



Utrecht University

A Utopia of Stories

An Intertextual Analysis of Iain Pears' *Arcadia*

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Abstract

Even though *Arcadia* by Iain Pears is standing in our bookshops for almost three years, the following thesis is the first one to address this intricate novel. *Arcadia*, published in 2015, embodies a large amount of allusions to other literary works, multiple genres and numerous memorable stories. It is the perfect case study to discuss the manifestation of intertextuality and its effectiveness within an intertextual text. This thesis analyses the relations based on Paul Claes' contribution to the term intertextuality as stated in his work *Echo's Echo's: De Kunst van de Allusie*. The analysis of *Arcadia* provides insight into the working of its constructive- and deconstructive allusions and analyses the way the allusions invite the reader to interpret and reflect on four layers: the utopia within *Arcadia* (Anterworld), the novel *Arcadia*, *Arcadia's* dystopian world and the perception of our own world. By matching the allusions to four universal subjects, the analysis leads to a more in-dept interpretation of the novel. Namely, the references not only broaden the literary scope of interpreting *Arcadia*, but provide clarification by way of exclusion. Ranging from dystopian references to references about Tolkien and Lewis's work, the allusions help understand *Arcadia* and its characters. This thesis honours the richness of *Arcadia* by addressing and exploring the intertextual dimension and elaborates on how the novel can be interpreted when a reader is aware of the allusions to other literary works.

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Introduction

Arcadia by Iain Pears, published in 2015, is fundamentally a story concerning three interlocking worlds and ten different storylines. The first world, Oxford 1959, introduces professor Henry Lytten and the 15 year old girl Rosie Wilson. Meanwhile, Angela Meerson, a psycho-mathematician, enters the 20th century from 2222, the second world. Unknown to Lytten, she stored her time machine in his cellar and used his manuscript of “Anterworld” as the prototype of the self-contained physical universe she created with her machine.

Anterworld is Henry’s fictional sketched outline of a utopian world, the third world, which Rosie enters when she steps into Angela’s time machine. Once Rosie realises the world she entered is Lytten’s fiction, she starts to notice the effect of Anterworld’s intertextual references. Expressions like “[y]ou may have got that from The Wizard of Oz” (Pears 717), or Rosie telling Lytten that he “steal[s] ideas from everyone” (717) are a common occurrence. Lytten claims that almost anything he says or writes resonates with something that has been said or written before, and that his (reading) experience will shape his story no matter what (71). Knowing that stories are his passion, this remark and Rosie’s awareness, invite the reader to be aware of the fact that every word or sentence could be a possible reference. Consequently, the complexity of the novel depends on the perception of the reader; the broader your literary background, the more intricate the novel becomes. This is mainly due to its combination of apparent and cryptic textual references. Due to *Arcadia*’s textual richness, the novel is not only a perfect case study to apply the research methods of intertextuality to, but it is also a text that yet has not been academically explored.

Intertextuality is and will remain a crucial element in the attempt to better understand literature (Ahmadian and Yasdani Abstract) and is therefore important to acknowledge when reading a literary work. However, as stated by Mohammed Khosravi Shakib, the term intertextuality is almost impossible to define. Ever since Julia Kristeva is said to have

invented the term in 1966, defining intertextuality as “[s]emeiotiké: recherches pour une sémanalyse” (Kristeva), it is one of most commonly used terms in contemporary critical vocabulary (Allen 2) and often defined differently. In answer to Kristeva’s findings, Roland Barthes’ definition presents intertextuality as a reference to the “interconnectedness of cultural narratives, such that current texts refer always backward to structures and ideas contained in earlier texts” (172) including literary texts. About this interconnectedness, Culler voices that intertextuality does not focus on a work’s relation to a prior text, but on the contributory factor within the “discursive space” (1382). Whether it is a dialogue with other texts, containing an act of absorption, parody, or criticism... it all alerts one to the “artifice of literature” (1383). In *Intertextuality vs. Hypertextuality*, Michael Riffaterre implies that it is this discourse, thus the exchanges between a text and an intertext that depends on necessarily perceived signs. Especially as the level of susceptibility of the literary references depends on the perceptiveness of the reader. In order for a reader to notice and understand the discourse, Riffaterre claims that it accounts for a “reader response narrowly controlled by the text” (787) and in order for a reader to be “controlled”, proper literary communication of intertextuality is key. Even though Paul Claes adheres to the fact that readers have distinct backgrounds and thus will interpret and give meaning to texts differently, in comparison to the researchers discussed above, his approach to textual relations steers the reader and provides clarity when reading *Arcadia*. In his work *Echo’s Echo’s: De Kunst van de Allusie*, Claes voices the idea that a text’s whole body of relationships contains a universal subject (49). In combination with analysing constructive and deconstructive allusions, his approach leads to an interpretation of a text by way of exclusion (49) instead of providing multiple possible interpretations. Constructive allusions either partially or fully confirm a reference, and deconstructive allusions either partially or fully reject a reference. Claes’ approach thus obtains control of the “reader response” as Riffaterre discusses in his work (787). For

instance, the connection Lytten draws between Rosie's name and the name of Rosalind from his play *As You Like It* not only influences the reader's perception of Rosie, but also creates a bridge between *Arcadia* and Shakespeare's play. *As You Like It* is namely known to be part of the Pastoral Romance genre (Kronenfield 333) and due to this *allusion*, *Arcadia* invites the reader to recognise elements of this genre in *Anterworld* and to view Rosie as a heroine known for her intelligence and quick wit.

Due to the many definitions and forms of literary relations within intertextuality, I will use the terminology of Paul Claes, discussed in his work *Echo's Echo's: De Kunst van de Allusie*, in order to adhere to one consistent work of terminology. Claes defines the following terms: a *genotext* (architekst) as the founding text and the *phenotext* (fenotekst) as the transformed genotext; a *citation* (citaat) as an intertextual transformation that repeats the graphic and semantic aspect of the phenotext of which its function only works when identified; and an *allusion* (allusie) as a repetition of the content of a meaning in the genotext without repeating the form, which again only works when identified. Within the categories of *citations* and *allusions*, Claes exploits different kinds. For instance, both textual elements can be: *iconic*, portraying a relation of similarity with the genotext; *indexical*, portraying a relation of contiguity or adjacency with the genotext; *metaphorical*, connecting and mixing texts; *metonymical*, illuminating the relation of contiguity, the differences in particular; and *symbolic*, showing a conventional relation between texts. As mentioned before, *allusions* can both be constructive and deconstructive, meaning that they, either partially or fully, confirm or reject a textual reference.

This thesis will provide an analysis of the *allusions* between Iain Pears' *Arcadia* and *genotexts* made by the characters Henry Lytten, Angela Meerson and Rosie Wilson. Their awareness of the intertextual references invites the reader to be aware of them, to look for more, to wonder why they are important, and what they mean for the interpretation of the

story. Based on Paul Claes' method, this thesis matches the *allusions* to four universal subjects, which all embody the layered structure of the novel and invite the reader to interpret its four layers: Anterworld within *Arcadia*, *Arcadia* itself, the dystopian world, and the perception of our own world. Chapter 1 introduces Anterworld with the four universal subjects: 'the creation of worlds' which shows the world of Anterworld within *Arcadia*, 'the creation of hierarchy and power' which shows the structures within Anterworld, 'the creation of strong characters' which shows the multiple sides of Rosie and Catherine; and 'the creation of a constituted institution' which shows the future dystopian world. As the novel consists of stories within stories, the line between Lytten's Anterworld and Pears' *Arcadia* is blurred. The *allusions* can refer to either one world or both worlds at the same time. Chapter 2 consequently shows how the *allusions* refer to the second layer, *Arcadia*, as well. Chapter 3 shows how the *allusions* cast a critical eye on the workings of societies in general, including our own. In the same way as the *destructive allusions* invite the reader to reflect on the way in which the topic was handled in *Arcadia*, the topics that are broached request reflection on the standards of our own society. Especially as the Oxford timeline is very much like our own.

No scholarly articles have been written about *Arcadia*, besides the few that centre the *Arcadia App*. The research below, explaining the interpretative value of the intertextual relations in *Arcadia*, is therefore most entirely my own. The method Paul Claes introduces is one that is proposed within the field of intertextual research when interpreting a textual text. However, this thesis will explore and actualise this method when looking at Pears' *Arcadia*, showing the richness of the novel and the intertextual value when interpreting the novel.

Chapter 1

A Textual Analysis of Anterworld

1.1. The Creation of Anterworld

Creating Anterworld was a challenge to both Angela and Henry. Angela needed an outline of a plausible world that would not intercept with reality, in order for her to test her theory that there is only one linear timeline. Henry simply wanted to “construct a society that work[ed]” (Pears 11). In their process of choosing and inventing this society, the critique of other written societies is palpable and invites the reader to question how Lytten deals with the topic he is scrutinizing. Especially since Lytten claims that he can do better (65). The *allusions* to Tolkien’s and Lewis’s work I will discuss in this section hold a *deconstructive function*. By expressing the problems of Tolkien’s and Lewis’ worlds, Lytten is expected to “do better” with Anterworld (65).

Angela needed a world that was incomplete, full of imagination, but coherent, structured and most importantly, possible. According to her, modern French novels were either “too rooted in rather grim reality or increasingly obsessed with sober meditations on the pointlessness of existence,” the writers of Science Fiction “knew little science” and children’s books just “involved an awful lot of cooking” (229). When Lytten introduced her to Tolkien, she thought she had found the perfect match for her machine. However, her replica of Tolkien’s universe, *Middle Earth*, kept falling apart. Angela came to the conclusion that the first problem was the trick Tolkien plays with religion (233); not only were the moments in which the wizards could harness magical powers inconsistent (232), but Tolkien also never clarifies whether *Middle Earth’s* Gods are real. The fact that Anterworld did not fall apart invites the reader to think of their differences. Moreover, it invites the reader to think about the concept of religion in Anterworld: the divine is namely part of Anterworld’s history as well. Yet, the history of Anterworld never claims Esilio or the Giants are real, only that their

belief in them is. The world needs to be coherent and possible for the machine to work, but Angela's machine could not handle Tolkien's indecision on the matter and by trying to bring the Gods into existence, it shut itself down. The second problem was that the world was neither set in the past nor in the future of Oxford 1959 where the machine was placed. Because the two universes did not exist on the same timeline and only one can be actualised (183), either Lytten's reality, Oxford 1959, or the machine's reality, *Middle Earth*, needed to go. When comparing the problems of *Middle Earth* to Anterworld, not only the topic of religion, but also the likeliness for the world to exist is validated. Anterworld bears no indecision on the topic of religion and as Angela's fear is that Anterworld will threaten the stability of Oxford 1959 due to its realism, Anterworld's likeliness to exist is affirmed as well.

Another way in which the likelihood of Anterworld is emphasised, is through Lytten's insistence of clarifying Anterworld's apparition scene. Alluding to the world of *Narnia*, Lytten utters that Lewis tried to create a whole world, but ended up creating "only a middle-class suburb with a few swords" (Pears 66). He claims that Lewis' apparition scene was "unsatisfactory" (66) and that it lacked coherency, because it operated in a simple world where the supernatural is banished. He points out that lion Aslan is the only exception to this rule, though its reason is never clarified in *Narnia*. After an encounter with an apparition anyone would be terrified and awe-struck, according to Lytten, but the characters in *Narnia* are not surprised, not even for a brief moment: when a "beaver offered you tea, your only reaction was to specify how many lumps of sugar you wanted" (66). Lytten voices that all societies hold supernatural beliefs, but that it is the nature of the apparition that tells you about the people who see them: a "mechanical society feared mechanical things" and "a spiritual society feared spiritual things" (67). As the character of Lytten points out the flaws in *Narnia*, the reader is again encouraged to focus on these points of critique in Anterworld. The framework of Anterworld mainly unfolds without the divine and when it does it is coherent. It

is clear that Lytten's apparition is not supernatural as the appearance of Rosie is scientifically explained; Rosie accidentally steps into Angela's time machine when she tries to find Lytten's cat. However, this does not mean that Jay, who sees Rosie, does not see her as a supernatural being. When Lytten describes Jay's fearful reaction, he introduces Anterworld's fears at the same time: the reaction of Jay's mother when he tells her is nervous laughter (Pears 6) and their companion, the old widow, even prohibits Jay from speaking of what he has seen: "The sooner this is forgotten the better. You don't want a reputation for being mad, or a trickster, do you?" (8). As Lytten states that "mechanical societies fear mechanical things" (67), and Anterworld's society fears the supernatural, Anterworld is introduced as a supernatural society.

1.2. The Creation of Hierarchy and Power

The imagery, religion, and the characters' worldview evolved from Lytten's snapshot of Anterworld. However, this process only started when Rosie stepped into the time machine. When Angela explains the workings of her machine and how the world Rosie entered is actually the Professor's manuscript, Rosie starts to question the inhabitants' freedom and originality. Representing *Arcadia's* readers, Rosie exclaims: "All those people, they're just puppets? Acting out the Professor's book?" (Pears 516). Taking into account the many instances Shakespeare's work is mentioned (on page 70, 107, 108, etc.) this sentence *alludes symbolically* to Shakespeare's "[a]ll the world's a stage and all the men and women merely players" (*As you like it* Act II, Scene VII) and holds a *constructive function*. Along these lines, Lytten, being the writer of Anterworld, would have the power to change the course of the storyline and change characters' minds. However, Angela utters that she would not have been worried about Anterworld threatening the stability of Oxford's existence if the inhabitants handled on Henry's instructions alone: "[j]ust because your choice is predetermined does not

mean you do not have a free choice before you take it” (516). With this remark Angela draws a *constructive* relation with Calvinism, adding a philosophical dimension to the question of free will.

However, it is not only the power Lytten might or might not possess over Anterworld’s characters. It is important to look at the power the characters give Lytten as well. The belief system of Anterworld is namely a power structure, where scholars are the authority figures, because they can read and write, and Storytellers hold the highest position of all (256). This power structure is emphasised by the fact that there is no available literature in Anterworld other than The Story, which is the “Bible” of Anterworld:

Many of you know little about storytelling. Before I begin, let me explain. The Story is the Story of us all. If understood properly, it is of immense power. It tells you who you are, what you might expect from this life. Some believe it can foretell the future. Mastery of the Story gives you mastery over life itself.
(56)

The Story talks about the exile and the return, when men led by Esilio came back to their homeland. These biblical references to Moses and the Promised Land and the use of Esilio, *an allusion with a characterising function* to Cesare Ripa’s *Stornelli d’Esilio*, instantly substantiates the belief system of Anterworld. Moreover, the *symbolic* value of the *allusion* to Esilio keeps the subject of pilgrimage and Geoffrey Chaucer close at hand. Something I will explore further in section 2.1.

1.3. The Creation of Strong Characters: Rosie and Lady Catherine

Rosie and Lady Catherine both refuse to adhere to Anterworld's hierarchical-power-structure. Rosie's dissidence is portrayed by her quick wit, her refusal to adhere to certain standards when she does not agree, and her expression thereof. Due to her jargon, her accent, her knowledge of literature, and her anachronistic behaviour she is not only seen as a scholar by the people of Anterworld, thus a person of authority, but also as a person of intrigue. She is an *allusion* to *Narnia's* Lucy, entering an unknown world and challenging the world's customs and beliefs. She is an *allusion* to *Alice in Wonderland's* Alice, correcting people's grammar (Pears 249), questioning the workings of the world (501), and her occasional naivety despite her maturity (516). Furthermore, Rosie is an *allusion* to a Shakespearian woman. Lytten draws the connection to Rosalind from *As You Like It* by telling her that she was named after "the most perfect character in all of English Literature ... the finest of Shakespeare's inventions" (108). Rosie is bold, witty, intelligent, and optimistic and she questions the relation between men and women which is most explicitly voiced through her dressing up as the opposite sex, Ganimed (319), being a *symbolic allusion* to Shakespeare's plays in general.

Lady Catherine (Kate), on the other hand, turns out to be the one getting what she wants due to her wits, her perseverance and her dedication to her beliefs and morals. A hint of dissidence is shown when she speaks of Anterworld's rules and in her responses to Rosie's ignorance (243; 244; etc.). However, clear protest of policy is best explained when talking about her alter ego: Emily Strange. Emily is the daughter of Angela and is thus born in the future dystopian world. Her dissidence is what brought her to Anterworld, which is explained in section 1.4 below. In line with the many references to Shakespeare's works, Catherine (Kate)'s journey shows traces from Kate from "The Taming of the Shrew", providing a *metaphorical allusion* I will explore further in chapter 2.

The power of Rosie and Lady Catherine is that they both are the variables; Anterworld

only started to evolve when they entered, like a chain reaction. To clarify, Anterworld needed to exist and work like a world on its own in order for Rosie to be there. The moment Rosie entered, Anterworld started to form based on the few points from Lytten's outline. Emily entered Anterworld, under the name of Catherine, long before Rosie did. However Rosie needed to activate the world in 1959 in order for Emily to have a choice of visiting Anterworld from the future.

1.4. The Creation of a Constituted Institution: Humanity and Technology

In the future dystopian world of Angela, critique of power structures and of the hierarchy of the society is most abundant. As her theory of one linear world was not fancied by the people higher in rank, Angela was forced to escape her time. Angela's daughter, Emily Strange, also known as Catherine, was born in the future technocratic dystopia. This dystopian world is said to have a "[s]cientific Government" (Pears 43) where authority rests on a ranking system (46) and "the efficient management of society" (42). Even though Emily had "the best of everything on offer" (544), she became a renegade at the age of fifteen. Renegades are viewed as "criminals" (277) or "misfits" (278) who refuse to live according to society's rules: they refuse drugs and set themselves against society in the hope for betterment and a chance to start over. When asked why Emily chose to neglect her privileges, she responds by saying that she wanted what she could not have: "Freedom to do nothing if [she] wished, [to] say whatever [she] wanted without consequence [and] [t]o think how [she] pleased" (544). Ending up in Anterworld was not her initial idea, but it provided her with the new start she desperately wanted.

The struggle both Angela and Emily face is one that is discussed in many dystopian novels, causing *Arcadia's* future world to be viewed as one of them. Similar to Emily's take on her (dystopian) world, Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* bears the following statement "I

don't want comfort. I want God, I want poetry, I want real danger, I want freedom, I want goodness. I want sin... I'm claiming the right to be unhappy" (187). Defined by Abrams and Harpham, a dystopia is a "very unpleasant imaginary world in which ominous tendencies of our present social, political, and technological order are projected into a disastrous future culmination" (337). The dynamics of the society of 2222 and onwards, and of its rules, refer to the genre in general. For instance, the drug to suppress emotions could be seen as a version of Soma used in Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, erasing memories happens in George Orwell's *1984* and societies based on logic and reason is shown in Yevgeny Zamyatin's *We* as well as in most dystopian novels.

Chapter 2

An Interpretation of *Arcadia*

2.1. The Creation of *Arcadia*

In order to convince readers of the probability of *Arcadia*, Pears uses *allusions* and scientific research to create order in the chaos of timeframes and theories. The *allusion* to Cesare Ripa's pilgrim *Stornelli d'Esilio* paves the way to pilgrim stories, and thus consequently to Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. The *Canterbury Tales* is known to be "a collection of stories build around a frame narrative of frame tale" (Cooper). Lytten's speciality is Sir Philip Sidney (69), thereby drawing the *allusion* to Sidney's prose *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia*. Like the *Canterbury Tales*, Sidney's prose, but also Tom Stoppard's play *Arcadia*, the main identifying feature is structure; layered narratives and stories within stories. The structure of Tom Stoppard's play is said to define the "orderly disorder" (Vees-Gulani Abstract). Formulated by Steve Donoghue, "Pears steadily folds and refolds the texture of his narrative, loading it with more and more imbrications until it seems like the superstructure itself will collapse" (*Washington Post*) forming the "orderly disorder" Stoppard's play is known to contain. Related to structure, Lytten's points of critique on Agatha Christie is that he finds that "she cheats a bit by always introducing a crucial piece of evidence right at the end" (Pears 21). This remark tempts the reader to focus on Pears' ability to create a plot without the need for a solid sequence. The way in which Iain Pears proves that his crucial piece of evidence can be set anywhere in the story is proven by the *Arcadia App* Pears introduced to help read the novel. In line with developing technology and introducing new ways to enjoy reading, users of the app are constantly able to bypass the limitations of the classic linear structure of the written version of *Arcadia* (Pears *The Guardian*). Pears explains that readers "can approach the story in the most comfortable way, rather than having a structure decided for them by the author" (Donogue *Washington Post*).

2.2 The Bridge between Anterworld and *Arcadia*: Rosie and Lady Catherine

Et in Arcadia ego, a painting by Nicholas Poussin, shows shepherds clustering around a forbidden tomb. The shepherd that sees his shadow on the tomb is confronted with death, but not every shepherd understands what they are seeing. A similar situation happens to Storyteller Henary as he is confronted with the ending of his world Anterworld while reading the manuscript “The Devils Handwriting” but does not understand its meaning (Pears 248). The interesting thing is that Poussin painted two versions under the same title. According to Anthony Blunt, the difference between Poussin’s two versions lies in the fact that the first shows a reaction of “regret and disillusionment at the transitoriness of life” (96) whereas in the second version there is resignation. Jerome Klein elaborates on the second version that Poussin shows the different nature and reason of each person’s response to the discovery that has turned the group to reflection (314). Klein’s analysis of the female figure mentions her immediate understanding of the meaning behind the inscription on the tomb. Of her stance and attitude he mentions that she denotes not only “independence”, “self-composure” and “her maturity in youth”, but that she even “constitutes a new, [and] as the only erect figure in the painting, a second center in the picture” (314). Rosie’s journey in Anterworld could certainly be described as one where she matures quickly. Her independence is abundant, she is self-composed and, at first, the only one who understands and knows what Anterworld really is. As for the dynamic between Henary and Rosie; Rosie is immediately able to translate the manuscript and to figure out its meaning. This shows a similar process as stated in the two version of Poussin’s paintings; Henary first shows regret and disillusionment and after their talk it turns into resignation. Above all, Rosie is seen as a scholar and part of the prophecy, becoming a centre figure in Anterworld more and more. Another connection between Rosie and the woman in Poussin’s painting is that during her time in Anterworld, Rosie encounters a “clearly maintained hole in the undergrowth” with two stone columns on

either side (Pears 416). Bones are sticking out of rotten meat (418) portraying a tomb or death cave. When Rosie departs Anterworld, she is split in two where one version of her stays in Anterworld and one is back in Oxford. The title of the painting is often translated as “I, too, was born, or lived in Arcady” (Louis 112) and clearly, so was Rosie and so did she.

In the latter version of Poussin’s painting, one of the shepherds recognises the shadow of his companion on the tomb and circumscribes the silhouette with his finger. This act is seen as the discovery of art as a creative response of humankind to the shocking fact of mortality (Becht-Jördens et al. 181), namely seeing once own shadow reflected on a tomb. Here, art is named to be symbolised by the beautifully dressed maiden and both Rosie and Lady Catherine are described as women of “unmatched beauty and elegance” (Pears 257) multiple times in the novel. Being one of the first to see the mortality of her own world, Emily’s response to this shocking fact is to flee to Anterworld, where she becomes Catherine. Like Rosie, Catherine alludes to a Shakespearian woman, namely Kate from *The Taming of the Shrew*. Feminist critics interpreted the character of Kate as the winner of Shakespeare’s piece. Coppélia Kahn stated the plays as a satire of how men see women and that Kate is an independent woman that does not want to adhere to the expectations of the patriarchal society (*The Woman’s Part* 77). Kate is said to be sarcastic in her last speech as she pretends to be tamed. Similar to the play, Oldmarter thinks he tricked Emily by sending her to Anterworld, but Emily is actually the one who tricked him knowing the inner workings of the machine all too well. The idea that Kate needs to be tamed to learn her position is translated in *Arcadia* by the ritual of the Abasement, when Catherine is stripped of her power and called Kate (Pears 385). Additionally, her home in Willdon can be seen as a reference to where Shakespeare’s play was performed for the first time: Willton. As discussed in 1.3, both Rosie and Lady Catherine are the variables that influence how Anterworld was formed. Rosie’s influence is clear as every inhabitant of Anterworld seems to be shaken or perplexed by her anachronistic

behaviour. Catherine on the other hand is by then already part of the world. Catherine's influence on the direction Anterworld takes is expressed by Lytten when he tells Angela that he finds it odd that almost everything in Anterworld happened because of Catherine. Especially as Lytten never wrote for character Catherine to have this influence (682).

Chapter 3

Arcadia: An Invitation to Question the Perception of Our Society

3.1 The Importance of Perception

In his explanation of the apparition, Lytten cites Francis Hutcheson's "[a]n Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue" (Pears 94). The function of this citation is *symbolic* as it gestures towards the notion that the apparition only exists in the mind of the person seeing it. In Hutcheson's theory, written during the Scottish Enlightenment, he wondered why people questioned the existence of "internal senses", because in his opinion, they were just as prominent as the "external" ones, like seeing and hearing (Hutcheson 9). Hutcheson defines the "internal sense" as a "passive power" of perceiving the ideas of beauty and harmony (16). His view explains how seeing an apparition does not question reality, but what reality is to the person who sees it. The importance of perception is a recurrent theme in Pears' *Arcadia*. When Rosie steps into Anterworld, she quickly realises that if she wants to understand its inhabitants and their views, she needs to learn why they perceive their world the way they do. In order for the reader to understand the intricacies of *Arcadia* they need to perceive the worlds from different viewpoints as well. The viewpoints of the main characters in *Arcadia* are the following, seeing *Arcadia* through a lens of belief, storytelling, faith or science. Though, these concepts are closely connected in *Arcadia*; the characters whom cling to these concepts change their perspective during the novel. Angela realises there is a whole world besides science; Henry realises that fictional does not necessarily mean that it is not real; all the characters encounter the importance of storytelling, and Rosie encounters the importance of belief. For instance, when Rosie claims that fairies do not exist, Lytten responds by saying that even though scientists would say they do not, believing in something can make it so (Pears 22). With this remark he *constructively* and *metaphorically* alludes to the conversation Alice has with the Queen of Hearts in Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*:

“‘One can’t believe impossible things.’ I daresay you haven’t had much practice, ... I’ve believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast” (127). The importance of belief is a theme broadly explored and exemplified by *Anterworld’s Story* and Rosie quickly realises that *Anterworld’s* founding is based on its inhabitant’s belief in this Story.

3.2. The Need for Time and Structure

Arcadia constantly plays with the concept of time and structure. Angela’s fear of our reality’s demise encourages a need for the reader to be aware of why we should, and quickly.

However, to figure this out, we need the whole picture, we need to know everyone and everything as it is all interwoven. We need every strand of storyline, and thus time, but we do not have the time. The timeline of *Arcadia* is never explained, but we do learn about time travel, about the various worlds and meanwhile, we hear different contradictory understandings of the perception of time by the characters in *Arcadia*. The time Rosie spends in *Anterworld* is not even a third of the time that passes in Oxford 1959 when she was away; Henry seems to view time as a concept where past and present are the same, portrayed by his saying to Rosie that we “are our past, my dear” (Pears 107). Future villain Zoffany Oldmaster views time as his enemy and never seems to have enough. Even the phenomenon of time travel is questioned when Angela claims the term to be an “unfortunate hangover” (185). According to Angela, time travel “has nothing to do with either travel or time” (185).

Nevertheless, there is a purpose to this orderly-disorder, because *Arcadia* deliberately plays with our need to impose an artificial order on things when we try to understand something. Angela explains that “this is the only way that such an inadequate instrument as our brain can function”: We simplify everything and put everything in an artificial order so we can deal with them one at a time, rather than all at once (685). The only people who are capable of dealing with the complexity of reality and thus grasp the essential non-existence of time are

children and people with dementia as they have no concept of time and live in the “ever-present now” (686). Angela concludes that the way we interpret things is learnt (685). The gist of this example is that, unconsciously, society influences our way of interpretation. Consequently, it encourages us to think in which ways this is applicable to our society.

3.3. Comparing Our World to a Dystopia

The reason Henry wants to construct his own society is because he wants to build “a better one” than the one we already have (Pears 11). Henry’s goal is to modify the outline of his world until it becomes “capable of dealing with the feeble creatures that are men without collapsing into a nightmare as bad as [ours]” (12). His friend responds by saying that “a perfect society requires perfect people [and that they] are always a terrible disappointment” (11) which is emphasised by Angela: “Never underestimate the ability of humanity to mess things up” (351). The future world, 2222 and onwards, is presented as a nightmare. This world, where technology has become important enough for society to form a technocratic society in combination with stimulants and advertisements, encourages the reader to think about the similarities with our society. When Henry tells Angela about the manuscript of his colleague Persimmon, saying that it is extraordinarily like the world she describes the future to be, Angela falls silent as Persimmon’s story is about “hell on earth” (683), “the perfect technocratic society” (683). His description is so closely related to the dystopian future, that most readers of *Arcadia* will respond like Angela: “[n]ow ... you’re just trying to give me a headache” (683). Yet, despite the way *Arcadia* plays with time and structure, it does not undermine the credibleness of Anterworld. As the reader struggles to comprehend the inner workings of time, time travelling and the creation of other dimensions, Angela is right there with us questioning whether there is a need for willing suspension of disbelief. At the same time, the reader is conflicted with the possibility that Persimmon’s future and thus Oxford’s future, is not unlikely to become our own.

Conclusion

Arcadia by Iain Pears is a complex novel where interestingly the range of complexity depends on the perception and literary knowledge of the reader. The critique of other written societies is palpable. In combination with Lytten's claim that he can do better (65), points of critique, encourage the reader to question if and how *Arcadia* did better. *Arcadia* demands a heightened focus on the story and its structure from the reader, due to its many storylines, characters and timeframes. However, the *allusions* clarify this intricate novel. Due to the *deconstructive allusions* to Tolkien's and Lewis' worlds and the way in which Lytten partially rejects how they handled the topic of belief in their work, *Arcadia* creates a platform for itself to convince the reader it did not make the same mistake and that in comparison to *Middle Earth* and *Narnia*, *Anterworld* is more likely to exist. The *deconstructive allusion* to Agatha Christie's work shows his mastery of sequence and order. The *constructive allusions*, for instance to dystopian novels, fully or partially confirm the relation between the *genotext* and the *fenotext* and steer the reader in its interpretation of the future world and how it came to be. Consequently, the reader draws connections and encounters similarities and differences between the texts. As certain *allusions* are pointed out by the characters in the novel, the reader knows, if perceived and understood, that there is a textual relation between *Arcadia* and the alluded text and that it will either deepen or broaden the storyline or the character in question. The allusion to *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia* for instance is a paratextual reference, yet noticed by the character Henry in the novel. While the references broaden the literary scope of interpreting the novel, hidden references such as Nicholas Poussin's painting, but also the *allusions* to, for instance, Alice, Lucy, Rosalind and Kate contribute to a better understanding of the characters. The method of Paul Claes helped structuralise the *allusions* by matching the topics to four universal subjects. *Arcadia* plays with time, structure, perception, and *allusions* and due to the categorisation of subjects, these concepts can be

interpreted as different categories that both stand on its own, but also influence and strengthen each other. The *allusions* to Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, Stoppard's play and *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia* all illuminate the structure of the narrative of *Arcadia*. Moreover, the intertextual critique calls for reflection on more levels than Anterworld. As the novel consists of stories within stories, the line between worlds is blurred; Henry's Anterworld urges to reflect on Pears' *Arcadia* as well. The characters of Rosie and Lady Catherine help understand and help connect these worlds. The intertextual relations also encourages to reflect on our own worldview; our perception of time and belief, the working of our society and what we deem more important: technology or humanity.

Nevertheless, the focus on only those four subjects is also a limitation as the novel calls for many more. Future research may focus on a deeper exploration of dystopian terminology, use of technology, the conflict between fact and emotions and the topic of morality in the layer of the future dystopia. A whole different topic can be the importance of storytelling. *Arcadia* is a utopia of stories and every world has their own interpretation of what storytelling is. The importance of storytelling for the structure of *Arcadia* and for its characters is one that can be explored further. As only the textual relations that develop or modify the semiotic, meaning-bearing side of the understanding of *Arcadia* are mentioned in this thesis, another topic may be the effect the textual activities in *Arcadia* have on the *genotexts*. Further research can also focus on a more thorough exploration of the various layers of *Arcadia*, for instance the *James Bond*-like storyline of the novel or the romantic one. A topic already widely explored in the empirical research field, but still difficult to grasp, is to gain knowledge of the perceptiveness of readers while encountering the *allusions* in *Arcadia*. Mainly because the *allusions* only fully influence the reader's interpretation when noticed and considered. Questions such as when do readers notice a reference and how broad should their knowledge be in order for them to notice that a intertextual reference was made must still be

asked. In turn, research can discover the influence of the levels of perceptiveness when interpreting *Arcadia*. In turn, this will elaborate further on my thesis as it will discover of the importance of honouring the richness of the novels intertextual dimension even more.

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