sense of self; an image which resonates beyond the temporal horizons of the texts, pre-empting the well versed notion of today's reader as a mindless consumer of culture.

Arnas Arnæus's attempt to find and preserve the eddas and sagas is thus emblematic of the search for a national identity almost lost under Danish rule, a quest for which he sacrifices all his wealth and his love for Snæfriður, and which takes him all over Iceland, from the homes of wealthy clergymen, to the hovels of the poor, and even to the catacomb libraries of the Vatican. He keeps the books in his mansion in Copenhagen, where he intends them:

> to be stored for all eternity so that the learned men of the world could be sure that once upon a time there had lived in Iceland a folk to be reckoned men, such as Gunnar of Hlíðarendi and the farmer Njáll. (*IB* 19)

The idea that Iceland's national history should be preserved in Copenhagen, under the King's protection, would have been significant to Icelandic readers at the time of the novel's publication when the saga manuscripts recovered by Árni Magnússon were still being stored exclusively in Copenhagen. Indeed, it continues to have contemporary resonance as even after national independence in 1944 it took until 1971 for the Danish government to finally return some of the sagas to Iceland, and they are still stored jointly at the Arnamagnæan Institute in Copenhagen and the Árni Magnússon Institute in Reykjavík (Talmor 2010). It is significant too that the sagas were themselves composed during a time of conflict, in the thirteenth century when unrest and war between chieftains destabilised a political system which had flourished for over three hundred years, and they may well have been composed in the first place, as Axel Kristinsson (2003) suggests, to create cohesion during a time of social and political instability. As the only literature composed during 'the formative medieval phase of Nordic history' (Árnason 2012: 229), the Icelandic sagas have been foundational source texts for the historical identity of the entire region, which explains the long-standing interest in the Icelandic sagas across Scandinavia, beginning with the antiquarian pursuits sponsored by the Danish and Swedish monarchies in the seventeenth-century, as in *Iceland's Bell,* and later taking a more 'public turn with the nineteenth century ascendancy of Romanticism' (Árnason 2012: 229). In Iceland, literary history is synonymous with the history of the nation, a feature of Icelandic culture which Laxness allegorises to great effect in *Iceland's Bell.*[29]

However, the sagas are not the only form of literature in the novel. *The Elder Ballad of Pontus*, an epic poem sung by Jón, weaves in and out of the story, visibly disrupting the novel's prose. Unlike the 'old books' *The Elder Ballad of Pontus* is not a precious artefact to be collected and preserved, but is, rather, Jón's personal ditty and a form of resistance to the violence around him. Every time he is flogged, beaten, robbed or imprisoned he always turns to *The Elder Ballad of Pontus*, which he adapts and alters to suit his circumstances and surroundings. Take this moment at the start of the novel when he is imprisoned in a dungeon, awaiting execution:

> There were no conveniences in this dungeon other than a narrow plank covered in sheepskin, a chamber pot, and a chopping block. A hefty ax lay on the chopping block and next to it was an earthen jug of water. The steward's lantern momentarily illuminated the scene – and then the men turned to leave. They climbed out of the hole, dragged the ladder

[29] The centrality of the sagas to Laxness' representation of the Icelandic nation can be seen in his use of the term 'Saga people' to describe his countrymen in the 1944 *Þjóðviljinn* article quoted above, and his novels are permeated with references to the heroes and stories of the sagas. In *Iceland's Bell*, for instance, Jón claims to be a relative of 'Haraldur Hilditönn, the Danish King', a hero from *Njal's Saga* (*IB* 20), and in his novel *Wayward Heroes*, published in 1952, Laxness undertakes a modernist reworking of the medieval Icelandic saga stories, to critique the political climate in the lead up to the Cold War.

> up behind them, closed the shutters and drove the bars, then turned the keys in the locks. Afterwards everything went quiet. It was pitch-black; not a thing could be seen. Jón Hreggviðsson sang:
>
> "The soldier entreated and got his way
> A maid to lie in sport and play
> Increased our love as there we lay
> Increased our love as there we lay:
> - Though at first she answered 'nay'."
>
> Jón Hreggviðsson sat in prison and sang the *Elder Ballad of Pontus*, throughout the whole winter and on into summer. (*IB* 29)

Just as Jón's song disrupts the silence of the dungeon, it disturbs the detailed and realist prose description, reworking and emphasising the sense of narrative disjunction associated with Jón further. Throughout the novel, the ballad becomes a marker of resistance, not just as a distraction from the direct violence Jón is subjected to, but also, importantly, a form of cultural resistance to Danish hegemony.

In his chapter on "The Emergence of Nationalism in Iceland" Gunnar Karlsson suggests that ballads, known in Icelandic as *rímur,* were the most common cultural form in Iceland after 'the demise of saga-writing in the middle ages' (1992: 57). *Rímur,* he explains, were long epic poems comprised of 'material from old sagas and other histories', which 'were made according to the same tradition, generation after generation, and century after century, without any real creative contribution, and sung to traditional monotonous melodies' (1995: 57). Karlsson seems to suggest that the popularity of *rímur* after the late middle-ages was a marker of the cultural stagnation that followed the great saga-era, which seems completely at odds with Laxness' deployment of the form in *Iceland's Bell.* In the novel the only literature which is actively being created is *The Elder Ballad of Pontus*, and that it belongs to the barely literate Jón, rather than the educated elite, seems to suggest that the ability to compose national literature resides in the ordinary Icelandic people. Despite being illiterate Jón claims to have 'learned from his mother all the necessary sagas, ballads, and old genealogies' (*IB* 20), and frequently makes reference to the sagas heroes and myths in his *rímur*, showing a familiarity with the country's literature as part of his daily lived reality that is quite different to Arnas Arnæus's desire to collect and preserve the ancient manuscripts. *The Elder Ballad of Pontus* is thus not only Jón's private mode of resistance, but the poem also operates as a mode of literary resistance to the cultural marginalisation of Iceland in the long centuries after the end of the Icelandic commonwealth and shows that despite the 'old books' being reduced to 'scraps',

the stories of the sagas and eddas have survived, preserved in the oral traditions of the common people.

As an epistolary novel, the written word also serves a central narrative function in *The Good Hope*, and Heinesen makes expert use of the letter form to create tension between realist depiction and the strange and supernatural events Peder Børresen faces in Tórshavn. We can see this tension at play in the letter dated '29th January A.D 1670' when Peder gives an account of some of the supernatural and unexplainable experiences he has faced since arriving on the islands. These primarily centre on Salmona, the daughter of the barber-surgeon, Master Olaus, who, Peder explains, has recently become the spiritual leader of a new religious sect. The sect is formed after a reported sighting of Saint John by a boy from the nearby village, and their teachings recognises him 'as a divine tool and Salmona as a prophetess' (*GH* 279). When Peder refuses to convert and formally recognise the new sect, he comes face to face with Salmona's 'demonic power' (*GH* 280). In the letter Peder describes how suddenly he felt as if 'enveloped in a mist' and reports feeling 'overcome by a sense of lightness and of being to the point of flying' (*GH* 281). Unable to move or speak, he recalls hearing Salmona chanting the name of Saint John until Rachel, the daughter of Børresen's predecessor, Pastor Anders, breaks the spell by proclaiming 'the name of our gracious Saviour' (*GH* 281). After being ordered to leave by Peder, now recovered, Salmona and her followers, mostly 'maniacal country folk' (*GH* 282), gather at Tinganes, the historic site of the Faroese parliament (*Løgtingið*) in Tórshavn, and begin to preach to the people of the town. The commandant is called for to arrest the sectarian congregation, and Peder is asked to assist with pacifying the people of Tórshavn, so that no 'rash or rebellious acts took place' (*GH* 282). The episode ends with another extraordinary event: when the commandant's men attempt to arrest Salmona, she escapes by throwing herself from the roof of a building overlooking the sea and in doing so appears as if 'raised on wings into heaven' (*GH* 283), leaving Peder and the townsfolk questioning if her disappearance was an optical illusion or if she really did have 'superhuman and remarkable' (*GH* 283) powers after all.

When her drowned body is discovered seven days later on a nearby beach, the extraordinary events are restored to the realms of the ordinary, but Peder confesses to feeling uncertainty about what to believe in his letter to Jonas:

> […] I must tell you of […] one of those curious and inexplicable events that one otherwise usually considers as the stuff of bad dreams and nightmares, or perhaps of the ambiguous world of legend and fable. We sometimes experience them as tangible reality but yet

hesitate later to reveal to an honest, upright friend in whose eyes we are reluctant to stand as irresponsible deceivers. (*GH* 279)

Throughout the novel Peder attempts to assert a rational perspective on the extraordinary events he experiences, by recording them in almost scientific detail, and assuring Jonas of the absolute authenticity of their content. However, despite his ardent attempts, Peder is never able to fully maintain control of 'tangible reality' and 'the world of legend and fable' continuously intrudes in on his letters, until it becomes indistinguishable from his experience of lived reality in the Faroe Islands. The unstable border between 'delusion and reality' (*GH* 280) in the novel is thus emphasised through Heinesen's use of the epistolary form and can be seen as an encoding of the 'fragmented and ragged' (Roh 1995: 30) reality of the colonial peripheries.

In an essay on the rise of Euro-American sentimentalism, Stephen Shapiro describes how the rise of sentimental novels in the eighteenth century coincided with the arrival of commodity capitalism, which generated a new global matrix as foreign goods produced in the peripheries were consumed by the central European middle-classes. By connecting core and periphery, the transfer of commodities brought the 'violent acts' entailed in their production to 'middle class social realms' in Europe, generating new structures of feeling (like sentimentalism) which were reflected in new narrative forms (gothic novels), that registered the 'geo-social transfigurations' of the world-capitalist system (Shapiro 1999: 139). Shapiro argues that gothic novels therefore represent 'the violation of traditional social relations in morphogenic tales of perverse antinomies where "non-civilized" humans get represented as examples of teratological Nature and amazing, or defamiliarizing weirdness' (1999: 139). In *The Good Hope* the local Faroese population are repeatedly described in terms of their physical and spiritual abnormalities, and Peder even suggests that Salmona has both a 'demonic' and a 'customary human figure' (*GH* 280). *The Good Hope* is therefore reminiscent of earlier epistolary gothic novels such as Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) and Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897),[30] and, set at the height of the trade monopoly, a coercive system intended to maximise exploitation of the colonial peripheries for the benefit of the metropolitan centre, it seems fitting to suggest that Heinesen makes use of a similar schema of 'defamiliarizing weirdness' to represent the violent encounter between metropolitan core and colonial periphery.

[30] Like *The Good Hope*, *Frankenstein* and *Dracula* are intensely political works that also deal, in different ways, with peripherality: Shelley's *Frankenstein* is preoccupied with individualism and individual sovereignty and the story plays out in a series of European border spaces (Ingolstadt, the Alps, the Orkneys); and Bram Stoker's *Dracula* deals intimately with the transgression of borders and the fear of reverse colonisation stemming from British imperial anxiety at the turn of the nineteenth century (Shapiro 2008b).

In writing an epistolary novel Heinesen draws on a lengthy tradition in European literature, which reached its height in the eighteenth century with sentimental novels such as Richardson's *Pamela* (1740), Rousseau's *Julie, ou la Nouvelle Héloïse* (1791), and Goethe's *Die Leiden Des Junge Werther* (1774). As in other epistolary novels, the use of letters in *The Good Hope* gives the impression of authenticity, with details such as dates and locations imparting a sense of anthropological and scientific detail. However, by posing as real-life communications letters also blur 'the distinction between the fictional world of the correspondents and the real historical worlds of the novelist-reader' (Altman 1982: 201), and this blurring of fact and fiction is emphasised by the fact that *The Good Hope* depicts real historical events and the central characters are based on well-known figures in Faroese national history. In her study of the epistolary form, Janet Altman also suggests that a sense of 'temporal ambiguity' (1982: 132) is inherent in epistolary novels, because:

> [b]y the very structural conditions of the letter-writing situation (which involves absence from the addressee and the constitution of a 'present' addressee, removal from events and yet also the constitution of events) epistolary literature intensifies awareness of the gaps and traps that are built into the narrative representation of intersubjective and temporal experience. (1982: 212)

In *The Good Hope* these temporal gaps are enlarged by the fact that none of Børresen's letters to Jonas are ever sent, because, as we are informed early on in the story, the Bailiff, Diderik Hindskou, checks any letter sent to Copenhagen and would 'never allow anything to pass through his hands that is to the disadvantage of these Gabel folk' (*GH* 33). As well as the usual time lags entailed in letter correspondence, the corrupt and oppressive Gabel regime prevents a dialogue between Jonas and Peder from ever taking place, concentrating Peder's letters into a confessional and solipsistic monologue. Heinesen thus utilises the 'temporal ambiguities' of the epistolary form to stage an encounter with national history that emphasises the violently disjunctive impact of colonial domination and oppression on the Faroe Islands.

Letters clearly play a central role in the novel, not only in terms of form and structure, but also in terms of plot. Despite the challenge of getting letters to the outside world, one letter does make it to its intended recipient: Peder manages to smuggle a letter to Counsellor Schumacher of the Danish court, detailing the atrocities committed by Gabel's regime and the corruption of the country's officials. The letter triggers an investigation into the leadership of the islands and represents Børresen's personal rebellion against the regime using his position in the church to wield influence in Copenhagen. However, the writing of letters is a form of protest that is unavailable to the people of Tórshavn, most of whom are illiterate and remain completely excluded

from the formal power structures that govern the islands. Instead their rebellion takes the form of an uprising, challenging the regime through physical and collective force. The rebellion takes place at the end of the novel and will be explored in more detail in the next section, but there are other forms of resistance that come to be associated with the Faroese people. In the novel the supernatural, magical and occult are usually linked with the local people and vernacular. This is illustrated in Børresen's very first encounter with the Faroese language, which is through the description of a ghost known as a '*niðagris*' in Faroese, a terrifying 'spectre in the shape of an infant, but considerably bigger' (*GH* 29), which haunted Pastor Anders until his death. Salmona, a character clearly associated with the supernatural and otherworldly in the novel, is also described as wearing traditional dress and singing 'distortions of old Faroese hymns' (*GH* 278), further cementing the association of the local language and traditions with the supernatural. There is also a broader connection made between belief in the supernatural, sectarianism and the politics of insurgency in the novel, illustrated when Peder is called on to quell a rebellion after Salmona's sermon at Tinganes. The episode highlights the role played by the church as a form of state control in the colonial peripheries, and it is therefore particularly interesting, that Peder, a representative of the colonial state, is himself so frequently 'unable to distinguish between delusion and reality' (*GH* 280). In fact, as the novel progresses, Børresen increasingly begins to see past the superstitious beliefs and sectarianism of the locals, and in one letter he describes a different side of Faroese culture to Jonas:

> During the dark period of the year it is the custom for people to gather in the hearth rooms in the farms for what is called an evening gathering and, while working at their spinning wheels and looms, to listen to legends and ballads or reading of the stories from the scriptures and our hymns, while others dance to the ballads, many of which are hundreds of years old. This not merely kills the slow passage of time, but the people are spiritually fortified by the force of the words, both sacred and profane. (*GH* 263)

The scene shows the coexistence of 'sacred' texts in Danish with the 'profane' traditional Faroese oral literature, and thereby evokes the entire history of the Faroese language in a snapshot: Faroese, a West-Scandinavian language that evolved from the early Icelandic and Norwegian settles on the islands, was historically primarily a spoken language, with Latin being used for writing after the conversion to Christianity at the end of the tenth century. After the Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth century, Danish replaced Latin as the official language of the Faroe Islands, by which time Faroese had disappeared entirely as a written language. That the first Faroese Bible written was not published until 1961, over ten years after the reinstatement of Faroese as the official language, shows the lasting impact of Danish political and cultural hegemony in the Faroe Islands

(Marnersdóttir 2015). Danish, the language of law, trade, and the church (Wylie 1983), represents the system of colonial domination in the novel, whereas the Faroese language is spoken by the oppressed and downtrodden local population who are 'spiritually fortified' by their gatherings. As a translator of literary fiction into Faroese, Heinesen was directly involved in the Faroese language revival, which played a vital role in the politics of national independence in the twentieth century by constructing 'positive differentiation' (Halink 2013:221) from Denmark and Danish culture. It is worth emphasising that *The Good Hope* is the only one of Heinesen's novels that has not been translated into Faroese, for the simple reason that there was no seventeenth-century written language to imitate (Marnersdóttir 2004), a fact that makes the novel inseparable from the history and politics of language in the Faroe Islands.

In both novels the written word is an evocative symbol that simultaneously signals the degradation of Icelandic and Faroese culture during the centuries of colonial rule *and* the cultural revival which has been at the heart of independence movements in both countries. At times letters, documentation and manuscripts serve a liberatory function, like Peder's letter of rebellion, and Arnas Arnæus's quest to find the medieval sagas and prove the worth of Icelandic culture to all, but they remain a cultural weapon restricted to the educated elite. Instead, the Icelandic and Faroese language of the common people is shown to be a repository of culture just as much as written text. In both novels the exploited and oppressed people have their ballads and folk tales, transmitted orally, like Jón's *rímur* and the ballads sung at the winter gatherings in *The Good Hope,* which offer a form of collective identity that exists outside the formal structures of power. If the written word records the official histories of Iceland and the Faroe Islands, the spoken word represents a different form of historical knowledge, popular, collective, orally transmitted, which both complements and challenges the official narratives recorded in writing. In both novels letters generate plot to an almost excessive extent: in *The Good Hope* the intensity of Peder's unidirectional conversation with Jonas is never relieved by a reply, and in *Iceland's Bell* Jón's court cases generate more and more paperwork that, ironically, keeps him from enjoying the freedom he has fought so hard for. We can thus see in the allegorisation of language and writing the overdetermined historical consciousness that characterises both these works, which creates multiple connections between past and present, and highlights the '"symbolic" violence embodied in language and its forms' (Žižek 2008: 1). In the next section I explore Laxness's and Heinesen's representation of the structures and institutions which maintain, perpetuate, and distribute colonial power in both novels, and show that the allegorisation of crime, criminality and the legal system in each text encodes the 'fundamental systemic violence' of colonialism and capitalism itself (Žižek 2008: 12).

Allegorical Structures II: Land and Law

Both *Iceland's Bell* and *The Good Hope* are centrally concerned with representing the forms and structures of colonial rule in Iceland and the Faroe Islands, and if the letters and documents explored above provide a paper trail evidencing the violence entailed in colonial domination, then the representation of the legal system faces the structural violence of colonialism head on. Both Jón and Peder spend time in prison and their encounter with the institutions of law and governance is used in each novel to stage a discussion about the idea of criminality in a situation of colonial domination. In *Iceland's Bell* we are introduced to Jón at the start of the novel immediately after he has finished a sentence of hard labour in the workhouse. He is being punished for stealing a length of rope and this initial crime acts as a catalyst for a series of other misdemeanours which snowball until he is eventually accused of murder. Almost immediately after returning home from the workhouse, he is called back to the bailiff's court where he is accused of slander after the jest he made about the King's mistress when he was cutting down the bell. He is sentenced to twenty-four lash-strokes, to be carried out by none other than the hangman Sigurður Snorrason who also accused him of the crime, and the brutality of the punishment is captured in a detailed description spanning several pages:

> Jón Hreggviðsson made no move at the first few strokes, but at the fourth and fifth strokes his body was seized with cramps. His legs, his face, and the upper part of his chest lifted, leaving his weight resting on his tight stomach. His fists clenched, his feet stretched away from his ankles, his joints stiffened, and his muscles hardened. His shoes were newly mended, by the look of the soles. The dogs jumped up on the wall and yelped down into the pen. After eight strokes had been delivered the bailiff said they would stop for a minute: the criminal had the legal right to a brief respite. […] After twelve strokes Jón Hreggviðsson's back had becomes somewhat bloodied and bruised, and at his sixteenth his skin actually started to split open between the shoulder blades and at the small of the back. The dogs on the walls yelped madly, but the man lay like a solid block of wood, motionless […]. As the work drew to a close the man's back was transformed into a bleeding and tattered sore, and splashes of blood were thrown in various directions by the hot dripping whip, some onto people's faces. (*IB* 12-13)

Laxness refuses to let the twenty-four lash-strokes remain an abstract number, and instead shows the reader exactly what this punishment entails. The description of the flogging is interspersed with comments from Jón goading Snorrason and even 'laughing incessantly' (*IB* 12), and, as always, he sings *The Elder Ballad of Pontus* in resistance to violence enacted upon him. It is the first of several

corporal punishments Jón endures in the novel, but the above description is the most detailed in terms of the physical effects it describes. Starting with the impact of the beating across Jón's entire body, the focus gradually shifts to his back, effectively capturing the build-up of pain he endures, but without ever shifting the narrative focus to Jón's perspective. Imitating the style of the medieval sagas, Laxness maintains this external narrative voice throughout the novel and despite the complete absence of subjective interiority, the description of Jón's punishment is deeply effective. However, what makes it particularly disturbing is the intrusion of prosaic comments about dogs barking and the condition of Jón's shoes into the detailed description of his punishment. The effect is to make a connection between violence and the everyday, suggesting both that state violence intrudes on daily life, but also that the everyday itself is violent. The scene thereby introduces the 'directly visible' (Žižek 2008: 1) subjective violence faced by the Icelanders under Danish colonial rule.

The brutality of the scene lends significance to what follows. After the flogging Jón finds himself in the company of those who accused him of slander, sentenced him, and carried out his punishment: Sigurður Snorrason, the bailiff, the two witnesses in his case, as well as two wealthy landowners, who are all making the journey back to Rein. When the party reach Galtarholt, the home of one of the landowners, Signeur Bendix Jónnson, they are invited in for *brennivín*,[31] and a long evening of drinking, 'storytelling, debate, and poetic recitation' (*IB* 14) ensues, during which the men 'expressed their shared brotherhood with handshakes and embraces' (*IB* 14). Bendix even offers to lend Jón a fishing line and sinker, a 'generous and noble gesture considering the shortage of fishing tackle and the famine that now pressed on the tenantry of the land' (*IB* 13) . When they leave Galtarholt later that night, completely drunk, they get lost in an area of swampland and peat-pits, and the last thing Jón remembers is:

> trying to get up on his own mare's back after helping drag Monsieur Sívert Magnússen from the pit, but his saddle was stirrupless and his horse seemed to have grown considerably, besides the fact that it wouldn't stop kicking out with its hind legs. Whether he actually made it up on horseback or whether something that prevented him from doing so occurred in the total darkness of the fall night, he could not completely remember later. (*IB* 14)

The next day Jón wakes up in the mire of a peat-pit with no recollection of the events that led him there, and, having lost his own horse, he rides back to Galtarholt on the hangman's horse with the

[31] The Icelandic equivalent of the Scandinavian *Akvavit*, *brennivín* is an unsweetened schnapps usually flavoured with caraway.

hangman's hat on his head. When he returns to the pit a little later with Signeur Bendix to look for his horse and the precious fishing tackle, he discovers the dead body of Sigurður Snorrason next to his own gloves and horsewhip. Taking Signeur Bendix's advice, Jón calls on six witnesses to examine the body and they promise to swear oaths that no 'wounds could be seen on the body, nor any evidence indicating that had been laid upon the man' (*IB* 16). Despite his efforts, Jón is arrested soon after, accused of murder and sentenced to death by hanging. The details surrounding Snorrason's death and Jón's subsequent conviction are significant because we never actually find out if Jón is guilty. Instead, the case against him is used to open up larger questions about crime, the idea of criminality, and the institutions of power.

After his arrest and sentencing, Jón is imprisoned in a dungeon in Bessastaðir while he awaits his execution at the *Alþingi* in the spring. In the darkness of the dungeon, he encounters several other criminals, all accused of 'crimes against the royal trade monopoly':

> One had been caught with English tobacco. Another had added sand to his sacks of wool. Some had illegally purchased flour from Eyrarbakki, because the flour in Keflavík was rotten and swollen with maggots. One or two had called their merchants thieves. There were endless amounts of these petty criminals, and they were all flogged. The King's whip continued to flicker voraciously over the prone bodies of naked and emaciated Icelanders. (IB 33)

Having just witnessed the brutality of Jón's punishment in close, realist detail, the horror of the scale of these 'endless' punishments is emphasised, and the violence of 'the King's whip' shown to be endemic. Furthermore, by pitting the individual petty crimes of the people against the violence and exploitation of the royal trade monopoly the systemic violence entailed in colonial domination is made abundantly clear, linking the visible, subjective violence of Jón's punishment, to the more abstract system of violence that the trade monopoly represents.

While Jón is being held in the dungeon at Bessastaðir, his mother embarks on a journey on foot, from the family's farm near Rein to Skálholt, the episcopal seat and home of Snæfriður, in the hope that she can persuade her to help free Jón. She finds Snæfriður alone there, waiting for Arnas Arnæus to arrive any day by boat from Copenhagen. Snæfriður listens to the plight of Jón's mother but makes it clear that she has no power, and 'no place in the events of the day' for they are 'ruled over by strong men – some with weapons, others with books' (*IB* 48). She repeats this maxim several times in the novel, and it contributes to an underlying critique formulated by Laxness throughout the novel, about the social hierarchies reproduced in official historical narratives, which tell the stories of, and are usually written by, 'strong men'. When Arnæus fails to arrive and

she realises he is not coming back, Snæfriður decides to free Jón. She travels to Þingvellir where he is now being held and manages to trick the soldier guarding his tent and set him free the night before he is due to be executed. She gives him a ring with the instruction to deliver a message to Arnæus in Denmark: '[t]ell him this, that if my lord can save the honour of Iceland, even if I am disgraced, his face shall shine for this maiden' (*IB* 71). Her actions set in motion Jón's journey across Europe, to plead for a letter of pardon from the King, and bind the fate of the three characters to each other and to that of the nation.

The case against Jón's and his attempt to get a pardon are central to the novel's plot, but there is another crime which weaves in and out of the novel, and to which Jón does confess when Snæfriður asks him later in the novel. Discussing the consequences of the crime she committed when she set him free, she asks him '[w]hat else have you done from the beginning? Are you a robber? Or a murderer?', to which he poignantly replies, 'I stole a piece of cord, good lady' (*IB* 189). This original crime, the theft of a piece of fishing line, we are told, is nothing unusual during the annual famine in the spring, when 'everyone able to do so tried to steal anything they could from the drying sheds of the fishermen' (*IB* 8). Rope is shown throughout the novel to be an invaluable commodity to the impoverished Icelanders, and despite the fact that it is considered almost worthless to the wealthy, the availability of rope is continuously a concern for the ordinary people. The image of rope allegorises the plight of the Icelandic people, who are striving to eek out a living and survive under the oppressive economic strictures of the trade monopoly. The image of the cord weaves in and out the novel, appearing and reappearing in various guises, first as the stolen fishing line, then as the rope which Jón cuts to remove the courthouse bell at the start of the novel, and eventually the hangman's noose with which he is continuously threatened. Laxness's figurative intention is clear: to show that the real crime is the system of colonial domination, which brutally punishes and dehumanises the Icelanders.

This critique is fully realised at the end of the novel. The story ends where it began, at Þingvellir, with a conversation between Jón and a group of other petty criminals, all of whom are being retried for past crimes. Despite coming from different areas of the country and having committed very different crimes they agree on one thing: "Our crime is that we're not men even though we're called men. […]" (*IB* 406), which can be taken as Laxness's final comment on the absolute injustice of colonial domination, which has been shown to ruthlessly criminalise and punishes the ordinary Icelandic people. The fact that the last words goes to a collective of lowly criminals also hints at a broader statement from Laxness about what constitutes, and who makes national history. By placing Jón's story at the centre of the novel, Laxness replaces the traditional heroes and warriors

of the sagas with a lowly peasant farmer, elevating his struggle for survival and independence to the struggle of the Icelandic nation during the centuries of colonial rule.[32]

In *The Good Hope,* the violence of Gabel's regime is also made clear in the first few pages of the novel, and before Peder even sets foot on land, he is faced with the consequences of defying the ruling elite. On the approach into the harbour of Tórshavn they sail past a small island known as the 'Daimon', and the skipper informs him that 'this island is used for the deportation of murderers and other criminals and of such men as are opposed to the Gabel regime that at present is responsible for governing the country' (*GH* 16).

Noting its 'demonic presence as it rises lofty and wild from the waves' (*GH* 16), the island serves as a warning not to cross Gabel's representatives, but also as a chilling premonition of what is to come, as Peder too will be imprisoned there, detained without a trial as punishment for his subversive activities later in the novel. When he finally reaches dry land the Danish officials in charge continuously emphasise the moral degeneration and rebelliousness of the people of Tórshavn, which is soon recognised by Peder as the result of their treatment under Gabel's oppressive regime, and he decides very quickly that he will do his best to 'combat the nauseating injustice to which this unhappy town's inhabitants were subjected' (*GH* 80). As the novel progresses, Peder records in his letters the numerous instances of unfair imprisonments, punishments and floggings the people of the town are subjected to, and it soon becomes clear that the penal system on the islands functions only to serve the interests of Gabel's appointed officials. The local people live in constant fear of punishment, including the back-breaking work on the fortifications protecting the Royal Store from 'foreign pirates' (*GH* 20) that is used to pacify and punish anyone who challenges Gabel's officials. There is a dark irony in the seemingly endless work on the fortification, a desperate attempt by the local authorities to protect the wealth they have forcefully accumulated through the trade monopoly from 'foreign pirates' (*GH* 17), never expecting the local population of Tórshavn to rise up and defend themselves.

In *The Good Hope* William Heinesen is also interested in the historical significance of the traditional Faroese assembly, the *Løgtingið,* and the action of the novel is structured around two meetings of the court, through which Heinesen shows the inability of *Løgtingið* to serve its proper function under the oppressive Gabel regime.[33] Spearheading the corruption of the *Løgtingið* is Diderik Hindskou, the 'Bailiff to the King and the Overlord, Sheriff and Governor' (*GH* 89) and the

[32] The peasant farmer is a key character throughout Laxness's works. See for example Bjartur from *Independent People*.
[33] Like its Icelandic equivalent, the *Løgtingið* has met annually in Tórshavn since the early tenth century and the accompanying annual celebration of *Ólavsøka* (St. Olaf's Wake), which marks the opening of a new parliamentary session, has increasingly become an expression of Faroese national identity (Wylie 1983).

highest authority on the islands. Although we never read the letter Peder manages to smuggle to Copenhagen detailing the full atrocities of the regime, he records some the corruption and illegal activities of the Bailiff in one of his letters to Jonas:

> The evidence I have gradually gathered concerning his behaviour speak of their own unpalatable truth about his manifold misdeeds, which not only cause suffering to the unfortunate inhabitants of Tórshavn but to the people of the land of Faroe as a whole. It tells me how he trades illegally in Crown land heedless of the ancient laws governing tenure; how it is within his power to deprive of his property a tenant farmer who displeases him and according to his own whim to transfer that man's tenancy to another who is more pleasing to him and acts according to his wishes; how he has land taxes, tithes and other imposts ruthlessly collected; how, with his approval, the stockings, skins, dried fish and other goods brought to the Royal Store are bought at the lowest possible price, while the price of the goods which the Store imports into the country is unreasonably high, although the quality of those same goods is often extremely poor. (*GH* 89)

Peder emphasises that all of these injustices are carried out in Gabel's name, and he is convinced that if he can smuggle a letter to Copenhagen to alert the King, then change will come. But Hindskou seems to be almost completely untouchable, with power over the land, the courts, and the Royal Store, meaning he has complete political, legal, and financial control of the islands. As in *Iceland's Bell,* this leaves the local population powerless and on the brink of starvation.

The description of Hindskou's seizure of land is also interesting, it seems to exemplify what Jameson has described as 'the primordial crime of capitalism':

> not so much [the imposition of] wage labor as such, or the ravages of the money form, or the remorseless and impersonal rhythms of the market, but rather this primal displacement of the older forms of collective life from a land now seized and privatized. (1986a)

Hindskou's illegal trade in crown land recalls a long history of land being appropriated by the Danish colonial state. Unlike in other colonial situations, land was appropriated gradually in Iceland and the Faroe Islands. It was not until after the reformation and establishment of absolutism, when the novels are set, that large swathes of land once owned by the Catholic Church were appropriated by the King, and leased out to tenant farmers, like Jón. The violence entailed in the seizing and privatization of land, the 'primordial crime of capitalism' is illustrated in both novels through two similar moments when Iceland and the Faroe Islands are reduced to commodities

that can be traded at the whim of the King. In *Iceland's Bell*, during an elaborate dinner at the King's palace in Copenhagen Arnæus discovers the he has offered to sell Iceland to wealthy merchants from Hamburg. He is shown a letter from one of the merchants:

> The letter was an invitation to several merchants from Hamburg to buy the island called by men Islandia, situated halfway between Norway and Greenland, along with all rights and privileges to for their full and free ownership, with a guarantee of the complete and total relinquishment of any claims to the aforementioned island by the Danish king and his descendants throughout eternity. The price was set five barrels of gold, to be paid to Our Royal treasury upon the occasion of the signing of the contract. (*IB* 304)

The threat to sell the country is in echoed in *The Good Hope*:

> His Majesty the King and the Lords of the Realm are also secretly considering unburdening themselves of the useless and revolting appendix to the kingdom in just the same way as the King Christian the first of blessed memory rid himself of the Orkney Islands and gave that evil, hideous place as a dowry to his daughter on her betrothal to the King of Scotland, to whom they never became more than a sorry millstone hanging round his neck. (*GH* 124)

In both cases, the North Atlantic colonies are represented as burdens to the King, 'revolting and useless', with the populations degraded from the decades of trade monopolisation and political oppression. The absurdity of the notion that these countries could simply be sold in fact hides a provocative historical truth, as almost all of the other Danish colonies were indeed sold. The first territory to be sold was Estonia was in 1347 (Bregnsbo 2008), and with 'the loss of its status as a midsized player in Europe in the wake of the Napoleonic wars' (Jensen 2009: 168), Denmark gradually gave up its overseas tropical possessions: in the 1840s Tranquebar and the Gold Coast were sold to the British and the Virgin Islands were sold to the USA in 1917 (Jensen 2009). The threat to 'sell' Iceland and the Faroe Islands in the novels would have served as a powerful reminder to Laxness's and Heinesen's readers in the mid-twentieth century, of the complete dispossession of the Icelandic and Faroese people in the centuries before Home Rule was granted. The notion of 'selling the country' also illuminates the inseparability of the colonialist project from capitalism, a connection that is abstract at times but is made clear through the allegorical 'machinery' at work in the representation of crime and criminality in the novels.[34]

[34] *The Atom Station* is also about the 'sale of Iceland', referring to the Keflavík agreement in 1946, which allowed the US military to build an airbase outside Reykjavík.

In both novels Laxness and Heinesen mobilise the history of the ancient political bodies, the *Alþingi* and the *Løgtingið*, and, by showing their degradation at the height of the trade monopolies, highlighting their transformation from ancient proto-democracies serving the local populations, to institutions transmitting and administering colonial power. In the mid-twentieth century, when the novels were written, both the *Løgtingið* and the *Alþingi* acted as important rallying points for national independence, but in *Iceland's Bell* and *The Good Hope* Laxness and Heinesen show that these institutions were also co-opted into the system of colonial repression. However, despite this bleak picture, both novels contain moments that seem to imply there is hope for these institutions in the future. In *The Good Hope*, the second meeting of the *Løgtingið* is attended by Admiral Balkenov, who has arrived in response to Børresen's letter, and Børresen's complaints against Bailiff Hindskou and the Gabel regime are finally heard in court. The court's decision to support his claims marks a turning point in the novel, and Bailiff Hindskou is taken to Copenhagen to answer for his crimes. In his absence the people revolt, killing the cruel Commandant Cattorp and reclaiming control of the Royal Store. In the final pages we are invited to compare the difference a year has made:

> Gone are the stalls on Tinganes, the Royal Store, the Residence, the Gabel Tower, the entire centre and core of town. No longer is there a Bailiff, no longer a Commandant, no longer an executioner, and nor are there any stocks, whipping posts or gallows, for these instruments of fear and oppression have gone, broken down by angry hands and splintered or burned or cast out into the waters of the bay. (*GH* 362)

At the end of the novel Peder's individual act of resistance in composing and sending his letter is matched by the collective resistance of the local population which culminates in the change of system, and this final description seems to foreshadow the end of the trade monopoly, which would bring about a veritable revolution in Faroese society in the mid-nineteenth century. The fall of the Gabel regime at the end of the novel clearly celebrates the story of Lucas Jacobsen Debes and the popular uprising against Gabel, and Heinesen's retelling of it would have had particular resonance in the Faroe Islands in the years almost immediately after the independence referendum, when the country's politicians, going against the popular vote, had negotiated to remain part of the Kingdom of Denmark. In *Iceland's Bell* Laxness presents us with a similar hope for the future of Iceland. In *The Fire of Copenhagen* Arnæus is offered the position of Governor, with complete control of Iceland. Starting with a promise to abolish 'all the decrees made by the Danish king […] before the next *Alþingi* is convened at Öxará', Arnæus reveals his vision of an independent Iceland to Snæfriður:

> "I'll order a library constructed of stone and will return to their rightful home all of the precious books that I saved from rotting away in the hovels of folk who have been ravaged into utter misery by the Danes." […]. "The people of Iceland will no longer be punished for trying to earn a living through trade." […]. A Splendid courthouse shall be raised at Þingvellir, and another bell hung there, larger and more melodious than the one that the king demanded from Iceland. […]. (*IB* 380-381)

However, his vision is never realised. Not only are many of the precious books and manuscripts he has collected lost in the Great Fire of Copenhagen, but, despite his best intentions, the anti-corruption lawsuits led by him later in the novel actually end up weakening the *Alþingi* further, removing the majority of the country's ruling elite from office and leaving the ordinary people, including Jón, to be unfairly persecuted and punished for many more years to come.

Conclusion:

In *Iceland's Bell* and *The Good Hope,* the traditional realism of the historical novel is reconfigured in order to interrogate established historical narratives about colonialism in the Nordic region and to represent the national histories of Iceland and the Faroe Islands as resistant to colonial domination and systematic marginalisation by the Danish state. In the first two sections I staged a discussion about Laxness's and Heinesen's historical novels through Jameson's well-known essays "Third-World Literature" and "On Magical Realism in Film", to show that the historical 'raw material' of Danish colonialism and the experience of semi-peripherality are encoded in the allegorical and magical realist aesthetics of both novels. The third section illustrated that across the two essays Jameson touches on some key ideas pertaining to the specific aesthetic and formal qualities of semi-peripheral literature, which solidified my interpretation of the overdetermined historical consciousness identified in both novels as a registration of the 'accumulation of contradictions' that make up the disjunctive experience of the semi-periphery. This was followed by a set of two analyses of the novels' allegorical frameworks, in which I showed that the representations of the written and spoken word in the novels reproduce the history of colonial domination, which, together with the representation of crime, criminality and the legal system in the novels, reveal the violence embedded in Icelandic and Faroese national history. By drawing on the history of colonial oppression, Laxness and Heinesen not only uncover the structures and forms of domination that would come to determine the future place of Iceland and the Faroe Islands in the capitalist world-system, but also give insight into the social conditions from which Icelandic and Faroese nationalism would subsequently develop. It is this attempt to read 'the present though the past',

the attempt to identify 'the moment or moments when the structurality of the present order was first concretised and set in place' (WReC 2015: 72), that generates the overdetermined historical consciousness identified in both novels.

In a recent essay, Žižek returned to the notion of systemic violence, reminding us that behind the commonplace abstraction of capitalism as a 'self-engendering monster' are actual people and social realities that are:

> "real" in the precise sense of determining the structure of the very material social processes: the fate of whole strata of population and sometimes of entire countries can be decided by the solipsistic speculative dance of capital, which pursues its goal of profitability in a blessed indifference with regard to how its movement will affect social reality. Therein resides the fundamental systemic violence of capitalism, much more uncanny than the direct precapitalist socio-ideological violence: this violence is no longer attributable to concrete individuals and their "evil" intentions, but is purely "objective," systemic, anonymous. (2012: 296)

I wish to suggest, finally, that it is the allegorical structures of *Iceland's Bell* and *The Good Hope* that allow the visible subjective violence portrayed in the novel to be directly related to the invisible systemic violence of colonialism and capitalism. In attempting to map the connections between local, individual experience and global economic forces, they can therefore be taken as an expression of what Jameson has called the 'geopolitical aesthetic' (Jameson 1995), which seems, to me, to be central to any conceptualisation of world literature that seeks to understand texts in their global complexity without losing sight of their local specificity. It will therefore be explored in more detail in the chapters that follow, firstly in order to understand the complex representation of nationalism and global capitalism in Laxness's *The Atom Station* and Heinesen's *The Black Cauldron,* and then in relation to the city and borderscapes of Latife Tekin and Orhan Pamuk's novels.

2. Between Nation and World: Peripheral Nationalism and Global Capitalism in Halldór Laxness's *The Atom Station* and William Heinesen's *The Black Cauldron.*

Both William Heinesen's *The Black Cauldron* (*Den Sorte Gryde*) (1949) and Halldór Laxness's *The Atom Station* (*Atómstöðin*) (1948) are set during or immediately after the Second World War; a time of great political and social change in both countries. As well as instigating rapid modernisation in Iceland and the Faroe Islands, the Second World War profoundly altered the political landscape of the Kingdom of Denmark. When Denmark was invaded by German forces in April 1940, contact between Copenhagen and the North Atlantic colonies all but ceased, and the Icelandic and Faroese local governments were given greater freedom to self-rule under the British and American occupying forces. At the start of 1944, the *Alþingi* took advantage of the lapse in contact with Copenhagen and voted unanimously to end the 1918 Act of Union, which had given Iceland nominal independence as a sovereign state within *Rigsfællesskabet* (the Danish Commonwealth) (Hálfdanarson 2000). Following a successful public referendum in May of the same year, Iceland was declared an independent republic, putting an end to almost seven centuries of foreign rule. Shortly after, in 1946, the Faroe Islands followed suit and a referendum on independence and secession was held. The Faroese people voted narrowly in favour of independence from Denmark, but after negotiations with Copenhagen (now unoccupied), the Faroe Islands were given their present status as an 'internally self-governing community within the Danish state' (Debes 1995: 63). Iceland and the Faroe Islands thus emerged more independent from the war, but as semi-peripheral within an increasingly US-led economic system that was beginning to assert and entrench its global reach (Arrighi 1999). *The Atom Station* and *The Black Cauldron* are set at this crucial moment in Faroese and Icelandic history, when the cohesive national consciousness constructed for decades to resist Danish colonial domination came under threat, fractured by the impact of international conflict and sudden integration into the global capitalist system. Both novels deal with the conflicts and contradictions of this historical moment and challenge the new forms of imperialism that arose in the post-war period.

The Black Cauldron (1949) is set in the fictional town of Kingsport and deals with the transformation of Faroese society while the islands were under British occupation. The story centres on the Berghammer family, whose home, Angelica Cottage, is situated in the fells above Kingsport. The family consists of Elias Berghammer, the family's infirm but kind father; his son Ivar, Captain of the trading vessel *Manuela*, and his four adult daughters: Thomea and Magdalena, one unmarried

and the other recently widowed by the war, Afhild, the youngest, whose child-like behaviour suggests she has learning disabilities, and, finally, Liva, a local beauty who is engaged to Johan, a former sea captain now interned with tuberculosis at a sanatorium on a neighbouring island. Liva is employed by Max Opperman, the most prominent business owner in Kingsport and is a follower of Simon the baker's 'fire and brimstone sect' (*BC* 19). Alongside the Berghammer family other notable characters include Johan's brother, Jens Ferdinand, a cartoonist and typographer for the town's newspaper and an outspoken critic of the war; Frederik, another of the town's young sailors and Ivar's best friend, and the superstitious and sexually predatory Icelander, Engilbert. The narrative perspective continually shifts between the different characters in the style of a *kollektivroman* (collective novel), a form of social realism popular in the early twentieth century in Scandinavia, in which the multiple narrative perspectives of 'a small group of highly individualized characters and a mass of minor figures' are connected by what seems at times like arbitrary interactions and encounters, but which combine to 'give the impression of general significance' over the course of the novel (Jones 1974: 85). In *The Black Cauldron,* Heinesen undertakes a modernist reworking of the traditionally realist *kollektivroman* to represent Faroese society at a moment of accelerated modernisation, and out of the numerous conflicting and competing perspectives, there emerges an overarching critique of the war and the capitalist modernity it represents.

Set in post-war Reykjavík in the years immediately after Iceland gained independence from Denmark, Halldór Laxness's satirical novel *The Atom Station* (1948) responds to two events: the 1946 treaty between Iceland and the United States, which allowed the US military to build a permanent base at Keflavík, and the repatriation from Copenhagen to Reykjavík of the remains of Jónas Hallgrímsson (1808-1845), Iceland's best-loved Romantic poet. Like the Faroese people, the Icelanders had also experienced occupation during the Second World War, first by the British who invaded in 1940, and then by the United States, whose armed forces occupied the island from 1941 until 1945, and the building of the Keflavík military base was met with widespread protest from the Icelandic people, who felt it threatened the nation's newly gained sovereignty. The novel's protagonist, Ugla, arrives in Reykjavík from the rural north of Iceland in the midst of these events, to work as a maid in the home of Búi Árland, her local Member of Parliament. Alongside Ugla's *Bildung* in Reykjavik, Laxness depicts the challenges facing the newly post-colonial nation as it negotiates its position within the global economy. Laxness is deeply critical of the government's willingness to sacrifice the nation's hard fought-for sovereignty to gain financial advantage and court a new global hegemon, and his satirisation of the post-war, post-independence politics in

Iceland reveals it to be a moment in the nation's history so absurd that the only formal response is surrealism.

In dealing with questions about the place of Iceland and the Faroe Islands in a rapidly changing global order, *The Atom Station* and *The Black Cauldron* are consciously national novels. However, the end of the Second World War marked a particularly contradictory moment in the history of nationalism: where in the former colonies nationalism was the 'necessary condition for the forging of unity necessary to spearhead the resistance to colonial domination' (Sivanandan 2004: 43), in the west,

> [c]onfronted with the spectre of "national socialism" (fascism), so recently defeated and at such a heavy cost, English and American commentators in the post-war period tended to conceptualize nationalism not in terms of identity and identification, sovereignty and self-consciousness, as they might have done in the nineteenth-century, but in terms of imperialism and genocidal aggressivity: the implication of nationalism for them was not liberty and freedom from tyranny, but rather the embodiment of tyranny. (Sivanandan 2004: 46)

Written on the cusp of national independence, both novels capture the paradoxes of nationalism at this historical moment, representing it as a volatile 'site of political and ideological contestation' (Lazarus 1999:74), rather than a static political programme. In *The Black Cauldron* for instance*,* the young men risk their lives 'like real soldiers' (*BC* 112), but on-board trading ships which serve the profiteering local elite rather than on the battlefields of Europe, and in *The Atom Station* the political elite of Reykjavík attempt to appropriate the nationalist sentiment which had fuelled the independence movement for their own benefit, using the funeral of Hallgrímsson, 'the Nation's Darling' (*AS* 16), to cover-up for 'the sale of the country' (*AS* 57) to the US military. Laxness and Heinesen thus treat the patriotism of the war and immediate post-war years with scepticism, whilst also showing the importance of a cohesive national consciousness in the struggle for national sovereignty, both from Danish rule and from the dictates of global capitalism. The result is a complex engagement with nationalism, that shows it on the one hand to stand for 'liberty and freedom from tyranny' and on the other 'the embodiment of tyranny'; a complexity that is mirrored in the formal and aesthetic terrain of both texts.

Drawing on Benita Parry's notion of 'peripheral modernism', in the first section I argue that the shift from historical realism in *Iceland's Bell* and *The Good Hope* to modernist formal modes in *The Atom Station* and *The Black Cauldron* attests to the rapid transformation of Iceland and the Faroe

islands from peripheral colonies to semi-peripheral nation-states in the mid-twentieth century and that the uneveness of this process is registered in the formal incongruities of both texts. I then explore the representation of nationalism in the novels through two particular instances of nationalist spectacle: Jónas Hallgrímsson's repatriation and funeral in *The Atom Station* and the funeral of Ivar Berghammer in *The Black Cauldron*, which illustrate the appropriation of the emancipatory and progressive nationalism of the independence movements by the local elite to serve their own interests. I root my analysis jointly in the Gramscian notion of the 'national-popular' and Frantz Fanon's pivotal discussion of national consciousness in *The Wretched of the Earth*, and suggest that despite the critique of bourgeois nationalism in both novels, cultural nationalism remains a point of resistance against the threat of 'cultural obliteration' (Fanon 2001: 190) posed by colonialism and capitalist imperialism. Set at a moment of hegemonic transition, these novels invite discussion of nationalism in world-systemic terms, and although focusing on the *national* might seem incompatible with the notion of *world*-literature, this chapter will show that the nation is in fact integral to the global perspectives of Laxness and Heinesen's semi-peripheral novels.

Locating Semi-Peripheral Modernism I: *The Atom Station* as *Bildungsroman*

The Atom Station and *The Black Cauldron* are each comprised of a discrepant mixture of social realism, satire, surrealism, and saga, resulting in a formal complexity that can be fruitfully explored as examples of what Benita Parry has termed 'peripheral modernism'. In "Aspects of Peripheral Modernism" Parry lists the defining features of peripheral modernism as 'the improbable coexistence of the past and the contemporary' (2009: 32), the presence of 'broken histories' (2009: 33), and a tendency to juxtapose 'the mundane and the fantastic, the recognizable and the improbable, the seasonal and the eccentric, the earthborn and the fabulous, the legible and the oneiric, historically inflected and mystical states of consciousness' (2009: 39). Parry relates these formal features to the uneven process of capitalist modernisation, and argues that as the literary response to capitalism's unevenness the idea of peripheral modernism applies to all spaces that occupy a 'shared position of structural underdevelopment within an uneven and an unequal world system', including semi-peripheral spaces such as 'Eastern and Middle Europe, Turkey, Ireland, Scotland, Spain, Iceland' (2009: 28-29). However she is careful to remind us of the necessity to acknowledge different social, historical, economic and cultural conditions in our search for 'likenesses among the many peripheral modernisms' (2009: 27). With this in mind, it seems pertinent to investigate the 'literary codes' specific to the 'social space' (2009: 35) of Europe's

north-western periphery, by comparing how capitalist modernity is represented in *The Atom Station* and *The Black Cauldron*.

Both novels deal with the 'seismic effects' of accelerated capitalist transformation in Iceland and the Faroe Islands in the twentieth century which, as in colonial situations elsewhere, had been 'slow in arriving and incomplete in its arrival' (Parry 2009: 31), resulting in the overlap of different economic conditions and social formations as

> vast rural populations unabsorbed or only marginally absorbed into colonial capitalism, provided – and continue to provide - material ground for the persistence of earlier economic practices and collective social arrangements, as well as for time-honoured customs and psychic dispositions. (Parry 2009: 32)

The Atom Station deals precisely with the conflicts that arose out of Iceland's uneven transition from a primarily agrarian economy to a modern industrial economy, which are registered in spatial terms at the start of the novel through the repeated articulation of difference between the rural north and the urban south. [35] The novel opens with movement between these two spaces: Ugla's relocation from her father's horse farm in the north, to the ultra-modern home of Bui Árland in Reykjavík. Working as a maid in the Árland household Ugla is assimilated into the urban class system from the bottom, and the novel's opening line, 'Am I to take in this soup?' (*AS* 2), expresses her initial disorientation and uneasy integration into the domestic hierarchy of the Árland family. After only one night serving at the Árlands' table she begins to resist her new classification: "That's just like you northerners, to start talking to people," said the cook when I returned to the kitchen. Rebellion stirred in me and I replied, "I am people" (*AS* 3). Where in the north she was simply the daughter of 'Falur of Eystridalur with his herd of wild horses' (*AS* 2), without class awareness as such, she is now the lowest ranking member of the Árland household, and her response to the cook's reprimand stages the encounter between Iceland's rural peripheries and urban centre in terms of conflict, rather than as a process of '*synthesis* and *negotiation*' (Parry 2009: 35). This conflict comes to take many forms as the novel progresses, but it is set up in the first instance as a confrontation between the north, which is rural and traditional, and the urban south, which is modern. This particular organisation is illustrated further when Ugla is introduced to the children through their nicknames, Dídí, Dúdú, Bóbó, and Bubu, which reject traditional Icelandic names

[35] A report on the Icelandic economy by The Central Bank of Iceland states that '[o]ver the course of the 20th century, Iceland was transformed from one of Europe's poorest economies, with about 2/3 of the labour force employed in agriculture, to a prosperous modern economy employing 2/3 of its labour force in services' (Sigurdardóttir *et al* 2008: 17).

in order to be '*chic*' and '*á la mode*' (*AS* 4).[36] Despairing at the children's 'barbarian' names, Búi Árland asks Ugla to 'please re-christen' (*AS* 4) them for him, imparting upon her the responsibility for preserving the Icelandic traditions and cultural identity which he feels are disintegrating as the city modernises. The role as representative of traditional rural Iceland is not an easy fit for Ugla, as her own personal development and political awakening necessarily mean that she too will be changed by her experiences in the city. It does, however, introduce an inescapable allegorical register to her *Bildung*, which I will return to a little later in this chapter.

The initial shock of the unfamiliar social space of Reykjavík forces Ugla to reflect on the material differences between north and south. Búi Árland's house, filled with all the latest advances in modern living, seems like a fairy-tale to her:

> The house was much more perfect than the sort of gilt-bordered Christmas-card Heaven which a crooked-nosed woman would sacrifice everything to attain in the next world: it was an all-electric house, with machines being plugged in and started up all day long; there was no such thing as a fire; heat came from underground, and the glowing embers in the fireplace were made of glass. (*AS* 3)

The use of geothermal energy to heat homes in Iceland was introduced at the start of the twentieth century, and by the end of the Second World War most of the capital was heated by underground springs. However, the geothermal heating network would not reach the entire island until later in the century, which explains Ugla's wonder at the decorative fireplace, but Laxness's reference to it here is also significant because the transition from imported coal to national renewable energy in the mid-twentieth century initiated Iceland's late industrialisation (Henning 2011). Ugla's arrival in the capital thus coincides with the dawn of Iceland's political and economic independence, a moment of rapid technological advancement and social change, which is represented by Laxness

[36] The preservation of Icelandic names and the traditional Icelandic naming conventions have been closely tied to Icelandic cultural nationalism in the twentieth-century. In 1925 a law was enforced that banned the adoption of non-patronymic second names in Iceland. Born Halldór Guðjónsson, Laxness changed his surname shortly before the law was enforced, in 1923, adopting the name of the family farm where he grew up (Guðmundsson 2008). Interestingly, Laxness has also been posthumously drawn in to a recent controversy surrounding the so called "personal names committee" (*mannanafnanefnd)*. The committee was established in 1991 to further protect the Icelandic language by establishing a list of approved given names which must conform to specific set of conventions. The controversy surrounds the name Blær, which is based on the masculine common noun for breeze, and therefore registered by the committee as masculine in 1998. However, Laxness had used the name Blær for a female character in his 1957 novel *The Fish Can Sing* (*Brekkukotsannáll*), which became the basis by which a teenage girl, Blær Bjarkardóttir Rúnarsdóttir, won a court case in 2013 to overrule the naming committee and keep her name (Willson 2009). The case illustrates the particular importance placed on linguistic purism in Iceland, but also the continued centrality of Laxness's literary works in twenty-first century Icelandic society.

as profoundly uneven. This uneveness is made clear when Ugla compares the Árlands' house with her home in the north:

> Here there was not one chair so cheap it could be bartered for our autumn milch cow; and all our sheep would not fetch nearly enough to seat this whole family at once. I am sure that the carpet in the big drawing room cost more than our farm, even including all the buildings. We only owned one article of furniture, the sagging divan which my father brought in an auction some years ago, and only the one picture […]. (*AS* 7)

At the start of the novel Iceland's uneven development is thus located in the social, technological, and economic differences between Ugla's family in the north, where 'the wild horses were our only luxury' (*AS* 7), and the affluence of the Árland house in the south, differences which soon lead her to ask questions, such as, '[w]hy do those who labour never own anything? Or was I a communist to ask such a question […]?' (*AS* 7), marking the start of her political awakening.

As Ugla explores her new urban environment she is exposed to an array of competing political, social and cultural ideas. The two main sites for her encounter with these are the Árlands' house and the Organist's cottage. Where the Árlands' house embodies the peak of modern living, the Organist's cottage is its direct opposite:

> Behind the largest buildings in the town centre there stood a small house which could not be seen from any street, and which no one would imagine existed. A stranger would argue, even swear an oath, that there was no house there. But there was one all the same, a ribbed wooden house, just a little storey and loft, sagging with age […]. (*AS* 10)

As 'a relic of the old market-town of Reikevig' (*AS* 10), the organist's cottage disrupts the neat geographical oppositionality set up between north and south at the start of the novel, representing instead the 'improbable coexistence of the past and the contemporary' which Parry identifies as characteristic of peripheral modernist representation (2009: 32). Indeed, the cottage's disjointed fit with its urban surroundings can be taken as a neat illustration of the particular interaction between time and space inferred by Parry's term: *peripheral*, signifying unevenness in spatial terms, while *modernism*, registering 'the experiences of *modernity*' (Parry 2009: 27), is itself a reflection of the 'complex and differential temporality' of the capitalist mode of production (Anderson 1992; see Parry 2009: 31). The Organist's house thus embodies the unevenness of Icelandic society in concentrated form, an old building within a modernising capital, and, significantly, it is also where Ugla experiences the 'overlapping of social realities' (Parry 2009: 30) of the city most acutely.

As well as learning to play the organ, the Organist's cottage provides a space for the full strata of urban society to mingle and learn 'the organ-play of life' (*AS* 11). The pupils, including the prostitute Cleopatra, two policemen, 'one selfconscious and [the] other unselfconscious' (*AS* 40), and two self-proclaimed gods, discuss art, economics, theology and philosophy, and if it is in the Árland household Ugla first becomes familiar with the structures of the urban social hierarchy, at the Organist's cottage that very same social order is unravelled as 'all conventional thinking' is 'turned into crude exaggeration, and universally accepted notions into vulgarity' (*AS* 96). During her very first visit she is entertained by two gods, the god Brilliantine and Benjamin the atom poet, who give a strange performance featuring a fish played in the style of a Hawaiian guitar and which ends with the ritualistic tearing-up of bank notes:

> […] he began to pull out of his pockets vast sums of money, bunch after bunch of bank-notes, 10 krónur notes, 50 and 100 krónur notes; and in a sudden fit he began to tear the notes in two, crumpling up the pieces and throwing them on the floor and grinding them down like a man killing an insect. Then he sat down and lit a cigarette. (*AS* 19)

After the performance Ugla, still in state of shock and confusion, asks Brilliantine '[w]as that real money, or was it fake?' to which he answers '[t]here is no such thing as real money' (*AS* 20), explaining that all wealth is, quite simply, the result of theft. He uses the bizarrely named F.F.F, 'in English, the Federation of Fulminating Fish, New York; in Icelandic, the Figure-Faking-Federation' to illustrate his point:

> One button costs half an eyrir over there in the west, but you have a company in New York, the F.F.F., which sells you the button, 2 krónur and writes on the invoice: button, 2 krónur. You make a profit of 4000%. After a month you're a millionaire. (*AS* 21)

The F.F.F. is an affiliate of Snorreda, the company which Pliers, short for Two Hundred Thousand Pliers, Búi Árland and the Prime Minister all work for, and in whose interest it is to 'sell the country' (*AS* 28). Although seemingly random, the episode is typical of Laxness' narrative style in the novel: moving swiftly between moments which are deliberately strange and oblique, such as the performance with the fish, to the accepted but equally strange facts of modern life, like the obscene "logic" of transnational capitalism. It is this movement, between the 'mundane and fantastic', that generates satirical tension in the novel, and embeds Laxness's, at times didactic, critique of capitalist modernity in the novel's form.

The novel thus opens with a set of opposing locations: we have Ugla's family's horse farm in the north and the Árlands' modern house in Reykjavík, respectively representing traditional and

modern ways of life in Iceland. We are then introduced to a third location: the Organist's cottage. Here the neat oppositionality configured in the differences between north and south is collapsed. For instance, in a dialectical twist typical of Laxness, it is in the Organist's cottage, 'sagging with age', not in the '*chic'* house of the Árlands, that Ugla is introduced to modern art and music. On her first visit she notices on the wall a

> coloured print of some creature which might have been a girl had her head not been cleft down to the shoulders; she was bald, her eyes were closed, her profile was superimposed on one half of her face, and she was kissing herself on the mouth. And she had eleven fingers. (*AS* 11)

The painting, reminiscent of Picasso's cubist *Buste de Femme* series, fascinates Ugla, and when she eventually builds up the courage to ask about it, the organist answers cryptically: '[s]ome say it is Skarpheðinn,[37] after he had been cleft to the shoulders by the axe *Battle-Troll*; others say it is the birth of Cleopatra' (*AS* 12). The double reference here, to both the medieval Icelandic sagas and the modernist art movement in central Europe, transposes the novel's combinatory form into the plot, and blurs the clear distinction between modern and traditional, local and global cultural forms.

The Organist's house thus not only embodies and contains the unevenness of Icelandic society, but constitutes an intermediary space in the novel, straddling the oppositionality of the traditional rural north and the modern urban south. Its narrative function can be explained further using Franco Moretti's notion of 'the Third' from *Atlas of the European Novel.* Through cartographic analyses of nineteenth century novels Moretti shows that most novels of the period tended to simplify the increasingly complex social and spatial systems of the city through oppositional patterns of movement. He argues that Honoré de Balzac's novels are different, because '[i]nstead of protecting the novel from the complications of Paris, he sees them, as a fantastic *opportunity* for narrative structure: for the novel of complexity' (2015: 106). Moretti's maps show that Balzac made use of the complexities of the Parisian landscape to challenge the neat separation of social space and generate narratives that represented rather than reduced the city's diversity. He achieved this in narratological terms by introducing 'a *third* narrative pole' (108), the 'concrete embodiment' of which can be different in different novels, but which always features a form of '*social overdetermination,* which intersects the narrative line and changes its course' (108). In *The Atom Station* the Organist's house is the spatial manifestation of 'the third', where characters can freely interact across the social divisions which are so solidly demarcated in the home of Bui Árland, and the full

[37] The eldest son of Njáll from the medieval Icelandic family saga *Njáll's Saga.*

complexity of Icelandic society can be explored. It is, as mentioned, a dialectical space, where the contradictions of modern Iceland are literally housed, and where gods and servant-girls coexist like the 'lords and bondsmen' of Jameson's 'exceptional situation' (1995: 60). The cottage can therefore also be considered a figurative representation of the intermediary space of the semi-periphery; and the unbalanced characters and strange behaviour encountered there, evidence of Moretti's suggestion that 'lunacy is endemic in the semi-periphery', because

> in these societies caught in the middle, where economic waves originating in the capitalist core strike with unfathomable and hyperbolic violence, irrational conduct becomes a sort of reflex, which reproduces the course of the world at the scale of individual existence. (2014:157)

The Organist's house, then, represents in microcosm the complexity and polarities of Icelandic society, but it also reduces and concentrates them, making it a space of both social and formal overdetermination. Taking this further, if the Organist's house provides a semi-peripheral third *space*, then it could be argued that Ugla operates as a third narrative *force* in the novel, which provides resolution and relief from the intensity of modernising Reykjavík.

From the start of the novel her relocation from the country sets the narrative in motion, and her *Bildung* stimulates connections and intersections which actively break down binaries. For example, after her experiences at the Organist's house, Ugla reinterprets what she has learned almost straight away by applying it to her own life:

> When my mother became sixty she was given 100 krónur. It then turned out she could not recognise money. She had never seen money before. On the other hand, the day had never dawned since she was twelve years old that she had worked less than sixteen hours out of twenty-four during the winter and eighteen during the summer, unless she were ill. So it was little wonder that I felt I must have been drunk the previous evening, or in a cinema, to see all that money torn up and burned. (*AS* 24)

The story of her mother's first encounter with money is the third of a set of three reflections on money at the start of the novel, the first being Ugla's observation of the wealth contained in the Árland household, 'there was not one chair so cheap it could be bartered for our autumn milch cow', and the second the bewildering performance by the gods and Brilliantine's lecture on asset speculation. In applying what she has learned in in the Árland house and the Organist's cottage to her own life and experiences, Ugla is able to translate the bizarre logic of capitalism to lived reality, effectively grounding the surreal and satirical aspects of the plot in the material and social

- a narrative function that is mirrored in the realist register of her narration. Importantly, to Ugla the strange and surreal is not isolated to the Organist's cottage, for she is just as confused by the Árlands' house, where 'the carpet in the big drawing room cost more than our farm, even including all the buildings' (*AS* 7), leading her to conclude that 'a country person in the city lets much go in one ear and out the other because he or she fails to understand the connection between things, cannot reconcile unrelated concepts' (*AS* 57). Although Ugla claims not to see 'the connection between things', she is unmistakably a force of connection in the text, and it is precisely the simplicity of her narrative perspective, the gods call her 'an innocent country lump' (*AS* 19) in one of their songs, that lends clarity to the unfathomable complexity of the world she encounters in Reykjavík. Ugla's *Bildung* thus operates as a 'force of mediation' (Moretti 2015: 109) in the text, allowing us to see the connection between the novel's irrational form and the uneveness of Icelandic society at this historical moment.

Like Parry's observation in "Aspects of Peripheral Modernism" that Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North* 'invites and frustrates a realist reading' (2009: 37), Laxness' combination of a surrealist plot, 'full of (seemingly) implausible and oblique events' (WReC 2015: 137), with the realist register of Ugla's perspective, creates a formal instability that reflects 'the disjunctive character of Iceland's historical transformation' (WReC 2015: 137). As my reading of the novel has shown so far, although Laxness introduces modern and surrealist elements, the narratological structure is comparable to the nineteenth century 'novel of complexity', which as Moretti suggests is itself as response to the imaginative challenge posed by the new 'geopolitical reality' of the nation-state (2015: 17). Moretti has suggested elsewhere that 'because of its ability to accentuate modernity's dynamism and instability' the *Bildungsroman* is 'the 'symbolic form' of modernity' (2000c: 5), and it therefore makes sense for Laxness to reactivate it in the mid-twentieth century, to represent Iceland at the moment of national independence, which is also, contradictorily, the moment the new nation encounters the hegemonic forces of global capitalism. Describing nationalism and capitalism as 'forces in contradiction', Benedict Anderson has characterised the twentieth century by the 'enormous process of disintegration' of empires into independent nation-states and the simultaneous 'integration' of these 'into a single capitalist economy' (1998: 59). In *The Atom Station* we can see these paradoxical forces at work, and Laxness adapts the narrative structure of the *Bildungsroman* to reflect the 'movement of integration and disintegration' (Anderson 1998: 59) that accompany the process of decolonisation, and to capture the particular dichotomies and polarities of the Icelandic nation at mid-century.

Locating Semi-Peripheral Modernism II: *The Black Cauldron* as Irrealist *Kollektivroman*

In *The Atom Station* Iceland's uneven development is mapped in spatial and social terms, and reflected in the narratological structure of Ugla's *Bildung*. In a similar organisation, *The Black Cauldron* is structured around movement between Kingsport and Angelica Cottage, the home of the Berghammer family situated in the fells above the town, and the two locations can be considered emblematic of the traditional and modern ways of life which coexist on the islands. The novel opens with a panoptic description of Kingsport and is one of only a few instances when the story is told from the perspective of a third-person omniscient narrator:

> There it lies tucked away like a womb deep inside the island, a fruitful, teeming, uterine passage in the midst of the desolate ocean, a favoured spot amidst the ravages of war, a haven for weary seamen, a refuge for déracinés and refugees, a breeding ground for religious sects, a cosy nest for profiteers of every kind. (*BC* 11)

The opening description of Kingsport has a distinctly cinematic quality which is emphasised as the narrative perspective gradually zooms-in on the town and its notable residents: 'here it is that Solomon Olsen has his home' and here are 'the other citizens of importance: Consul Tarnowius, Stefan Sveinsson and J.F. Scibbye's widow' (*BC* 11) until it comes to rest on Max Opperman, formerly a travelling salesman who has become wealthy from his recent business ventures. A lengthy passage is devoted to describing his new warehouse and offices, which have been 'designed in the most up-to-date style in concrete and glass', with no expenses spared:

> there is plenty of light and air and heat here, a lift, a toilet and a rubbish chute, and air-raid shelter, a kitchen and a cafeteria for the employees, comfortable offices with plenty of space, and cosy inner rooms furnished with Chesterfield chairs for visitors and customers to sit at their ease. Here, too, there is what is called a news bureau, where Opperman's employees can go and listen to the news and stimulate their intellects with good reading. […] On the walls there are advertisements and pictures illustrating the progress of the war, explosions, sinking ships, aeroplanes shot down in flames, ruined cities, maimed women and children, maps and statistics and portraits of Churchill, Roosevelt, Stalin and General Smuts. (*BC* 12)

The description of Opperman's offices seems to suggest he is a progressive and generous employer, and the narrator describes him as 'a friend of the people' and 'a democrat through and through' (13). However, there is something unsettling about this space. The positive description

of the modern facilities on offer to the employees is disturbed by the images on the walls, pictures of 'explosions, sinking ships, aeroplanes shot down in flames, ruined cities, maimed women and children', mixed-in with 'adverts', 'statistics' and 'maps', which both connect Opperman's workers to what Jameson has called the 'world space of multinational capital' (1984: 92), but also offer a sinister reminder that, despite the progressive and democratic veneer, the underside of capital drips 'from every pore, with blood and dirt' (Marx 1982: 926). The scene can be taken as an introduction to Heinesen's underlying concern in the novel: to show the disruption caused to the social fabric of the Faroe Islands by the war and the violently accelerated modernisation that accompanied it, and he makes use of the shifting narrative focus of the *kollektivroman* to reflect the uneven social landscape it creates.

After the opening descriptions of the town and its notable business owners, the narrative perspective is transferred from the unnamed narrator to old Ole, the town's postman. Passing from door to door delivering the morning paper Ole observes 'the name of Opperman […] on everyone's lips' (*BC* 14) as they read the day's headline about a recent donation he's made to a children's home. This 'mass ceremony' of 'simultaneous consumption', as Benedict Anderson has described the daily ritual of reading the newspaper (2006: 35), becomes the first communal act of the novel's collective. A little later in the story we see a similar ritual enacted, when 'the dull tones of London's Big Ben' can be heard in 'almost all the houses along the road' as the people of the town tune-in to the English news on their radios (*BC* 55). News clearly plays an important role in novel, and the story both begins and ends with a headline in the local newspaper about Opperman. In *Imagined Communities* Anderson suggests that just as the novel created the possibility for imagining the separate lives of a mass of individuals as being a national community through the representation of simultaneous actions in 'homogeneous, empty time', the newspaper created a sense of connection through the daily ritual of reading about the same events (2006: 33). However, in *The Black Cauldron* news doesn't just create the 'imagined linkage' (Anderson 2006: 33) necessary to the imaginary construction of a nation, it is also what connects Kingsport to the rest of the world, and, as the description of Opperman's offices affirms, there is one event which extends the sense of connection beyond the borders of the nation: the war. The war is what ties together the adverts and disparaging images on Opperman's walls, and is the topic that everyone reads about in the newspaper and listens to on the radio; it heightens the possibility for imagining a connected world, in which even the Faroe Islands, isolated in the North Atlantic, has a part to play.

The heightened sense of connection established at the start of the novel is interrupted by another shift in narrative perspective, this time to Engilbert Thomsen, who we follow after Ole gives him a letter to deliver to Liva Berghammer at Angelica Cottage on his way to Opperman's fox farm in

the fells. As Engilbert climbs the slopes leading out of Kingsport he stops to reflect on the town below, now only just 'discernible through a milky membrane of haze and smoke rising from chimneys' (*BC* 17):

> Life was beginning to bubble and boil down there round the black pool of water; there were the sounds of dogs barking and cocks crowing, of lorries groaning and hooting, motors spluttering, bagpipes twittering, cranes complaining, hammer blows resounding from Solomon Olsen's slipway. Then one of the armed trawlers let off steam with an ear splitting rush like the hiss of a gigantic goose. The fells hissed back in return. The Cauldron was boiling over in a motley of sound. (*BC* 17)

The industrious sounds and activities described by Engilbert suggest that Kingsport is a town in the midst of modernisation, and, viewed from above, the commotion seems almost overwhelming. As Engilbert further ascends the fells a thick fog falls, hiding the bustling town from sight, and when he reaches the top there is nothing but 'sky and sea, lonesome fells and huge isolated boulders' (*BC* 18). The remoteness of the bog is thus set starkly against the bustling town, and that the sounds of the town are initially 'hissed back' in echo by the fells, indicates an uneasy coexistence between the two spaces. To Engilbert, Kingsport embodies the 'crass everyday life', whereas the fells are a space of 'spiritual liberation' (*BC* 17) which he believes to be 'totally outside the undifferentiated world of reality' (*BC* 17) and populated by fantastical creatures and ghosts:

> Here wandered the ghosts of the two odious women Unn and Ura who poisoned their husbands so as undisturbed to go on fornicating with a mountain spirit, and here, too, it was that a farmer called Aasmund did combat throughout a whole winter's night with the spherical monster Hundrik, who sought to roll him into the ground and only gave up when Aasmund guessed his name. And here, too, lay the murky Hell Water Pool, which was said to be bottomless. Hell Water was one of those mysterious lakes in which visions were sometimes to be seen. It was here that an old shepherd saw a reflection of the great fire of Moscow in 1812. (*BC* 19)

As in the opening of *The Good Hope*, a sense of oppositionality underlies Heinesen's description of the Faroese landscape, with Kingsport and the fells set up as opposites, though barely separated, in a spatial arrangement that emphasises the 'juxtaposition of the mundane and the fantastic' in the novel (Parry 2009: 39). Echoing the sense of global connectivity introduced at the start of the novel, here the Faroe Islands are also connected, across time and space, to another of Europe's peripheries, nineteenth century Russia, though not via the war, radio or newspaper, but through the landscape of the fells; a connection that disrupts 'the steady onward clocking of homogeneous,

empty time' (Anderson 2006: 33) associated with the news, but at the same time overdetermines it.

Like the Faroe Islands during Heinesen's lifetime, Russia had experienced a rapid but incomplete capitalist transformation in the nineteenth century (Shanin 2018),[38] and in this passing moment of connection Heinesen creates a link between the uneven landscape of Faroese modernity and the 'truncated and warped modernization' (Berman 2010: 232) of Russia. The aesthetic implications of this link are incisive, in that it enables us to relate the novel's unusual aesthetics, the presence of the supernatural and fantastical in the otherwise realist depiction, to what Marshall Berman, has called 'the modernism of underdevelopment' (2010: 232), that is the modernism 'beyond capitalism's cores' (Parry 2009: 27), which, because modernisation is irregular or incomplete in these spaces, is 'forced to build on fantasies and dreams of modernity' and 'nourish itself on an intimacy and a struggle with mirages and ghosts' (Berman 2010: 232). Engilbert's tale of the ghostly women and spherical monsters can thus be taken as symptomatic of the uneven development of the Faroe Islands, and as an example of the 'modernism that arises from backwardness' (Berman 2010: 232).[39] The spatial arrangement of *The Black Cauldron*, with the bustle of 'undifferentiated reality' (*BC* 17) in modern Kingsport and the 'supernatural forces' (*BC* 18) of the fells surrounding Angelica Cottage, thus reflects the uneveness of modernisation in the Faroe Islands, and provides a local Faroese version of the 'bizarre reality' (Berman 2010: 232) shared by the peripheries of capitalism.

As previously stated, Heinesen makes use of the narrative structure of the *kollektivroman* to represent the Faroese nation under occupation, a time of rapid development and social change, however, moments such as Engilbert's description of the Hell Water Pool mark a conscious break with the usual realism of the form, and it is worth pausing briefly to consider its history and conventions in order to examine Heinesen's reworking of it. A branch of Scandinavian social realism, the *kollektivroman* arose in response to the ideas of the Danish literary theorist and critic Georg Brandes. In his introduction to a series of lectures on aesthetic theory held at the University of Copenhagen in the 1870s, Brandes criticised the provincialism and 'abstract idealism' (2017:

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[38] In his late writings (unpublished during his own lifetime) Karl Marx described the irregular combination of archaic forms, such as agricultural peasant communes, with modern capitalist production in Russia, and recognised in these conditions the potential for 'a road of development different from […] Western Europe' (See Shanin 2018: 134).

[39] In an essay on Dostoevsky Georg Lukács also observed the potential of literature produced in the 'backward' spaces of the capitalist system, and suggests that with novels such as Goethe's *Die Leiden Des Junge Werther* (1779) and Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* (1866) there appeared 'suddenly […] from an underdeveloped country, where the troubles and conflicts of contemporary civilization could not yet have been fully unfolded, works that stated – imaginatively – all the problems of human culture at its highest point, stirred up ultimate depths, and presented a totality hitherto never achieved' (see Wellek 1962: 146).

701) of Danish literature, calling the works of authors such as H.C. Anderson and the Romantic poet Bernhard Ingemann childish and naïve. Brandes suggested that in order for Danish literature to become 'fully developed' (2017: 699) and remain significant, it should deal with real social and political issues and 'provoke debate' (2017: 700), and he argued for a comparative literary perspective that would 'bring the foreign closer' (2017: 698), and thereby reinvigorate Danish literature. The lectures instigated vigorous cultural debate across the Nordic region and resulted in what has become known as *det modene gennembrud* (the modern breakthrough) that launched Scandinavian realism at the turn of the century. By the inter-war years the social responsibility and international outlook advocated by Brandes in 1870s was consolidated in the left-wing cultural and political movement known as *kulturradikalisme* (cultural radicalism). Hans Kirk's collective novel *Fiskerne* (*The Fishermen*) (1928) has become synonymous with the cultural politics of this period and is seen as the archetype of the form. The novel depicts in sociological detail the efforts of a small collective of religious fishermen to establish a community in northern Jutland (the Danish mainland peninsula) and the conflicts arising out of their attempts to convert the local parish to their puritanical faith. Heinesen's first two novels, *Blæsende Gry* (*Windswept Dawn*) published in 1934 and, *Noatun* (*Niels Peter*), published in 1938, were heavily influenced by Kirk. In *Noatun*, for instance, Heinesen portrays the challenges faced by a small fishing community attempting to establish a new settlement in a desolate Faroese valley, and although we can see structural aspects of the form at play in his later novels, these early novels conform most clearly to the rubric of the *kollektivroman*. By *The Black Cauldron* (his third novel), rather than portraying a close-knit and homogenous community as in his previous works, Heinesen makes use of the shifting narrative structure of the *kollektivroman* to represent the feeling of heightened connectivity brought about by the war and occupation, and the fantastical and surreal elements of the novel can be seen as an attempt to represent the destabilising effects of the accelerated and uneven modernisation that accompanied it.

However, the incorporation of supernatural and fantastical elements and a critical stance towards the social reality concomitant with the war also marks out Heinesen's adaptation of the *kollektivroman* as an example of what Michael Löwy has described as 'critical irrealism' (2007: 194). Following the Marxist tradition of critical *realism,* Löwy defines critical *irrealism* broadly as 'nonrealist works' that 'contain a powerful critique of the social order' (2007: 194), but which draw on the 'social, political, and philosophical outlook' (2007: 196) of the Romantic tradition. Löwy suggests that the cultural phenomenon of Romanticism is best understood a reaction against the bourgeois rationality of the late eighteenth and nineteenth century, and a form of 'cultural protest' against 'capitalist-industrialist modernity' (2007: 197). In order to re-enchant the world, Romantic,

and later Symbolist and Surrealist, artists and writers often drew on religion, 'both in its traditional forms and in its mystical or heretical manifestations', '[b]ut they also turned to magic, to the esoteric arts, sorcery, alchemy, and astrology; they rediscovered Christian and pagan myths, legends, fairy tales, and gothic narratives; and they explored the hidden realms of dreams and the fantastic […] (2007: 198).

Critical irrealism thus traverses a range of forms and genres, which are connected by a shared dissidence towards the abstract rationality of capitalist modernity. From this perspective Engilbert's fascination with the supernatural potential of the fells is not the only example of irrealism in *The Black Cauldron*, but Liva's religious fervour and Jens Ferdinand's drunken deliriums (and Laxness's surrealism in *The Atom Station*), can all be considered *irrealist*, and provide an alternative world-view to the bourgeois rationality of the local elite, whose only focus is on '[p]ounds and endless pounds…. pounds and war, pounds and war' (*BC* 14). Key to Löwy's formulation is his suggestion that realism and irrealism do not necessarily operate as fixed epistemological categories, meaning irrealist works often contain some realist elements, and vice versa, and that some texts – Löwy mentions Franz Kafka's novels and short stories – deliberately 'establish themselves in a no-man's-land, a border territory between reality and "irreality"' (2007: 196). In "Aspects of Peripheral Modernism" Parry builds on Löwy's work to explore the specific contours of irrealist representation in peripheral and semi-peripheral literatures as it reacts to the uneven penetration of capitalism across the world. Like Löwy, Parry is concerned with the politics of irrealist aesthetics, suggesting that the discordant narrative registers and forms encountered in peripheral modernist literatures express a 'consciousness of political and cultural conflict' (2009: 40), rather than 'mimetic cultural encounters' of 'cross-fertilization and fusion' (2009: 40). As such, we can read the irrealism of *The Black Cauldron* not as naïve and backward, as Brandes and the cultural radicals might well have seen it, but as a form of cultural opposition to 'the disenchanted reality' (Löwy 2007: 196) of militarised capitalist modernity.

Drawing on the realist traditions associated with the *kollektivroman*, but clearly incorporating irrealist elements, *The Black Cauldron* certainly seems to occupy this 'border territory', which is illustrated with particular clarity in the representation of the war in the novel. Although the war for the most part operates as a backdrop in the novel, there are moments when Heinesen actively incorporates it into the novel's plot, depicting, for instance, the aerial bombardment of Kingsport, and showing the impact on the community when the one of the town's trading vessels is destroyed. However, it is in the fells, already established as an irrealist space, that we are first reminded of the proximity of the war. Picking up where we left off earlier, shortly after Engilbert has delivered the letter to Liva, the peace of fells is disturbed by the distant sound of a plane approaching. It appears

at first as an innocuous 'tiny dark spot in the sky above the mountain' (*GH* 33), but soon the anti-aircraft guns in the town are fired 'in deafening cacophony and white smoke buds blossomed against the blue of the sky' (*GH* 33). Viewed from the fells, there is an uncanny beauty to the bombs exploding in the harbour and even the sounds of the guns seem to lose any threatening associations when heard in the fells: '[a]gain the guns started thundering for all they were worth, and the echoes thrown back by the mountains sounded like raucous laughter mingled with moans and high-pitched shrieks' (*GH* 33). Although the peace of the fells is disrupted, the sound of gun fire is distorted and seems abstract, almost absurd from this vantage point. This representation of war is thus not irrealist in the sense of Engilbert's supernatural encounters in the Angelica Bog, but resides between realist and irrealist representation, resulting in a kind of uncanny realism, like 'a dream punctured by the touch of reality' (Lukács 1962: 152). We see this form of irrealism again in another direct encounter with the 'bizarre reality' created by modern warfare.

In Chapter Six, Part Three, Jens Ferdinand embarks on a journey to a neighbouring island after receiving the news that his bother Johan is dying of tuberculosis. On board the small fishing vessel taking him there, Jens Ferdinand watches the Faroese landscape, comprised of still ocean and desolate islands, and lets his mind wander in an intoxicated stupor until

> suddenly something pulled all the dispersed elements back in their proper places: *a periscope!* A tiny vertical line sticking out of the dark water, a walking stick taking a stroll all on its own out in the ocean, and leaving a tiny wake of wavelets behind it. (*BC* 255)

Just as the periscope from the U-boat disturbs the surface of the water, the war interrupts the narrative, entering the plot like a sharp electric shock, and, as with the sound of guns earlier in the novel, its eerie presence is uncannily anthropomorphised, reflecting Heinesen's *angst* about the sinister and 'inhuman mechanism' of modern warfare (Löwy 2007: 203). Like the fog which separates the bustling port-town from the wilderness of the fells, the border between the real and the fantastic in the novel is opaque but immaterial, and Heinesen crosses fruitfully between realist and irrealist narration to reflect the uncanny experience of war in the Faroe Islands.

The idea of peripheral modernism, as I have attempted to illustrate through my reading of both *The Atom Station* and *The Black Cauldron*, thus challenges the pervasive stereotype that modernism is apolitical and defined by a turning away from 'the social materials associated with realism' (Jameson 1990: 45). It is a stereotype which was clearly at work in Glyn W. Jones's interpretation of *The Black Cauldron,* and which has dominated and restricted readings of Heinesen's literary works to date. Jones was the first to translate several of Heinesen's novels into English and one of very few scholars to have worked on Heinesen in the English language, but in his monograph on

Heinesen he pays almost no attention to the irrealist aspects of his works. This omission can, in part, be considered a result of the fact that Jones, as many others have, categorises Heinesen's work firmly as part of the Danish literary canon. He introduces Heinesen as 'undoubtedly the most distinguished writer of Danish today', one who belongs to 'that choice category of writers of Danish who have achieved an international status' (1990: 5). Of course Heinesen did write in Danish and was influenced by authors such as Hans Kirk and Henrik Pontoppidan, however, more interesting is the way he adapts the *kollectivroman* in *The Black Cauldron,* by reactivating traditional Faroese folklore and adding irrealist elements in order to convey 'the palimpsestic, combinatory and contradictory 'order'' (WReC 2015: 72) of semi-peripheral experience in the Faroe Islands. Jones, who considers *The Black Cauldron* 'in no sense a political novel' (1974: 84), fails to see the politics of Heinesen's irrealist aesthetics, which both reflects the 'unbearable pressures' (Berman 2010: 232) of semi-peripheral modernity and registers a profound dissidence towards it. In what follows I will show that the dissidence towards capitalist modernity, formally encoded in the peripheral modernism of both *The Black Cauldron* and *The Atom Station*, is mirrored in the dialectical treatment of nationalism in the novels.

Nationalism: Conflicts and Contradictions

Through my reading of the novels so far I have shown that *The Black Cauldron* and *The Atom Station* can be productively read as examples of peripheral modernism, and I have argued that the irrealist reworking of the *Bildungsroman* and *kollektivroman* in each novel not only encodes the changes to Icelandic and Faroese society during a period of accelerated modernisation, but also registers a dissidence towards capitalist modernity itself. My reading of the texts has deliberately emphasised the way in which space is used to represent the uneveness of modernity as experienced in the semi-peripheries, by showing that modern and archaic social, economic, and cultural forms are juxtaposed in Laxness's and Heinesen's portrayal of urban and rural landscapes. In both texts it is also in this nexus, between the modern and archaic, that the idea of the nation resides. In *Imagined Communities* Benedict Anderson lists this contradiction, the 'objective modernity of nations' from a historical perspective versus the 'subjective antiquity' at the heart of most nationalisms (2006: 5), as one of several paradoxes that make the nation and the related concepts of 'nationality' and 'nationalism', notoriously difficult to define.[40] Echoing Anderson, in his study of third-world nationalism, Timothy Brennan similarly suggests that the term 'nation' is 'both historically determined and general', referring at once to the modern nation-state and to 'something more

[40] Anderson also lists '[t]he formal universality of nationality as a socio cultural concept […] vs. the irremediable particularity of its concrete manifestations' and 'the 'political' power of nationalisms vs. their philosophical poverty and even incoherence' as definitional paradoxes (2006: 5).

ancient and nebulous - the *natio* – a local community, domicile, family, condition of belonging' (1989: 2). Brennan further highlights the paradoxical nature of nations by suggesting that although they are 'imaginary constructs that depend for their existence on an apparatus of cultural fictions' (such as the novel and the newspaper) (1989: 8), nations have very real consequences as 'people die for nations, fight wars for them and write fictions on their behalf' (1989: 7). Inherently contradictory, the idea of the nation eludes simple definition, however, most contemporary theorists have emphasised its fictive quality and 'cultural roots' (Anderson 2006: 7), and recognised nationalism, and the nation form, as an essential element of modernisation, an 'ineluctable feature of the transition from agrarian to industrial or from pre-capitalist to capitalist society' (Cleary 2002a: 51). Written in the formative years of national independence, a time of rapid modernisation in Iceland and the Faroe Islands, *The Atom Station* and *The Black Cauldron* register the conflicts and contradictions of postcolonial nation-building, and, despite constituting relatively cohesive cultural-political communities, with clearly defined national and territorial borders and populations that have for the most part remained ethnically and culturally homogenous, the political and cultural contours of the Icelandic and Faroese nations are continuously debated and contested in both novels.

In *The Atom Station,* Laxness uses the polemics surrounding the Keflavík agreement to show the various ways nationalism is mobilised across the political spectrum in the years immediately following independence. Working in the home of Bui Árland, Member of Parliament and brother-in-law to the Prime Minister, Ugla finds herself at the political centre of Iceland at a moment of national importance. Unfamiliar with the ins-and-outs of politics, she nonetheless becomes an inadvertent spectator to the negotiations between the Icelandic government and American diplomats, and experiences the often absurd ideas and actions of the national elite first hand. In the chapter titled "Visitors by Night" Ugla details her first encounter with the 'distinguished men from America' (*AS* 26) and the country's politicians. She is told to look her best by the Madame but warned 'not to greet them or look at them and above all not to look welcoming, because foreigners misunderstood such things' (*AS* 26). The stiff manners impressed upon Ugla by the Madame evaporate as soon as the Americans arrive and greet her warmly, 'as if they had met an old girlfriend' (*AS* 27):

> They smiled genially and talked nineteenth to the dozen; one of them patted me on the back; there was no question of me having to hang up their coats and headgear for them, they did that for themselves. The general, moreover, dug into his pocket for a handful of chewing gum and gave it to me, and the other, not to be outdone, gave me a packet of cigarettes. […] When I brought them the soda water and glasses a moment later they

> were seated beside the master of the house with maps in front of them, both of Iceland and the world. (*AS* 27)

Madam's description of the Americans as 'foreigners' highlights the xenophobia often associated with nationalism, a sentiment that is completely undermined when the visitors act with kindness and generosity towards Ugla. However, the imperialist imagery of the maps, as in Opperman's offices in *The Black Cauldron,* unsettles the cordial atmosphere, and can be seen as an anticipation of the democratic guise that would come to define US global imperialism in years to come. As soon as the negotiations end and the Americans leave, the Icelandic Prime Minister arrives, and other 'visitors' continue to arrive at the house late into the night. These visitors, we later discover, comprise the country's elite, and include 'the sheep-rot director, some Members of Parliament, wholesalers and judges, the mournful lead-grey man who published the paper saying that we had to sell the country, the bishops, and the oil processing plant director' (*AS* 59). They continue to gather for secret meetings in Búi Árland's house throughout the novel, and although Ugla is present during the meetings, serving soda water to the guests, as a domestic worker she remains completely excluded from the negotiations. This social configuration, Ugla's simultaneous centrality and exclusion from the activities of the elite, is expanded in the chapter immediately following, titled "Iceland in the Street. The Youth Centre".

The next day, on her way to the baker's shop at the other end of the street, Ugla comes across a group of young people gathered outside the Prime Minister's house making speeches and singing nationalistic songs like 'Our Fjord-riven Fatherland' (*AS* 29). Even though she was present at the negotiations she is confused by the protests, and when she asks a passer-by, they, surprised at her ignorance, explain that '[t]he country is to be sold' (*AS* 28). After every meeting at Búi Árland's house protesters begin to meet at the other end of the road, outside the Prime Ministers house, to protest the sale of the country:

> You can impose on us limitless taxes; […] you can devalue the króna as much as you like when you have managed to make it worthless; you can make us starve; you can make us stop living in our houses – our forefathers did not live in houses, only turf hovels, and they were yet men; everything, everything, everything, except only this, this, this: do not hand over the sovereignty which we have battled for seven hundred years to regain, we charge you, Sir, in the name of everything which is sacred to this nation, do not make our young republic the mere appendage to a foreign atom station; only that, only that; and nothing but that. (*AS* 60)

The secret and nocturnal meetings of the elite thus have their daylight counterpart in the public protests of the people, who, in pleading speeches, invoke the history of Iceland's colonial subjugation to challenge the imperialism behind the American's military interest in Iceland. The speech mobilises both the collective memory of hardship during the centuries of Danish rule and the recently successful independence movement, constructing an image of Icelandic history as a seven-hundred-year-old battleground for national sovereignty. The language of the protestors also draws on the dialectic of antiquity and modernity, as Iceland is both an ancient community, with a documented history dating back to the earliest settlements and the commonwealth, and a fragile 'young republic' at risk of being annexed to a new foreign power.

As well as being the public counterpart to the private negotiations of the politicians and business owners, the nationalism of the protestors contrasts starkly with the views expressed by the politicians leading the negotiations. At a supper party at the Árlands' house later in the novel, the Prime Minister makes his standpoint on the matter clear in a drunken rant:

> "Why do I want to sell the country?" said the Prime Minister. "Because my conscience tells me to," he said [...]. What is Iceland for the Icelanders? Nothing. Only the West matters for the North. We live for the West; we die for the West; one West. Small nation? - dirt. The East shall be wiped out. The dollar shall stand. (*AS* 61)

The Prime Minister's speech shows that the national elite are all too happy to sacrifice the country's independence to gain favour with a new world power.[41] Throughout the novel the 'clandestine' meetings of the national elite and the public protests in the streets are set up as opposites by Laxness, but with deliberate irony he has the visitors at Bui Árland's house sing nationalistic songs, with titles like "Fellow Were in Fettle" and "O'er the Icy Sandy Wastes" (*AS* 61) that mirror the nationalism of the protestors, whilst they sign away the country's independence. Laxness thus represents the conflicts surrounding the Keflavík agreement in class terms, and with a sense of futility, as the meetings of the country's elite and the protests of the ordinary people fail to coincide.

Towards the end of the novel the conflicts between the people and the national elite escalate. The negotiations are moved to *Austurvöllur* (parliament house) where the agreement is discussed by politicians 'in closed sessions' (*AS* 63). In response the protests move closer and closer to the parliament building, until the people eventually burst through the doors, where they finally come face to face with the Prime Minister. In a 'national-father voice', he manages to pacify the protestors, swearing 'by everything which is and has been sacred to this nation from the beginning:

[41] An uncompromising representation of the Icelandic Prime Minister Ólafur Thors (1892- 1964), that led to Laxness's writer's stipend being withdrawn by parliament (D'Amico 2015).

Iceland shall not be sold' (*AS* 64). The politicians continue to swear 'solemn oaths' (*AS* 135) until the deal has been agreed, and despite the peaceful nature of the protests, which eventually dwindle to nothing, they order the police to use 'tear-gas and other titbits' (*AS* 167) against them if necessary. The threat of tear-gas creates a historical connection between the protests depicted in the novel, the protests against Iceland's membership of NATO in 1949, a year after the novel was published, and the more recent protests in 2009, when the people of Iceland demanded the resignation of the government and leading bankers following the 2008 financial crisis:[42] in both 1949 and 2009 the people called out a failure of the national political elite to protect the country's sovereignty, and in both cases tear-gas was used by the police to pacify protestors (D'Amico 2015). *The Atom Station* thus not only captures the new nexus of power that arose at the end of the Second World War, but also seems to anticipate the national crises to come.

Moreover, the notion of 'selling' the country, an idea first introduced in *Iceland's Bell* with the King's attempt to sell Iceland to the German merchants, also extends the historical reach of *The Atom Station* backwards in time, allowing the Keflavík agreement, with which the transaction is completed, to be connected to the history of colonial domination. The 'sale of the country' motif thereby creates continuity between the colonial past and the post-colonial present, but also seems to illustrate, with remarkable foresight, Frantz Fanon's suggestion over a decade later, in *The Wretched of the Earth*, that after independence the national elite 'discovers its historic mission', a mission that 'has nothing to do with transforming the nation [but] consists, prosaically, of being the transmission line between the nation and capitalism, rampant though camouflaged, which today puts on the mask of neo-colonialism' (Fanon 2001: 122). In "The Pitfalls of National Consciousness" Fanon critiques the forms of nationalism promoted by the newly independent local elite, which he argues poses a threat to the formation of an authentic national consciousness that has the potential to challenge the structures and systems of oppression which survive after colonialism has formally ended. In *The Atom Station* the conflicts surrounding the Keflavík agreement result in a similar discussion about the potential of nationalism to be both 'the all-embracing crystallization of the innermost hopes of the whole people' (Fanon 2001: 119) or to perpetuate and even amplify the social divisions fostered by colonial rule.

The Black Cauldron is similarly concerned with representing the conflictual politics of nationalism, and, as in *The Atom Station*, the nationalism of the local elite is undermined and critiqued by

[42] The crash followed a period of 'astronomical growth' of the Icelandic banking system and stock market under the leadership of Davíð Oddsson, the Icelandic Prime Minister from 1991-2004, who transformed the banks from 'small local institutions operating within a restrictive political and business environment into international commercial and investment banks with combined balance sheets amounting to seven to eight times Iceland's GDP' (Loftsdóttir 2016: 35)

Heinesen throughout the novel. As previously mentioned, in *The Black Cauldron,* Heinesen transforms the *kollektivroman* to represent a society divided by class, politics and religious sectarianism, and to highlight the intensification of existing social tensions brought about by the war. The changes to Faroese society are reflected upon throughout the novel by the conservative newspaper editor Nikodemus Skælling. As the editor of the local newspaper, Mr Skælling occupies an influential position in the local community, a position matched by the prominence given to his narrative perspective in the novel's collective structure. However, despite this, Heinesen doesn't miss a chance to mock and undermine his perspective. In chapter 3, part III, for instance, we are privy to Mr Skælling's xenophobic fears of 'Asian proletarian hordes pouring across Europe' (*BC* 218) after the defeat of Germany by Soviet Russia on the Eastern Front. Skælling relates the unsettled political landscape of central Europe to the 'deplorable state' of things in Kingsport, where the presence of occupying forces has disrupted the status quo and caused '[s]ectarianism, both religious and political' to blossom 'unrestrained' (*BC* 218). He is particularly concerned by the increased calls for independence from Denmark and is deeply critical of those involved:

> Now these barbarians seriously wanted to make these islands a sovereign land in which they could do as they thought fit. There were ructions in the capital; the lawful Danish authorities were being criticised and attacked in the most impudent manner; conceited smatterers, failed students and sectarian missionaries thought themselves qualified to assume the roles of governors and judges. (*BC* 218)

His opposition to the independence movement is closely tied to his greater fear of communism, a fear shared by the Madame in *The Atom Station*, and he sees the demand for national independence as another ploy by the increasingly 'ungovernable' masses to challenge the elite's firm grip on political and economic power (*BC* 218). As the novel progresses Skælling's fears escalate to paranoia, and he is convinced that communism is rampant in Kingsport and that revolutionaries and assassins lurk around every corner. He begins to suspect that the typographer and cartoonist Jens Ferdinand is 'socially contaminated' and might be the 'very borer beetle that could bring the entire edifice tumbling down over their heads when they least expected it' (*BC* 220). However, Heinesen's pairing of Skælling's narrative with that of the supposedly dangerous Jens Ferdinand, effectively mocks and undermines his perspective. Jens is a depressive alcoholic who is hopelessly in love with Liva, and rather than revolutionary scheming, we are given insight into his fragile psychological state, alcoholic hallucinations and existential crises, which are insightful, at times even philosophical, but which make Skælling's fears seem utterly ridiculous. As the novel progresses, Jens's narrative perspective, fragmented and at times delusional, grinds against the prosaic narratives of characters such as Mrs Shibbye and Mr. Skælling, whose consciousness and

interactions seem to be taken up entirely with whatever transaction might next increase their wealth, and the increased prominence of his narrative perspective in the second half of the novel results in a destabilisation of the novel's 'collective' structure, that seems to gesture towards a violent reconfiguration of Faroese society itself.

As well as representing a politically divided society, Heinesen is keen to show the dangers of religious sectarianism. Religious sects have a long history in the Faroe Islands and are the subject of several of Heinesen's novels. In *Noatun*, for example, Heinesen depicts a sectarian fishing community, and, as discussed in the previous chapter, in *The Good Hope* a religious sect is also established by Master Olaus with terrible consequences for his daughter, Salmona who, completely deluded, throws herself from a building. Although Simon's doomsday sect in *The Black Cauldron* initially seems to be harmless, it is mockingly nicknamed 'the bun sect' (*BC* 50) because its meetings are held in a former bakery, but its activities and impact on the local community become more sinister as the novel progresses. In the first half of the novel members of the sect begin to cause minor public disturbances, such as singing hymns and preaching sermons outside the dance-halls on Friday evenings, warning the local population and the British occupying forces 'about the great hour that is approaching when the Lord shall reveal himself in the clouds and strike the nations with terror and divide the sheep from the goats' (*BC* 57). Heinesen deliberately undermines the puritanical façade of the sect, when it is revealed that the congregation is comprised of people with dubious morals, such as Selimsson a known 'drunkard and reprobate' and Morten, the shoemaker, who was an 'infamous domestic tyrant' (*BC* 182), however, it is not until the end of the novel that the real dangers of sectarianism become clear: in a horrifying scene Simon has members of the sect to nail him to a wooden cross in an attempt to atone for his sin of falling in love with Liva. In the end, Simon is committed to the mad house, several members of the congregation are imprisoned for assisting with the crucifixion, and the sect outlawed by the authorities, in a clear refusal by Heinesen to let religious extremism become a resolution to the social fragmentation caused by the war.

Political and religious sectarianism are thus clearly shown to be divisive, but it is the profiteering of the local elite which Heinesen is particularly concerned with in the novel. Although still a Danish territory, during the Second World War the Faroe Islands were given greater freedom to self-rule under the British occupying forces, and, as in *The Atom Station,* in *The Black Cauldron* the local elite take advantage of their newfound political and economic power. It is repeatedly mentioned that the fishing industry underpins 'the entire social fabric' of Kingsport (*BC* 124), and its importance is made clear when one of the ships docked in the harbour is destroyed during an air raid early on in the novel. The ship belongs to Mrs. Schibbye, one of the town's prominent business owners,

and her response illustrates the particular brand of patriotism combined with profiteering with which Heinesen takes issue in the novel:

> "Ah, the swine! Swine, I say. Keep at it lads. It's a good ship to lose for so little. Remember, it's bread and butter to all of us. We can't get on top of that fire, and in any case the ship's sinking, any fool can see that. We'll get insurance, but what the hell's the good of that? No one ever grew fat on insurance money. And where am I going to find a new ship at a bloody time like this? Keep at it lads. No, we're too late. The battle's lost. The battle's lost". (*BC* 35)

Excluded from the real battles of the Second World War, the war here is played out in the 'battle' to save the ship, illustrating a transference of meaning from 'victory' to 'profit' that we encounter several times in the novel. The episode also draws attention to the fine balance between prosperity and destruction during the war, reflected in Schibbye's manic response to the bombing which runs across several pages in the novel. She is described as seeming 'in high spirits' even though she laments the loss of her ship, and it is only after several outbursts of 'fierce utterances mixed with embittered cries' (*BC* 35) that she wonders if anyone on-board has been killed. Her lack of concern for the sailors working on the ship also seems to suggest that the opportunity to 'grow fat' from the inflated war-time demand for fish is the preserve of the business owners, who make profit from the relative safety of their offices in Kingsport while the sailors must risk their lives on a daily-basis to earn a wage.

Along with Mr Skælling's chauvinistic nationalism, Mrs Schibbye's character thus seems to illustrate Fanon's warning in "The Pitfalls of National Consciousness" that after independence, rather than serving the 'social and political needs' of the people (2001: 165), the national middle classes of 'under-developed' countries become merely a tool of capitalism' (2001: 120), and although Fanon's work arose out of his experience of anti-colonial movements in Africa, his critique of bourgeois nationalism is quite clearly applicable to both *The Atom Station* and *The Black Cauldron,* both of which represent the national elite as complicit in exploitative economic and social practices that reproduce the inequalities of Danish colonial rule. In what follows I will explore Laxness's and Heinesen's representation of nationalism further, through two parallel examples: Ivar Berghammer's funeral in *The Black Cauldron* and the funeral of Jónas Hallgrímsson in *The Atom Station,* which each highlight the dialectical treatment of nationalism in the novels.

Nationalism Consigned: Funerals and the Spectacle of Bourgeois Nationalism

In *The Black Cauldron* the Berghammer family and Angelica Cottage, their turf-roofed home in the fells, serve as a reminder of traditional Faroese culture and way of life, which throughout the novel are pitted against the modernising town of Kingsport and the profit-driven business elite who reside there. This socio-cultural schema, set up in the spatial configuration at the start of the novel, continues to be solidified as the novel progresses, and Ivar Berghammer, in particular, is set up as an embodiment of traditional Faroese culture. At the end of part one, for instance, we see him leading the 'traditional ring dace' to 'the ancient ballad of the Battle of Roncevalles' (*BC* 56), making a connection between Ivar and the Faroese tradition of ballad-dancing. Known in Faroese as *kvæðir*, the long heroic ballads (some with over a hundred verses) have been sung and danced on the islands since medieval times, and are still performed at celebrations such as *Ólavsøka*, the summer festival that accompanies the annual opening session of the *Løgtingið* (Wylie 1982: 44). The ballads played a vital role in keeping the Faroese language and ancient stories alive during the centuries of Danish political and cultural domination and remain an important aspect of Faroese national identity today. In the novel we are told that Ivar is one of only a few people to 'be entirely at home in the rambling ballad' (*BC* 58), which seems to suggest that it has become a fading cultural form by the time the novel is set; an implication that is emphasised when, almost immediately after he is set up as emblematic of traditional Faroese culture, Ivar is killed, 'his chest torn apart by machine gun fire' when the *Manuela* is attacked by an enemy aircraft, 'not bombing it, but strafing and setting it ablaze' (*BC* 109). Those lost on the *Manuela* are the first local victims of the war, and as the ship's captain, Ivar receives a lavish public funeral, orchestrated by the ship's owner, Max Opperman.

Six of the crew survive the attack on the *Manuela*, including Ivar's best friend, Frederik, and chapter 1, part II follows Frederik as he breaks the news of Ivar's death to Opperman and to the Berghammers. He starts with Opperman, who at first seems genuinely upset, exclaiming 'Oh Lord and God', and repeating the word 'dreadful' over and over again (*BC* 112). But Frederik observes a sudden change in his manner:

> [...] suddenly he got up. A smile was dawning around his eyes. He raised his head, suddenly adopted an upright, almost manly, stance, and held out his hand to Frederik. […] "Well. He died for his native land, Frederik," said Opperman, in a voice as though addressing an auditorium. "All you who sail go to war for a native land like real soldiers. And we who own ships, we risk everything and lose much money for common good. Yes, this is how

> men die and suffer throughout all world, in blood, sweat and tears…for victory of justice." He looked deep into Frederik's eyes and repeated: "Yes, for victory of justice in this dreadful war. […] Through suffering to Victory". (*BC* 112-113)

Like Mrs Shibbye, Opperman aligns the war effort with the risks of business, borrowing patriotic language and images which, once again, have the effect of conflating 'victory' with profit. Opperman's tone and body-language, imitating someone 'addressing an auditorium', indicate a realisation that the death of Ivar can be spun to suit his own interests; a performance that seems to pre-empt the spectacle to come. After seeing Opperman, Frederik begins the climb to Angelica Cottage, accompanied by Pastor Fleisch, who he has asked to help break the news to Ivar's family. On the way there, the Pastor, seemingly unaffected by Ivar's death, is keen to discuss 'markets and fish prices with Frederik' (*BC* 119). When they arrive, they find Opperman already at the cottage breaking the news to the Berghammer family, but before Opperman leaves, Frederik overhears him and Pastor Fleisch 'speaking in low voices' saying 'something about insurance' (*BC* 120), while Liva and Magdalena weep in the background. Pastor Fleisch, eventually fulfilling his duty, reads a passage from the bible and says a long prayer with the family, but, as with Opperman, there is an unmistakable hollowness to his performance, and throughout the chapter corporate interests continuously intrude on the tragedy of Ivar's death, jarring against Fredrik's narrative perspective as he mourns his best friend. The insidious combination of tragedy and profiteering comes into full force in Heinesen's representation of the funeral itself.

On the day of the funeral, the church, full to bursting with mourners, is decked out with black bows and flowers, with no expenses spared. Faroese hymns are sung in the church and poems referencing 'Viking blood' and the 'Nordic spirit' (*BC* 150) are read at the grave side. The newspaper editor Mr Skælling is responsible for writing the obituary and the narrative perspective therefore resides with him on the day of the funeral. To him, Ivar's death has come 'from a purely technical point of view at the right time […] for he was short of material' (*BC* 121), and despite his concerns that Ivar had recently 'attracted unfavourable attention' (*BC* 121) by getting in drunken fights, he writes a rhetorically dense obituary that mythologises Ivar and transforms him from 'Ivar Berghammer the individual' to 'the representative of all those brave and intrepid seamen who are risking their lives for their native land' (*BC* 126). It becomes clear that the funeral is a flamboyant display of nationalist and patriotic spectacle used to justify the continued need for men to risk their lives on the trading ships, revealing the real interests of the business owners, who not only use the event to make money, but also to mythologise death as heroic so that others will continue to sail for them. Against all the pomp and spectacle of the funeral, the Berghammers quietly mourn Ivar. In fact, they are hardly mentioned at all during the funeral itself, but afterwards,

'[a]ccording to old rural custom', they host a wake at Angelica Cottage, where a table is laid looking 'festive and beautiful, with a white tablecloth and lighted candles' (*BC* 157). In deliberate opposition to the church opulently clad in black, the simple beauty of the wake emphasises, once again, the Berghammers' role as custodians of traditional Faroese culture and customs, and positions their cultural nationalism against the nationalist spectacle of the public funeral. The result is a representation that simultaneously reveals bourgeois nationalism for the 'empty shell' it really is (Fanon 2001: 119), but in doing so, also seems to emphasise the potential of what can be described in Gramscian terms as the 'national-popular' (see Forgacs 2000: 368).

Writing in the early twentieth century, the time of Italy's 'transition to modernity' (Forgacs 2000: 363), Gramsci used the term 'national-popular' to describe the political and cultural potential of the Italian working classes. For Gramsci, culture played a vital role in socialist transformation, and the 'struggle for a new culture (that is, for a new humanism)' had to start from below and pass through a 'national stage' before it could take on an international dimension (see Forgacs 2000: 394). In his *Prison Notebooks* (1929- 1935), Gramsci observed an absence of popular literature in Italy, which he argued was the direct result of a historical gap between Italian intellectuals and the working classes, which meant that in the Italian context the word 'national' did not include the culture of the masses, but was an exclusively 'intellectual and bookish tradition' that failed to engage with popular reality in any meaningful way (see Forgacs 2000: 367). Gramsci argued that popular cultural forms, such as folklore, were important because they reflected 'the conditions of cultural life of the people' (see Forgacs 2000: 361), and the failure to incorporate these into a national culture, was what had hindered the political, cultural, and social development of Italy into a 'national political unit' (see Forgacs 2000: 368). In *The Black Cauldron*, the 'rural customs' and folk-cultural traditions associated with the Berghammers might thus be considered an example of a national-popular cultural nationalism, which is mobilised by Heinesen to challenge to the hegemonic nationalism of the local elite. The result is a dialectically complex representation of nationalism that can also be identified in the funeral of Jónas Hallgrímsson in *The Atom Station.*

In the novel, alongside the plan to "sell the country", there runs a parallel plot, devised by Pliers and the politicians, to distract the population from 'the thievery that really matters' (*AS* 41): the repatriation of the Icelandic Romantic poet Jónas Hallgrímsson's remains from Denmark for an elaborate public funeral in Iceland. Hallgrímsson, a natural scientist and poet, is the undisputed 'poetical icon of Icelandic nationalism', and, alongside his fellow contributors to the journal *Fjölnir*, he was hugely influential in laying the political and cultural foundations for the Icelandic independence movement in the early nineteenth century (Egilsson 2010: 158). In *The Atom Station,*

Ugla comes from the same rural valley as Hallgrímsson and their shared birth place means she feels a particular affinity with him:

> The Nation's Darling, the pride of all Iceland even though he was born in our forgotten valley, my valley, he who was the dearest friend of the nation's heart, the reborn master-smith of this golden language, the resurrector who, by wiping away our blindness, gave us what we had never seen before, the country's beauty, Icelandic Nature, and who sowed in the breast of posterity the secret sensitivity of the elf instead of heroism and saga while himself lived in loneliness and died uncomforted in a far metropolis, overpowered by the apathy of this degenerate nation which he had touched with the wand of life, crushed by the hostility of degraded men towards things concerning the spirit, and culture, and art […]. (*AS* 56-57)

The passage recalls Hallgrímsson's fate and the significant contributions he made to Icelandic literary culture, and the epithet, 'The Nation's Darling', presents him as a central figure of Icelandic cultural nationalism. Hallgrímsson died in Copenhagen in 1845 and the return of his bones from Denmark in 1946 was surrounded by scandal and intrigue. In *The Atom Station*, the plan to have his body returned is devised by Pliers, who claims to have made contact with Hallgrímsson after a number of séances hosted in Bui Árland's house. The character of Pliers is loosely based on Sigurjón Pétursson (1888-1955), a professional wrestler and industrialist with an interest in Icelandic culture and psychic research, who in the autumn of 1946 brought Jónas Hallgrímsson's bones back to Iceland, 'claiming that the poet himself had telepathically asked him to do so' (D'Amico 2015: 476). The strange historical episode hardly needs satirisation, but Laxness effectively moulds it to solidify his critique of the Icelandic elite in the novel.

After lengthy negotiations two crates eventually arrive in Reykjavík, supposedly containing Hallgrímsson's remains. One of the crates is addressed to the Prime Minister of Iceland, and the other to the Snorreda Wholesale Company, showing, once again, the inseparability of national politics from the corporate interests of the government. The crates are immediately stolen by the gods, Brilliantine and Benjamin the atom poet, who drive them north, to Ugla's valley, so that Hallgrímsson can be buried at the newly built church there. When Ugla and Her father inspect the crates, they notice the words '*Dansk Ler*' (*AS* 149) tarred on the side one of them, meaning "Danish clay", and when they open it, the crate really does just contain clay, not even 'Icelandic dirt' (*AS* 150) which, Ugla points out, could have had some symbolic value to the initiative. The second crate seems more promising, but is marked with 'foreign writing' (*AS* 150), and turns out, perhaps even more absurdly, to contain Portuguese sardines imported from America:

> the only fish which could scale the highest tariff walls in the world and yet be sold when ten years old at a thousand percent profit in the greatest fish country in the world, where even the dogs walk out and vomit at the mere mention of salmon. (*AS* 150)

With the content of the first crate Laxness is clearly signalling the history of Danish colonial rule, showing that despite Iceland's recent independence, the countries remain historically and culturally connected, with the embodiment of Icelandic cultural nationalism, Hallgrímsson, literally still buried in Copenhagen. According to the Warwick Research Collective, the second crate offers 'a sure sign of the commodity logic of the world market' (2015: 137) and can therefore be taken as indicative of the new imperialist threat to the Icelandic nation. Undeterred, the local pastor, who is supposed to lead the funeral, claims that it is irrelevant what the crates contain, for this 'is a symbolic consignment' (*AS* 150), and thus, like Ivar in *The Black Cauldron*, Hallgrímsson is transformed into a nationalist symbol. The pastor's wish to have Hallgrímsson buried in Eystridalur church is cut short when at the end of the chapter government representatives arrive to fetch the crates back to Reykjavík.

In the novel's final chapter, Ugla, having returned to Reykjavík at the same time as the crates, stumbles on an elaborate funeral:

> This was no small fry being buried judging by all the ceremonial, as far as I could see it was all the overlords of the country, whom I had learned to know by sight last year when I opened the door to them at night, who were now gathered again […]. This little group formed a circle round an exceedingly ornate coffin, which was carried by the pick of this *corps d'élite*, the Prime Minister and lead-grey man who published the paper. (*AS* 179)

We can assume that the funeral is Hallgrímsson's, but what Ugla finds strange is that there is no cortège following the coffin, 'no people, no bystanders, no mourners', and the people continue to go about their business in the street 'with complete indifference, without so much as a glance in the direction of this ceremony' (*AS* 179). The failure of the funeral to rouse the people seems to illustrate Ugla's suggestion a little earlier in the novel, that the 'Nation's darling' was never 'lost' to the Icelandic people, because in their minds he never died: '[t]hat's why we have never made a fuss about his so-called bones nor his lack of a headstone in Denmark. He dwells in the blue mountain peaks we can always see when the weather is fine' (*AS* 149). To Ugla, Hallgrímsson already has a symbolic value that cannot be so easily bent to serve the will of the politicians: as the poet who 'gave' the Icelandic people 'the country's beauty', Hallgrímsson so fundamentally shaped the national-popular imaginary that when the people look at the landscape around them, they see it through the lens of his poetic vision. In thus reclaiming him Ugla circumvents the politicians'

attempt to appropriate his national-popular value, and, along with the underwhelming funeral at the end of the novel, the strategic nationalism of the elite is unmasked for what it really is: a distraction to conceal the 'sale of the country' and the transfer of economic and political power into their own hands.

In different ways, both *The Atom Station* and *The Black Cauldron* illustrate the conflicts and contradictions of nationalism in the historical process of decolonisation, simultaneously highlighting the risks of bourgeois nationalism whilst emphasising the necessity for a nationalism that represents the 'moving consciousness of the whole of the people' (Fanon 2001: 165) in challenging the cultural and political hegemony of the national elite after independence. The result is a dialectical treatment of nationalism, also identifiable in Gramsci's concept of the 'national-popular' and Fanon's discussion of national consciousness in *The Wretched of the Earth*, which not only reveals the fundamental class struggle that attends postcolonial nation-building, but also shows the different and competing forms of nationalism in the peripheries and semi-peripheries to be historically combined. In "Spectral Nationality: The Living-on of the Postcolonial Nation in Neocolonial Globalization" Pheng Cheah makes a similar observation about the conflicting forms of nationalisms that arise in postcolonial contexts. Commenting initially on the 'vitalist ontology' (1999: 227) that pervades critical discourses on nationalism, juxtaposing the 'living national culture' (1999: 239) of the people against the nationalism of the state, 'an artificially bounded entity that seeks to impose stasis on the becoming of the people by diverting this dynamism in the service of dead capital' (1999: 235), Cheah suggests that in the postcolonial context this neat ontological opposition is disrupted, resulting in a 'mutual haunting between the nation and the state' (1999: 240). Using Derrida's notion of 'spectralization', which is 'the general process of paradoxical incorporation' (1999: 24), Cheah argues that

> we might see the postcolonial nation as a creature of life-death because, by virtue of its aporetic inscription within neocolonial globalization, the neocolonial state stands between the living nation-people and dead global capital, pulling on both even as it is pulled by both. (1999: 251)

Cheah challenges Derrida's anti-nationalism in the essay by suggesting that for postcolonial societies the state is a necessary 'prostheses' for the 'living national body', which means that the vitalist ontology, the clear distinction between life and death, is untenable in the postcolonial peripheries and semi-peripheries (1999: 239). With this in mind, the representations of funerals in *Iceland's Bell* and *The Black Cauldron* can be seen as more than just a critique of the empty nationalist spectacle of the local elite, but, in dealing with the division between 'living' and 'dead' forms of

nationalism, they illustrate the dialectical tension of nationalism in the peripheries. Cheah's analysis is incisive in that he considers postcolonial nation building in relation to the uneven globalisation of capitalism a set of historical processes that need to be considered in tandem to understand the contradictions of nationalism in the peripheries and semi-peripheries.

In *The Black Cauldron* and *The Atom Station* decolonisation is not just played out in national terms, but, as both novels show, increased independence, whether through home rule granted by occupying forces, or full political sovereignty, paradoxically leads to an increased dependence on global capitalism; a contradiction, akin to Anderson's 'double movement of integration and disintegration' (1992: 1-2), that is reflected in the complex engagement with nationalism in the novels. I want to conclude this section by proposing the term *peripheral nationalism* to describe the dialectical treatment of nationalism in *The Atom Station* and *The Black Cauldron*. In activating the world-systemic qualities of the word 'peripheral', I am intentionally redirecting it from its predominant association with the regional nationalisms that exist in conflict with a dominant nationalism, such as the Basque and Catalan regions of Spain (Dinas 2012), and instead, echoing Parry, I intend it to denote the contradictory forms of nationalism found in spaces that occupy a 'shared position of structural underdevelopment within an uneven and an unequal world system' (2009: 28-29). By reframing the study of nationalism in world-systemic terms, the idea of peripheral nationalism challenges the 'established post-1945 ideologeme of nationalism' (Lazarus 1999: 69) which has restricted the way texts such as *The Atom Station* and *The Black Cauldron* have been read and studied, and, in consciously drawing on Parry's definition of peripheral modernism, it suggests an immediate relationship between the dialectical treatment of nationalism in these works and their formal complexity.

It is clear, then, that for Laxness and Heinesen decolonisation is a process that brings 'the future of *capitalism* radically into question' (Lazarus 1999: 79), which results in both novels in a tension between local and global perspectives. In "Conjectures on World Literature" Moretti frames this tension between local and global, national and international perspectives in the form of a question. He asks, if '[t]he products of cultural history are always composite ones […] which is the dominant mechanism in their composition? The internal, or the external one? The nation or the world? (2000a: 68). He concludes the essay by proposing a 'division of labour […]: national literature, for people who see trees; world literature, for people who see waves' (2000a: 68), an analogy, which, although it rightly captures the methodological differences between national and world-literary study of texts, seems ultimately to suggest that these are discrete. From my reading of *The Black Cauldron* and *The Atom Station* in this chapter, it is clear that in the case of Laxness and Heinesen, neither nation nor world is dominant. Instead there exists a productive antagonism between the

two, whereby local (national) experiences of capitalist modernity are productively linked to the global capitalist system, in a continuous escalation from local to global, from national to international. In both novels, this process of escalation and de-escalation is further illustrated in the form of miniatures: Jens's carousel model in *The Black Cauldron* and the atom bomb in *The Atom Station*, which represent a condensed version of the dialectical complexity of the nation in the world-system that I have termed peripheral nationalism.

Atom Bombs and Carousels: The System in Miniature

In *The Black Cauldron*, Heinesen's critique of militarised capitalist modernity gradually intensifies following Ivar's funeral, and this coincides with a shift in narrative perspective to Jens Ferdinand, the typographer and caricaturist at the local newspaper. An alcoholic and an outspoken critic of the war, Jens is despised by many of the town's notable residents and he is the most obviously alienated character in the novel. Despite this, Heinesen privileges him with a special insight, 'the ability to see perspectives, to comprehend, to understand' (*BC* 252), that is quite different to that of any of the other characters in the novel. At the start of chapter five, a telegram arrives announcing that another trawler has been attacked off the coast of Iceland, this time with no survivors. The very next day, Mr Skælling reads out a list of proposed adverts that have been sent in to the newspaper for publication: they range from the deeply ironic '*Top quality life jackets!*', to 'Drown your sorrows and worries in coffee and cakes at the *Bells of Victory*', to the absurdly tragic 'mourning clothes for women and children, widow's veils, mourning decorations, huge selection' (*BC* 232), and together illustrate that even death and tragedy have now been commodified by the profiteering local business owners. The adverts are the final straw for Jens, who, tired of working for the '[w]armongers' with their 'devilish speculations' (*BC* 236), resigns from his job at the newspaper. He returns home and begins to drink, and the narrative soon transforms into a fragmented alcohol-induced monologue criticising the 'outbreak of war and the general will to sacrifice' (*BC* 238), including the 'Anglo-Saxon' (*BC* 239) occupying forces:

> […] this people of proud missionaries and dealers had gone out into the whole world to convert the heathen to God, whisky and capitalism. There they come, these pioneers of civilisation, everlastingly travelling and trading…traversing boundless oceans, endless deserts, poisonous jungles, icy Mountain passes…. Unflinching young and cruel, enveloped in tobacco and gunpowder smoke and early mornings. (*BC* 239)

Jens traces a direct line between military occupation in the Faroe Islands and the history of British colonialism, introducing an escalation in perspective from the local experience of war to a more

historically and geographically expansive critique of imperialism that will continue as the novel draws to a close.

Jens's monologue is disrupted when his sister Sigrun arrives with more bad news: their brother, Johan, has died of tuberculosis. Jens abruptly leaves the house and begins to wander the streets of Kingsport. When he reaches the harbour two destroyers and three badly damaged freighters arrive following yet another attack at sea, and he soon finds himself in the midst of a 'silent, oppressive flurry of activity' (*BC* 243). As he watches the dead and injured being transported from the ships to Kingsport's hospital, reality momentarily slips out of focus and Jens glimpses an otherworldly landscape in the turbulent sky above:

> For a moment a crystal white ray of sunshine awoke in the grey mass and turned the sky into a landscape of mountains and bluish ravines… the curtain was drawn aside to reveal a tempestuous Jupiter landscape of demented, cruel beauty. But the next moment the tumultuous vision was extinguished. It was nothing for human eyes, a vision reserved for gods and giants. (*BC* 243)

The landscape of his vision mirrors the fjords and fells of Kingsport, but is transformed by a 'demented, cruel beauty', that both reflects Jens's inner turmoil at the death of his brother, but also seems to offer a moment of sublime connection, not unlike that experienced by Peder Børresen in *The Good Hope* when he first encounters the Faroese landscape. This overwhelming sense of connection is, however, different from that established by the collective of narrators in the first half of the novel, for instead of the 'imagined linkage' of national community, here we see a connection between individual subjective experience and unexplainable cosmic forces.

Jens's 'tumultuous vision' is followed by a break in the narrative. It resumes with him inviting home Myklebust and Thygesen, a pair of Danish and Norwegian refugees, to see the carousel model he has built of Kingsport. Jens explains that the model was commissioned by Masa Hansen, and was supposed to be 'something with dancing fairies' (*BC* 246) to go in her shop window at Christmas, but instead he built a 'kind of puppet theatre or circus', 'an ingenious little machine, driven by clockwork'(*BC* 245):

> *The Black Cauldron* was written above the little cardboard proscenium, which was decorated with grinning satyr masks. But the piece being performed was anything but funny. The background represented a grey ocean, dotted with mines and periscopes, and the air above the horizon was plastered over with a formidable collection of aeroplanes. In the left foreground there was a quayside with a group of figures in party dress sitting around a

> table weighed down with bottles and glasses and small flags. And now a ship came sailing in, loaded with money bags and gold bullion, and it passed the bridge and the party-goers rose excitedly and waved hurrah with their arms. And the ship sailed on. (*BC* 245)

The scene is repeated again and again, and just when 'it is danger of becoming a little tedious' (*BC* 245), at the press of a button, the peaceful scenario is transformed: an explosion is heard, and the model ship disappears without trace. The party-goers on the quayside are 'replaced by a group of women and children, dressed in black, standing uneasily and raising their arms in despair' (*BC* 245) after which the model reverts back to the first act, with people cheering the ships on as they return to the harbour laden with gold. The cyclical combination of death and celebration can be taken as a condensed version of the novel's plot, reminding us, for instance, of Ivar's funeral, when there was barely a moment's pause before the wheels of profit began to turn once again. But the mechanised repetition of the scene, playing over and over again, also uncannily captures something of the abstract forces that determine the fate of Kingsport's residents: the war and the impersonal rhythms of the market, the figurative significance of which is extended when Myklebust comments that 'it symbolises the Cauldron here, eh? Or the North Sea? Or …well, I suppose the whole world, the entire present age, doesn't it?' (*BC* 246).

The model can be seen as acting out, in miniature, the transition from the collective 'social co-existence' of a *Gemeinschaft* (already beginning to fragment at the start of the novel), to a society of 'purely mechanical construction' (Tönnies 2001: 17-18); the completion of which is confirmed, when Myklebust and Thygesen notice the model, profoundly altered, on display in the window of Masa Hansen's shop at the end of the novel:

> The cardboard ship was lying fully laden at the quayside, and jumping jacks were happily waving their arms about. But the proscenium had gone, and the inscription *The Black Cauldron* had been erased. It had been replaced with some rather clumsily written words:
>
> THE SHIP IS LADEN WITH:
>
> Below which there was a moveable panel in which Masa Hansen at any time could blazon the goods she wanted to advertise. (*BC* 353-4)

With the carousel repurposed as an advert, its intended critique is subverted, which itself becomes a powerful illustration capitalism's violent 'thrust towards the commodification of everything' (Wallerstein 2003: 15). Jens's model thus also captures something of the reifying effects of capitalism; the process that transforms 'human relationships into an appearance of relationships between things' and 'renders society opaque' (Jameson 1980: 212). It serves as a condensed and intensified version of Heinesen's critique of capitalist modernity, simultaneously representing

Kingsport, the Faroe Islands, and the 'whole world', but also as the allegorical counterpart to Jens's earlier 'tumultuous' vision; a contracted and mechanised version of his moment of sublime that connects the feeling of cosmic connection to the abstract forces of global capitalism.

A similarly potent miniature can be identified in *The Atom Station*: the atom bomb. It is the plan to build a US military base at Keflavík that brings the threat of atomic warfare to Iceland, but it also instigates a shift in Iceland's systemic relation to the rest of the world, placing the island at the centre of an escalating conflict between east and west. The presence of the atom bomb can be felt throughout the novel and contained within its symbolic schema are a number of contradictions: its small size versus its potential for absolute destruction; its power to divide the world in conflict and unite it in total devastation; its ability to place Iceland in the centre of a global conflict and render it meaningless at once, all of which combine in an explosive dialectic that is played out over two successive conversations at the end of the novel. The first is between Ugla and Búi Árland, after her return to Reykjavík following the birth of her daughter, Guðrún, who was conceived out of wedlock with the self-conscious policeman. Leaving her daughter in the north until she is settled, Ugla arrives once again alone and without resources in the capital. She swallows her pride and calls Árland, who has promised himself to Ugla and her child, should she choose him. Once they are together again, it dawns on Ugla how different they are, she 'a penniless girl from the north', and he 'a Fairy-tale personified' (*AS* 160-161), but Árland insists there is a place they could overcome their differences and be happy:

> "Now you must see that Patagonia is not such a bad idea after all," he said.
>
> "Does any Patagonia exist?"
>
> "I shall show it to you on the map."
>
> "Isn't it some barbarian Land?" I asked.
>
> "Soon the whole world will be one vast barbarian land."
>
> "And there was I, thinking that the world civilisation was just beginning," I said. "I thought we were beginning to be people."
>
> "The attempt seems to have failed miserably," he said. "No one any longer imagines for a moment that it is possible to save capitalism, never mind resurrect it; not even with Poor Law Relief from America. Barbarism is at the door."
>
> "Is communism barbarism then?"

> "That is not what I said," he replied. "On the other hand, Capitalism will drag world civilisation down with it to the depths when it falls."
>
> "And Iceland too?" I asked.
>
> He said, "There exist land and sea, divided between east and west: and the atom bomb."
>
> "Has Iceland then been abandoned to the atomic war?" I asked.
>
> Suddenly he rose to his feet, turned away and walked over to the wireless, and switched off some Spaniard who was making a speech on the other side of the world. "The conflict is between two fundamentals," he said. "The battlefield covers all seas, all skies; and particularly our innermost consciousness. The whole world is one atom station". (*AS* 163)

As in *The Black Cauldron*, in this final conversation between Ugla and Búi Árland there is an escalation in perspective, from the local "here and now" to 'the whole world', a movement instigated by the subject of the atom bomb. At first Patagonia is posed as a utopia; a classless space that Ugla and Árland can inhabit as equals, but the fantasy of such a place is soon abandoned when it becomes clear that there is nowhere that the destructive power of atomic warfare would not reach. Furthermore, in the 'barbaric' world after nuclear apocalypse there would be no need for Patagonia, for there would be no class distinctions, just as there would be no conflict between communism and capitalism, between east and west. Instead, the whole world would be 'one atom station', united in total destruction. The conversation concludes with the realisation that Árland's power as a member of the political elite, which is 'all the power to be had in a little country' (*AS* 161) is meaningless against the destructive force of the bomb.

At the end of the chapter, Árland vows to renounce his wealth and position, and to dedicate himself to Ugla: '[y]ou are my truth: my life's truth. That is why I offer you everything a man can offer a woman' (*AS* 162). After spending the night together, Ugla wakes in the early hours of the morning, and leaves Árland without explanation. Walking the empty streets of Reykjavik, for the first time in the novel she experiences the alienating effects of urban modernity:

> The street lights took the place of stars, except that they brought no message from the depths of the heavens; this was a world without depths, and I was alone – so alone that even that other persona of the self, the one which stirs shame and regret, had abandoned me; I was dull, and everything was flat: a person without context or, to be more exact, a woman without existence. (*AS* 164)

If Ugla's confesses at the start of the novel to feeling the cognitive dissonance associated with modern urbanity – 'this new world which in a single day had made by previous life a dim memory' (*AS* 7) – then by the end of the novel she comes face to face with the full social and psychological fragmentation of capitalist modernity: not only has the natural and spiritual light of the 'stars' and 'heavens' been replaced by man-made streetlights devoid of meaning, but she feels a sense of psychological estrangement, a momentary split in her psyche that enables her to reflect on her subconscious mind, that 'other persona of the self' which 'stirs shame and regret'. Returning to the square where Árland picked her up the day before, she observes her surroundings with a sense of utter detachment. Even though they were once familiar to her: 'in reality I did not recognise anything anymore, except my wooden case' (*AS* 126). She is surprised when a 'disembodied voice' strikes up a conversation with her, until she looks up and recognises her 'good friend and fellow pupil of the previous winter, the unselfconscious policeman' (*AS* 165).

The presence of the policeman restores Ugla's sense of self, and in the chapter that follows, titled "Before and After Atomic War", Ugla and the policeman return to the organist's cottage. When the policeman expresses his disappointment at the country's political situation, the organist, ever the dialectician, asks him, "'[d]on't you want to have any heroes?' (*AS* 169), and goes on to suggest that the 'sale of the country' is exactly the kind of thing the heroes of the sagas would have done, for a hero is a 'man who risks everything for his cause, even his good name if his cause is to be defeated' (*AS* 170):[43]

> "Goebbels murdered his six children and his wife before committing suicide, rather than yield to the East," said the organist. "It is a fallacy to think that heroism is in any way related to the cause being fought for. We Icelanders, who have the greatest heroic literature in the world, ought to know what a hero is; the Jómsvikings[44] are our men, they made obscene remarks while they were being beheaded. We do not doubt that in the Fascist armies there were proportionately as many heroes as the Allied armies. The cause makes no difference to heroism. For myself, I believe that the Icelandic nation has gained a few heroes in the last few days. (*AS* 170)

[43] In the lead up to the 2008 economic crisis the reference to Vikings resurfaced in Icelandic public discourse, in relation to 'the so-called *útrásarvíkingar* (expansion Vikings). These new Vikings were celebrated but controversial figures well into the first decade of the new millennium. As businessmen they acted on a scene of a relatively newfound economic optimism at a time when Iceland was taking part in increased exchange with the globalized world. However, the daring investments, extravagant life styles and doubtful liquidity of the *útrásarvíkingar* later linked them to the national economic collapse in the autumn of 2008'. (Nielsen-Gremaud 2012: 96).

[44] A ferocious band of Vikings who according to the Jómsvíkinga Saga founded the Baltic city of Jómsborg (thought to be near the present-day city of Wolin in Poland).

After the battle to preserve the country's independence, the countless protests and discussions throughout the novel about what it means to the 'sell the country', the organist's comments about heroism challenge the very foundations of Icelandic national identity. He not only likens Iceland's politicians and business owners to the ruthless heroes of the sagas but also to the political leaders of Nazi Germany, and in doing shows just how fine the line between tyranny and heroism is, if one takes a longer historical perspective.

It is also by expanding the temporal horizon further, into the distant future, that the organist is able to see the positive potential in the absolute destruction of the atom bomb:

> It may well be that a sizeable portion of the earth's population will die in the war for a more expedient community pattern. It may well be that cities of the world will have to be laid to waste before this pattern is found. But when it is found, a new golden age will arise for mankind. (*AS* 171)

The organist illustrates that when thinking in epochal terms, 'Iceland does not matter very much', nor are nations 'very important on the whole', and he reassures Ugla and the policeman that '[t]he nuclear bomb wipes out cities but not geography' and that 'Iceland will continue to exist' (*AS* 171-172). Where for Búi Árland the idea of the atom bomb forced him to extend his thinking to incorporate 'the whole world', one united in total destruction, for the organists it triggers an expansion in temporal perspective, allowing him to see beyond the destruction of atomic warfare, to a 'new golden age […] for mankind'. In each case, by exploding social, geopolitical, and historical distinctions, the categories whereby humanity attempts to organise and make sense of the immense complexity of the world, the atom bomb provides a 'forcible reopening of access to a sense of society as a Totality' (Jameson 1980: 212). Like Jens's carousel, the figurative power of the atom bomb resides in its ability to condense a 'system so vast that it cannot be encompassed by the natural and historically developed categories of perception with which human beings normally orient themselves' (Jameson 1995b: 2), and both miniatures might therefore be seen as examples of Jameson's geopolitical aesthetic, or perhaps more adequately as moments of geopolitical sublime, when a sense of the underlying systemic reality of capitalist modernity is fleetingly grasped.

The atom bomb and the carousel condense and contain the dialectical complexity of the nation in the world-capitalist system, but there is another form of miniaturisation that takes place in both novels, which allows us to make some final comments about the overall meanings of these texts: the national allegorical significance of the novels' protagonists, Liva and Ugla. Throughout *The Black Cauldron* Liva holds a point of centrality in the multi-perspectival narrative structure, not so

much through her own narrative perspective, which is relatively minimal, but through her presence in the narratives of almost all the other characters. Her allegorical significance is further encoded in her name, Liva, recalling the Danish word for life (*liv*), and her positive presence in the collective consciousness of the novel's narrators suggests she can be taken to represent the 'living expression of the nation' (Fanon 2001: 165), as directly opposed to the 'dead' nationalism of the elite. I have already shown that the transition from *Gemeinschaft* to *Gesellschaft* is represented in the transformation of Jens's carousel, but it is also encoded in the gradual fragmentation of the novel's collective structure, which begins after Ivar's funeral. As the novel draws to an end, tragedy and death escalate: after the death of his brother, Jens commits suicide by throwing himself into the ocean. In a state of shock and trauma at the death of both Jens and Johan, Liva seeks comfort in her religion, but is rejected by Simon, and in a daze finds herself in Opperman's offices. Opperman, realising her vulnerability, plies her with alcohol until she loses consciousness, and then rapes her. She never recovers, and alongside Simon, she spends the rest of her days in the madhouse, a victim, it seems, both of the 'psychic deformation […] caused by the evolution of capitalism' (Lukács 1962: 156), and of the failure of the novel's collective of narrators to save her. By the end of the novel, with the perspectives of so many of the central narrators truncated, there is no one left to challenge the selfish and exploitative elite, and Opperman not only goes unpunished for Liva's rape, but manages to raise his standing in the local community with another well-timed charitable donation. The novel thus ends where it began, with Ole the postman delivering the local newspaper and the name of Opperman on everyone's lips:

> It was Opperman's day. His name in huge letters adorned the front page of The News, and old Ole the Post nodded as he recognised the round O being outlined on everyone's lips and in their sensation rounded eyes. "Op-op- Opperman," he chanted good-naturedly, and as he went on his newspaper round he turned it into a little verse:
>
> Op, op, Opperman,
>
> Now he really, really can. (*BC* 359)

As the residents of Kingsport uncannily chant Opperman's name in unison, the novel ends with a forceful reassertion of connection, but one without a communal element, constructed as it is entirely through the mechanistic social order of capitalism. It is ultimately a pessimistic ending, but one which nonetheless contains a warning: that the future of the Faroe Islands will be bleak if the

relentless social and psychic fragmentation caused by global capitalism is not countered by the national community.[45]

The end of *The Atom Station* paints a different picture. Ugla's *Bildung* is disrupted in the second half of the novel when she falls pregnant out of wedlock and must return to her parental home in shame to give birth to her daughter. As we shall see, it is her experience of motherhood, or more precisely of being a single mother, that ultimately shapes the outcome of her *Bildung.* In a piece on Henrik Pontoppidan's *Bildungsroman Lykke Per* (1898-1904)[46] for the *London Review of Books*, Jameson commented on the fact that protagonists of the nineteenth-century *Bildungsroman* were almost exclusively all young men, and he makes the suggestion that the novel of adultery' was 'women's compensation for their exclusion from the Bildungsroman' (2011). Jameson argues that as opposed to the narrative of success common to the *Bildungsroman*, novels of adultery, such as *Madame Bovary* (1857) by Gustave Flaubert and Leo Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* (1977), offered an alternative and rich 'raw material' because they were stories of failure. Unlike Tolstoy's Anna and Flaubert's Emma, in *The Atom Station* Ugla rejects proposals of marriage from Búi Árland and the self-conscious policeman, despite the scandal of being a single mother, and is instead determined to make something of herself:

> "I want to become a person."
>
> "What do you mean, a person?"
>
> "Neither an unpaid bondwoman like the wives of the poor, nor a bought madam like the wives of the rich; nor the prisoner of a child which society has disowned. A person amongst persons. I know it's laughable, contemptible, disgraceful and revolutionary that a woman should not wish to be some sort of slave or harlot; but that's the way I'm made". (*AS* 157)

Like *The Black Cauldron*, *The Atom Station* ends with an echo of its beginning: Ugla's declaration 'I am people' (*AS* 3) at the start of the novel. The fact that by the end of the novel she has realised that she is not yet 'a person', is not only evidence of the alienating effect of capitalist modernity but also the culmination of her *Bildung:* the realisation that society must change if she is to live a truly 'independent' life. By rejecting marriage, and thereby the possibility of adultery, Ugla refuses to be tragic like the adulterous protagonists of the nineteenth-century novels, and instead her

[45] The pessimistic ending might also be considered in relation to the disappointing outcome of the Faroese independence referendum in 1946, just three years before the novel was written, when the people voted in favour of independence, but were 'betrayed' by politicians who negotiated to remain within the Kingdom of Denmark.
[46] The novel was translated into English from Danish by Naomi Lebowitz in 2010, with the title *Lucky Per.*

declaration of independence paves the way for a different kind of *Bildungsroman*, one which transcends the traditional narratives of success or failure by aligning personal development with social transformation. If the *Bildungsroman* can be read allegorically as the 'coincidence' of the nation's 'collective destiny with that of the individual' (Jameson 2011), then Ugla's *Bildung,* culminating in her assertion to 'become a person', could represent the basis for an authentic nationalism, one that would lead the nation to true independence instead of merely serving as 'the tool of capitalism' (Fanon 2001: 120). In *The Atom Station,* independence thus becomes an expanded conceptual category, encompassing more than just national sovereignty; it is a process of national becoming, which must be realised at an individual as well as a national-collective level.[47]

Conclusion:

In different ways both *The Atom Station* and *The Black Cauldron* point to the national community and national culture as a means to combat the alienating and reifying effects of rapid modernisation and capitalist development, and despite Laxness's and Heinesen's critiques of bourgeois nationalism, in both texts national culture still offers the possibility of an authentic means of belonging and, more specifically, the '*national* project' still has

> the capacity to become the vehicle - the means of articulation - of a *social(ist)* demand which extends beyond decolonization in the merely technical sense, and which calls for a fundamental transformation rather than a mere restructuring of the prevailing social order. (Lazarus 1999: 79)

The idea of peripheral nationalism, then, by forcing us to consider nationalism in world-systemic terms, repositions the nation and national culture as a possible point of resistance, both against the violent forces of cultural homogenisation social and psychological fragmentation of global capitalist modernity. Following Cheah's reinterpretation of Derrida's 'spectrality', peripheral nationalism is in this sense both a 'specter of global capital', but also 'a specter that haunts global capital, for it is the undecidable neuralgic point within the global capitalist system that refuses to be exorcised' (Cheah 1999: 252).

In the following two chapters I shift my perspective to Europe's south eastern margin, to Turkey, in order to extend and further my analysis of semi-peripheral literature. I start by comparing the representation of Istanbul in the autobiographical novel *Dear Shameless Death* by Latife Tekin and

[47] The connection between personal and national development is also present in Fanon's "Pitfalls of National Consciousness". In her discussion of the different translations of *The Wretched of the Earth,* Kathryn Batchelor highlights that central to Fanon's argument is his suggestion that 'it is through the process of fighting for the nation that the individual develops, overcoming alienation and becoming himself in the truest sense' (2017: 47).

Orhan Pamuk's memoir *Istanbul: Memories of a City*, and I then proceed in the final chapter to explore the representation of the semi-peripheral borderscape in Pamuk's *Snow* and Tekin's *Swords of Ice*. Across the two chapters I suggest that the city and the border can be considered spaces of concentrated uneveness, which give further insight into the disjunctive character of capitalist development and nationalism in the semi-periphery. I show that despite the geographical, generic, and chronological differences, these texts respond formally and thematically to the situation of semi-peripherality in ways not unlike those identified in Laxness's and Heinesen's earlier novels, which allows me to make some broader conclusions about how the intensified uneveness of the semi-periphery is registered and encoded in its literature.

3. The Semi-Peripheral City: Orhan Pamuk's *Istanbul* and Latife Tekin's *Dear Shameless Death*

Like Iceland and the Faroe Islands, Turkey underwent a period of rapid modernisation in the twentieth century. However, unlike in the North Atlantic, the founding of the Republic of Turkey in 1923 came about after decades of decline in the Ottoman Empire, marked by military defeats and loss of territory in North Africa, the Middle East, and Eastern Europe throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The city of Istanbul also underwent a 'process of peripheralization' (Eldem 1999b: 139) at this time, the result of both a new configuration of power within the Ottoman Empire and its gradual 'incorporation into and consequent dependency on the world-capitalist system' (Eldem 1999b: 139). As it transitioned from a position of imperial centrality to one of semi-peripherality within the global capitalist system, Istanbul declined both in terms of its population size and its political and economic significance, and it was eventually replaced as capital city in 1920 by the Anatolian city of Ankara. Latife Tekin's *Dear Shameless Death* (1983) and Orhan Pamuk's *Istanbul: Memories of a City* (2005) both explore Istanbul in relation to this history of decline and peripheralisation, and as self-narratives, the first an autobiographical novel and the latter a memoir, they depict the city's complex history and urban landscape through childhood memories and personal experiences. By comparing Tekin's and Pamuk's representation of Istanbul, this chapter will consider the ways in which memory interacts with fictional and historical narratives to form an aesthetics of urban semi-peripherality, which attests not only to Istanbul's uneveness but also to the 'asymmetric relations' (Akçan 2006: 42) between Turkey and core Europe.

Orhan Pamuk's *Istanbul* (*I*) is at once a history and guide to the city and the author's memoir of growing up there in the 1950s and 1960s. Pamuk recalls that as a child he 'had no sense of living in a great world capital but rather in a poor provincial city' (*I* 221), and throughout *Istanbul* he examines how Turkey's history of decline has shaped him and the city. In the memoir, Pamuk explores Istanbul's layered past through literary and artistic portrayals of the city by artists such as the French painter and architect Antoine Ignace Melling (1763-1831), the French orientalist writers Gustave Flaubert (1821-1880), Gérard de Nerval (1808-1855) and Théophile Gautier (1811-1872),[48] and four Istanbullu writers: the poet Yaha Kemal (1884-1958), the memoirist Abdülhak Şinasi Hisar (1887-1963), the creator of T*he Istanbul Encyclopaedia*, Reşat Ekrem Koçu, and the novelist Ahmet Hamdi Tanpinar (1901-1962). However, at the heart of his memoir is the idea of

[48] Flaubert, Nerval and Gautier are all mentioned in Edward Said's *Orientalism*.

hüzün, a 'communal ideology' (*I* 290) based on a shared feeling of melancholy arising out of the city's history of decline and peripheralisation:

> *Hüzün* teaches endurance in times of poverty and deprivation, it also encourages us to read life and the history of the city in reverse. It allows the people of Istanbul to think of defeat and poverty not as a historical endpoint, but as an honourable beginning fixed long before they were born. (*I* 94)

Pamuk's nuanced engagement with the memoir form is closely tied to his notion of *hüzün,* and throughout *Istanbul,* he toys with the relationship between public and private history and the causality of historical development, as he intertwines his own fate with the fate of the city. The memoir is interspersed with black and white photographs of Pamuk's family, mostly taken by his father, as well as numerous pictures of the city by photojournalists Ara Güler, Selahattin Giz, and Halmi Şahenk, amongst others, resulting in an evocative and visual account of Istanbul that draws on nineteenth and twentieth century Ottoman, Turkish, and European art and literature.

Dear Shameless Death (*DSD*) by Latife Tekin is similarly concerned with exploring a collective experience: the migration of a village community to Istanbul, and, like Pamuk, Tekin incorporates autobiographical details into her representation of the city. The novel is the first instalment in a trilogy that depicts the journey and settlement of poor rural migrants from Anatolian villages to cities such as Ankara and Istanbul in the 1960s and 1970s (Paker 2011).[49] The story centres on a young girl called Dirmit and her family, consisting of her father Huvat, mother Atiye, sister Nuğber, and brothers Halit, Seyit and Mahmut, and mirrors Tekin's own childhood and adolescence. The first part of the novel is set in the fictional village of Alacüvek, later renamed Akçalı, where Huvat occupies a place of importance in the local community. Huvat works as a road builder and contractor in the city, and the stories and objects he brings back with him introduce the village to an urban modernity that seems strange and otherworldly. Huvat's tales of the city eventually inspire over half of the villagers to migrate, and the second half of the novel deals with the attempts by Dirmit and her family to adapt to life in the city and the struggles of her father and brothers to earn a living in the competitive labour market of Istanbul. Like Pamuk, Tekin is concerned with how a shared experience leads to the formation of individual and collective identities, but her engagement with the past in *Dear Shameless Death* does not amount to an official history of Istanbul. Instead, she explores how the songs, games and belief systems of village-life

[49] *Dear Shameless Death* (2001 [1983]), *Berji Kristin: Tales of the Garbage Hills* (1996 [1984]), and *Swords of Ice* (2007 [1989]).

are transformed by the experience of rural-urban migration, and how the villagers, in turn, imbue Istanbul's urban landscape with new significance as they make the city their home.

To understand the complex cityscape that the two texts map between them, the fate of Istanbul during the era of post-imperial nation-building must be considered. The founding of the Republic of Turkey in 1923 was accompanied by an aggressive modernisation programme, which sought to construct a secular and western nation-state with a homogenous Turkish population and national identity.[50] As well as enforcing a series of wide-reaching reforms, including the abolition of the caliphate and the Latinisation of the Turkish alphabet, the process of "Turkification" fostered a new set of dominant values that favoured the Turkish majority, and led to the forced displacement and persecution of the country's ethnic and religious minorities. In *Istanbul* Pamuk describes the impact of Turkification on the city. Where once a diverse range of languages were spoken, including 'Turkish, Greek, Armenian, Italian, French and English,'

> [a]fter the founding of the Republic and the violent rise of Turkification, after the state imposed sanctions on minorities – measures that some might describe as the final stage of city's 'conquest' and others as ethnic cleansing – most of these languages disappeared. I witnessed this cultural cleansing as a child, for whenever anyone spoke Greek or Armenian too loudly in the street (you seldom heard Kurds advertising themselves in public during this period) someone would cry out, 'Citizens, please speak Turkish!' You saw signs everywhere saying the same thing. (*I* 215-16)

The 'forcible transition' (Ahmet 2013: 245) from the multicultural Ottoman Empire to a culturally homogenous and monolingual nation-state has not been without conflict, and the boundaries that enclose the Turkish Republic and define Turkish national identity continue to be disputed. Perhaps the most prominent of such conflicts has been with the Kurdish population who form the majority in Eastern Anatolia but whose cultural identity, language, and existence have been violently repressed by the Turkish state. Furthermore, the secularist ideals that were so fundamental to the Kemalist national movement,[51] have increasingly been challenged by the rising support for political Islam, which has sought to reclaim a space for religion in national discourse and public life (Çinar 2001). However, the violent response by the Turkish state to those who challenge its founding ideals 'is rarely, if ever, recognized in the standard histories' (Karavelı 2018: 13) and there is a tendency instead to gloss over the conflicts and crises of post-imperial nation-building in favour

[50] It was preceded by the Young Turk nationalist movement which succeeded in ending absolutist Ottoman rule in 1908 and restoring the 1878 Constitution, but also initiated a programme of forced displacement and extermination of ethnic and religious minorities that culminated in the Armenian genocide in 1915 (Schaller and Zimmerer 2008).
[51] Named after the founder and first president of the Turkish Republic, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (1881- 1938)

of historical narratives that emphasise the Ottoman Empire's cosmopolitan character, and Istanbul's cultural and historical 'uniqueness and peculiarity' as a city 'straddling West and East' (Keyman 2018: xi).

In his analysis of the 'peripheralization' of Istanbul, for example, the historian Edhem Eldem continuously asserts 'the "uniqueness" of Istanbul's role within a global perspective of the Ottoman Empire' (1999b: 139), and although he admits the narrative of 'peripheralization' is indebted to 'the Wallersteinian model' of world-systems analysis (1999b: 139), Eldem argues that the historical complexity of Istanbul, both as a port-city and as a former imperial capital 'transcends the material world of trade and exchange' (1999b: 137) and therefore cannot be reduced 'to a set of purely economic determinants' (1999b: 139). It is instead, he suggests, best defined in terms of "contact,"

> between cultures and ethnicities, conflicts between political goals and economic interests, mixtures between creeds and mentalities, equilibria between opposing tendencies and, most of all, a constant process of brokerage and mediation between actual or potential rival forces (East and West, center and periphery, Islam and Christianity, state and society, modernity and tradition, the elite and the masses, Empire and Republic). Istanbul, in that sense, was and is no ordinary city and cannot be reduced to any ordinary function. No wonder therefore that it should constantly have developed into a myth, a symbol, even if this symbol should often appear to be quite removed from reality. (1999: 138)

His description of the city in terms of 'contact' between 'East and West, center and periphery, Islam and Christianity, state and society, modernity and tradition, the elite and the masses' is, problematic in that it smooths over the uneven distribution of power between these 'rival groups' and thereby underemphasises the violence entailed in the process of 'brokerage and mediation' he describes. In contrast, I see the particular combination of contradictors, which Eldem suggests are 'unique' to Istanbul, as directly related to Istanbul's transition from a position of imperial centrality, to a city in decline, which, as opposed to a state of equilibrium, has given rise to the city's historical complexity and its pronounced unevenness. To avoid falling into the trap of exceptionalist thinking, as Eldem does, what should be emphasised, once again, is the 'singularity and global simultaneity' (WReC 2015: 14) of capitalist modernity, and, more importantly, its irreducible local specificity.[52] From this perspective Istanbul is not unique in the terms laid out by Eldem, but, like Iceland and the Faroe Islands, it occupies the contradictory space of the semi-periphery; a situation

[52] Harry Harootunian also reminds us that 'uneveness is not a developmental stage that is eventually to be overcome but a principal condition that capitalism must constantly produce and reproduce' (Harootunian 2005: 51).

of being at once 'a core country for some peripheral areas' and 'a peripheral zone for core countries' (Wallerstein 1976: 463), making it a valuable case to expand the comparative scope of this study.

Urban theorists have long suggested that cities play an important role in the operation and expansion of the capitalist mode of production. David Harvey, for instance, has suggested that from their very inception cities have played an active role in stabilising the conditions for capital accumulation by absorbing the surplus product that is perpetually produced in capitalism's search for surplus value, meaning cities have played a central role in the 'ascendance, consolidation and geographical extension' of capitalism (Rossi 2017: 80). However, Harvey also highlights the radical potential of the city as a site for emancipatory politics and anti-capitalist struggle. This is at the heart of his redeployment of Henri Lefebvre's notion of 'the right to the city', which he suggests is

> far more than a right of individual or group access to the resources that the city embodies: it is a right to change and reinvent the city more after our hearts' desire. It is, moreover, a collective rather than an individual right, since reinventing the city inevitably depends upon the exercise of a collective power over the processes of urbanization. (2013: 4)

Harvey argues that the process of capitalist urbanisation in the second half of the twentieth century has almost completely dispossessed the urban masses of any right to the city, and that to reclaim this right it is vital to democratise the control of the production and use of the surplus. In this chapter I therefore consider the representation of Istanbul both in in terms of how Tekin and Pamuk engage with capitalist urbanisation as a profoundly uneven global process, but also the ways in which each text represents the city as a radical space for articulating alternative forms of collectivity and belonging, which in different ways attempt to counter the profound uneveness of the semi-peripheral city.

I start by discussing Rosa Luxemburg's essay on "Social Democracy and the National Struggles in Turkey", in which she outlines some key aspects of Turkey's imperial 'disintegration' (2003a: 40) that allow me to situate *Istanbul* and *Dear Shameless Death* as representations of semi-peripheral spaces and to make some initial comparisons between the two texts. I then turn to Pamuk's and Tekin's representation of Istanbul. Notably, both authors make use of the self-narrative form to articulate alternative 'forms of belonging' (Lazarus 2011c: 133): the feeling of *hüzün* in Pamuk's memoir, and the village collective known as *hemşehrilik* in *Dear Shameless Death*, which can in different ways be taken as responses to the violence entailed in the process of post-imperial nation-building. Across the two sections, I draw on Laura Ann Stoler's concept of 'ruination' (2008: 194)

as a way of thinking about how the history of imperial decline is inscribed in the physical, social and affective landscapes of the city as well as in the form and structure of the texts. In the final section, I explore the narrative function of memory with reference to Walter Benjamin's essay "A Berlin Chronicle" and show that in both texts memory serves a mapping function that challenges the 'persistent segmentation and proliferation of multiple spaces and temporalities' (Harootunian 2005: 45) that congregate in the urban semi-periphery. I argue that like Laxness's and Heinesen's earlier novels, *Dear Shameless Death* and *Istanbul* are shaped by the conflicts and contradictions of rapid capitalist development and that the instability of the urban modernity it engenders is encoded in the different registers of uneveness identifiable across the two texts.

Uneven Development and 'the carcass of Turkey'

As in *The Atom Station* and *The Good Hope*, in *Istanbul* and *Dear Shameless Death* Pamuk and Tekin illustrate the conflicts and contradictions of nationalism. However, unlike the relatively homogenous populations of the North Atlantic islands, the Ottoman Empire was comprised of several different religious and ethnic communities, which gave rise to different and competing nationalisms in the nineteenth century as the Ottoman Empire began to decline and fragment. Kader Konuk has emphasised that unlike national movements elsewhere in the twentieth century 'Turkey as a nation state did *not* emerge from a struggle against European colonization' but as 'the result of the prolonged decline of the Ottoman Empire' (2011: 255). She explains that Turkish nationalism arose during the so-called Tanzimat era in the mid-nineteenth century when a radical reorganisation and centralisation of the Ottoman Empire took place. Inspired by 'Western European notions of progress' (2011: 255-6), the reforms created a racial and social hierarchy that prioritised the Muslim-Ottoman population and eroded 'the autonomy of the empire's religious and ethnic minorities' (2011: 255). This resulted in the rise of national movements and calls for independence in the Christian provinces which accelerated the fragmentation of the Ottoman Empire. In her 1896 essay "Social Democracy and the National Struggles in Turkey,"[53] Rosa Luxemburg explores the 'deeper-lying material causes' (2003a: 38) of these national movements, and in doing so, outlines some key features of Turkey's uneven development and transition from a position of imperial centrality to the semi-peripheries of capitalism.

Luxemburg starts her essay by challenging the portrayal of the Ottoman Empire as a cosmopolitan 'paradise' (2003a: 38) where for hundreds of years people of different nationalities coexisted

[53] The essay was originally published in 1896, in the *Sächsische Arbeiter-Zeitung*, the German Social Democratic paper in Dresden, but was reprinted in a 2003 special issue of *Revolutionary History* on "The Balkan Socialist Tradition: Balkan Socialism and the Balkan Federation, 1871–1915".

peacefully, a perspective she suggests is 'based on extensive ignorance of the conditions' in the region (2003a: 38). Grounded in the history of 'real social development' rather than the 'coffee-house politics' of diplomats (2003a: 46), Luxemburg's analysis instead reveals the violence entailed in Turkey's integration into the capitalist economy. She suggests that the unstable political situation in the Ottoman provinces at the turn of the century was directly linked to the political and economic restructuring of the Ottoman Empire which took place in the mid-nineteenth century, when the feudal-style Ottoman government was replaced by a centralised bureaucracy and a standing army and new financial system were introduced. This was achieved through a huge increase in public taxation, which led to 'a terrible deterioration in the material conditions of the people' (2003a:39). But what made these conditions 'particularly unbearable', 'was a quite modern feature which had become involved in the situation — namely, *insecurity*: the irregular tax system, the fluctuating relations of land ownership, but above all the *money economy*' (2003a: 40).

Luxemburg emphasises that because a 'material base for the money economy […] had not grown in parallel with the forms of government and financial taxes associated with it' (2003a: 40) the transition to capitalism in Turkey was incomplete, which led to internal decline: to 'bankruptcy in the capital', as the treasury failed to repay foreign loans, and 'bankruptcy in the villagers', as a deficit arose in the peasant economy, resulting in 'a strange mixture of modern and medieval principles' (2003a:39) and a paradoxical situation in which

> [t]he basis of the existence of Turkish despotism is being undermined. But the basis for its development into a modern state is not being created. So it must perish, not as a form of government, but as a state, not through class struggle, but through the struggles of nationalities. And what is being created here is not a regenerated Turkey, but a series of new states, carved out of the carcass of Turkey. (2003a: 42)

Luxemburg argues that the national struggles taking place in the Ottoman provinces at the time could only be understood in the context of this unstable process of decline and 'disintegration' (2003a: 40), and that because the basic preconditions for establishing a bourgeois order were not in place – 'security of persons and property, […] formal equality before the law, a civil law separate from religious law, modern means of communication, etc.' (2003a: 40) –each religious and national group sought 'higher social development in autonomous existence' (2003a: 41). The national struggles therefore took the place of class struggle.

Significantly, this seems at odds with the 'hostility to nationalism' (Parry 2018: 59) generally associated with Luxemburg's writings. In her foreword to the anthology *The Polish Question and the Socialist Movement,* for instance, Luxemburg describes the Polish national movement as a 'bourgeois

utopian fantasy […] capable only of interfering with the class struggle of the proletariat and diverting it from its path' (1976: 85) and argues that the working-class movement is the only way to attain 'freedom in political life and in our national culture' (1976: 97). In "Social Democracy and the National Struggles in Turkey," however, she suggests that

> Social Democracy always stands on the side of aspirations for freedom. The Christian nations, in this case the Armenians, want to liberate themselves from the yoke of Turkish rule, and Social Democracy must declare itself unreservedly in support of their cause. (2003a: 42)

As opposed to an outright 'hostility to nationalism', for Luxemburg national movements thus seem to have the potential both to fragment and impede the working-class movement, but also to be a means of liberation in the journey towards cultural and political autonomy in the peripheries and semi-peripheries. So, where in 'Poland, Alsace-Lorraine or Bohemia' it was 'in the interests of the working-class movement to advocate the unity of forces, and not their fragmentation in national struggles' (2003a: 42), in the Ottoman Empire's Christian provinces where there was no working-class movement 'aspirations to freedom' (2003a: 42-3) could only take the form of movements for national independence. Luxemburg acknowledges the apparent contradictions between these two positions on nationalism in the essay, and explains why advocates of social democracy should support national movements in one region whilst opposing them in another:

> The Eastern Question, together with that of Alsace-Lorraine, forces the European powers to prefer to pursue a policy of stratagems and deception, to conceal their real interests under deceptive names, and to seek to achieve them by subterfuge. With the liberation of the Christian nations from Turkey, bourgeois politics will be stripped of one of its last idealistic tatters — 'protection of the Christians' — and will be reduced to its true content, naked interest in plunder. (2003a: 43)

The essay on "Social Democracy and the national struggles in Turkey" thus highlights Luxemburg's recognition of the complexity of nationalism within the expanding capitalist system and the role of national movements in combatting the logic of exploitation on the peripheries of capitalism. It is clear from Luxemburg's analysis that the 'disintegration' of Ottoman Turkey has to be understood in the context of capitalist imperialism, which she defines in *The Accumulation of Capital* as the violent and 'competitive struggle for what remains still open of the non-capitalist environment' (2003b: 427). Indeed, Luxemburg returns to Turkey in *The Accumulation of Capital,* where she describes the role of the Turkish state as that of a mediator between 'European capital and the Asiatic Peasant economy' (2003b: 424):

> On the one hand it makes for progressive accumulation and expanding 'spheres of interest' as a pretext for further political and economic expansion of German capital in Turkey. Railroad building and commodity exchange, on the other hand, are the historical conditions of accumulation fostered by the state on the basis of a rapid disintegration, ruin and exploitation of Asiatic peasant economy in the course of which the Turkish state becomes more and more dependent on European capital, politically as well as financially. (2003b: 424-425)

From this perspective, despite, Konuk's assertion that 'Turkey as a nation state did *not* emerge from a struggle against European colonization,' we can see how 'the onset of capitalist modernity' and the incorporation of Turkey into the world capitalist system 'brought about state apparatuses as well as social and cultural configurations that were, nevertheless remarkably similar to the ones in India, which was fully colonised' (Ahmad 1995: 7). Furthermore, as a space where 'many interests of the capitalist world converge' and where capitalist development 'has a constricting and retarding effect on general political development' (2003b: 43), Luxemburg's analysis suggests that Turkey belongs to the 'exceptional' space of the semi-periphery, a space where capitalist imperialism is 'reduced to its true content' of violence and exploitation. I find Luxemburg's image of 'the carcass of Turkey' particularly compelling as an emblem of the semi-peripheral state, as by aligning imperial decline with images of death and decomposition it imbues the Turkish nation-state, constructed in the early twentieth century out of the fragmented remains of the Ottoman Empire, with an almost zombie-like quality. It also illustrates once again the 'ontological metaphors of life and death' (1999: 228) identified by Pheng Cheah in his essay on "Spectral Nationality," including the tendency to oppose the 'living national culture' (1999: 239) of the people, to the state, which 'seeks to impose stasis on the becoming of the people by diverting this dynamism in the service of dead capital' (1999: 235). As in a postcolonial context, however, Luxemburg's description highlights the Turkish state as one such 'creature of life-death' standing 'between the living nation-people and dead global capital, pulling on both even as it is pulled by both' (Cheah 1999: 251); a tension identifiable in both formally and thematically in *Istanbul* and *Dear Shameless Death*.

In the opening of *Istanbul*, for instance, Pamuk makes use of a figurative schema of death and decay when describing his childhood in the early Republican era. In chapter two Pamuk describes his family home, the 'Pamuk Apartments', through a catalogue of valuable, but apparently superfluous objects, such as the pianos which '[n]o one ever played', 'unused desks with mother-of- pearl inlay', 'turban shelves on which there were no turbans', and 'Japanese and Art- Nouveau

screens behind which nothing was hidden', which he recalls made him feel as if the house was 'not for the living but for the dead' (*I* 9-10). He explains that as in other middle-class homes, the sitting rooms in the Pamuk Apartments were intended not for relaxation or comfort, but as 'little museums designed to demonstrate to a hypothetical visitor that the householders were Westernised', where

> [a] person who was not fasting during Ramazan would perhaps suffer fewer pangs of conscience amongst these glass cupboards and dead pianos than he might if he was sitting cross-legged in a room full of cushions and divans. Although everyone knew it as freedom from the laws of Islam, no one was quite sure what else Westernisation was good for. (*I* 10)

The catalogue of unused object and Pamuk's description of the lifeless 'sitting-room museums' (*I* 10) evoke feelings of decline and decay, whilst also making it clear that the family belonged to the 'slowly growing bourgeoisie' (*I* 52) of the new Republic, who were defined not just by their wealth, but by their secularism and desire to appear western. Throughout the memoir Pamuk portrays bourgeois existence as bland and its culture vacuous, and he explains that because westernisation 'amounted mostly to the erasure of the past', including the Islamic Ottoman heritage, and because 'nothing, Western or local, came to fill the void,' the effect of Kemalist nationalism on culture 'was reductive and stunting' (*I* 27).[54]

Pamuk explains early on in the memoir that the family's wealth came from his paternal grandfather, a civil engineer who had 'made a great deal of money during the early 1930s, when the new Turkish Republic was investing heavily in railroad building' (*I* 11).[55] A generation later however, the family begins to experience the same decline as the city of Istanbul:

> as my father and my uncle stumbled from one bankruptcy to the next, as our fortune dwindled and our family disintegrated and the quarrels over money grew more intense, every visit to my grandmother's apartment brought me sorrow and a step closer to the realisation: it was a long time coming, arriving by a circuitous route, but the cloud of gloom and loss that the fall of the Ottoman Empire had spread over Istanbul finally claimed my family, too. (*I* 16)

[54] Fanon also notes the 'spiritual penury' of the national middle classes in "The Pitfalls of National Consciousness" (2001:117).
[55] In *The Accumulation of Capital*, Luxemburg lists railroad construction as one of the key characteristics of the 'capitalist emancipation of the hinterland' during the 'the imperialist phase' of capitalism (2003b: 399).

In his recent study of Turkish politics Halıl Karavelı suggests the Turkish national movement is best described as a 'revolution from above', as it prioritised the interests of the growing middle classes, rather than '[s]ocial and labour issues' of the working classes (2018: 7). This created a split between the country's wealthy ruling minority and the impoverished majority, which might account for the sense of loss with which Pamuk's describes his childhood. Representing the post-imperial nation-state as a lifeless 'empty shell' (Fanon 2001: 119), Pamuk's description of the 'dead' space of the living room not only echoes Luxemburg's image of 'the carcass of Turkey', but also ties the family's fate to Istanbul and to that of the nation.

If Pamuk's family belong to the Republican middle-classes 'in the service of dead capital', then, at the other end of the social spectrum, the characters from *Dear Shameless Death* represent the 'living national body' (Cheah 1999: 239). The class difference between the two families is immediately clear when comparing the family's home in *Dear Shameless Death* to the museum-like Pamuk Apartments. In the first half of Tekin's novel the family's home is at the centre of the local community, and the domestic space serves a number of functions: it is Atiye's workspace, where she weaves carpets and sews 'in exchange for eggs, fat or a bowl of wheat' (*I* 22), when a teacher arrives the men's lounge is converted into the village school, and when Atiye begins to give injections and gains a reputation for her spells and charms there is an endless stream of visitors at the house seeking medical and spiritual advice. Furthermore, unlike the secular space of Pamuk's family home, the home in *Dear Shameless Death* is also inseparable from day-to-day spiritual and religious practices. Atiye washes Huvat's clothes in 'water in which she had soaked charms for breaking love spells' (*DSD* 31-2), and she protects her family by burying charms under the threshold of the house, sewing them into quilts, and pinning them onto her children's clothing. Inanimate objects also literally have a life of their own in the village. Dirmit, for instance, befriends the creaking water pump that Huvat brings to the village, and Tekin's novel is filled with references to fairy tales, games and *türküs* (Turkish folk songs) (Paker 2008), which are incorporated into the novel without explanation in what feels almost like direct opposition to the cultural and spiritual vacuum that Pamuk suggests was left in bourgeois cultural life after the 'great drive to Westernise' (*I* 27) in the first half of the twentieth century.

However, like Pamuk, Tekin aligns the family's fate with that of the new Turkish nation. In her introduction to *Dear Shameless Death,* Saliha Paker includes translated excerpts from talks and interviews given by Tekin when the novel was published. In one Tekin describes her family's experience of rural-urban migration: '[o]ur fathers were roadworkers. Mine too. First, they built the roads. We came to this city building the roads, travelling the roads out fathers built. Poor and routeless, we had no other way' (Tekin; see Paker 2008:10). Tekin's family belonged to the first

wave of internal migrants who travelled from rural Anatolia to cities such as Ankara and Istanbul in 1950s and 1960s, and the interview illustrates the proximity between her own experiences and those of the characters in *Dear Shameless Death*. Like Pamuk's grandfather, Tekin's father thus contributed directly to the infrastructural changes during the great drive to westernise in the first half of the twentieth century, that would facilitate the mass migration and transform both village and city life. Despite this, the idea of the nation doesn't feature explicitly in *Dear Shameless Death*. Instead, the smaller social units of the family and the village stand in for the national community, as Tekin depicts the challenges faced by working-class migrants in the era of post-imperial nation-building.

The novel's title, *Dear Shameless Death,* refers to Atiye's deal with Azrael, 'the Angel of Death' (*DSD* 92). After falling seriously ill Atiye comes face to face with Azrael, who grants her a 'reprieve for three measures of time because she had sewn shirts and drawstring trousers for Akçalı's orphans' (*DSD* 93). However, not knowing exactly how long the 'three measures of time' give her, Atiye becomes obsessed with death, and frequently takes to her bed in protest, using the threat of her imminent demise to control her husband and children. Read with Luxemburg's 'carcass of Turkey' in mind, the novel's title points towards an allegorical relationship between the family and the nation, for according to Walter Benjamin, it is death that most clearly signals the complexity and antinomic essence of allegory. In *The Origin of the German Tragic Drama,* Benjamin defends allegory as a mode of expression, suggesting that as opposed to the symbol, which offers an 'indivisible unity between form and content' (2003: 160), allegory is inherently fragmentary, and, operating in 'the movement between extremes' (2003: 160), is an essentially dialectical form of expression. He suggests that unlike symbolic expression, where 'destruction is idealized and the transfigured face of nature fleetingly revealed in the light of redemption',

> in allegory the observer is confronted with the *facies hippocratica* of history as a petrified, primordial landscape. Everything about history that, from the very beginning, has been untimely, sorrowful, unsuccessful, is expressed in a face – or rather in a death's head. […] This is the heart of the allegorical way of seeing, of the baroque, secular explanation of history as the Passion of the world; its importance resides solely in the stations of its decline. The greater the significance, the greater the subjugation of to death, because death digs most deeply the jagged line of demarcation between physical nature and significance. (2003: 166)

For Benjamin, allegorical expression triggers dialectical reversals in which '[a]ny person, any object, any relationship can mean absolutely anything else' (2003: 175), so that the image of death can

come to stand for its very opposite, for life and vitality. From this perspective the image of the 'dead' bourgeois culture in the opening of Pamuk's *Istanbul* and the representation of Atiye as a living corpse in *Dear Shameless Death* might contradictorily signal that these are stories about survival, continuity, and rebirth, for, according to Benjamin, 'seen from the point of view of death, the product of the corpse is life' (2003: 218). In his chapter on Benjamin in *Marxism and Form*, Jameson summarises Benjamin's work as being 'marked by a painful straining toward a psychic wholeness or unity of experience which the historical situation threatens to shatter at every tum' (Jameson 1971: 61), and I want to conclude this section by suggesting that a similar tension between the representation of fragmentation and the urge towards 'wholeness and unity' can be identified in Pamuk's and Tekin's representation of the semi-peripheral city in *Istanbul* and *Dear Shameless Death*.

Stephen Shapiro has described the semi-periphery as 'the zone where political economy receives its greatest cultural inflection and amplification' (Shapiro 2008a: 37) and suggested it is a space where

> the experience of trauma by peripheral peoples and the speculative entrepeneurialiship of the core collide *to produce new forms of representation*, especially as it receives both the oral, folk beliefs of the periphery and the core's printed matter and institutionally consecrated notations, objects, and behavioural performances [my emphasis]. (Shapiro 2008a: 37-8)

Reading *Dear Shameless Death* and *Istanbul* together highlights the proximity of the core and periphery in the city, and, alongside Luxemburg's analysis of capitalist development in Ottoman Turkey, allows us to position Istanbul as a semi-peripheral urban space. The initial comparison between *Dear Shameless Death* and *Istanbul* has shown that despite the different social terrains that the two texts portray, they clearly converge in a number of ways and together give us a sense of the social organisation of Istanbul from above and below. In the following two sections I explore the different registers of unevenness across the two texts and focus on how each novel articulates alternative 'forms of representation', to make sense of urban life in semi-peripheral Istanbul.

The Uneven City I: *Hüzün*

Despite, or perhaps precisely because of, his social and economic privilege, a sense of melancholy colours Pamuk's childhood memories with the same monochromatic palette as the black and white photographs in his family home: 'To see the city in black and white', he claims, 'is to see it through the tarnish of history: the patina of what is old and faded and no longer matters to the rest of the world' (*I* 38). Pamuk terms this melancholic way of seeing the city '*hüzün*' and describes it as a

'feeling that is unique to Istanbul and binds its people together' (*I* 83). Alongside his childhood memories, *hüzün* occupies a place of central importance in the memoir. It is first introduced in chapter nine, titled "Another House: Cihangir," in which Pamuk recalls his parents' tempestuous relationship. He describes how in the midst of their rows he would distract himself:

> […] with mental games in which I changed the focus, deceived myself, forgot altogether what had been troubling me or wrapped myself in a mysterious haze. We might call this confused, hazy state melancholy, or perhaps we should call it by its Turkish name, *hüzün,* which denotes a melancholy which is communal rather than private. Offering no clarity; veiling reality instead, *hüzün* brings us comfort, softening the view like the condensation on a window when a tea kettle has been spouting steam on a winter's day. (*I* 79)

Esra Akçan suggests that Pamuk's engagement with *hüzün* is organised along two different thematic lines: it is initially associated both 'with the feeling of loss' and then 'connected to the city's landscape' (2006: 40), but I want to suggest that alongside these two categories, a third can be added: the inseparability of Istanbul's *hüzün* from the history of imperial decline and nation-building in Turkey.

Pamuk begins his discussion of *hüzün* by tracing the etymology and development of the word*,* starting with its first recorded usage in the Quran to convey 'a feeling of deep spiritual loss' (*I* 81). He shows that the word eventually developed in two distinct religious-philosophical directions. In the first, it came to stand for the feeling of loss experienced 'when we have invested too much in worldly pleasures and material gain' (*I* 81), whereas in the second, the Sufi tradition, *hüzün* denoted 'the spiritual anguish we feel because we cannot be close enough to Allah in this world' (*I* 81). In the Sufi tradition the word thus takes on a dialectical note, for it is 'the absence, not the presence of *hüzün'* that causes the Sufi follower distress; it is the feeling that he can never do enough or be close enough, or adequately apprehend Allah in this world, that leads him to *hüzün* – he suffers precisely 'because he has not suffered enough' (*I* 81). According to Pamuk, it was Sufism that brought a sense of honour to *hüzün* and made it central to Islamic culture. Despite his positioning of *hüzün* as a specifically Istanbullu identity, Pamuk identifies an overlap between *hüzün* and "melancholy" in the western philosophical tradition. As in Aristotle's study of the humours – the etymological source for the word melancholy ('*melan khole* – black bile' (*I* 83)) – and Robert Burton's seventeenth century *The Anatomy of Melancholy, hüzün* was treated by early thinkers of the Islamic Golden Age not as a poetic concept but as a medical condition and mental affliction to be treated. However, Pamuk notes an important difference between the two: where melancholy came to be associated with the individual, 'a happy solitude' (*I* 83) in Burton's case, for the classic Islamic

thinkers whose 'central preoccupation […], was the *cemaat*, or the community of believers,' *hüzün* was 'an experience at odds with the communal purpose' (*I* 83), and it is from this definitional distinction that Pamuk develops his notion of *hüzün*:

> My starting point was the emotion that a child might feel while looking through a steamy window. Now we begin to understand *hüzün* as, not the melancholy of a solitary person, but the black mood shared by millions of people together. What I am trying to explain is the *hüzün* of an entire city. (*I* 83)

Pamuk's conceptualisation of *hüzün* combines Burton's idea of melancholy being 'ultimately as life affirming as it is negating' (*I* 82), with the traditional Islamic emphasis on the religious community; a combination of philosophical traditions that infuses *hüzün* with a dialectical flexibility, rooted in a set of contradictions: between Islamic and European thought, between individual and collective emotion, and public and private experience, and, as we shall see, it is this flexibility that gives Pamuk's *hüzün* its vitality and enables fluid movement between private memory and collective experience, and between the past and the present.

The plasticity of *hüzün* is illustrated almost immediately after this initial definition, when Pamuk presents a five-page catalogue of instances that evoke a feeling of *hüzün*:

> […] the old Bosphorus ferries moored to deserted stations in the middle of winter; […] the covered women who stand at remote bus stops clutching plastic bags and speaking to no one as they wait for the bus that never arrives; […] the teahouses packed to the rafters with unemployed men; […] the tens of thousands of identical apartment-house entrances, their façades discoloured by dirt, rust, soot and dust; […] the city walls, ruins since the end of the Byzantine Empire, [...] the cold reading rooms of libraries; […] the tired old *dolmuşes*, 1950s Chevrolets that would be museum pieces in any Western city but serve here as shared taxis […] the days when a sudden curfew is announced to facilitate the search for terrorists, and everyone sits at home fearfully awaiting 'the officials' […]the ships in the sea that sound their horns at the same time as the city comes to a halt to salute the memory of Atatürk at 9.05 on the morning of 10 November; […] everything being broken, worn-out, past its prime […]. (*I* 84-89)

Pamuk's catalogue of *hüzün* covers different aspects of the city, its people, its history and landscape, and captures both the prosaic routines and rhythms of daily life in the city and the political and economic crises of the Republic. Quite unlike his first definition of *hüzün* as a 'veiling of reality', here Pamuk uses it to give a detailed and realist snapshot of life in Republican Istanbul and to

describe the city's 'emotional register' (Göknar 2013: 230), an affective schema that crosses political, social, and religious boundaries.

If *hüzün* is a 'way of looking at life' (*I* 82) that is shared by the residents of Istanbul, then the city's architectural landscape is where this shared code is rooted and inscribed:

> If I am to convey the intensity of the *hüzün* that Istanbul caused me to feel as a child, I must describe the history of the city following the destruction of the Ottoman Empire, and – even more important – the way this history is reflected in the city's 'beautiful' landscape and its people. (*I* 82)

The layered cityscape of Istanbul doesn't just form a backdrop to Pamuk's memoir but is the primary way Pamuk connects the city's history of decline and peripheralisation to the melancholic feeling of its present. Alev Çinar has suggested that by creating a 'historical rupture' (2011: 370), a break from the past marked by the founding of the Republic in 1923, the idea of a Turkish nation could be located in ancient history in such a way that all other events seem to lead to this moment. The republican state was thereby able to reconstruct history into a linear narrative of progress, in which the founding of the Turkish nation was the end goal (2001: 370). Within this history, the Ottoman Empire was almost completely excluded, as 'official national history has been built on carefully forged boundaries separating and distancing the Turkish national experience from its Ottoman predecessor' (2011: 366). However, in Pamuk's memoir this linear narrative is continuously disrupted, as Pamuk describes in detail the architecture of the different houses and districts he lived in as a child; the once glorious *pasha* mansions and *yalıs* along the Bosphorus, now fallen into disrepair; the Byzantine ruins strewn across the city; and the unpainted wooden houses occupied by the 'defeated and deprived Muslim population' (*I* 227). Pamuk thus portrays modern Republican Istanbul as a space that is continually disturbed by remnants of the Ottoman past, by what Laura Ann Stoler has termed 'the ruins of empire' (2008: 194).

In her introductory essay to a special issue of *Cultural Anthropology* on "Imperial Debris," Stoler argues that as opposed to 'inert remains' (2008: 194), ruins represent the 'aftershocks of empire', 'the material and social afterlife of structures, sensibilities, and things,' which 'reside in the corroded hollows of landscapes, in the gutted infrastructures of segregated cityscapes and in the micro ecologies of mind and matter' (2008: 194). As well as famous ruins of fallen empires such as Cambodia's Angkor Wat, the Acropolis, and the Roman Coliseum, Stoler includes the toxic debris left in the 'Agent Orange-infested landscapes of Vietnam' (2008: 197), 'the dried up veins of Anaconda's copper mines' (2008: 198), and the 'mental disabilities' and 'corroded infrastructures' left behind by over a century of French rule in Algeria (2008: 195), as examples of

imperial ruins. Stoler's definition thus refers both to material objects and to the process of ruination; it is simultaneously a noun and a 'vibrantly violent verb' (2008: 194) that highlights the unfinished history and lasting legacies of empire. In *Istanbul,* ruins similarly evidence the persistence of imperial formations within the Republican present, and serve as reminder of the durability of the political and social structures of the Ottoman Empire. In chapter nineteen, "Conquest or Decline? The Turkification of Constantinople", for instance, Pamuk discusses the politicisation of the city's history in the early decades of the Republic, when the city's most ardent nationalists insisted on using the word 'conquest' rather than 'fall' to describe the Ottoman capture of the city in 1453. He recalls how in 1955 riots were deliberately provoked by the Turkish state, targeting the city's Greek and non-Muslim inhabitants, including the shops in Beyoğlu he enjoyed visiting with his mother:

> The next morning the shops of Beyoğlu stood in ruins, their windows smashed, their doors kicked in, their wares either plundered or gleefully destroyed. Strewn everywhere were clothes, carpets, bolts of cloth, overturned refrigerators, radios and washing machines; the streets were piled high with broken porcelain sets, toys (the best toy stores were all in Beyoğlu), kitchenware, and fragments of the aquariums and chandeliers that were so fashionable at the time. (*I* 158)

Pamuk's description of the plundered and destroyed shops of Beyoğlu as 'ruins' connects Turkish nationalism, and the violent process of Turkification, to the Ottoman 'conquest of Istanbul' in the fifteenth century, and thereby illustrates how imperial 'relations of force' (Stoler 2008: 193) persist after the official end of empire. Throughout *Istanbul* the city's imperial debris is used by Pamuk to evoke *hüzün,* the melancholic feeling permeating the lives of those who live 'amid the ruins' (*I* 91), and by connecting the republican present to the imperial past, *Hüzün,* like the city's ruins, exists somewhere 'between metaphor and material object, infrastructure and imagery' (Stoler 2008: 203).

Pamuk is not alone in recognising the melancholia bound up in the cityscape of Republican Istanbul. In chapter twenty-six, "The Hüzün of the Ruins: Tanpınar and Yahya Kemal in the City's Poor Neighbourhoods," Pamuk describes the walks taken by two of his 'four melancholic writers', Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar and Yahya Kemal, who in the early years of the Republic followed in the footsteps of Nerval and Gautier, 'the two French friends whose works they so admired' (*I* 221) and explored the impoverished neighbourhoods of Istanbul. Pamuk explains that in the seventy years between the walks taken by the two sets of friends 'the Ottoman Empire had slowly lost all its territory in the Balkans and the Middle East, growing smaller and smaller until it finally disappeared' (*I* 221), and that for Tanpınar and Yahya Kemal, exploring the poor neighbourhoods

became a way 'to address the reality that Istanbul and Turkey were themselves poor neighbourhoods' (*I* 221). However, behind Tanpınar's and Yahya Kemal's flaneurial wanderings was a political agenda:

> they were picking their way through the ruins looking for signs of a new Turkish state, a new Turkish nationalism: the Ottoman Empire might have fallen, but the Turkish people who made it great (like the state, the two were happy to forget the Greeks, the Armenians, the Jews, the Kurds and many other minorities) […] though suffused in melancholy […] were still standing tall. (*I* 225)

Instead of describing the city's skyline, the famous mosques and churches which they found too cosmopolitan, they sought a new national image in the city's ruins and poor Muslim population. They thereby transformed the ruined landscape of Republican Istanbul, its post-imperial melancholy and deprivation, into a poetic nationalism, illustrating Stoler's suggestion that as 'sites that condense alternative senses of history' (Stoler 2008:194) ruins can be strategically positioned within the politics of the present, to promote specific political programmes and historical narratives. Tracing a direct line from Nerval's and Gautier's nineteenth-century travel writings to the Tanpınar and Yahya Kemal in the inter-war years, Pamuk creates a genealogy of authors who drew creative inspiration from the city's ruins, and simultaneously writes himself into this transhistorical artistic community. However, unlike Tanpınar and Yahya Kemal, Pamuk makes use of Istanbul's ruins, and the *hüzün* they evoke, to mourn its 'multilingual, multi-religious heritage' (*I* 226). Pamuk thus diverges from his predecessors, by seeing in the city's decline and peripheralisation not a burgeoning Turkish national identity heralding 'the creation of a new nation' (*I* 226), but rather the exhaustion of a national project rooted in the ruinous historical landscape of imperial decline. This marks another shift in Pamuk's articulation of *hüzün*, as he begins to wield it as a challenge to the constraints of Kemalist nationalism and the forms of national belonging it prescribed.

Just as the ruin constitutes an interruption of the present by the past, the narrative of *Istanbul* is itself continuously interrupted by photographs of Istanbul's cobbled backstreets (*I* 225) and isolated suburbs (*I* 228), the ruined Byzantine city walls (*I* 223) and abandoned wooden houses in various states of disrepair (*I* 222, *I* 224), resulting in a similar 'process of intensification' (2003: 178) that Benjamin identifies as essential to allegorical representation in *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*. For Benjamin, the ruin, like the corpse, represents the dialectical force of allegory, for whilst simultaneously reminding us of the passage of time by representing a 'process of decay' (2003: 179), in the image of the ruin the events of history have been made static and 'become

absorbed in the setting' (2003: 179). It is therefore also emblematic of the process of allegorisation, in which the very image of decay becomes 'the basis for a rebirth, in which all ephemeral beauty is completely stripped off, and the work stands as a ruin' (2003: 182). Connecting, as Benjamin does, allegory with the feeling of melancholy, the *hüzün* derived from Istanbul's ruins forces its residents to experience the city allegorically, and it is the dialectical quality of allegory that gives *hüzün* the ability to transform the city's post-imperial melancholy into something honourable, into a mournful pride shared by its residents.

The dialectical quality of *hüzün* is particularly clearly articulated in Pamuk's descriptions of the many fires that ravaged the city in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In chapter twenty-two, Pamuk recalls 'ordering tea, beer, and cheese toasts from teahouses' (*I* 191) and sharing stories and gossip with his friends as they watched old Istanbul burn, a ritual he traces back to the Ottoman pashas who 'took a similar pleasure in watching the great fires of their time' (*I* 190). However, he suggests that 'for those of us who watched the city's last *yalıs*, mansions and ramshackle wooden houses burn down during the 1950s and 1960s' the fires caused,

> a spiritual ache different from that of the Ottoman pashas, who thrilled to them as spectacles; this is the guilt, loss, and jealousy felt at the sudden destruction of the last traces of a great culture and a great civilization that we were unfit or unprepared to inherit, in our frenzy to turn Istanbul into a pale, poor, second-class imitation of a western city. (*I* 191)

The ritual of watching the city burn connects the city's residents to their Ottoman predecessors, whilst simultaneously reminding them of the increasing distance between the Istanbul of their present and the former glory of the Ottoman past. Pamuk's description of the fires thus encapsulate 'the troubled relationship between the new Turkish Republic and the Ottoman Empire' (Konuk 2011: 250) and links the feeling of *hüzün* both to the sense of loss associated with the imperial decline to the violence of the post-imperial national building project, which created a temporal rupture between the Republican present and the Ottoman Islamic past; a rupture which Istanbul's residents are reminded of daily in the ruins of the city.

As well as an attempt to represent and overcome the historical rift between the city's past and present, *hüzün* also responds to another rupture: that between the orient and the occident, or east and west. Pamuk illustrates early in the memoir the influence of western writers and artists, who travelled to the Ottoman Empire in the nineteenth century and left behind their representations of Istanbul: 'if we see our city in black and white, it's partly because we know it from the engravings left to us by Western artists: the glorious colours of its past were never painted by local hands' (*I* 39). I have already mentioned that the definitional basis of Pamuk's *hüzün* draws on both eastern

and western philosophical traditions, but Esra Akçan goes further in her analysis of Pamuk's memoir, suggesting that the feeling of *hüzün* is itself rooted in the 'asymmetric relations' between east and west. Like Konuk, she suggests that during the process of modernisation that began in the second half of the nineteenth century, '[i]deologies of eurocentrism' were imported to Turkey, which caused 'the idea of the "Western" (which itself varies and should not be standardized) to be perceived as the "ideal" norm for humanity, its cultural productions as the inescapable "universal" expression' (Akçan 2006: 42). The feeling of *hüzün*, she suggests, is rooted in the internalisation of these eurocentrist and Orientalist ideas, which results in a perceived distance from the ideal.

Edward Said defined Orientalism as a 'system of knowledge, an accepted grid for filtering through the Orient into Western consciousness' (2003: 6), and, like Akçan, I want to suggests that Pamuk's notion of *hüzün* can also be considered a response to the 'complex hegemony' (Said 2003: 5) of Orientalism as it, in turn, has filtered into and shaped the consciousness of those who reside in the Orient. Exploring the intellectual genealogy of Orientalism, Said lists the travel writing by Nerval, Flaubert, and Gautier as examples of imaginative literature that contributed to the development of Orientalist discourse. Said suggests that along with the research produced by learned societies and historical and cultural anthropologists, such texts not only created a body of knowledge in which the Orient is variously positioned as strange, exotic, sensuous, and inferior to the west, 'but also the very reality they appear to describe' (2003: 94), and became the scholarly basis for the political and cultural domination of the Orient by the west. The "reality" created by the Orientalist tradition, was of course nothing like the modern Orient, as Nerval discovered when he visited Cairo and Beirut in the mid-nineteenth century, for

> [m]emory of the modern Orient disputes imagination, sends us back to the imagination as a place preferable, for the European sensibility, to the real Orient. For a person who has never seen the Orient, Nerval once said to Gautier, a lotus is still a lotus; for me it is only a kind of onion. To write about the modern Orient is either to reveal an upsetting demystification of images culled from texts, or to confine oneself to the Orient of which Hugo spoke in his original preface to *Les Orientales*, the Orient as "image" or "pensée," symbols of "une sorte de preoccupation générale". (2003: 100-101)

Said's anecdote captures succinctly the violent disjunction between imagined and lived reality created by Orientalist discourse, an asymmetry that has been cultivated for centuries and continues to shape the way cities such as Istanbul are imagined.

In his essay on *Istanbul*, Erdağ Göknar identifies an 'overdetermined ambiguity' (2013: 230) in Pamuk's notion of *hüzün*, which he suggests is caused by a vacillation in Pamuk's narration between

'outsider observer' and 'insider' (2013: 231). Göknar suggests that in *Istanbul* this doubling is in part derived from the genealogy of *hüzün*, from Nerval and Gautier, to Yaha Kemal, to Tanpinar, and to Pamuk, which traces impressions of the city, 'from an external European gaze to an internal attempt at authenticity' (2013: 231). This ambiguity is epitomised in chapter twenty-five, titled "Under Western Eyes", in which Pamuk admits that

> [t]o see Istanbul through the eyes of a foreigner always gives me pleasure, in no small part because the picture helps me to fend off narrow nationalism and pressures to conform. Their occasionally accurate (and therefore somewhat embarrassing) descriptions of the harem, Ottoman dress and Ottoman rituals are so distant from my own experience that I feel as though they are describing not my city, but someone else's. (*I* 217)

Although he claims 'Westernisation has allowed me and millions of other Istanbullus the luxury of enjoying our own past as "exotic"' (*I* 217), it is simultaneously the Eurocentrism embedded in the process of westernisation that makes the attempt to 'westernise' futile, for in comparison with the west, Turkey will always remain 'half-formed, shoddy and soiled' (*I* 288). As a member of the secular and westernised national elite, Pamuk embodies the dilemma of 'belonging to a community that another facet of the same self despises, denies and denigrates' (Göknar 2013: 232), and this, fundamentally, is the crisis at the heart of the feeling *hüzün*.

Pamuk thus portrays Istanbul as simultaneous eastern, linked to the Ottoman Empire through its architecture and history, and western, an orientalist construction by European artists and writers, which together leave its residents 'caught in a stream of slippery, contradictory thoughts, not quite belonging to this place, and not quite a stranger' (*I* 261):

> [c]aught as the city is between traditional culture and Western culture, inhabited as it is by the ultra-rich minority and an impoverished majority, overrun as it is by wave after wave of immigrants, divided as it has always been along the lines of many ethnic groups, Istanbul is a place where, for the past hundred and fifty years, no one has been able to feel completely at home. (*I* 103)

Hüzün is thus simultaneously a reflection of Pamuk's own psychic disposition but also the foundation for his articulation of a collective Istanbullu identity. Deliberately ambiguous, *hüzün* transforms the city's legacy of decline and peripheralisation into something its residents 'absorb with pride and share as a community' (*I* 84), an alternative means of belonging that attempts to recuperate and represent the city's fragmented past.

The Uneven City II: *Hemşehrilik*

Although it captures a sense of Istanbul's rich and layered past, the idea of *hüzün* as a collective feeling or a shared identity is, however, problematic. On the one hand it helps us to navigate Istanbul's complex history, but it also aestheticises poverty and decline, the material conditions that shape the daily reality of many of the city's residents. In her article on *Istanbul,* Konuk draws attention to the fact that unlike Pamuk, Latife Tekin 'does not convey a sense of melancholy for an "old Istanbul" in her work', a fact which she suggests shows 'that Pamuk's *hüzün* might be linked to the bourgeois habitus of the Westernized, urban elite' (2011: 252). In his discussion of the memoir, Norbert Bugeja also identifies a reluctance in Pamuk to engage in any depth with 'the community he refers to as being afflicted by *hüzün'* (2012: 153), and he observes a change in tone when Pamuk describes the present-day city towards the end of the memoir:

> With its muddy parks and desolate open spaces, its electricity poles, the billboards plastered over its squares, and its concrete monstrosities, this city, like my soul, is fast becoming an empty—a truly empty—place. The filth of the side streets; the foul smell from open rubbish bins; the ups, downs, and holes in the pavements; all this disorder and chaos; the pushing and shoving that make it the sort of city it is—I am left wondering if the city is punishing me for adding to the squalor, for being here at all. (*I* 286)

Unlike the ruins of the imperial city, which create the melancholy aesthetic Pamuk so admires, the 'concrete monstrosities' and 'desolate open spaces' of the modern city make him feel estranged and out of place, and he admits that when the city's modern melancholy and disorder become too much, he fantasises about 'a golden age', a pure and shining moment when the city 'was at peace with itself,' when it was a 'beautiful whole' (*I* 288). It is precisely *hüzün's* ability to veil reality that enables Pamuk to distance himself from the deprived population he describes and from the reality of contemporary Istanbul.

Pamuk's *hüzün* thus also operates as a form of resistance to the changes taking place in his own narrative present, which he fails to situate in relation profound uneveness of the city's development in the latter half of the twentieth century. In contrast, in *Dear Shameless Death* the uneven process of urbanisation is embedded formally and thematically throughout. This is clearly illustrated in the novel's structure, which is split into two halves depicting the family's life in the village and in the city. The move to the city is marked by a break in the narrative, and the second part of the novel opens with the family's arrival in Istanbul, crossing the Bosphorus by boat:

> 'Is the boat moving or not?'

> 'It's not.'
>
> 'It is, girl.'
>
> The boat was not moving. The huge houses, the trees and the people were all walking backwards. Dirmit looked on, eyes popped wide open, awestruck. (*DSD* 82)

As the body of water that separates the European continental landmass from Asia and urban Istanbul from rural Anatolia, the Bosphorus represents the 'contact' that Eldem considers so 'unique' to Istanbul. However, rather than connection between country and city, east and west, Dirmit's inability to process the movement of the boat instead seems to point to a fundamental rupture between the two. It might seem strange to start my discussion of *Dear Shameless Death* with the middle of the text, but as the only structural marker in the novel I want to suggest that this rupture epitomises the feeling of uncertainty and instability that characterises Tekin's novel.

Despite the novel's binary structure, there is no neat split between village and city in terms of tradition and modernity, and the impact of Ataturk's drive to modernise is felt throughout Tekin's novel. Indeed, the novel opens with a symbol of the modern:

> Huvat Aktas travelled for a whole day and a night, ending his journey at noon by the sheepfold in the village of Alacüvek. This time he had brought a bright blue bus with him. The bus had collected quite a bit of dust along the way but it still stood gleaming like a mirror in the fiery rays of the sun. (*DSD* 19)

Not only is Huvat returning from a trip to the city at time when few of the villagers travelled, but that he brings with him a bus, an obvious image of transportation and movement, foreshadows the mass migration to come. At first the villagers are 'horrified by this outlandish contraption the likes of which they had never seen' (*DSD* 19), and they refuse to get on the bus. But they soon overcome their fear and, realising how 'tiring and pointless it was to walk', they start taking the bus 'to the fields, the vineyards and even the sheepfold' (*DSD* 19), until the once shining symbol of modernity loses its novelty and begins to deteriorate:

> It could no longer take the slope without stopping for breath. Even on a flat road the engine boiled and the bearings started to seize up. One by one, its mirrors wipers and door handles dropped off. Its driver finally gave up one day and abandoned it. So the bus settled back against the garden wall and sat there peacefully at rest. (*DSD 24*)

Huvat also introduces a stove, a radio, a water pump to the village, and each one is initially treated with suspicion by villagers, before eventually, like the broken-down bus, they accept and integrate

the 'outlandish' objects as part of their daily reality. The stories that surround these objects express the peripheral encounter with modernity, but also reminds us that 'capitalist development does not smooth away but rather *produces* unevenness, systematically and ·as a matter of course' (WReC 2015: 12-13), which is further illustrated when a few pages later a man wearing a black suit and a hat arrives in the village, announcing that a mine has been discovered on the side of a nearby mountain, and that

> [w]e're going to open a pit there, build a school and lay asphalt roads for the village. We're going to plant sugar beet in all the fields and gardens, pour tons of fertilizer right at your doorstep and pile oil cake before your animals. (*DSD* 26)

The man represents 'the Party', presumably the Republican People's Party (CHP), who, under Atatürk's leadership sought to urbanise and industrialise Turkish society through infrastructural projects such as road and rail building (Caliskan and Waldman 2017). In the novel, several of the villagers begin to work in the mine, and soon trucks are 'rumbling in and out of the village' (*DSD* 29). However, when three people are killed after a dynamite explosion, the mine, like Huvat's blue bus, is abandoned. Guzine Dino explains that, as well as the greater rural-urban integration created by the Kemalist modernisation project, it was the intervention of the post-war European Recovery Programme that instigated the mass migration from the country to city in the second half of the twentieth century. Under the Marshall Plan, fifty thousand tractors and farm machines were allocated to Turkey, but only awarded those farmers who owned a large amount of arable land, possessed bank credit, and enjoyed the support of the Democratic Party, which came to power in 1950, meaning that sharecroppers and poor peasants were forced to leave the villages and live in slums on the outskirts of cities such as Istanbul, Ankara, and Izmit (Dino 1986). This caused wide-scale social upheaval, which both reinforced social inequalities and put an end to the closed economy of the forty thousand Anatolian villages (Dino 1986). This process of modernisation and urbanisation forms the contextual backdrop to the novel, and Tekin illustrates with clarity that capitalist development is not just something that happens in cities rather than in the countryside, and that this 'development' just as frequently takes the form of 'underdevelopment, of maldevelopment and dependent development' (WReC 2015: 2015: 13).

When the family relocate to Istanbul in the middle of the novel their social status is transformed, and, like Ugla in *The Atom Station*, they are integrated into the social hierarchy of the city from the bottom. Tekin explains in her introduction to the novel that after her own family's relocation to the city her 'father quickly became working-class, then gradually fell into unemployment' (see Paker 2008: 8), and one of the more disruptive aspects of urbanisation that Tekin draws attention to in

her novel is the transition from the stable labour relations of the village to the precarity of wage-labour in the city. At first Huvat and his eldest sons Halit and Seyit compete for contracts to paint or lay insulation at one of the many new construction sites in the city, but as soon as winter comes, the work begins to dry up:

> The dog snow brought the dark boy with the spotty face to Dirmit and deprived the household of its prosperity and order. On the day of the dog snow, Huvat came home early looking sulky. Halit and Seyit arrived shortly afterwards. Then they all joined together in cursing the snow. That winter left them without employment. (*DSD* 86)

Huvat asks Dirmit to help him write lengthy business proposals but he continues to return home unsuccessful day after day. Nuğber and Zekiye are forced to sell their gold jewellery, and Dirmit even hides her rag doll out of fear that it too will be sold. Atiye's response is to use all the spells and charms she knows from the village to alter the family's bad fortunes. She prays for Huvat every time he leaves the house, she unties 'every single knot she could find' and even prohibits 'her daughters and daughter-in-law from braiding their hair for fear they would knot up the household's prospects' (*DSD* 87).

It is Huvat's social position that is most clearly affected by the move. In the countryside 'he had made suitcases full of money as a road-building contractor' (*DSD* 88), whereas in the city he can't get a single contract and abjectly refuses to work as day labourer for a wage. His sons, however, continue to work, but for low pay and in dangerous conditions. The youngest, Mahmut, for instance, is apprenticed to a central-heating installer, a job he despises, and announcing that 'he would never work on a construction site, even if it meant he had to grovel in misery' (*DSD* 156), he begins to sell comic books out of a cardboard box instead. His comment that at even hearing the word 'construction' 'his hands and knees trembled as if possessed by djinns' (*DSD* 156) illustrates the harsh working conditions faced by Halit, Seyit, and Mahmut in the city. Seyit, for instance, is shot in the leg by his competitors after earning himself a bad reputation for stealing others' contracts, in an aggressive attempt to earn enough money to start his own company. Huvat, in the meantime, dedicates himself to worship and starts following the teachings of a mysterious 'black bearded Hodja' (*DSD* 140), and takes on conservative Islamic values:

> Soon Huvat lost his senses completely and cultivated a beard of his own on the very tip of his chin. […] He also enrolled Dirmit and Mahmut in the mosque school, ordered Atiye and Nuğber to cover their heads, forbade his children lying down in his presence and lined up everyone in a row before he left in the morning, then offered them his hand to kiss. He crammed the house full of black sheep pelts, prayer beads, heavy essences

> and even issued a *fatwa*: 'Spiders are said to be sacred, so don't ever kill or touch their nests'. (*DSD* 89)

As opposed to adhering to the secular values of the Republic, Huvat becomes increasingly religious as the family's fortunes dwindle, evidencing the link between religion and class that Pamuk makes much of in his memoir. Pamuk describes his family as belonging to the 'those godless bourgeois families of Europe' (*I* 163) and explains that the only people in his life interested in religion were 'the maids and the cooks' (*I* 160) who brought 'the legacy of centuries of dervish orders […] into our republican, European household in the form of proverbs, sayings, threats and suggestions' (*I* 163). Huvat's transition to religious conservatism might, however, be taken as a form of protest against the secular modernity of the city, which has made life so much harder for the family.

Like most of the other characters, Dirmit also struggles to adjust to life in the city. She mourns the loss of the familiar objects and plants she used to talk to in the village and finding their new home strange and unfamiliar she takes up her 'old habit of eating soil' (*DSD* 84). Atiye, concerned about her daughter's behaviour, decides to cut her hair and throw away the 'brushed cotton dresses that Dirmit had stubbornly insisted on wearing since she left the village' (*DSD* 84), and sends Dirmit to school, where she eventually begins to acclimatise to her new surroundings, but grows apart from her siblings who are forced to work.[56] The novel's binary structure and the conspicuous narrative break between the village and the city thus clearly encodes the trauma of the family's migration from the village community to the 'dystopian nightmare' of the modern city (Harvey 1999: 38); a space

> of concentrated impoverishment and human hopelessness, of malnourishment and chronic diseases, of crumbling or stressed out infrastructures, of senseless and wasteful consumerism, of ecological degradation and excessive pollution, […], of seemingly stymied economic and human development, and of sometimes bitter social strife, varying from individualized violence on the streets to organized crime (often an alternative form of urban governance) […]. (Harvey 1999: 38)

Whilst in the city the family continue to reminisce about rural life, playing familiar games and telling stories from the village, and as soon as they close their eyes at night, they are 'back at the sheepfold, walking down the path towards the village' (*DSD* 125). Like Atiye with her spells and *türküs*, Dirmit remains connected to her former life in the village by intricately intertwining the

[56] Tekin explains in her introduction to the novel, that like Dirmit, she 'finished high school, slipping away like a trembling shadow from seven brothers and sisters' (see Paker 2008: 8-9).

belief system of the village with her new urban reality, replacing, for instance, her old friend the water-pump, with a plant growing beneath a chestnut tree in a local park.

In her essay on "Cosmopolitanism and Nationalism in a Globalized World," Meyda Yeĝenoĝlu proposes the idiomatic Turkish word '*hemşehrilik'*, to describe the feeling of kinship that is central to migrant communities and their 'struggle to attain stability and carve out roots in the margins of Istanbul' (2005: 121). In a footnote, she defines *hemşehrilik* as referring to

> a person who is from the same locale (town or village) as you, in the sense of a 'fellow countryman', a kind of local compatriot. In traditional Turkish culture, it establishes a strong social tie, operating in situations where two people living in a big city, metropolitan area or in military service, are originally from the same locale, even if they have never met before. (2005: 129)

I want to suggest that, like Pamuk's *hüzün, hemşehrilik* operates as another mode of collective identification and belonging that seeks to counter the social and psychological fragmentation associated with urban modernity.[57] Although it is not explicitly mentioned in Tekin's novel, I want to suggest that the idea of *hemşehrilik* is encoded in the novel's very form and structure.

Dear Shameless Death has been variously categorised as a modernist novel, a fantastic novel, a postmodern novel, and a magic realist novel, but is perhaps best known as a work of autobiographical fiction. This is the result most likely of Tekin's oft-cited introduction to the first edition of the novel, which, along with several interviews she gave when the book was published, highlights the connections between her own life and the experiences of the characters in the novel (Irzık 2017). However, Saliha Paker, one of the novel's translators, highlights another starting point for the novel:

> When Tekin announced to her family that she would be writing a book about her village, her father made her write down all the fairy tales, folk epics, games and *türküs* (folk songs) that he knew. Her elder brother organized a gathering of fellow villagers, now migrants in Istanbul who had known Latife from childhood and were ready to offer their contribution to a 'collective' novel. Each man was appointed to give an account of his recollections of the village. (2008:7)

[57] In his 1903 essay on "The Metropolis and Mental Life", the German sociologist Georg Simmel suggested that living in the city required a radically different 'psychological foundation' (1971: 325), to cope with the 'intensification of emotional life in the city' (1971: 325).

This illustrates that Tekin drew on the collective knowledge of the village community, her *hemşehri,* to compose the novel, and the story of the family represents a shared, rather than individual experience. Paker's introduction to the novel places *Dear Shameless Death* firmly in the Turkish literary tradition of the so-called 'Village' or 'Peasant' novel, which dates back to the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, but emerged as a consolidated genre in the 1950s, with the publication of Mahmut Makal's *Bizim Köy* (*Our Village;* 1950), a realist novel which recounted life in a village on the Anatolian Plateau (Dino 1986). Inspired by Makal's novel, authors such as Fakir Baykurt, Talip Apaydin, Lutfi Ay, and Dursun Akşam, and Yashar Kemal, whose novel *Memed, My Hawk* (1955) has had global success, began to write about life in Turkey's rural hinterlands, revealing 'the emotional world, the social conflicts, the language, and the images of the rural majority' to middle class city-dwellers (Dino 1986: 267).[58] Not dissimilar to the Scandinavian social realist *kollektivroman,* one of the stylistic innovations of the village novel was the development of a collective narrative voice. This was pioneered by the writer and trade unionist Fakir Baykurt (1929-1999) in his novel *Yılanların Öcü* (The Vengeance of the Serpents, published in 1958 (Dino 1986), and clearly influenced Tekin, who in her second novel, *Berci Kristin: Tales from the Garbage Hills,* similarly utilises a narrative voice that encompasses the whole community of the *gecekondu* rather than any individual within it. We can see this voice emerging in *Dear Shameless Death*, where the narrator plays a very small part and often recedes completely in favour of a narrative perspective that shifts fluidly between characters.

Although Tekin conforms to many of the conventions of Turkish rural fiction, she departs markedly from canonical works by transforming the village novel into a tale about migration, to reflect the reality of rural life at the time when mass migration from the country to the city was at its peak. However, perhaps the most obvious way that Tekin departs from the village novel is her turn away from the traditional realism of Turkish rural fiction, to an irrealist, or magic realist aesthetic that reflects the rapidity and far reaching consequences of the changes that the rural Turkish community faced during the era of nation-building and modernisation. With this in mind, I want to conclude this section by offering another reading of Stoler's notion of 'ruination' and suggest that the stories and folktales that weave in and out of Tekin's novel can be productively viewed as the remnants of a rapidly fading culture and way of life. Tekin explains that in *Dear Shameless Death*,

[58] The village novel contributed to the democratisation of the Turkish language by 'helping to bring about the divorce between the modern idiom and the old Ottoman language which was filled with Arabic and Persian words' (Dino 1986: 267). It is therefore a genre that has been intimately shaped by the Turkish national movement and the Republican programme of modernisation and nation-building.

> I laid my foundations on the logic of language, and the way it reflects how our people perceive themselves the world and others. Interestingly, they proceed from the parts to the whole, not the other way around…. I discovered this, exploring the logic of Turkish, thinking of my readership. My book had to be understood by fellow migrants, who tended to identify with the heroes in the traditional folk epics, but it also had to offer something to the "enlightened" public, something to which they could relate. (See Paker 2008: 12)

Her aim to recover and collect the fragmented language, culture, and identity of the migrant community and to retell their story in a way that would appeal both to the migrants and to the metropolitan reading public, draws attention to the underlying formal tensions that shapes the novel. These tensions are rooted in the combination of close, realist depiction of the social experience of the migrants, including their poverty and struggle to find work, with a fantastical and dream-like narrative style. Furthermore, the combination of autobiography with the collective fairy tales, folk epics, and *türküs* from the village gives the novel the feeling of collective autobiography, effectively memorialising an entire community. Blurring the border between realism and irrealism, and between the personal and the communal, Tekin's novel also quite clearly belongs to the same aesthetic 'border territory' (Löwy 2007: 196) as Laxness's and Heinesen's works, and like *The Atom Station* and *The Good Hope*, it derives its realism precisely from being able to represent the specific experience of capitalist modernity in the rural and urban peripheries.

Despite their differences, both *hüzün* and *hemşehrilik* can be taken as examples of the 'cultural modes' that 'operate in conditions of uneven development' (WReC 2015: 145). However, where Pamuk formulates *hüzün* as a form or non-national belonging in response to the historical rupture created by the Kemalist national project and the sense of cultural, social and psychological fragmentation it caused, the idea of *hemşehrilik* operates within the confines of the nation-state. This, as Yeĝenoĝlu explains, is because marginalised urban groups such as the family in *Dear Shameless Death* often remain 'excluded from the framework of the nation-state', and so 'their search for stable and long-lasting roots' still takes place 'within the existing perimeters of the nation-state' (Yeĝenoĝlu 2005: 105). When read in tandem there also emerges a dialectics of stasis and mobility across the two texts, which highlights the fundamental differences in the social environments they inhabit. In *Istanbul*, for instance, Pamuk benefits from freedom that comes with social and economic privilege and is able to explore the city's different neighbourhoods with the leisure of a *flâneur*. Pamuk's personal freedom is, however, contrasted by his attachment to the city and his family home. Comparing himself to writers such as Conrad, Nabokov and Naipaul, whose 'imaginations were fed by exile' (*I* 6), Pamuk explains that where they drew creative nourishment from 'rootlessness', his creativity required him to stay 'in the same city, on the same street, in the

same house, gazing at the same view' (*I* 6), keeping him rooted to the city of his birth. Tekin's *Dear Shameless Death*, on the other hand, is a novel structured around the traumas and challenges of rural-urban migration, and in contrast to Pamuk's privileged childhood, once in the city Dirmit is restricted to the single room that the family share, with limited personal freedom to venture beyond her home and school. Where Pamuk swings between rootedness and restlessness, Tekin's characters are always striving against the uncertainty and instability of life in the city, which generates a manic narrative in which the only sense of permanency is derived from the folktales and beliefs that the migrant community cling to. It is this dialectic between stasis and mobility which is embodied in the narrative break mentioned above and inscribed in the uncertainty of Dirmit's question: 'Is the boat moving or not?'

Memory, Maps, and the Uneven City

Having discussed some of the narrative strategies used by Pamuk and Tekin to represent the uneven city, I want now to explore how memory operates as a tool for mapping the city in terms of its uneveness. In his autobiographical essay "A Berlin Chronicle" Benjamin describes memories as 'isolated pieces of the interior that have broken away and yet contain the whole within' (1986: 50), which suggests that as fragments of the interior, memories, like the corpse and the ruin, are related to allegorical figuration. Writing on *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, Jameson also draws attention to the temporal dimension of Benjamin's theory of allegory, which distinguishes symbolic from allegorical representation. Where the symbol is temporally limited because it is instantaneous, allegory is 'the mode of our life in time' and involves the 'clumsy deciphering of meaning from moment' in a 'painful attempt to restore a continuity to heterogeneous, disconnected instants' (Jameson 1971: 72). Memory, it might therefore be surmised, needs allegory. It requires unscrambling, translating and mapping, which is precisely what Benjamin suggests in "A Berlin Chronicle". In the essay, Benjamin recalls how, sitting in a Paris café one afternoon he was suddenly struck by the idea of drawing a diagram of his life. He describes the diagram as resembling 'a series of family trees' or a labyrinth made up of different entrances and pathways. Reflecting on how such diagrams could be used to compare the differences among individual lives, he begins to question if the many offshoots and connections might be governed by a set of 'hidden laws' (1986: 31). Benjamin laments the fact that he lost the original diagram, and it is the recollection of it that prompts his reflections. In this way the anecdote is really about memory and the fact that memory itself is a 'hidden law', connecting the past and the present. This section will suggest that in *Istanbul* and *Dear Shameless Death* Pamuk and Tekin are also in search of the 'hidden laws' that structure experience, and that, like Benjamin, they want to understand 'what kind of regimen cities keep

over the imagination' (1986: 30). In seeking to understand how the city encodes itself in memory and what kind of influence it in turn exerts over our experience of the city, Benjamin's memory 'map' doesn't just operate spatially but has a temporal dimension too. It can therefore be related to what he has elsewhere described as 'the dialectical image', which is the moment when the past comes 'together in a flash with the now to form a constellation' (1999: 462, N2a,3). Charting the dialectical fluctuations between past and present, Benjamin's memory map is inherently allegorical, as it strives to restore order and 'continuity to heterogeneous, disconnected instants' (Jameson 1971: 72). Memory is thus invaluable for understanding the temporal uneveness of urban capitalist modernity and for exploring how Tekin and Pamuk 'map' the disjunctive terrain of the city.

David Harvey has argued that the contemporary city has numerous layers that 'form what we might call a *palimpsest,* a composite landscape made up of different built forms superimposed upon each other with the passing of time' (1999: 49):

> In some cases, the earliest layers are of truly ancient origin, rooted in the oldest civilizations whose imprints can be discerned beneath today's urban fabric. But even cities of relatively recent date comprise distinctive layers accumulated at different phases in the hurly burly of chaotic urban growth engendered by industrialization, colonial conquest, neocolonial domination, wave after wave of migration, as well as of real estate speculation and modernization. (1999: 49)

Harvey suggests that despite this layered, mobile, and changing landscape, 'one of the oddities of cities is that they become more fixed with time' (1999:49). He uses the example of rapidly expanding shanty-towns of cities in developing countries, which spawn quickly but also solidify quickly and soon become a permanent feature of the urban landscape. Harvey's analysis of urbanisation thus also reveals a dialectic of stasis and mobility, which he suggests is due to the 'internal contradictions within the dynamics of overall capital accumulation' (1999: 48). In a similar vein, Harry Harootunian has suggested that

> One of the seeming paradoxes of both temporal and spatial matrices under capitalism seems to be persistent segmentation and proliferation of multiple spaces and temporalities that, through the mediation of state and nation, manage to homogenize and even universalize their apparent dissociations. (2005: 45)

In "Some Thoughts on Comparability and the Space-Time Problem," Harootunian argues that one of the functions of the nation-state is to impose a historical narrative which violently denies the coexistence of multiple, uneven temporalities. We can see the social and cultural effect of the

nation-state's attempt to obliterate 'the multiple moments and temporalities' in the feeling of historical rupture in *Istanbul*, which separates the Ottoman past from the republican present and leaves the city's residents with 'nothing […] to fill the void' (*I* 27), but also in the narrative break in *Dear Shameless Death*, which separates the temporality of the country from that of the city. However, despite this, the 'temporal boundary separating past from present' (Harootunian 2005: 32) is continually disrupted in both texts, through the presence of ruins in *Istanbul* and the remnants of a traditional rural culture in *Dear Shameless Death*, which results in a 'dissonant temporal asymmetry' (Harootunian 200: 50) that seems to resist the temporal singularity of the nation.

As previously mentioned, in Pamuk's memoir the temporal disjunction associated with the founding of the Republic is counteracted by *hüzün*, which attempts to accommodate and make sense of the city's accumulation of historical layers. However, the sense of temporal asymmetry cannot be completely exorcised and intrudes on the narrative through the figure of the double. The very first chapter, for instance, titled "Another Orhan", addresses Pamuk's childhood fear that somewhere 'in the streets of Istanbul, in a house resembling ours, there lived another Orhan so much like me that he could pass for my twin, even my double' (*I* 3). Pamuk recalls that on one of the walls at his uncle's house there was a picture which his relatives suggested looked like him:

> The sweet, doe-eyed boy inside the small white frame did look a bit like me, it's true. He was even wearing the cap I sometimes wore. I knew I was not that boy in the picture (a kitsch representation of a 'cute child' that someone had brought back from Europe). And yet I kept asking myself – is this the Orhan who lives in that other house? […] Each time my aunt and uncle teased me about being the boy in the picture I felt my mind unravelling: my ideas about myself, my house, my picture and the picture I resembled, the boy who looked like me, and the other house would slide about in a confusion that made me long all the more to be home again surrounded by family. (*I* 3-4)

Harootunian suggests that by virtue of experiencing some form of colonisation or subjection to imperialism, those living outside of the Euro-American west experience the 'different temporalities produced by capitalism's capacity for serializing and segmenting a cumulative temporal process' (2005: 26) more acutely as part of their daily lived reality. He develops the notion of 'living comparatively' to describe this experience, citing the work of the Japanese philosopher Watsuji Tetsuro (1889-1960), who suggested that Japanese history could be characterised by a sense of '"layering" (*jusosei*)', which compelled Japanese people to live comparatively 'as a condition of their modern transformation' (2005: 26). This experience of living 'in double-time – comparatively – in one place, that is to say, unevenly' (2005: 37), is, according to Harootunian, the result of the

'classificatory strategies' used by imperial dominants to hierarchise relationships 'everywhere colonialism and imperialism spread' (2005: 26), and that Pamuk's feeling of doubling is brought on by the picture of a 'cute child' from Europe suggests that it might also be related to the symmetric relationship between Turkey and western Europe, that was consecrated by the modernisation process.

In her essay on melancholy in Pamuk's memoir, Akcan also suggests that the feeling of living comparatively, 'the pendulum swings between pride and inferiority' (2006: 42) associated with the peripheralization of Istanbul, manifests itself in Pamuk's memoir as a form of paranoia, and I want to suggest that this is compensated for by an incessant need to make lists, to count, and impose order on the irrational space of the city. In Chapter Twenty-two, "On the Ships that Passed through the Bosphorus, Famous Fires, Moving House and Other Disasters", Pamuk recalls that as a child he kept 'small disasters' at bay by establishing a

> strict regime of superstition for myself (like not stepping on the cracks, never closing certain doors all the way) or I'd have myself a quick adventure (meet up with the other Orhan, escape to my second world, paint, fall into a disaster of my own by picking a fight with my brother). Or I'd count ships passing through the Bosphorus. (*I* 181)

The 'small disasters' he refers to here, are the increasingly fractious arguments between his parents and relatives, which like "free-floating mines' at the mouth of the Bosphorus' (*I* 180) could explode at any time. Pamuk deals with them partly by escaping into his daydreams, but also through the practice of counting and cataloguing ships passing through the Bosphorus. He explains that '[b]y counting I felt as if I was giving my life order', and that, years later, he realises that counting ships on the Bosphorus was a common practice amongst Istanbul's residents:

> in the course of a normal day, a large number of us make regular trips to our windows and balconies to take account, and we do so to get some sense of the disasters, deaths and catastrophes that might or might not be heading down the straits to turn our lives upside down. (*I* 185)

Pamuk relates this tendency to the traumas of peripheralisation, post-imperial nation-building, and Turkey's asymmetric relationship with the west, which meant that for 'the past hundred and fifty years' the residents of Istanbul 'have lived in timorous anticipation of catastrophes that will bring us fresh defeats and new ruins' (*I* 186). By counting the ships on the Bosphorus, which he was told in school was 'the key, the heart of the geopolitical world,' Pamuk was able to decentre his 'picture of the world and my own place within it' (*I* 184-5). Here we see clearly, how through the

memoir form Pamuk moves swiftly from private to collective experience, linking his personal memories of family traumas – his parents' fights – to the national trauma of peripheralisation. His counting of the ships thus constitutes a form of mapping in the Benjaminian sense, an attempt not only to restore order to the disparities – social, historical, temporal, geo-political, etc. – of Istanbul, but a striving to understand the 'hidden laws' of the city.

In *Dear Shameless Death*, Dirmit similarly strives to make connection between disparate experiences. At the start of the novel, for instance, one of her teachers disappears after being accused of being a 'commonist' (*DSD* 56). Dirmit pleads with her mother to explain what a 'commonist' is, and eventually Atiye points to an aeroplane in the sky, and says 'there, good-for-nothing, that's commonist!' (*DSD* 66). No further explanation is provided, and throughout the novel Dirmit remains fascinated by the idea that her favourite teacher and a plane in the sky could somehow be mysteriously connected. The episode exemplifies Tekin's narrative focus in the first half of the novel. While in the village anything from the outside, ideas as well as objects, appear strange and otherworldly, and rather than seeing the disappearance of the communist teacher in relation to national politics, particularly the CHP's violence against its political opponents, she pays attention to the rhythms of everyday life, the daily politics of the household, and the village community. Once in the city, however, the novel's political content takes on a less abstract form. Halit, for instance, returns from national service readings books on Turkism and expresses support for some of the more progressive aspects of the Turkish national movement, such as the equal education of women. As the novel progresses Dirmit is also gradually politicised, and at the end of the novel she even participates in a left-wing protest, rebelling against the conservative minded Huvat by threatening to 'deny Allah and […] turn into a commonist' (*DSD* 228).

The move to the city also offers a clear illustration of the multiple and different temporalities that exist within the confines of the Turkish nation-state, evident in the changes in narrative rhythm between the country and city. Guzine Dino suggests that a feeling of timelessness is a trope of the village novel, and this certainly is also felt in the first half of Tekin's novel, which is completely devoid of temporal markers, and fluidly moves between days and seasons without explanation. This rural timelessness comes into confrontation with the more regimented time of the city almost immediately, not just through an acceleration of narrative tempo, but through physical reminders of the imposition of a single, national temporal order:

> 'What does it mean,' she asked, "'Don't fear cancer, fear being late"?' Upon their arrival in the city, Dirmit, having read this on a huge signboard just as she had descended from the

> boat, had insisted on knowing what it meant and had never forgotten what she'd read there. (*DSD* 83)

Pamuk also recalls in his memoir that during his childhood the pavements in Nişantaşi were inscribed with decrees, instructions, and warnings, such as 'no spitting please' and 'Don't drink water from the pool' (*I* 118-119), as part of the 'civilising mission' (*I* 120) that accompanied the drive to modernise and westernise Turkey, and like Dirmit, who no matter 'how hard she tried to give up her quest or forget the words she had read, […] couldn't' (*DSD* 83), Pamuk feels compelled to read the signs and instructions that turned the city into a 'jungle of announcements' (*I* 120).

The move to the city, however, doesn't fully homogenise time for the family in Tekin's novel, and their continued reliance on and reference to the fairy tales, charms and *türküs* from the village, suggests that they live with the 'heterogeneous spatio-temporalities' that Harvey suggests are experienced by migrant communities and shape 'how they orientate themselves between place of origin and place of settlement' (1999: 52). Djinns are an important part of the belief-system of the village and are often used as a way to explain anything strange and 'outlandish' but also as a means of social control against. anyone who challenges the norms of village life. Originating in the collective imagination of the pre-Islamic peoples, 'djinns' passed into Islamic folklore, where they were conceived as 'supernatural creatures that could also assume human or animal form' and were 'believed to be capable of harm when disturbed by human beings but also with assisting them under special circumstances' (Paker 2008: 14). When Atiye first arrives in the village, like the objects Huvat brings from city, she is shunned by the villagers who believe her to be possessed by a djinn. As well as being literate and trained to give injections, Atiye dresses Nuğber in 'nylon garments, with ribbon in her hair and a dummy in her mouth' while the other children of the village roamed about 'wearing nothing but a greasy bib' (*DSD* 22), which makes her the target of the villagers' superstitions.[59] Huvat's success as a road-builder, on the other hand, is also related by the villagers to him having caught the djinn known as Kepse, who

> was invisible at first but later […] appeared as a fever, followed by sweating and shivering. Finally it pounced on your chest and sat there, a black ball with neither hand nor feet, and with eyes like lentils. If, just at that moment, you were quick enough to reach out and grab Kepse, it immediately became your faithful servant. But if you missed, and it escaped, you never got another chance. (*DSD* 23)

[59] Tekin has explained that like Atiye her own mother 'was literate, […] knew how to sew, give injections and speak Kurdish and Arabic' (see Paker 2008: 8), and in clear reference to Tekin's own mother, Atiye converses with her sister Sose in a 'strange, totally incomprehensible language' (*DSD* 47).

The family's superstitions and belief in djinns accompany them to the city and become a way to make sense of the uneven and unequal world they encounter there. Atiye's spells, her faked illnesses, and Huvat's religion, can all be considered attempts to order and assert control of their lives, of their livelihood, and ultimately of their fate, from birth to the after-life.

I want to suggest, finally, that in both novels the representation of fate and the idea of an underlying 'hidden symmetry' (*I* 166), reveals the underlying impetus to map and decode our 'being-in-the-world' that Jameson has called cognitive mapping. Drawing on the work of urban theorist Kevin Lynch, Jameson proposes the idea of cognitive mapping to describe the attempt to 'span or coordinate, to map, by means of conscious and unconscious representations' the 'gap between the local positioning of the individual subject and the totality of class structures in which he or she is situated' (Jameson 1988: 353). Initially developed by Lynch as a way to understand how we process our modern urban environment, Jameson repositions cognitive mapping as the attempt to make sense of the global space of late capitalism, and describes it as a 'social cartography' that attempts to connect 'our individual and social relationship to local, national and international class realities' (Jameson 1984: 91). I want to conclude by suggesting that the act of memorialising, which is at the heart of both *Istanbul* and *Dear Shameless Death*, can be seen as a way of exerting control against the uneveness of the city, whether it be the city's gradual decline and peripheralisation, or fate, the 'dark magic of history' (WReC 2015: 145), and can therefore be considered a form of cognitive mapping, a

> practical reconquest of a sense of place and the construction or reconstruction of an articulated ensemble which can be retained in memory and which the individual subject can map and remap along the moments of mobile, alternative trajectories. (Jameson 1991: 51)

Jameson has suggested that allegory is the 'figurative machinery' at work behind cognitive mapping and I therefore want to propose that as a form of expression that embodies contradiction, and existing as it does in the border territory between realist and irrealist representation, paradoxically elevating as it devalues the 'profane world' (Benjamin 2003: 1975), allegory might be productively thought of as the aesthetic logic of the semi-periphery. In doing so, I am building on the discussion of allegory in the opening chapter of this study, in which I explored the allegorisation of national history in William Heinesen's and Halldór Laxness's historical novels *The Good Hope* and *Iceland's Bell*. Following Jameson, I argued that allegory responds to the crisis of representation caused by the globalisation of capitalism and that the intensity of the allegorical structures found in *The Good Hope* and *Iceland's Bell* are directly related to the 'accumulation of contradictions' (Althusser 1969:

67) that characterise the semi-periphery. As cities are spaces of concentrated uneveness, it is my suggestion that similar patterns of overdetermination are identifiable in Pamuk's and Tekin's self-narratives, particularly in terms of how they navigate national history *vis-à-vis* individual memories and experiences of the city.

Conclusion:

In the previous chapters, I suggested that the unevenness of capitalist modernity is registered particularly forcefully in the semi-peripheries, which often results in unstable literary aesthetics in which realist and irrealist representation is juxtaposed and the border between 'the mundane and the fantastic' is disrupted (Parry: 2009: 39). However, because 'class-differentiated regions, such as the core sectors where elites live and work and the peripheral slums housing the manual labor force' (Shapiro 2008a: 33) exist in close proximity in urban areas, the city represents a space of concentrated unevenness. This uneveness is expressed from the outset in both *Istanbul* and *Dear Shameless Death* through detailed descriptions of Istanbul in terms of its material, cultural and social inequality, but also formally, through the authors' inclusion of folktales, myths and rituals of city life that represent Istanbul as a space 'quite removed from reality' (Eldem 1999b: 138). In *Dear Shameless Death* for instance, Tekin's characters attempt to fight unemployment and poverty with rituals and spells imported from the village, whereas in *Istanbul* Pamuk's concept of *hüzün* is used both to the reveal Istanbul's layered history and as a way to disguise the 'shameful poverty' (*I* 32) and deprivation of the city. The irrealism of Pamuk's and Tekin's self-narratives can be understood both as a response to the violence of the Turkish national project and to the conjunctural history of imperial decline, peripheralisation, and uneven development characterises the city's 'social cartography', which is the disjunctive 'historical raw material' (Jameson 1986b: 311) of the semi-periphery. As self-narratives *Istanbul* and *Dear Shameless Death* also challenge the violence entailed in the construction of a neat and linear 'national narrative' (Harootunian 2005: 42), and by collapsing the border between the public history and private memory, they instead capture the material and temporal unevenness experienced as part of everyday life in the semi-peripheral city. In the final chapter of this thesis, I explore another space of concentrated uneveness: the border. Comparing Pamuk's novel *Snow* with Tekin's *Swords of Ice*, I return to the idea of "mapping" as a way to understand the narrative strategies by which Tekin and Pamuk conceptualise and represent the border.

4. Semi-Peripheral Borderscapes: Latife Tekin's *Swords of Ice* (2007) and Orhan Pamuk's *Snow* (2005)

In *Border as Method, or the Multiplication of Labour* Sandro Mezzadra and Brett Neilson suggest that because they structure and regulate 'labor, space, time, law, power, and citizenship' (2013: 7), borders serve a powerful material and symbolic function within the capitalist system. By drawing attention to the productive power of borders, Mezzadra and Neilson reposition them as central to the construction of global space and suggest that the conflicts and contradictions of the capitalist system are played out particularly intensely in these spaces. In *The Culture and Commerce of the Early American Novel: Reading the Atlantic World-system* Stephen Shapiro describes the semi-periphery in similar terms, suggesting that because 'the semiperiphery has a homeostatic and communicative role in the world system, its spaces are […] highly sensitive to global transformations' (2008: 38). As the 'contact zone' between core and periphery, the semi-periphery might therefore be productively thought of as the border-space of capitalism and as 'a privileged region for registering the sociocultural formations of each phase in the world-system' (Shapiro 2008: 37-8). Borders and the semi-periphery thus share overlapping conceptual and geographical territory, converging in some ways, whilst differing in others. Shapiro reminds us for instance, that because the zones of the world-system operate across, between and within international, regional, local and urban levels, and correspond roughly to class relations ('*core zone* […] is analogous to the term *middle class*'), the semi-periphery is best thought of in relational rather than fixed geographical terms (2008: 33-34). The idea of the border on the other hand, continues to be affiliated with state control of geographical space. The recent so-called European 'migrant crisis', for instance, which came to public attention in the Spring of 2015, has been accompanied by an increased militarisation of national borders dictating (often violently) the movement of people, despite capital crossing these spaces almost entirely unrestricted (Gümplová 2015). Borders and the semi-periphery therefore offer different ways of thinking about global space that together illustrate the multiple and layered fault lines that traverse and shape the modern world. Keeping in mind the overlaps and differences between the two, the aim of this chapter is to investigate how literary texts produced in, or dealing with material, symbolic, or conceptual borders, register and mediate the distinct political, economic, cultural, and social relations of these spaces and thereby contribute to our understanding of capitalism's 'global cartography' (Mezzadra and Neilson 2013:5).

In both Latife Tekin's *Swords of Ice* (2007) and Orhan Pamuk's *Snow* (2005), borders are represented as sites of contention and confrontation, and both novels deploy irrealist stylistics to explore the contradictions of the border. Set in the 'forgotten city' (Pamuk 2005: 7) of Kars in Eastern

Anatolia, Pamuk's novel *Snow* (*S*) tells the story of a *coup d'état* which takes place during a three-day snowstorm. The protagonist Kerim Alakuşoğlu, known simply as 'Ka', has returned to Turkey after twelve years of political exile in Germany, with the hidden agenda of pursuing a former acquaintance from his university days in Istanbul – the beautiful İpek. He has heard from a friend in Istanbul that İpek is recently divorced, and under the cover of reporting on the upcoming local elections and the epidemic of suicides amongst young Muslim girls, Ka makes the journey to Kars. During his time in Kars, Ka is inspired to write a number of poems, he develops a relationship with İpek, and unwillingly becomes involved with the *coup* and its immediate aftermath. Although the *coup* is described in detail and the plot plays out almost in real-time, the situation is itself farcical, and Pamuk uses it to stage a discussion about the political, religious, and cultural conflicts which continue to dominate Turkish society, raising questions about the secular state, national identity and the relationship between Turkey and Europe.

In *Swords of Ice* (*SoI*) Latife Tekin makes use of an oblique narrative style to represent a society fractured by division. The novel is the third instalment in Tekin's trilogy, following *Dear Shameless Death* and *Berji Kristin: Tales from the Garbage Hills.* As mentioned before, the three novels are loosely focused on the community of rural migrants first introduced in *Dear Shameless Death,* and together the three novels explore their migration from the village to the Istanbul (the city), their subsequent settlement into *gecekondu* (shanty) neighbourhood, and finally, in *Swords of Ice*, their complete marginalisation in the urban periphery. The story centres on Halilhan Sunteriler, who belongs to a dispossessed community of 'ragged men' (*SoI* 9), who live in '*seher* [meaning twilight]*, the land of exile that always verged on daybreak*' (*SoI* 64), a world parallel to the real world. Halilhan stands apart from the other ragged men due to his possession of a car, a red Volvo, and he is determined to use its power to transcend the boundaries of his dispossession and become rich and influential. Although the world of the 'ragged-men' seems similar to 'the world lying beyond' (*SoI* 44), in *seher* objects are sentient, money is mythical, and perceptions of time, space, and reality are skewed. Tekin thus explores the invisible, yet impenetrable boundaries which continue to divide society and keep the dispossessed from gaining any real agency or control in the world.

Studied in tandem the two texts draw attention to the heterogeneity of borders and illustrate Mezzadra and Neilson's suggestion that borders are cognitive as well as geographical spaces, '[i]nvented and instituted through often violent historical processes' (2013: 27), and the purpose of this chapter is to explore how the two texts "map" the asymmetries of the border, both formally and thematically. The first part of this chapter will explore how Tekin and Pamuk represent the numerous and overlapping borders that congregate in the semi-periphery, and through comparative analysis of the act of border crossing in both novels, I will propose that the highly

mobile protagonists serve a critical narrative function in mapping and translating the complex and uneven terrain of the border, drawing attention to contradictions and tensions that define this space. The second part of this chapter will focus on Halilhan and Ka's roles as mediators in both novels, and drawing on Shapiro's suggestion that the semi-periphery plays a 'communicative role' (2008: 38) in the world-system, this section will address the importance of translation to the articulation of alternative ways of belonging in these marginal spaces, which, as in *Dear Shameless Death* and *Istanbul*, exist in tension with the confines of the Turkish nation-state and the identity it prescribes. The final part will address how, as in *Istanbul* and *Dear Shameless Death,* both Pamuk and Tekin unsettle realist representation to produce a dialectical literary aesthetic, which further attests to 'the pressures of combined and uneven development' (WReC 2015: 62) in the semi-periphery.

Mapping the Borders, Mapping the Nation

In *Atlas of the European Novel: 1800-1900,* Franco Moretti pays close attention to the relationship between the nation, our 'modern geopolitical reality' (2015: 17), and the novel, the only 'symbolic form' capable of making sense of it (2015: 20). For Moretti the border serves a crucial function in delineating and defining the geographical and conceptual space of the nation, and he identifies two types of borders, external and internal, within the narratological framework of the novel form. External borders, he suggests, are 'the site of *adventure'* (2015: 35), they define the limits of the nation-state and 'generate narrative' by taking 'two opposing fields' and making 'them collide' (2015: 37). The conflicts arising out of internal borders, on the other hand, 'define modern states as composite structures [...] made of many temporal layers' (2015:40), which rely on the novel not only to make sense of their 'internal unevenness', but to 'abolish' it (2015: 40). Drawing on Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of the chronotope,[60] Moretti suggests that 'each genre possesses its own space [...], and each space its own genre: defined by spatial distribution – by a map – which is unique to it' (2015: 35). He uses the movement of the characters in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* and Sir Walter Scott's *Waverley* to illustrate the different spaces that the sentimental novel and the historical novel inhabit and represent:

> In *Waverley*, Charles Stewart never completes his march towards London: he lands in the middle of the Highlands, crosses the Highland line, reaches Edinburgh, crosses the Anglo-Scottish border, reaches Derby – and then stops. He stops in other words exactly *where Austen's England begins*. And that Scott's world should end exactly where Austen's

[60] He cites Bakhtin's famous essay on "Forms of Time and the Chronotope in the Novel": '[t]he chronotope in literature has an intrinsic generic significance. It can even be said that it is precisely the chronotope that defines genre and generic distinctions' (see Moretti 2015: 35).

> begins, and Austen's end where Scott's begins …. such a perfect fit, of course, is only a (beautiful) coincidence. But behind the coincidence lies a solid reality: namely, *that different forms inhabit different spaces*. (2015: 33-34)

The central aim of Moretti's *Atlas* is to explore the value of maps for understanding the relationship between literary form and geographical space, a method which places emphasis on the border as a definitive space for imagining the nation. In both *Swords of Ice* and *Snow* the act of border-crossing is used to explore the complexity of the borders, acting, I suggest in this section, as a form of "mapping," which takes into account both the external and internal borders of the nation.

Set in the 1990s, *Snow* explores the stagnation of Kemalist ideals of secularism, Turkification, and westernisation, and tackles the widening religious divides carving up the Turkish nation almost a century after its founding. Pamuk's protagonist Ka, a poet who has spent the last twelve years in political exile in Frankfurt, is both appalled and enchanted by the Turkey he rediscovers during his time in Kars, a duality which Pamuk configures in a number of ways throughout the novel. The story starts with Ka's journey to Kars, which takes him far from the familiar urban landscape of Istanbul, through rural Anatolia, along perilous mountain roads. During the final bus ride through the mountains a blizzard begins to rage, which will cut off the city from the rest of the world:

> The road signs caked with snow were impossible to read. Once the snowstorm began to rage in earnest, the driver turned off his full beam and dimmed the lights inside the bus, hoping to conjure the road out of the semi-darkness. The passengers fell into a fearful silence, with their eyes on the scene outside: the snow-covered streets of derelict villages; the dimly lit, ramshackle, one-storey houses; the roads to farther villages that were already closed; and the ravines barely visible beyond the street lamps. If they spoke, it was in whispers. (*S* 5)

The signs of decline and decay in the local towns and villages highlight the deprivation of Turkey's Eastern periphery and impart a melancholic tone to the landscape. However, the blizzard transforms the scenery, and by erasing road signs and other geographical details needed for navigation, it emphasises the sense of dislocation felt by Ka as he travels from West to East. This dislocation is contrasted by a detailed description of what can be glimpsed through the bus window; snippets of landscape and villages 'barely visible' through the falling snow. More importantly however, is the fact that Ka also experiences a personal transformation on the journey, and the snowstorm is central to this:

> In the snowflakes whirling ever more wildly in the wind he saw nothing of the impending blizzard, but rather a promise, a sign pointing back to the happiness and purity he had once known as a child. (*S* 4)

The narrator moves seamlessly between the external landscapes Ka observes through the bus window, to the subjective terrain of his memories. Here the falling snow instigates a temporal leap in the narration, disrupting the otherwise realist representation at the start of the novel, and evidencing Moretti's suggestion that 'near the border *figurality rises*' (2015: 43). Although there is no political or geographical border separating Kars from the rest of Turkey, the blizzard becomes the first manifest border in the novel, trapping Ka and the city's residents for the rest of the novel.

When Ka finally arrives in Kars, the city is simultaneously familiar and unfamiliar: he recognises from a previous visit the 'old Russian stone houses' that in his memory 'had made Kars such a special place', but, even though it has 'the same concrete apartments that had sprung up all over Turkey over the last ten years, the same plexiglass panels', 'the city itself looked much poorer and sadder than he remembered' (*S* 6-7). Here too is evidence of decline, and many of the ancient buildings of Baltic, Armenian, Russian, and Ottoman heritage are left empty and dilapidated, and those still in use have been assigned a new function. The building used as a dormitory of the religious high school, for instance, 'had once been an Armenian mansion before it became the Russian consulate' (*S* 425). Indeed, every building seems to have a layered and detailed history in Kars and, as in *Istanbul*, Pamuk uses the city's architecture to explore the historical and cultural complexities of Turkey, directly challenging the linear and secular historical narrative of the republican state (Çinar 2011). It is also clear from Pamuk's descriptions of Kars, that the Kemalist drive to modernise and westernise has only partially reached the provinces of Turkey, where crumbling Ottoman mansions sit next to new concrete apartments, and 'horse-drawn carriages' can be found 'sheltering in garages' (*S* 6), illustrating that the border is a space where 'non-contemporaneity […] becomes inescapably visible' (Moretti 2015: 38).[61]

In "What is a Border?", Étienne Balibar suggests that because the assigning of boundaries is the 'precondition for any definition', borders are central to the 'establishment of definite identities, national, or otherwise' (2003:76). In setting the novel in the 'forgotten city' of Kars, Pamuk relocates the locus of Turkey's internal conflicts from the political and cultural centres of Istanbul and Ankara, to the borders of the nation, 'the poorest and most overlooked corner of Turkey' (*S*

[61] It is worth noting that although Moretti's study tends to focus on canonical works of fiction from core European nation's such as France and England, his way of reading these novels emphasises the fact that uneveness is intrinsic to capitalist development, and that 'the 'uneveness' characteristic of (semi-)peripheral literature will also be discernible in literature from the core formations […] ' (WReC 2015: 57).

18), and I want to suggest that in *Snow*, Kars becomes a microcosm for the conflicts fracturing Turkish national at the turn of the twenty-first century.[62] On the one hand, Ka's journey to Kars represents a return to traditional Turkey, distant from both Frankfurt and metropolitan Istanbul, and on a personal level, Ka sees it as 'an attempt to step outside the boundaries of his middle-class upbringing, to venture at long last into the other world beyond' (*S* 18). Indeed, the city is full of people who have "returned" from the West, such as Muhtar, a former friend of Ka's and İpek's ex-husband. Despite belonging to the same liberal left-wing political groups as Ka during their university days in Istanbul, Muhtar has rediscovered religion and is standing as the mayoral candidate for the Islamist Prosperity Party. After failing to become 'the Westernised, modern and self-possessed individual' he had always dreamed of, Muhtar has returned to his hometown of Kars and has become a follower of His Excellency Saadettin Efendi, a Kurdish Sheik (*S* 55). Buying himself 'a how-to pray manual at the bookseller's' (*S* 57), Muhtar's rediscovery of Islam typifies the religious transformation amongst the westernised middle classes, whose liberal secularism has distanced them from the religious traditions of the past. In Kars, a place 'erased from history, banished from civilisation' (*S* 55), Muhtar rediscovers a Muslim heritage and identity, his response to the failed dream of a westernised, European identity to which he, and the rest of Turkey, could never fully belong.

The novel thus opens with the crossing of both external and internal borders: Ka's transnational journey from Frankfurt to Turkey, and his internal journal from the secular and westernised Istanbul, to the 'border-city' of Kars. Like the city in *Istanbul*, in *Snow* the border functions as a microcosm for Pamuk to explore the conflict between westernised liberal values, and the traditional, conservative values of Islam, a set of ideological standpoints from which numerous other social, political and cultural divisions derive (Ahmet 2013). As in *Istanbul*, the temporal ruptures and overlaps produced by the state's drive to modernise is pressed onto Kars' architectural topography, but Ka's movement in the novel, which leads him to encounter a number of oppositional perspectives (metropolitan and provincial, eastern and western, secular and religious, liberal and conservative), highlights the ideological complexity of the nation and the fault lines which carve up modern Turkey. Kars might be the 'border-city' of Turkey, but it is here that the issues facing the Turkish nation coincide and the conflicts of the day are played out most aggressively, and by mapping the layered history of the city, Pamuk resists the linearity of official

[62] In *We, the People of Europe*, Balibar also repositions border territories, such as Greece, as central to the conceptualisation of Europe and the possibility of shared European identity. He suggests that because economic and political crises tend to be more acutely experienced in border territories (European refugee crisis in the Mediterranean, the 2008 economic crash in Iceland, for example), rather than being marginal, borders are in fact central to the *'unresolved political problem'* which the idea of Europe continues to present (2003: 2).

history, revealing instead the nuanced and multicultural history of Kars, which is largely ignored by the Turkish state.

Quite unlike the detailed topography of *Snow*, there seems to be an almost deliberate lack of geographical information about the exact location of 'the city', and 'the country' (*SoI* 18) in *Swords of Ice*. This is because the novel deals with a community of people who are, so to speak, a geographical anomaly in relation to the Turkish state: 'not illegal immigrants in a foreign country', but 'second-generation migrants from villages who settled mainly on the fringes of the big city in their makeshift huts' known as '*gecekondus*' (Paker 2011: 146-7). Their existence is by definition marginal, as they arrived as squatters on public land in the 1950s and have since settled into a community of shantytowns in Turkey's larger towns and cities (Erman 2001). At the beginning of the novel the only information to guide the reader is that:

> *Baggy-eyed weeping to distant laments, the ragged men congregated on the morning when snowfall let up for the first time in seventeen days and crowded into the mosque toying with icicles they'd snapped off the eaves.* (*SoI* 9)[63]

The absence of compass points such as east and west, which are so significant to Pamuk's novel, creates a kind of cartographic obscurity, but with no information about the location of the mosque, nor any context to explain the 'distant laments' which have the men weeping, Tekin similarly creates a powerful sense of dislocation at the start of the novel. As in Pamuk's novel, the snow has the effect of emphasising the unfamiliarity of the setting, particularly because in the courtyard of the mosque a '*huge igloo and seven dwarfs sculpted from snow*' (*SoI* 9) is to be found. The characters from the well-known German fairy-tale *Schneewittchen* (Snow White) seem completely out of place outside the suburban mosque in Turkey and offer the first of a series of unexpected and 'surreal cross linkages' (WReC 2015: 17) which feature throughout the novel. Furthermore, the fragmented language of the opening description, full of tangential rhetorical questions, such as '*But what can I say*?' (*SoI* 9), extends the sense of marginality felt by the characters in the text, to the reader. Tekin's intention to disrupt becomes clear when a little further on she poses the direct question to the reader: '*[b]ut what would you know about any of this*?' (*SoI* 9), and in doing so extends the narrative frame of the novel beyond the pages of the book, relocating the reader from their passive and external position, to the space of the text; the first of many border-crossings which will take place as the novel progresses.

[63] Several parts of *Swords of Ice* are in italics. All quotes are presented as in the original, unless otherwise stated.

The main plot centres on the various dreams, business plans, projects and cons, which Halilhan hopes will free him, his best friend Gogi, and two brothers Hazmi and Mesut, from their marginal existence. Tekin charts their encounter with the various institutions and structures which, '[l]ike an electric fence […] held at bay the type of neighbourhoods where they lived' and kept 'people like Halilhan from getting too close to the men in charge of the country's *ekonomi*' (*SoI* 18). When, half way through the novel, it is decided that their usual methods for making money dry up, Halilhan and his friends decide they need 'to cultivate political connections' to support their ambitions (*SoI* 54). They do so not by any ordinary means, but by summoning spirits through Mesut's wife Aynina, politics was known to be 'like that dreadful valley of the forty thieves, an arena with primeval birds glowering over it' (*SoI* 56). Political participation is thus replaced with supernatural activities in the novel, and the idea of joining a party seems to the ragged-men as mythical as a tale from *Arabian Nights*. The irrealist imagery that surrounds political activity highlights the disenfranchisement and distance of Halilhan and his friends from those in power and throughout the novel political agency is as ephemeral as the money which continues to elude Halilhan and his friends. Despite attempting to enter the 'deadly valley' of politics, the group fails to gain any real advantage, and as the novel progresses it turns out that the borders which, 'like an electric fence', keep Halilhan and his friends from entering the real world are policed not by the nation-state, but by the mysterious 'Organisation' (*SoI* 18):

> They'd learned from N. Çevik, a contractor and underground café regular, that the people running the world had formed a secret organisation which was in charge of sixty-five super nations. Any person in these countries who had reached the position of general manager automatically became a member of the Organisation. (*SoI* 81)

This supranational entity, supposedly established 'two hundred years ago' by 'English Knights' (*SoI* 93), supplants the national government, making the country's politicians 'Organisation puppets' and 'nothing but a false front' (*SoI* 81). With the Organisation, the characters are faced with a more powerful and intangible institution than the nation-state, which exerts influence on their lives from an even greater distance: one of the transnational conglomerate corporations that have become the real source of power in our current moment of late capitalism. This layering of both national and international structures of exclusion in the novel resonates with Jameson's description of the nation's role in the late capitalist system, which is

> to limit the political power of resistance, to limit the symbolic and ideological power of their narratives, to drive down local standards of living in the name of great multinational

> corporations, and to secure an appearance of multiculturalism at odds with economic, existential and class realities. (2012: 481)

This representation of the nation within the late capitalist-system can be linked chronologically to Heinesen's and Laxness's post-war novels, set at the moment of national independence, in which the nation still has the potential to be 'the vehicle - the means of articulation - of a *social(ist)* demand' (Lazarus 1999: 79), even if it is threatened, particularly in case of *The Atom Station*, by capitalist imperialism. Although Tekin's characters still fight to belong to the nation-state, the Turkish national project is shown to be exhausted, supplanted by the 'Organisation', making Halilhan's attempts to gain access to the 'real world' seem hopelessly futile.

By focusing on those who remain excluded from the confines of the nation, Tekin emphasises the 'negative functions' of the nation-state (Jameson 2012: 481), and unlike in *Snow*, where Pamuk complicates the boundaries defining what and who belong in the Turkish nation, in *Swords of Ice,* access to the collective national identity and benefits offered by the nation-state is completely denied the ragged men. This strains the usual relationship between the nation and the novel, its 'symbolic form', forming a gap in the very form of the novel; a gap which is filled instead with the tale of the ragged men, italicised throughout the novel to show its distinct difference from the novel's central plot:

> *The souls of the poor know and understand each other as no others can. To keep the reality of their dispossession weighing down of them at bay – the one certainty as sharp and absolute as death – these 'have-nots' have been communicating in signs, silently, for hundreds of years, murmuring on in the secret language that only they can ever learn.* (*SoI* 9)

Perhaps more so than in *Dear Shameless Death*, in *Swords of Ice* Tekin constructs an alternative collective identity in place of nationhood, and as the language above indicates, one as mythological as the nation itself. Borders are thus not just exclusionary devices, keeping the ragged-men from participating fully in Turkish society, but have become the very spaces that these characters occupy.

Where in *Snow*, Ka's movement between Frankfurt, Istanbul, and Kars intersects the external and internal borders of the nation, in *Swords of Ice*, the narrative is structured to reflect the impenetrability of the borders that separate the twilight zone of the 'ragged men' from the rights and privileges of belonging to a nation, as well as the larger and more intangible borders created by transnational capitalism. Despite their differences, in both novels borders have ceased to be 'purely external realities' but have been internalised by the people of the *gecekondus* and the residents of Kars, to become '*invisible borders,* situated everywhere and nowhere' (Balibar and Williams 2002:

78). In both novels border-crossings, or rather attempted border-crossings in *Swords of Ice*, become the means by which these spaces are given shape, illustrating Moretti's suggestion that literary maps dissect and reconnect texts in an 'unusual way, bringing to light relations that would otherwise remain hidden' (2015: 3-4). More generally, maps have the potential to facilitate movement between specific and abstract forms of knowledge. But maps, like nations, have representational limits. Maps tend to reduce borders to divisive lines, and thereby fail to account for the varied material conditions of the borders. Mezzadra's and Neilson's idea of 'borderscapes' is formulated precisely to encourage

> a relational approach to the study of borders, one that remains politically responsive to the experiences of border crossing and border reinforcement and also adequate to the equivocations of definition, space, and function that mark the concept of the border itself. (2013: 10)

I find Mezzadra's and Neilson's definition particularly compelling for understanding the engagement with borders in Pamuk and Tekin's novels, for it captures the ideological as well as the material function of borders for dividing and labelling geographical and social space. The act of crossing borders functions in both texts as a way of disrupting or attempting to disrupt the binary and dangerously neat divisions of the world, and this disruption, as we shall see, creates a space for 'indefinable and impossible identities to emerge in various places', 'in utter disregard of certain borders – or, in some cases, under cover of such borders' (Balibar and Williams 2002: 77).

The Red Volvo and the Charcoal Coat

In both *Snow* and *Swords of Ice* the divisions and conflicts of the Turkish nation are mapped onto the temporal and spatial terrain of the novels. In different ways, the protagonists, Halilhan and Ka, also act as mediators, moving across spaces from which other characters are excluded and weaving together the divided communities represented in the texts. In *Snow,* Ka's arrival in Kars has immediate repercussions in the local community, and his presence is registered by the different factions with a ripple-like effect. As soon as Ka arrives in the city, he is met by Serdar Bey, editor of the local newspaper, *Border City News*, and greeted with: 'Welcome to our border city, sir. But why are you here?' (*S* 10). To the local people of Kars, he is an outsider and, more importantly, a representative of the west, and everyone is interested in the story he will tell. He is advised to meet with both the local assistant chief of police, Kasım Bey, who offers him the protection of a plain-clothes police officer, and the city's deputy governor who warns him not to exaggerate the story when writing it up for the *Republican*. The charismatic leader of the local radical Islamist group, known simply as Blue, also requests a meeting with Ka. Blue is in hiding due to his suspected

involvement in the murder of a TV personality and gameshow host, Güner Bener, who had been found strangled with one of his own trade-mark brightly coloured ties after making an inappropriate joke about the Prophet Mohammed. Although Blue had an alibi, he went underground to avoid the press, but the story spread even as far as Frankfurt, where Ka recalls reading of the incident. When Ka meets Blue, he is similarly curious about Ka's motives for coming to the city. Ka explains he's been hired by the secular newspaper *Republican*, based in Istanbul, to write a piece on the recent spate of suicides amongst the girls of the local religious high school. Blue orders Ka 'not to write about the suicide girls for a Turkish newspaper or for a European one!', because 'they talk about these things as if they happen in a land beyond the civilised world' (*S* 77), and he warns Ka that if he writes about the most recent case that 'she was a Muslim girl making a political statement about headscarves, it will be more lethal for you than poison' (*S* 77). Ka finds Blue enticing and eloquent, and despite their religious and political differences, he leaves the meeting with Blue's reassurance of mutual trust: '[y]ou would never want to be the pawn of those who would denigrate innocent Muslims. Just as I've decided to trust you, you've decided to trust me – and you came through all this snow that we might meet' (*S* 78).

Almost every citizen of Kars is concerned about how Ka will present their city to the rest of the world and the fear of being judged by "the west" unites the otherwise opposed groups in Kars. As a famous poet and journalist from Istanbul, and a perceived representative of the west, Ka is also manipulated into taking part in the first live transmission of *Kars Border Television* channel scheduled for later that day, and he becomes directly involved with the aftermath of the 'theatrical coup' (*S* 415), which takes place during the broadcast. The *coup* is led by the owner of a 'Brechtian and Bakhtinian theatre company' (*S* 14), the actor Sunay Zaim, and supported by the former 'journalist and old communist' (S 165), Z Dermikol, who has been tasked with controlling 'the lowlifes in the audience who were unlikely to appreciate the nuances of 'modern art' (*S* 164). The *coup* begins at the end of a performance by Sunay and his wife, the belly dancer Funda Eser, of a secularist and republican play provocatively titled *My Fatherland* or *My Scarf*. As the play reaches a dramatic finale, a group of armed men dressed as soldiers arrive in the theatre and begin to unload their rifles on the crowds:

> It was only with the third volley that some in the audience realized that the soldiers were firing live rounds; they could tell, just as one could on those evenings when soldiers rounded up terrorists in the streets, because these shots can be heard in one's stomach as well as in one's ears. […]. As someone from the back rows stood up and made straight for the stage with blood streaming from his head, there came the smell of gunpowder. The audience looked ready to erupt in panic, and yet everyone was sitting in silence, still as

> statues. As in a bad dream, everyone felt very alone. Even so, the literature teacher Nuriye Hanım, who attended the National Theater every time she visited Ankara and was full of admiration for the beauty of the theatrical effects, rose to her feet for the first time to applaud the actors. (*S* 159-160)

In the aftermath of the *coup* Ka ends up being caught between the Islamists of Kars and the military secularists behind the *coup* as both Blue and Sunay, the leaders of the opposing sides, want him to report their side of the story. Ka however, attempts to remain neutral by pleasing both, and he stubbornly maintains a detached ambivalence towards the events and people of Kars:

> It cheered Ka to be spinning lies for these luckless people who'd allowed themselves to be swept into the asinine political feuds of this stupid city, the city that had taught him so late in life that the only important thing was happiness. (*S* 338)

Although he ends up directly involved in the conflict, Ka does not share the locals' concern for the outcome of the *coup*. Indeed, his very reason for going to Kars in the first place is duplicitous: to the outside world he is interested in the religious politics which have made headlines in Istanbul and Frankfurt, but the reader knows that Ka's real reason for coming is his interest in İpek. Throughout the novel Ka maintains an ambivalent relationship with Kars and its residents, fluctuating rapidly between feelings of 'inner peace' (*S* 6) at being back in the innocent snow-clad Turkey of his childhood, and shame and disgust at the poverty and provincial politics of the city. On the one hand, he is enchanted by the simple life he could have with İpek if they stayed there and he even has spiritual moments, feeling 'God inside him' (*S* 19), when he is drawn to Blue's unwavering faith. However, Ka is keenly aware that

> in this part of the world faith in God was not something achieved by thinking sublime thoughts and stretching one's creative powers to their limits; nor was it something one could do alone. Above all it meant joining a mosque, becoming part of a community. (*S* 63)

In the end, the idea of belonging to a religious community challenges Ka's faith in liberal ideas of secularism and individualism and is too remote from both his middle-class upbringing and his years of exile in Frankfurt to be considered seriously.

The tension between the competing and overlapping political and religious ideas, staged dialogically throughout the novel and coming to a head with the 'theatrical coup', are also contained in the single dialectical image of Ka's 'German charcoal-grey coat' (*S* 146). Pamuk's very first description of Ka emphasises the significance of his coat:

> He was sitting next to the window and wearing a thick charcoal coat that he'd bought at a Frankfurt Kaufhof [shopping mall] five years earlier. We should note straight away that this soft, downy beauty of a coat would cause him shame and disquiet during the days he was to spend in Kars, while also furnishing a sense of security. (*S* 3)

Throughout the novel other characters repeatedly note the quality of his charcoal coat, which marks him out as an outsider in the city. It becomes a signifier of his western-ness, something he wears with both a sense of 'shame' and 'security'. The coat repeatedly crops up in conversations, including one with Sunay, who asks Ka to borrow it to wear for his next performance, to be screened a few days after the *coup*. He even offers Ka a bodyguard, '[j]ust to keep you from getting any holes in your nice coat' (*S* 307). When Ka puts on his coat, its smell transports him back to the *Kuafhof* in Frankfurt and he recalls buying the coat from a shop assistant called Hans Hansen: '[i]t may have been because his name was so Germanic and because he had blond hair that Ka remembered thinking about him when he woke up in the middle of the night' (*S* 180). Representing the epitome of German identity, the coat is as seductive to Ka as the German sales assistant who sold it to him, and throughout the novel it gives him the 'superiority of knowing he was from Istanbul and Frankfurt' (*S* 312). Where the coat makes Ka stand out as a member of the liberal bourgeois in Kars, it was originally purchased to make him blend in in Germany, and there are several suggestions in the novel that his time in Germany was not as privileged as Ka represents it: when the narrator visits Frankfurt four years after the *coup*, for instance, it turns out that Ka lived in dingy flat, struggled to make money, and spent most of his days in the city's central library or drinking wine in the dilapidated playground outside his apartment block with his Italian and Yugoslavian neighbours. Ka's purchase of the coat can thus be seen as an attempt by him to belong in Germany, but one which nonetheless leaves him feeling uncomfortable and out of place both in Frankfurt and Kars. The coat also comes to represent his continuous fluctuation between the modern and liberal west, epitomised in his pride in being from Frankfurt, the economic centre of the European Union, and the east, where his love for İpek makes the 'border-city' of Kars seem like an enchanted place from his childhood.

Echoing his physical movements between Frankfurt and Kars, throughout the novel Ka continuously undulates between a set of opposing stand points, which Marshall Berman suggests sketches out a 'dialogue on the question of what it means to be modern' (2009:113). In his review of the novel for *Dissent,* Berman argues that this dialogue is between what he calls 'Modernist Liberalism' and 'Modernist Anti Modernism', 'the prime enemy of modernism' (2009: 115) and is represented by Ka and Blue respectively. He describes the social, political and cultural divisions in

the novel as a 'drama of modern life in the process of moving toward radical polarization' (2009: 115), and he sees in the love affair between İpek and Ka a final victory for 'modernist liberalism':

> A great many people have got out of nightmarish situations all over the globe, and America has given them space to breathe. On any Saturday or Sunday afternoon, at Herald Square, on Telegraph Avenue, in shopping malls in all sorts of American places I and Pamuk have never heard of, you can find couples that look a lot like Ipek and Ka (they are often of different colors), schlepping their babies around in ultra-modern snugglies, overflowing with new life. We could give them a super-title: *Modernist Liberalism Lives.* (2009: 118)

However, Berman's conclusion that *'Modernist Liberalism Lives'* disregards the fact that Ka and İpek do not end up together in Frankfurt and occludes entirely the growing sense of uncertainty and irresolution that dominates the second half of the novel. Ka's betrayal of Blue, revealing his location to the police in the final hours of the *coup*, does, in the first instance, seem to confirm Berman's suggestion that in the end Pamuk comes down on the side of 'modernist liberalism,' however, his betrayal also follows immediately after İpek's confession of her love affair with Blue, which suggests that Ka's actions might have been fuelled by jealousy rather than motivated by any moral or philosophical opposition to Blue. Countering Berman's analysis of the novel as a dialogue between two opposing philosophical currents of the modern world, it might instead be suggested, that Pamuk presents a variety of different oppositions (east, west, Europe, Turkey, Islam, secularism, and so on), which rather than operating as fixed poles, overlap and coincide in complex ways. It is Ka's mobility in the novel, which causes ideas (and events) to bleed across apparently binary divisions. So, when four years after the *coup* Ka is assassinated on the streets of Frankfurt, it is clear that in the end then novel offers no ultimate victory for 'modernist liberalism', and that Europe (or America as Berman suggests) is not the utopia of 'honesty, complexity, respect, real love, a lifetime of intimate dialogue, communication with other people, exposure to relatively free and open mass media' (2009: 116) that Berman imagines:

> The first bullet had gone in through the back of Ka's head and out his left eye. The other two bullets had shattered major blood vessels around his heart and his liver, piercing both the front and the back of his charcoal-colored coat, which was drenched in blood. (*S* 261)

In the end neither Ka's retreat to the supposed safety of Frankfurt, nor his treasured coat, offer protection from the consequences of his unwitting involvement in the 'the little revolution of Kars' (*S* 163), and caught as he is between Europe's center and its most eastern periphery, itself a position of semi-peripherality, Ka ultimately falls victim to the violent tensions that exists between these two spaces.

Like Ka, Halilhan can also be positioned as a semi-peripheral character, and Tekin similarly configures his semi-peripherality in the form of an object: his red Volvo. Halilhan is the only member of his community to own a car, and the increased mobility this object affords him profoundly changes his status within the s*eher* community:

> Halilhan Sunteriler was the first of the area's poor who had been lucky enough to transform his sense of dispossession into the substance of a car. As the feelings this instilled in him set him visibly apart from his fellow men in the neighbourhood – that distant satellite ruled over by those fused with their possessions – people started to spin a yarn of epic proportions, based on Halilhan's car and his soft spot for women. (*SoI* 16)

The Volvo doesn't just impart a different social status to Halilhan, but the car actively generates narrative, as the ragged-men are inspired to tell stories about him. At the very start of the novel, Halilhan also appears to the ragged-men as a 'celestial being' as he drives past the mosque in his red Volvo; 'a luminous object racing towards them as fast as a shooting star' (*SoI* 15). He is chasing after 'the phantom of fatal love' (*SoI* 15), and the ragged-men watch as he closes in on the apparition, who is described as a woman with 'sparks flying from her heart' and 'a stream of black liquid as wide as an arm flowing from her brow' (*SoI* 15). When Halilhan eventually reaches her she lets out a 'poisonous scream' (SoI 15) and vanishes, and he proceeds to crash the car into a tree. The novel's strange and dramatic opening characterises Halilhan as a man willing to risk everything to chase both women and his dreams, but it also introduces a number of important themes and ideas. The 'phantom of love' he is seen chasing, for instance, with the black substance flowing from her head, simultaneous represents erotic love, which Halilhan, 'the ever-roving saint of love' (*SoI* 15), is always desperately chasing, but also the petro-modernity from which the Volvo originates but from which he and his friends are excluded.

When Halilhan looks at the Volvo, he sees an instrument 'sensitised to sniff out money almost effortlessly' (*SoI* 18) and he is intrigued to find out 'what powerful feelings and fantasies lay hidden in the Volvo's creation' (*SoI* 20). To decipher its powers, he decides to study the car's country of origin, Sweden:

> When he learned that in this northern country the nights glowed bright with daylight, he was both astonished and envious. As far as he could tell from the photographs he found, the people here lived below a sky marbled and magical as the one in paradise. A land disposed towards *melankoli*, ruled by snow, winds and rain, and with the highest rate of loneliness! This was proved by the amount of money spent on alcohol there. (*SoI* 20)

The Volvo thus serves as a reminder of the transnational nature of the capitalist economy, which acts as intangible and abstract force in the novel. At times the car is even reified to the point of sentience, exhibiting 'small quirks, such as a slight impatience with the traffic police and a partiality for roads that ran down the coast' (*SoI* 25). It even earns the nickname 'beads with gears' in the local community, because it seems that Halilhan has 'mistaken his car for prayer beads' (*SoI* 21). It is little wonder that the car is worshipped like a deity, when the forces dictating the lives of the ragged-men have the appearance of magic, stretching far 'beyond the bounds and borders of the national state' (Jameson 1995: 57). The Volvo also comes to define Halilhan, giving him the confidence and hope to rekindle his business *Teknojen*. However, although his relationship with the Volvo brings him closer to the 'real world', it fails to change him in the ways he expects: '[s]adly, Halilhan could find nothing in himself to confirm the fact that he actually owned the car. As the sorrow on his face waned, it was replaced by the rapid breathing of pure fear' (*SoI* 19). Failing to become 'fused' (*SoI* 16) with the Volvo, Halilhan's transition into the 'world beyond' is not smooth, and he develops a fraught relationship with the car.

Like Ka in *Snow,* in *Swords of Ice* Halilhan's possession of car gives him partial access to the privileges of the core, but he remains unable to fully leave the twilight realm of *seher* behind him. However, unlike Ka, who fluctuates between the different ideologies of the core and periphery, Halilhan's main concern is with attempting to decipher and translate the mysteries of the 'real world,' which lies just out of reach of *seher*. Translation therefore plays a significant role in the novel, both in linguistic as well as in conceptual terms. The novel itself is comprised of a complex linguistic landscape, including numerous English loanwords, which are italicised and deliberately Turkified throughout, such as '*teknoloji*', '*ekonomi*' and '*imajinasyon*' (*SoI* 17-18). The effect is to simultaneously emphasise their foreignness and to illustrate the dominance of the English language; a linguistic imperialism constitutive of capitalism's globalising forces. The Turkification of English loanwords also draws attention to the distance between the ragged-men and the world beyond, and throughout the novel language indicates a fault line between the two worlds but is also where its overlaps and difference are most apparent. In the introduction to *Nationalism, Colonialism and Literature*, Seamus Deane defines translation, as

> the adaptation, readjustments, and reorientations that are required of individuals and groups who have undergone a traumatic cultural and political crisis so fundamental that they must forge themselves a new speech, and new history or life story that would give it some rational or coherent form. (1990: 14)

Deane is specifically referring to the work of the Field Day Theatre Company, which staged several productions in Derry, a city close to the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, and whose 'central preoccupation,' he suggests, was 'translation' (1995: 14).[64] In her contribution to *Translation and Opposition*, Saliha Paker, co-translator of *Swords of Ice*, has also suggested that *Swords of Ice* embodies 'a translation poetic that can be read as a manifesto of literary-political opposition and resistance' (2011: 147), meaning that the radical alterity of life in the *gecekondus* offers one such 'political and cultural crisis'. I want to suggest that Tekin reformulates the idea of translation in *Swords of Ice* in a way that draws attention to the twilight existence of the ragged-men and can be read as attempt to 'forge […] a new speech' and a new 'life story'. At the start of the novel, for example despite the lack of topographical details, Tekin provides a detailed description of the ragged men's home, the *gecekondus*:

> *The crowd of ragged men, who churned through the snow like a whirlwind of locusts cast onto the city, actually live at one with their belongings, in tiny homes like storehouses that contain stage sets left over from the plays they've put on: rusting brass bedsteads from their days as junkmen, fake metal-backed armchairs from the furniture stores they helped to construct, machine woven rugs, keepsakes from their outdoor market stalls….* (*SoI* 9-10)

This catalogue of the objects that fill the homes of the ragged-men stands in stark contrast to the lack of detail about the wider setting of the novel. However, things are not as objective as they might first appear. This material world, though apparently not unlike our own, is in fact radically different, as the narrator informs us, for, '*to keep the reality of dispossession weighing down on them at bay – the one certainty as sharp and absolute as death – these 'have-nots' have been communicating in signs, silently, for hundreds of years, murmuring on in the secret language that only they can ever learn'* (*SoI* 9). To guide the reader through this strange landscape of object and language, which both is and is not like the world we know, Tekin provides us with a translation: '[l]erry sharupdiende tisika jemmy' *is what we call our belongings. Meaning,'border map of the land of the have-nots'* (*SoI* 10). By placing familiar objects from "our" world, into an asymmetrical reality, the ordinary becomes extraordinary, disrupting our perception of reality. Tekin's conflation of landscape with the objects of the *gecekondus* thus illustrates both the disjunction of modernity as experienced in the semi-peripheral borderlands and the process of reification itself: the 'direct pressures of capitalist quantification, that relentless cataloguing of everything on earth' (Said 1983: 233), configured here in the idea of the '*border map*'.

[64] The company was set up in response to the political crisis in Northern Ireland and their first play, Brian Friel's *Translations*, was performed in Derry in 1980. Field Day expanded from a theatre production to publishing and has published pamphlets and anthologies on Irish writing (Deane 1990).

The map thus instigates a reconfiguration of translation in terms that are spatial as well as linguistic, and which have political as well as aesthetic consequences.

The prominence and repeated descriptions of Ka's charcoal coat in *Snow* and Halilhan's red Volvo in *Swords of Ice*, make them seem completely out of place in the deprivation of Kars and the urban periphery of Istanbul, and together the two objects epitomise the contradictory logic of the semi-periphery, by connecting the border spaces of Turkey with the economic centres of the world. In their role as mediators, Halilhan and Ka serve a similar function in the novels, absorbing the unevenness between core and periphery, transforming it into narrative tension, and in doing so mapping the otherwise abstract structures of the capitalist world-system. In their contribution to a forum on "Combined and Uneven Development" in *Comparative Literature Studies* the Warwick Research Collective position the semi-peripheries as central to understanding the combined unevenness of the world-system, precisely because they 'function not only hegemonically, transmitting value to core regions but also counter-hegemonically circulating new forms of solidarity and international consciousness' (WReC 2016: 549). It is here the primary difference between the two texts resides, for where in *Snow* Ka falls victim to the violent uneveness of the semi-peripheries, in *Swords of Ice,* despite their failure to enter 'the world beyond', Tekin's characters forge a new language and mode of belonging. Commenting on Lukács' *A History of Class Consciousness* Said suggested that class-consciousness is the recognition of

> a class of being like itself who have the power to think generally, to take in facts but to organise them in groups, to recognize processes and tendencies where reification only allows evidence of lifeless atoms. (1983: 233)

The 'secret language' of the ragged-men can thus be read as the expression of the class-consciousness of this community of disposed people that operates as an antidote to the relentless reification that the capitalist economy dictates; a 'secret language' that with translation has the potential to extend beyond the boundaries of *seher*.

Border Form: Semi-Peripheral Realism

In the borderscapes of *Snow* and *Swords of Ice* the contradictory and overlapping fault lines of the nation and international capital congregate to create an unstable social terrain, and, as in all the works studied so far in this thesis, in both novels Pamuk and Tekin deal directly with the aesthetic dilemmas of representing an economic system which is invisible and abstract and yet has the power to divide the world in the service of capital. In his ground-breaking "Conjectures" essay, Moretti identifies a sense of instability as one of the key features of peripheral literatures and he suggests

that this is caused by a structural compromise between 'western forms and local reality' (2000a: 61) that can be identified in a range of national literatures, from India to Japan, Brazil and Nigeria, but that in certain times and places this instability is intensified. In a footnote Moretti lists the Turkish novel as an example of such a situation of intensification, where the conflict 'between the methodology and concerns of the Turkish literary tradition on the one hand and those of the European novel on the other' results in 'structural defects' (Evin 1983; see Moretti 2000a: 62). Drawing on the work of Jale Parla, Moretti explains that because ideas and technologies imported from Western Europe during the Tanzimat era of modernisation were moulded to fit Ottoman society, 'two different epistemologies that rested on irreconcilable axioms,' it was 'inevitable that this mould would crack,' and the formal compromise of the Turkish novel, 'in one way or another, reflects the cracks' (see Moretti 2000a: 62). We can identify this structural compromise in both *Swords of Ice* and *Snow*, and indeed across Tekin's and Pamuk's works more generally. In *Swords of Ice*, for instance, it is encoded in the separation between *seher* and the 'world beyond,' whereas as in *Dear Shameless Death* it is registered in the novel's structural split between life in the city and life in the village. In *Snow*, the formal 'crack' is narrativised through Ka's movement between Kars and Frankfurt, and in *Istanbul* it is embodied in the idea of *hüzün*, the aesthetic response to the city's history of imperial decline and peripheralisation. It is, however, also identifiable in the dialectical realism of *Snow* and *Swords of Ice*.

In *Swords of Ice* Tekin once again combines a social realist focus on the conditions and livelihood of the dispossessed community of the *Gecekondus* with irrealist stylistics. The effect is a confrontation with the 'bizarre reality' (Berman 2010: 232) of the urban semi-periphery, a space where characters are 'forced to build on fantasies and dreams of modernity' (Berman 2010: 232) because access to the 'real world' is restricted. Nowhere is the novel's semi-peripheral realism more clearly illustrated that in the representation of capital itself:

> *If the destitute didn't imagine money as a treasure that was buried seven caves away in a valley that could never be reached, would they – either in the spirit of honesty or thievery – go on tracking it through the city, as if they were enacting a ritual?* (*SoI* 64)

Throughout the novel, the ragged-men mythologise capital and worship its most recognisable manifestation: money: For those who live in *seher*, '*outside reality*' (*SoI* 64), the idea of money is no more tangible than the promise of treasure in a fairy-tale, and the pursuit of it sends Halilhan and his friends on wild journeys across the city. However, despite its mythological quality, money dominates all the characters' lives and the lack of it has very real consequences. Early on in the story, for instance, when Halilhan has an affair with Jülide, an alcoholic lap dancer, we are informed

in a tone that is frighteningly casual, that having 'walked off a week ago, leaving [his wife] with only a few coins for food […] she and her family were now starving' (*SoI* 33). As the novel progresses, Halilhan does manage to make some money, but most are through fraudulent means, including

> by plastering unimaginable metres of burning steam pipes with a mixture of fibre glass and perlite mud, and then lining them with layers of plastic – a made-up procedure that he'd sold to the *teknik personel* of a big company as a special type of insulation. (SoI 24-25)

So, like Huvat and his sons in *Dear Shameless Death,* in *Swords of Ice* to the only option for the dispossessed community to survive is through illegitimate means, a situation that forces them to become con men and thieves.

The pursuit of money dominates the novel's plot, and the characters put all their energy into hatching often-bizarre plans to access it. Halilhan and his best friend, Gogi, make several attempts to understand the system that keeps them from the money, and their solutions range from attempting to divine meaning from the Volvo's engine, summoning spirits to enter into politics and Gogi even spends several months studying the insides of figs and black holes in space to fathom their 'architectural mystery' (*SoI* 17). Halilhan, believing himself special because of the Volvo, feels that he has a greater understanding of 'life's vital matters' (*SoI* 56), and in a speech to the employees at *Teknojen*, he explains that, despite the hardships and chaos of life in *seher,* an underlying order does exist just beneath the surface of reality. His method for discerning this order is as follows:

> First, you get your hands on thirty or forty thousand nails, then you need a sheet of wet panelling. […] After that, you get an endless ball of string. Twist it around and around all those nails, letting your hand just wander around, trying all those thousands of nails together. There'll come a moment, a point you'll reach, where you've lost track of the order you followed while weaving all that string around those nails. There you've lost it! But there's a network. Think of it however you like. Picture it as a spider's web, any kind of web in fact. That's just how I see a human relationship - I'm also talking here about the divine relationship, of course. […]. Life's been so finely calibrated down to the last millisecond! Believe it or not, boys, I swear to you, everything has been figured out so exactly you can't be led astray by even a single second. (*SoI* 57)

Here divine predestination is amalgamated with the money system, and Halilhan's analogy of the web refers to 'the strings of fate' binding the characters together and which gives them the ability

to 'sight the cash and nail it down much more easily' (*SoI* 57). Although Halilhan's method seems nonsensical, it does capture the sense of a mechanistic universe where everything is predetermined, the 'relentless cataloguing of everything on earth' (Said 1983: 233), however, not by a single deity, but by the 'network' of capitalism.

After conning a construction contract from the government, Halilhan feels even more strongly that, 'the curtains of illusion veiling [his] eyes' (SoI 107) have been lifted. However, this feeling is short lived, and just as he fails to become 'fused' with the Volvo, his newfound wealth does not achieve the desired synthesis with the 'real' world that he expected. Instead, when he touches the money he feels 'fear rising in his blood' (*SoI* 103), because as one of the dispossessed,

> [w]hen you found yourself lacking, missing something somehow, you could find a way to trick yourself into becoming complete. Essentially, all the things people do, as well as their dreams and fantasies, were rooted entirely in the meaningless. And so it was that in Halilhan's entire life there was no story – in fact nothing at all – that could be in any way explained. (*SoI* 96)

As opposed to the underlying sense of order Halilhan was convinced existed before he got rich, once he possesses money, the world no longer appears interconnected to him; he has become a victim to what Jameson calls 'the blindness of the center' (2012: 480). In Tekin's story the border between *seher* and the 'real' world is thus determined by money, but as opposed to giving Halilhan influence and power, the money leaves him feeling 'dizzy and abandoned' (*SoI* 136), and the novel ends with him trying to repair his relationships with his brothers, who he left behind in his pursuit of wealth. The novel's unusual structure – split between the story of Halilhan and the strange tale of the ragged-men – doesn't just reflect the formal compromises of the peripheral novel but forces us to confront the borders of our "reality" and those it systematically excludes.

In *Snow*, Ka is similarly obsessed with the idea of an underlying order, 'a unified system' (*S* 88), with which he can make sense of the fractured world around him. He experiences sublime moments when, despite the oppositional ideas pulling him in different direction, the world feels whole and complete. These moments are specifically related to his poetry. One of the many subplots of the novel is the story of Ka's poetry collection. After years of writer's block, on his very first day in Kars a poem suddenly comes to him:

> And so it was that Ka heard the call from deep inside him, the call he heard at moments of inspiration, the only sound that could ever make him happy: the sound of his muse. For the first time in four years a poem was coming to him. Although he had yet to hear

> the words, he knew that it was already written. Even as it lurked in its hiding-place, it radiated the power and beauty of destiny. (*S* 88)

The sublime feeling of his poetic inspiration makes Ka feel like the poem is preordained, but the poem is in fact the fulfilment of a prophecy, for earlier in the novel, when Ka met with Serdar Bey, he showed him a newspaper article planned for the day after the live broadcast of Kars Border Television, in which it is forecasted that 'Ka, the celebrated poet, who is now visiting our city, recited his latest poem, entitled "Snow"'s' (*S* 29). Fulfilling the prophecy, Ka does indeed name his poem "Snow" and he does ends up reading it out during the broadcast just as the newspaper foretold. Immediately after Ka has written his first poem, the narrator interjects with the following observation:

> Much later, when he thought about how he'd written this poem, he had a vision of a snowflake. This snowflake, he decided, was his life writ small; the poem that had unlocked the meaning of his life he now saw sitting at its centre. But – just as the poem itself defies easy explanation – it is difficult to say how much he decided at this exact moment, and how much of his life was determined by the hidden symmetries that this book is seeking to reveal (*S* 89).

As the novel progresses, Ka writes several other poems, each of which becomes part of the snowflake he envisioned after writing "Snow". He subsequently connects all the poems he writes during his time in Kars and gradually creates a map mimicking the shape of a snowflake, which he believes has the potential to unlock a 'hidden logic' (*S* 263) behind his 'visions and inspirations' (*S* 263). The story of Ka's poetry increasingly comes to dominate the novel's plot, and it becomes clear that the novel's narrator, conspicuously named Orhan, has his own agenda for finding out the snowflake's meaning. Orhan's presence in the plot becomes increasingly intrusive in the novel, and the second half is continually disrupted by asides and comments from him. It turns out he is an old friend of Ka's from Istanbul, and the novel itself, he explains, is the result of his investigation as he attempts to recover one of Ka's lost notebooks that supposedly reveal the snowflake's 'secret geometry' (*S* 135). Ka's journey from Frankfurt to Kars is echoed in the reverse journey of Orhan from Istanbul to Frankfurt to investigate Ka's death and locate his notebook, and the two narrative strands continually overlap, resulting in disruptions in the novel's timeline. Throughout the novel, Orhan reveals future thoughts and feelings of Ka and pre-empts events that have yet to take place. These projections start in the very first chapter of the novel, such as during Ka's journey to Kars. While Ka is speaking to another passenger, Orhan interrupts the conversation to note that, '[t]hree days later, while standing in the snow on Halitpaşa Avenue, with tears streaming from his eyes, Ka

would see this slim, handsome villager again' (*S* 6). Furthermore, by calling the narrator Orhan, and making reference to his subsequent novel *The Museum of Innocence*, published in 2008, six years after *Snow,* Pamuk also disrupts the border between reality and fiction, writing himself into the novel, and extending the narrative frame beyond the text. Orhan thus both is and is not like a traditional realist narrator: he does have an omnipotent insight into characters' thoughts and feelings, but he maintains the illusion that this insight has its basis in research. It is here that Moretti's notion of a structural 'compromise' can be identified, as the attempt to provide a rational, realist framing of the novel is constantly undermined by the absurdity of events that take place. Ka's poetry collection functions as a centripetal force in the multiplicity of oppositions in the novel, as it attempts to make sense of and unite the complex and unstable borderscape the novel represents.

I want to briefly return to Jameson's notion of 'cognitive mapping,' as it seems to me that the attempt to fathom an underlying 'network,' or a 'secret geometry,' can be taken in both novels as evidence of the drive to represent capitalism as a 'unifying and totalizing force' (1988: 348). The central premise of much of Jameson's work has been his suggestion that there are three stages of capitalism, each with a different type of space unique to it and with different 'problems of figuration' (1988: 349). The first stage is classical or market capitalism, the second is known as the imperialist stage, and the third, our current phase, is the late, global stage. Jameson argues that in each case the transition between the different stages of capitalism is marked by 'a growing contradiction between lived experience and structure' as the 'immediate and limited experience of individuals' fails 'to coincide with the true economic and social form that governs that experience' (1988: 349). However, because the reality of capitalism in its global phase is unpresentable, it is often grasped either through the sense of an 'absent totality' or through figures which allow it 'to express itself in distorted and symbolic ways' (1988: 350). I want to suggest that in the two texts examined in this chapter, there is an awareness of capitalism as a total force, but that they each offer a different cognitive response to it. In *Swords of Ice* the characters' attempts to 'root out the money' and to understand the structures of the '*ekonomi'* capture the bizarre logic of capitalism in 'distorted and symbolic ways,' whereas in *Snow,* Ka's and Orhan's efforts to understand the 'hidden logic' of the snowflake, apparently unrelated to capitalist economics, can instead be taken as evidence of the 'absent totality' that late capitalism presents. The idea of cognitive mapping, and the practice of reading for those moments when the capitalist system momentarily slips into focus, thus offers potential for resistance in the sense intended by Majumder in his definition of peripheral aesthetics, because it forces us to focus on the uneven, erratic, unexplainable nature of the capitalist system, without losing sight of the structures that underlie its function.

Conclusion:

Read together *Snow* and *Swords of Ice* highlight the heterogeneous and multidimensional nature of the borderscape and thereby complicate the notion of borders as neat lines of division. This creates a space for the formation of alternative forms of belonging, which exist simultaneously, but often in asynchronous relation to, the nation-state and national identity, opening

> a new continent of political possibilities, a space within which new kinds of political subjects, which abide neither the logics of citizenship nor established methods of radical political organization and action, can trace their movements and multiply their powers. (Mezzadra and Neilson 2013: 14)

The analysis of borders in this piece has also further drawn attention to the 'spatialized relations' of the world-system, made up of fluctuating zones rather than fixed 'geographic demarcations,' that operate across and within national borders (Shapiro 2008a :33). In connecting and dividing the world, borders are, as Balibar suggests, inherently 'world-configuring' (2002: 79), and therefore of central importance for understanding how the world is constructed and imagined. As such, they are significant also to the epistemological challenges of imagining a world-literature which takes into account the complexities and contradictions of late capitalism. It is here a comparative criticism is most urgent, for in order to glimpse the system in anything that comes close to totality, we need a critical stance focused on connecting the various and unequal social realities, which together begin to map the system. Thus, if unexpected 'commonality, linkage and connection' (WReC 2015: 6) evidence the systemic nature of capitalism, then comparativism is the necessary critical tool for assembling the various and seemingly incommensurable fragments into a whole, a necessity for facilitating what Benita Parry describes as 'the search for affinities' (2009: 29) amongst peripheral literatures, an extensive task which relies on crossing national, regional, cultural, aesthetic and temporal borders.

Conclusion: Uneveness as 'Hidden Symmetry'

> These two things […] have nothing whatsoever to do with one another, and yet, as we shall see, they have something in common. Something in the very pattern itself. [65]
>
> (Heinesen 1985: 118)

The aim of this thesis has been to explore the form and aesthetics of semi-peripheral literature in order to understand what this crucial space might offer to the study of world-literature. Across my two case studies, I have to outlined some of the formal and aesthetic features pertaining to the literature produced in the semi-peripheries of the global capitalist system, particularly the unstable combination of realist and modernist forms and stylistic devices identifiable across all eight texts, which I have termed "semi-peripheral realism". The first two chapters focused on the relationship between nationalism and the novel form in the works of Halldór Laxness and William Heinesen, and showed that the dialectical engagement with nationalism by both authors is reflected in both the allegorisation of national history in the historical novels, *Iceland's Bell* and *The Good Hope,* and in the modernist reworkings of the *kollektivroman* and *Bildungsroman* in *The Atom Station* and *The Black Cauldron.* In the third and fourth chapters, I argued that the city and the border are spaces where capitalism's uneveness is intensified, which in the works of Orhan Pamuk and Latife Tekin register as a similarly unstable combination of realist and irrealist representation. Across the four chapters, I have suggested that the instability of the semi-periphery is encoded in the unstable literary aesthetic of the texts produced in these spaces, making this space vital for understanding the relationship between capital and culture.

In "Cosmopolitanism and the Specificity of the Local in World Literature," Neil Lazarus emphasises the '*phenomenological* dimension' (2011c: 133) of literary works, suggesting that unstable narrative forms, such as those encountered in *The Good Hope*, *Iceland's Bell*, *The Black Cauldron*, *The Atom Station*, *Istanbul*, *Dear Shameless Death*, *Snow*, and *Swords of Ice*, do more than register the social logic of modernisation in the semi-peripheries, but give us a sense of:

> what it *feels* like to live on a given ground – to show us how a certain *local* socio-natural order (a physical world, a mode of production, a specific set of social relationships, forms of belonging, customs and obligations) is encountered, experienced, lived. (2011c: 133)

[65] My translation from the original: 'De to ting, de plutokratiske imperiers gigantiske styrkeprøve og vores little beskedne sprøjetprøve, har ingenting med hindanden at gøre, men har alligevel, som vi skal se, noget tilfælles. Noget i selve is selve mønstret' (1985: 118).

They do so through their ability to mediate the 'discrepant and discontinuous aspects of reality' (2011c: 133) which enables readers to imaginatively inhabit the specific localities portrayed, and enables us to understand that

> not only is there no necessary contradiction between the ideas of the "universal" and the "local" or the "national", but that, on the contrary, there are *only* local universalisms (and, for that matter, only "local cosmopolitanisms", where "cosmopolitan" is taken to describe a particular way of registering selfhood in a particular time and place), which it becomes our task as readers to situate as completely as we can. (Lazarus 2011c: 134)

I want to illustrate this point with brief reference to a short story from William Heinesen's *Laterna Magica*. The collection is Heinesen's last work of fiction and explores the modernisation of the Faroe Islands during the early twentieth century. I want to focus on the story called "Sprøjteprøven" ("The Fire-Pump Test"), from which the title quote above is taken. In the story, a new fire-pump has been installed at the ancient fire station in Tórshavn, and the whole town has gathered to watch its first test. In the moment before the water is turned on, the narrator notes, almost as if in passing, that this test took place in 1914 just before the outbreak of World War One, and, with barely perceptible irony, he suggests that the 'modest' test of the fire-pump, and the 'enormous tests of strength' about to take place between the major empires of Europe, 'have nothing whatsoever to do with one another, and yet, as we shall see, they have something in common. Something in the very pattern itself' (1985: 118). The conflict in the story is between Fire Chief Umbertsen, who has been tasked with operating the pump, and Engineer Blüthner, who has been responsible for sourcing it. When the Fire Chief decides to soak the crowds eagerly watching the test, including Blüthner, the embodiment of 'practical common sense and technical efficiency' (Heinesen 1987: 135), 'a barbaric duel', a 'battle to the death' ensues (Heinesen 1987: 150). Although it is apparently unrelated to the conflict in central Europe, the fire-pump test becomes a 'local projection' (Balibar 2003: 5) of the global violence to come. More importantly, what Heinesen captures in the story is the sense of an underlying system, that 'something' which renders the spectacle of testing a new fire-pump in the distant capital of Tórshavn, on an isolated archipelago in the North Atlantic, part of a shared global experience: the militarised modernity introduced by the First World War. As Jameson identifies in the work of Theodor Adorno, the story offers a moment when

> for a fleeting instant we catch a glimpse of a unified world, of a universe in which discontinuous realities are nonetheless somehow implicated with each other and intertwined, no matter how remote they may at first have seemed; in which the reign of

> chance briefly refocuses into a network of cross relationships wherever the eye can reach […]. (1971: 8)[66]

Like much of Heinesen's work, the story 'reflects a sharp awareness of being both on the edge of the world and in the middle of everything' (Moberg 2012: 201), a reflection of the contradictory position of the European peripheries, which were at once implicated in the conflicts of central Europe, and yet excluded from "core" Europe. The story, like the other texts included in this study, registers both the local 'social logic of modernity' (Lazarus 2011: 122), whilst maintaining an awareness of the globality of capitalism – Heinesen's underlying 'pattern,' or Pamuk's 'hidden symmetry' – 'a system so vast it cannot be encompassed by the natural and historically developed categories of perception with which human beings normally orient themselves' (Jameson 1995b: 2). This tension between local, national and global perspectives is recognisable in all eight texts, including, for instance, in the the image of the atom bomb in Laxness's *The Atom Station*, and in the 'surreal cross linkage' between Turkey's urban periphery and Sweden created through Halilhan's beloved Volvo in *Swords of Ice.* It is also encoded, as Lazarus suggests, in the 'fractured and unstable narrative forms' (2011c: 129), which are encountered in literatures from the peripheries and semi-peripheries and which correspond to the disjunctive and discontinuous experience of capitalist modernity. This formal and aesthetic instability cannot be adequately explained along postmodern theoretical lines that tend to position Heinesen's works, for instance, as an example of postcolonial 'dislocation' and 'hybridity' (Marnersdóttir 2004: 185). It ought instead to be understood as evidence of a peripheral aesthetics that encodes the systemic violence of capitalism and is attuned to the history of combined and uneven capitalist development. As WReC suggest, this way of reading for 'linkage and connection, articulation and integration, network and system,' deliberately 'distances itself […] from the antecedent lexicon of 'post'-theory, which had been disposed to emphasise not comparison but incommensurability, not commonality but difference, not system but untotalisable fragment, not the potential of translation but rather its relative impossibility, and not antagonism but agonism' (2015: 6).

With this I want to return briefly to the discussion of peripheral aesthetics with which I introduced this thesis. In *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* Terry Eagleton warns us that the philosophy of aesthetics is always: 'a contradictory, self-undoing sort of project, which in promoting the theoretical of its object risks emptying it of exactly that specificity or ineffability which was through to rank among

[66] To Jameson, Adorno's writings display a 'dialectical consciousness', the will to 'link together in a single figure two incommensurable realities', what he calls 'spirit and matter, the data of individual experience and the vaster forms of institutional society, the language of existence and that of history' (1971: 6-7), an impulse which is also at the heart of Heinesen's story, and can be identified in different ways across all the texts selected for study in this thesis.

its most precious features' (1990: 2-3). His central argument is that 'the modern construction of the aesthetic […] is inseparable from the construction of the dominant ideological forms of modern class-society, and indeed from a whole new form of human subjectivity appropriate to that social order' (1990: 3). However, he also suggests that the aesthetic, contradictorily, has the potential in some instances to provide an 'unusually powerful challenge to these dominant ideological forms' (1990: 3). Auritro Majumder's emphasis on the political and emancipatory aspect of peripheral literature suggests that rather than conforming to the capitalist social order, peripheral aesthetics seeks to undermine it, and it is my contention that despite their differences all the texts selected for this study deal with the politics of emancipation, whether it is the struggle against colonial domination, as in the case of Laxness and Heinesen, or a resistance to the violence of Turkey's post-imperial nation-building project, as in Tekin's and Pamuk's novels, and it is capitalism's combined uneveness, which is registered and encoded in the semi-peripheral realism of these texts; an aesthetic which attempts to grasp 'the underlying mechanism of things' (Eagleton 2003).

By registering capitalism's uneveness, semi-peripheral realism also reflects the dialectical complexity of nationalism in the world system. As an intermediary between the core states of the capitalist world-economy and the older modes of production that linger in the peripheries, the semi-peripheral nation plays a key role in stabilising capitalism's systemic uneveness, in temporal as well as spatial terms. It is thus the intermediary position of the semi-peripheral nation that generates the overdetermined historical consciousness identified in Laxness's *Iceland's Bell* and Heinesen's *The Good Hope*, and the sense of a historical rupture across Pamuk's and Tekin's works, where capitalism's 'persistent segmentation and proliferation of multiple spaces and temporalities' (Harootunian 2005: 45) is forcefully countered by the nation-state as it attempts to enforce a singular historical narrative. In his essay on comparability and the space-time problem, Harry Harootunian makes some valuable comments that relate to the challenge of articulating a world-literary comparative method that is sensitive to the temporal and spatial uneveness of texts such as these. In the essay, Harootunian argues that in the disciplines of area studies, cultural studies, and more recently postcolonial studies, there has been 'a turn toward space' (2005: 23) and that the prioritisation of 'diasporic bodies and their movement crossing borders, in-between states exhibiting hybrid combinations, the inside and the outside' has resulted in the disappearance of 'the spatiotemporal relationship' (2005: 24) from comparative cultural studies. By exploring the relationship between space and time, Harootunian suggests, we can develop a comparative practice that is attuned to detecting the different temporal forms that coexist and shape our experience of

the everyday. What is required for this kind of practice, he suggests, is a 'minimal unity' (2005: 47), 'a ground of comparability' (2005:49) such as the Lefebvreian notion of 'everydayness', which

> constitutes a social space of uneveness and a cultural form that shares with modernity the experience of capitalism since it is coeval with it; it is also a primary temporal category that signifies its broader importance as a specific historical form (2005:48).

Harootunian suggests, that the everyday, or even smaller units, such as "the moment," show that past and present are not just successively produced in a neat linear fashion, but 'coexist as uneven temporalities, just as the here and there of modernity are coeval' (2005: 47), and therefore allow us to 'confront the larger and immanent framework of capitalist modernity and its incessant transformation' (2005:48). From this perspective the figurative potency of Jens's carousel model in *The Black Cauldron*, the atom bomb in *The Atom Station*, Halilhan's Volvo in *Swords of Ice* and Ka's charcoal coat in *Snow* doesn't just reside in their miniaturisation of geopolitical space, but also in their ability to create momentary unity in the fragmented and uneven temporalities of capitalist modernity: a reduction of time to the momentary or instantaneous, which conversely allows the larger framework of capitalist modernity to be glimpsed. It is thus from the spatio-temporal position of the minute and the everyday, as opposed to larger units of analysis such as "the world", or "the empire" that Harootunian suggests we might begin to construct a comparative practice that captures the temporal asymmetry of our everyday experience: one that is truly global in scope, but would also simultaneously account for local differences whilst avoiding the 'dangerous misrecognition' of identifying capitalism with universalism (2005: 48). Where Harootunian sees this comparative model, rooted in a combination of Blochian contradiction of 'contemporary non-contemporaneousness'[67] and Lefebvre's analysis of the everyday, as an opportunity to move away from the 'singularity of the nation as such, and its counterclaims to uniqueness' (2005: 52), I want to suggest that the nation still has a part to play in the articulation of a comparative practice that is sensitive to capitalism's unevenness both in spatial and temporal terms. As my analysis has shown, in different ways the texts included in this study all react against national historical narratives and in doing so they draw attention to the asymmetry between the linear and diachronic conceptualisation of historical time as well as the uneven temporalities of daily lived reality. Through unstable narrative forms and irrealist aesthetics, these texts challenge the forced

[67] Harootunian builds on Bloch's original use of the phrase in *Heritage of Our Times*. He explains that Bloch was convinced that German capitalism was 'hostaged to late development and failed, therefore, to integrate the social, political, and economic realms, thus opening the way to the continuous surfacing of older practices and residual mentalities – the non-contemporaneous – that fascism successfully appropriated and Marxism misunderstood' (2005: 50), and that this lead to an unintentional exceptionalisation of the German experience of modernization that inhibited comparison.

restructuring of time by the nation-state into linear national history and make us aware of how the nation continues to operate within global capitalism. It is this interaction between nation, global capitalism and literary form that makes the semi-periphery a valuable object of study within world-literature.

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