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Suspense in Narrative Poetry: How formal and story-related elements create suspense in Christina Rossetti's *Goblin Market*

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Esta tesis se la dedico a mi familia, pero especialmente a mis padres. Muchas gracias por todo.

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Introduction

The idea for this Master's thesis arose after writing a seminar paper on the same topic, titled *How formal and story-related elements create suspense in Samuel T. Coleridge's The Rime of the Ancient Mariner (2020)*. During the research process, it became evident that though there were plenty of sources available regarding suspense across media¹, comparably little had been written about suspense in poetry. This apparent neglect, aside from being inconvenient, was also surprising, for while there might be an explanation as to why lyric is not present in this field, there is no such explanation for narrative poetry's absence: for suspense is all the more present in stories where *things happen* (hence the studies of suspense in thrillers, horror and crime novels), and narrative poetry is characteristically eventful. Partly responsible for this apparent neglect may be the controversial conflation of lyric with poetry as a whole. Lyric is, after all, in comparison to narrative poetry, characteristically lacking in eventfulness.

- Example: *Who Has Seen the Wind?* By Christina Rossetti²

Who has seen the wind?
Neither I nor you:
But when the leaves hang trembling,
The wind is passing through.

Who has seen the wind?
Neither you nor I:
But when the trees bow down their heads,
The wind is passing by.

If one compares this poem by Rossetti with her poem *Goblin Market*, it becomes clear why the latter would be considered suspenseful, while the other would not. If one were to know only the former type, it would explain why suspense studies would focus on other text types.

¹ See Cadera et al 2014, Indrusiak 2018., Irsigler et al 2008; Vorderer et al. 1996

² All the poems cited in this paper are taken from the website *Poetry Foundation*, unless noted otherwise. <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/43197/who-has-seen-the-wind> [Last accessed: 10.10.2022]

The aim of this thesis is to identify which formal and story-related elements contribute to suspense in Christina Rossetti's *Goblin Market*. By formal elements, I refer to those in the discourse – the expression of the content (Chatman 19) – among which belong genre, narrator, structure, intertextual patterns and the language. Under story-related elements are those that belong in the level of story – the content itself (ibid) -, these are the events, characters, and narrative space. Of these, events are the most important one, for they mark the points where suspense reaches a peak and is what – supposedly – separates narrative from lyric. Once the events are identified, the tracking of the other contributory elements becomes easier as well.

This thesis is divided into two parts. The first offers a definition of suspense, outlining all those elements that must be present to develop it. Here, among the key sources are Donald Beecher's article *Suspense* (2007), Geir Farnes's *Literary Fiction: The Ways We Read Narrative Literature* (2014), and Peter Vorderer's *Suspense: Conceptualizations, Theoretical Analyses, and Empirical Explorations* (1996), as well as Mieke Bal's *Narratology* (1985).

Having once defined what suspense is, the paper moves on to discussing whether lyric can be suspenseful, and why reducing the answer to “yes or no” does the entire genre a disservice. Here, Werner Wolf's theory (2020) is compared to Jonathan Culler (2008, 2017) and Peter Hühn's (2005) theories of lyric. The approaches of the latter two are opposite to each other, while Wolf appears to offer a compromise. Both lyric and narrative, though they each have elements characteristic for each, need to be seen in terms of gradience: the higher the lyricality of a poem, the less likely suspense is to develop, since eventfulness is not characteristic of lyric, and events can be completely absent from it. Nonetheless, as will be shown, eventfulness does not belong among the characteristic features of lyric, a conclusion which has repercussions on the study of suspense. Narrative poetry, on the other hand, does not have that issue, as it seems to combine the “principles of poetry and of story telling in a way that must be basic to both arts.” (Ciardi 685)

The second part of this thesis focusses on which formal and story-related elements create suspense in *Goblin Market*. It begins with an analysis of the story-related elements and ends with the formal elements. The choice behind this order is not arbitrary. Given the importance of events in identifying high points of suspense, it seemed practical to discuss the story-related elements before the others. Events are

thus at the beginning. Yet their separation is but a result of this analysis: it is not natural. It is their interplay that generates suspense – that gives expression to the content in the first place. Therefore, many findings will overlap: dialogues cannot be separated from characters, just as the narrator affects the perception of the events.

Moreover, in order to understand the complexity of the development of suspense, and the variety of forms it can take, comparisons to both poems – lyric and narrative alike – and prose fiction are made. The aim is to give the reader an impression of poetry's reach, with the hope that it will encourage others to attempt a similar approach to expand what little has been done to fill the gap in the field of suspense studies. Much more can be learned by studying the way suspense is built in poetry – after all, the literary canon has a multitude of material at a disposal.

Part I: The Theory

1. On Suspense

Suspense is a feeling of uncertainty towards the outcome of a story or towards the development of that outcome (Beecher 255; Farner 273) and depends on two things: the interplay between the formal (narrator, structure, and language) and story-related elements (events, characters, and space) within the text, and the reader's willingness to engage with the text (Farner 273). Moreover, suspense is dynamic in nature: it increases and decreases as the story unfolds and must thus not be confused with tension with its static and opposing abstract principles (Borgmeier and Wenzel 22).

This definition of suspense requires several explanations.

➔ Two types of suspense

Farner distinguishes between result-oriented and process-oriented suspense (Farner 273-274), referring to stories where the ending is known beforehand, and those where it is not. The structure of the story will differ according to the type. The main difference between them is, naturally, that of expectations. If one reads a novel like *Watership Down* (1972) by Richard Adams, the outcome of the rabbits' adventures remains uncertain until the end. In *Crónica de una muerte anunciada* (1981) by Gabriel García Márquez, however, the fate of the protagonist is announced in the very first line of the novel, and yet suspense is no less present as the narrative builds up towards that known outcome. In this case, the question is not *what* will happen, but rather *how* it will happen.

➔ The relationship between the text and the audience

Suspense is a two-sided phenomenon: it is both objectively trackable in the text, and a feeling readers experience while reading that text (Irsigler et al. 8, Beecher 255). The text contains "emotion prompts" (Beecher 258) which ideally the reader picks up on and reacts to accordingly. Hans J. Wulff explains that the audience takes that information and combines it with their pre-existing knowledge "about life, physics, and psychology in general, but also about genres and modes of narrative" (Wulff in Vorderer et al. 1) to draw links between events and form predictions as to the development of the story. In that sense,

the experience of suspense follows a strategy of referential showing and is thus always orientated to the text. Viewers cannot free themselves completely from the text – despite the importance that the workings of the imagination have for the experience of suspense. In fact, viewers are always being led back into that domain of controlled information. (4)

Audiences' engagement is important if the text has to have its intended effect, but if the text does not contain the elements necessary for suspense to build, then it will remain ineffective regardless.

➔ The Paradox of Suspense

With the relation between the construction of the text and the audience's subjective experiences explained, another issue comes to mind, namely that of the connection between suspense and uncertainty. Noel Carroll rightly points out that audiences and readers still feel suspense after multiple re-watches and re-reads (Carroll in Vorderer et al. 71). This, however, seems to contradict what suspense supposedly is: a feeling of uncertainty. How can audiences still feel suspense if they already know the story?

To state the paradox involved here at greater length, we may begin with the assumption that, conceptually, suspense entails uncertainty. Uncertainty is a necessary condition for suspense. When suspense is removed from a situation, suspense evaporates. Putatively, if we come to know that the heroine will not be sawed in half, or that she will be, then we should no longer feel suspense. Moreover, if a situation lacks uncertainty altogether, no sense of suspense can intelligibly arise. It would be irrational for people to feel suspense in such contexts. [And yet,] consumers of fiction find themselves in the enjoyable hold of suspense while responding to stories, read, heard, or seen previously, whose outcomes they remember with perfect clarity (72-73)

I offer an explanation for this paradox. One needs to keep in mind one essential element of suspense: the audience's participation. The story may be, objectively, the best-crafted thriller in human existence, but if the readers or viewers are unwilling to let themselves be *immersed* in the story, then the text will not have its intended effect. Wulff is right about the "controlled information" (Wulff in Vorderer et al. 4) guiding the readers through the story, but it is their willingness to suspend disbelief, and to take that information and do something with it – that is, "calculating, expecting, and evaluating a coming event" (1) – that allows the prompts to be effective.

1.1. Suspense and Immersion

So far in the process of explaining what suspense is and what elements come into play, I have mentioned the audience's willingness to immerse itself in the story to be

essential. Here, some clarifications as to the definition of immersion and its distinction to suspense is necessary.

Immersion is not suspense. Immersion is not dependent on suspense, but immersion is a prerequisite for suspense to form. Marie-Laure Ryan (2000) describes this phenomenon as the absorption of the reader's consciousness into the textual world (Ryan 89-90), where s/he can lose him/herself in it (Ryan 93-95). Though not real, the text itself creates a space in which the reader "can relate" (Ryan 14) and in which a plot can develop.

The textual world, as the term implies, is created through the interplay of formal and story-related elements. Ryan lists four as essential in generating this world: objects and individuals, a space where these can interact, and a "field of activity for its members" (91). These elements are reminiscent of those that were previously listed as relevant for suspense, but this does not diminish the distinction between these two phenomena. It is understandable that they would interlap since immersion is a prerequisite for suspense.

1.2. Suspense and Tension

Tension, according to Peter Wenzel, is generated by the "*Gegensatz zwischen verschiedenen Bedeutungsmustern oder eine Spannung zwischen zwei kognitiven Ebenen*" (Borgmeier and Wenzel 22). These oppositional schemata or elements can be, for example, good against evil, man against nature or against society; it can be between two different ideologies.

Tension thus establishes the central themes of the story and determines what questions the story will strive to answer. This makes tension static – contrary suspense, which is dynamic because it increases and decreases with each turning point. This leads to believe that tension is also a prerequisite for the development of suspense. In establishing the main components of the story, the reader can make predictions according to the familiar pattern of these elements. In a story about good against evil, that question will be about which side prevails; in a romance novel, tension is generated through the male love interest and the woman, the question in this case is "will they, won't they." Once the tension is resolved (in this case, good perseveres; man and woman get together) the conflict between these two oppositional elements has been resolved, and with this resolution, so does suspense also begin to wane.

1.3. Other contributing factors of suspense

Above, I have established suspense to be as much an objective textual construct as well as a subjective feeling. Immersion cannot be measured, because it is something each reader will experience individually, but the elements that encourage it can be identified and analysed. The same applies to suspense. The “emotion prompts”, to borrow Beecher’s term, are incorporated in the text and can thus be detected in the analysis. These prompts are the formal (narrator, structure, language) and story-related elements (characters, events, space).

The question that remains is how one approaches the analysis of how a text develops suspense. That it is prompted by these elements means that its development can be traced simply by identifying them. But where does one begin? First, it is important to find out how suspense is oriented in the story – is it result-oriented or process-oriented? This can be done by identifying how it begins and how it ends. When one reads *Crónica de una muerte anunciada*, it becomes clear from the first page onward that the suspense in this novel is process-oriented – it is about the “getting there” to that expected outcome. Now that this aspect has been clarified, one begins a closer analysis aware that the story’s structure is oriented towards the development of that expected outcome.

The second step is identifying the events in the story. Suspense is dynamic, meaning that it fluctuates as the story develops, and these fluctuations can be traced by pinpointing exactly when a “turning point” (Hühn and Schönert in Hühn and Kiefer 7) is reached. Following this step, identifying the role the other elements play in building suspense becomes easier.

1.4. The role of story-related elements

a) Events

Events have previously been mentioned to be the driving force of suspense, and the elements most useful for tracking suspense in a narrative. An event represents a change - a “deviation from the expected continuation of the sequence pattern”; a “turning point” (Hühn and Schönert 7). Schmid offers a list of features that an event must fulfil. Most notably is that events must really occur in the story-world, that is, the events must not be imagined nor wishful thinking from a character, but real occurrences that affect the characters and the world they live in: this applies, also, to the consequences of those

events. Secondly, an event must be irreversible and unrepeatable, and finally, it must be relevant for the characters (Schmid 320-322).

Regarding suspense and the role of events, William F. Brewer remarks that

suspense is produced by including an initiating event or situation [...].The initiating event causes the reader to become concerned about the potential consequences for the character, the intervening material prolongs the suspense, and the eventual occurrence of the outcome resolves the suspense. (Brewer in Vorderer et al 113)

Two things this quote points out: the connection between suspense and events, and the connection between events and the readership. The reader needs to grow concerned over the potential outcome(s); s/he needs to grow invested in the characters. How can the reader grow concerned if ‘nothing happens’ to arouse worry or fear? The initiating event creates the conflict that will endure until the end; meanwhile, the characters must suffer, must overcome one obstacle after the other. This encourages emotional investment in the reader, and the more invested the reader becomes, the stronger the suspense can be.

Events contains the two other central story-related elements: character and narrative space. Events need to take place *somewhere*, and so do characters need a world where they can ‘live’ in, and characters usually cause the events, or are the ones most affected by them.

b) Characters

The events must happen to, and affect, *somebody*. This somebody need not be human. It is neither necessary that the protagonist be responsible for the events, nor is it necessary that the reader identify with, or even approve of the character’s actions, though some level of empathy and investment is still necessary (Beecher 260, 269). To develop emotional investment, the character needs to be fleshed out to some extent. The first step is to clarify the character’s goals (269). In the case of Cinderella, it is to go to the ball undetected; in the case of *Emma* (1816) by Jane Austen, it is to find a suitable match for her acquaintances.

Furthermore, “characters can be described through four different types of information: (1) inner qualities (personality, background, attitudes, views, inclinations), (2) appearance, (3) the physical objects they surround themselves with and (4) physical and verbal actions.” (Farner 156) Snow White, for example, is described to be “so schön, wie der klare Tag, und schooner als die Königin selbst” (*Märchen* 64); Emma,

on the other hand, is described by the narrator to be “handsome, clever, and rich, with a comfortable home and happy disposition [...] and had lived nearly twenty-one years in the world with very little to distress or vex her.” (Austen 414) One can be considered a flat character, the other a round character, but whether a character is round or flat says little about the quality of the story, and rather more about the type of story they are in. Flat characters typically have only “one or a few features, of which one in particular is dominant” (Farner 171), while round characters cannot be described with only a few characteristics. Another contrast is that round characters go through a character arc, a development, while flat characters usually remain static. Hence, flat characters are more common in fairy tales, while round characters are prevalent in novels. *Snow White* is a fairy tale, and her beauty is that one feature which causes all the conflict. She remains the same from beginning to end. Emma, however, is the protagonist of a novel, and she must face a number of conflicts before she eventually changes. One may prefer one over the other, but neither one is more valuable than the other, because they are different stories of different genres.

Given that events are crucial for suspense to develop and that events are caused by characters or affect them directly, it is clear that at least one character must play a role in building suspense – regardless of his/her complexity. The first thing that needs to be clarified is how involved the characters are in the events of the story. Do they trigger the initiating event? Do they bring about the closure? Are they directly affected by the events? How do they stand in relation to other characters? Even the complexity of the character is significant and must be taken into consideration when analysing suspense.

c) Narrative Space

Narrative space is the “physically existing environment in which characters live and move” (Ryan “Space”, Paragraph 5) and is intrinsically connected to events, as “space is always implicitly necessary for every activity performed by a character.” (Bal 97-98). Ryan proposes several terms to describe the various levels of narrative space: narrative universe, story world, story space, setting and spatial frames. Of these, only setting and spatial frames are relevant to the discussion of narrative space’s role in developing suspense.

Setting is the overall geographical, cultural, historical environment of the story and “embraces the entire text.” (Ryan Paragraph 7). Spatial frames, on the other hand, are “the immediate surroundings of actual events” (Paragraph 6), and thus can change

from scene to scene. Together, spatial frames and setting encompass the overall story space – “the space relevant to the plot” (Paragraph 8).

It is noteworthy that of all three story-related elements, narrative space is perhaps the only element that does not need to be described or explicitly referred to in order for it to exist. This is because both characters and events need a place to exist in, and in the case where the location has not been indicated, readers will, in most cases, “supply one.” (Bal 43)

- Example:

“Alice went hiking with her dog.”

The word “hiking” immediately comes with connotations. Usually, people do not go hiking in cities or suburbs, it is thus highly likely that the reader will picture a landscape as a spatial frame when s/he reads that “Alice went hiking with her dog.” The narration of one action automatically creates the necessity of a space.

That narrative space is an element that needs not to be referred to or described in any detail raises the question whether it is even essential for building suspense. To reiterate, narrative space is essential to story, because the events need to unfold somewhere, just as the characters who inhabit the story need a world in which they can exist, but an explicit mention of its characteristics is not necessary. However, how can space build suspense if the reader has only the bare elements of space (e.g., “a street”, “a house”; “a room”) in mind? Here we return to the “domain of controlled information” (Wulff in Vorderer et al. 4) and must distinguish between two types of uses space can have in a narrative: that of “an acting place” or a “place of action.” (Bal 95) Space “influences the [story], and the [story] becomes subordinate to the presentation of space. The fact that ‘*this* is happening here’ is just as important as ‘the way it is here’, which allows these events to happen.” (95-96). As such, it leads to believe that space can indeed add to suspense, so long as it actively included in the turn of events.

Let us return to the above example of an inferred spatial frame.

- Example 1:

“Alice went hiking with her dog.”

The space is inferred by the action. Fleshing it out with more specific characteristics and including “the senses which are especially involved in the perception of space” (Bal 94) may create a feeling of suspense.

- Example 2:

“Alice went hiking with her dog. After an hour of walking through the meadow, the wind turned and began to howl. The sky darkened. It began to rain, first lightly and then heavily, until she could no longer see.”

The spatial frame receives one explicit characteristic– “the meadow”. This gives the reader a more specific understanding of where this scene is taking place. Every other element mentioned is related to change - events are turning points; some type of change is thus needed. In this example, the weather turns from sunny (as is implied by “The sky darkened”) to cloudy and it begins to rain. The rain impedes Alice’s field of vision. The removal of one of the senses of a character creates suspense, because her perception is affected and thus leaves her vulnerable to possible dangers present in the narrative space.

The example is meant to show a possible approach to analysing how suspense can create suspense. The first step is to identify where the events are taking place, as these are the points where suspense culminates. Tracing back, one can study how the space is affected by the upcoming event or vice-versa, and how it is described: what references are included in the text, how often is a spatial frame mentioned? Is it used to foreshadow a change? Is the image expanded as the event unfolds? And which characteristics are emphasised? These are the questions one must keep in mind when discussing narrative space’s role in building suspense.

1.5. The role of formal elements

a) The narrator

Including the narrator among the formal elements requires some justification, for there are a great number of narratives where the narrator is also the protagonist. Is a division between the two in cases like these justifiable or even possible? It is, because the narrator manages the exposition, “who decides what is to be told, how it is to be told (especially, from what point of view, and in what sequence), and what is to be left out. If necessary, the narrator will defend the ‘tellability’ (1.5) of the story (Labov 1972) and comment on its lesson, purpose, or message.” (Jahn 27).

In contrast to this, a character is a “text- or media-based figure in a story world, usually human or human-like.” (Jannidis Paragraph 1) In other words, the narrator can be alternated, but the character remains a fixed element of the story. An example is Rick Riordan’s *Percy Jackson and the Olympians*. The five novels are narrated by the protagonist Percy Jackson, but while the narrator could be changed for a different narrator (the villain, for example), Percy Jackson’s status as a character would not be affected.

The change in narrator inevitably comes with a change in perception. Through the narrator, the readers get to know the characters, the events are understood through a particular perspective. One character may be perceived as a villain if narrated by another particular character; and changing the narrators in a case like this might either confirm or debunk this perception. This perception is connected to suspense, because depending on the type of narrator, more or less about the events and the world they occur in will be known. In the case of Percy Jackson, he is unaware of many events that go on outside his field of perception, and consequently, so is the reader. But this does not mean that a first-person overt narrator is preferable to a third-person covert narrator. In the case of *Watership Down*, the third-person covert narrator allows the reader a peak into many other significant characters’ opinions and motivations. This change in focus can build suspense by increasing the emotional investment in other characters (and thus secure their significance in the narrative), and by letting the readers know about important facts or upcoming events before the characters themselves (dramatic irony) (Konstantakos and Liotsakis 7). In the case of the latter, it allows the readers to adjust their expectations and predictions.

b) Narrative Structure

That the narrator is an influential factor in how a story is perceived brings up the matter of structure. The former does have influence over the latter, because the scope of knowledge of the character means that more or less is revealed at different points (Konstantakos and Liotsakis 4). In fact, the choice of the order in which the events are narrated is crucial to suspense, because it determines how it will be developed. If the suspense is result-oriented, the story might begin at the very start of the journey, if it is oriented towards the development of the outcome, then the story might begin in the middle or after the events have transpired. Either way, measures will be taken to create suspense in both types.

Another aspect of structure is that of duration. Duration refers to the time in which the story transpires. There is duration on the story-level (how much time the story actually takes), and duration on the discourse-level, that is, how much space an event occupies in the text. Duration includes the element of time, as well. There is discourse-time and story-time. Within story-time, things can happen which the author may choose to leave out of the narrative out of necessity: spending too much “time” on the description of a zoo, for example, may be counter-productive, while skipping the morning routine of the main character (through a summary or an ellipsis) only to slow down as the story approaches a turning point, may increase suspense. Specific sequences in the story are given more or less attention for a reason.

c) Patterns

Part of suspense is the “calculating, expecting, and evaluating a coming event” (Vorderer et al. 1), this is done by taking the information in the text and connecting them to the most probable (logical) outcome. When a text offers a sentence like this: “Alice tried parking on top of a hill, but the brakes were not working”, the reader can accurately predict that the car will start rolling down the hill it drove up before, simply by being aware of the laws of nature. This, Beecher coined “Pattern awareness” (Beecher 265). Patterns do not just refer to the laws of nature and societal and historical norms, but also to “genres and modes of narrative” (Vorderer et al. 1); this also includes archetypes, intertextual references and genre conventions. To identify these patterns is important, because it does not just reveal their role in the narrative but also helps the reader in predicting what is to come.

d) Language

It is tempting to neglect the importance of language in the building of suspense, because elements like the narrator, the structure and the characters have a tendency to overshadow the others. But words individually carry meaning – put together that meaning is expanded, asserted: it becomes impactful. Language is capable of creating entire worlds.

In the metaphor of the text as world, the text is apprehended as a window on something that exists outside language and extends in time and space well beyond the window frame. To speak of a textual world means to draw a distinction between a realm of language, made of names, definite descriptions, sentences, and propositions, and an extralinguistic realm of characters, objects, facts, and states of affairs serving as

referents to the linguistic expressions. [...] The function of language in this activity is to pick objects in the textual world, to link them with properties, to animate characters and setting—in short, to conjure their presence to the imagination. (Ryan 91)

In no other genre is language “so consistently forced beyond its communicative limits” (Müller-Zettelmann and Rubik 7) than in poetry. It is not just that one word may be given multiple meanings, but everything else – from the arrangement of the syllables to rhyme, and the structuring into verses and stanzas – heightens the meaning sought by the poet. I use ‘sought by’ consciously – the poet seeks to convey something, be it an impression, a feeling, a message, but while some aspects may be under his/her control (as the stanzas, verses and rhymes), other layers of meaning may be added unconsciously (Habscheid 31).

Additionally, the full combination of the words in a poem, lines, rhyme, stanzas, all put together, may create not just an atmosphere, but be the iconicity itself (See Hösle 673-699). In other words, poetry is a “two-directional process: first, certain meanings are transferred to a sound pattern, and then the tone of this sound pattern, coloured by such meanings, is transferred back to the level of meaning.” (Hrushovski 42) Perhaps an example will illustrate this best.

- Example: *The Bells* by Edgar Allan Poe:

Hear the sledges with the bells—

Silver bells!

What a world of merriment their melody foretells!

How they tinkle, tinkle, tinkle,

In the icy air of night!

While the stars that oversprinkle

All the heavens, seem to twinkle

With a crystalline delight;

Keeping time, time, time,

In a sort of Runic rhyme,

To the tintinabulation that so musically wells

From the bells, bells, bells, bells,

Bells, bells, bells—

From the jingling and the tinkling of the bells. (V1-14)

For elucidation as to the multiple layers involved in conveying a message (in this case, the impression of bells), I offer here a brief analysis of the first stanza. Linguistically, there is a common saying: “For whom the bell tolls”. “Toll” is a verb and means to sound a bell; but figuratively, “for whom the bell tolls” means that, in essence, death is inevitable and will come for everyone. The meaning is figuratively communicated: the bell tolls when a particular hour has been reached – it announces not just the hour, but also the passing of time.

To return to a less morbid topic, “toll” is a verb connected to bells, which is connected to time. Toll in both sound and spelling is very similar to “tell”. Tell means to communicate something to another – “foretell”, the word with which the third line of *The Bells* ends, means to predict something, that is, to reach forward in time. Another layer of meaning is given through “tinkle, tinkle, tinkle” (V4). “Tinkle” is not just an onomatopoeic word, its repetition is meant to reflect the tolling of the bells, as does the repetition of the word “bells” itself in lines 12-13. In short, the words used are not just chosen to depict a particular characteristic of the bells (time, and the passing of it), they are also chosen for their sound, because it is attributed to the meaning and characteristic of the topic and vice-versa. The meaning is enhanced with the sound pattern.

This example means to show how language can work in poetry. It is not just the words as a semantic unit that creates meaning, but also the sound pattern that the combination of sounds creates. In a narrative poem like *Goblin Market*, it is then not just a matter of who speaks but also about *how* is spoken.

2. Can Poetry be Suspenseful? Lyric vs Narrative Poetry

It has been emphasised several times that suspense is reliant on events. Thrillers, adventure, crime, and even romance novels are suspenseful *because* they are eventful. This would explain the number of studies on suspense in, for example, Edgar Allan Poe's short stories (See Indrusiak 2018), Alfred Hitchcock's oeuvre (Indrusiak 2018, Stiegler 2011), and crime novels (See Cadera et al. 2014). Poetry is notably absent in suspense-studies – with the exception of Konstantakos and Liotsakis' *Suspense in Ancient Greek Literature*, which was only published in 2021. However, its chapters on Ancient Greek poetry are about the Homeric epics and hymns, the latter which, "despite having a shorter narrative component" (Konstantakos and Liotsakis 74) is still nonetheless eventful. Lyric poetry – the type of poetry that strives to "be an event rather than the representation of an event." (Culler *Lyric Words* 39) – remains noticeably absent.

Perhaps the blame can be put solely on lyric poetry eluding any attempt at developing a theory like narratology (Hühn and Schönert 1; Müller-Zettelmann and Rubik 7). There seem to be two camps: those that insist on lyric's non-narrativity (one of narrative's characteristics is its eventfulness), and those that disagree. The main difference between them appears to be that the first group does not see the exceptions within lyric poetry to be sufficient to change their definition, while the other claims that these large number of exceptions mean that lyric is narrative. If Jonathan Culler belongs to the first group, Peter Hühn belongs to the second. In the following, I will outline their theories to explain why lyric as a rule is uneventful, and if it is that it cannot be suspenseful.

2.1. Jonathan Culler's theory: lyric's non-fictionality

Lyric for Culler is distinct from other genres in two ways: its non-fictionality – that is, even when it contains fictional elements, it is not done with the purpose of creating a fictional world but to "present propositions about our real world" (Culler "*Lyric Words*" 33-35), – and its ritualistic structure (35-37).

Regarding the non-fictionality, Culler is, of course, aware that some lyric poems contain fictional elements, but he rejects the notion that it is lyric's "default model" (35). Lyric, so he claims, has an epideictic purpose—to "cast values in a new light, ostentively [sic] to disclose aspects of the world and praise what should be noted and remembered, but they claim especially to offer thought in memorable form, truths to

be considered, absorbed, and repeated by readers.” (33) To read lyric poetry as one were reading a novel, that is, as if it were fictional, would mean to “to trivialize it: [...] To treat this poem as the discourse of a fictional speaker is to set aside as marginal everything that distinguishes this language from the rant of a drunk in a bar” (34). In short, the epideictic purpose is a priority of lyric.

But the epideictic aspect is not exclusive to lyric, and the matter of fictionality vs non-fictionality is in that regard irrelevant, as narratives play with these concepts and their limitations, too. Novels, short stories, fairy tales – they all can make statements about our real world using fictional elements, such as plot, characters and world building, to get that message across. It is true, of course, that the focus of prose more often than not lies on the creation of a fictional world and story, but that it has, tendentially, no epideictic purpose is not. In response, Culler proposes the ritualistic element to be a distinctive feature of lyric, which “encourages concentration on the formal properties of lyric utterance, from rhythm and rhyme to other sorts of linguistic pattering, which make lyrics discourse to be repeated.” (Culler 37) If the ritualistic and the epideictic element together make lyric distinct from other genres, this means that some fairy tales, which also have ritualistic elements (for example, “Mirror, Mirror on the wall”) would also fit in that schema.

With that said, however, most relevant to the discussion whether lyric can be suspenseful, is Culler’s insistence that “narrative is about what happens next, lyric is about what happens *now*” (Culler “*Why Lyric?*” 202, emphasis mine), and that the latter aims at being an event rather than the “representation of events” (Culler “*Lyric Words*” 35). He does not deny that lyric may include fictional events, but insists that it is not a characteristic feature of lyric. Instead, it is on the conveyance of subjective or objective truths – to evoke an experience in the reader through the ritualistic patterning. In short, lyric is more interested in the moment itself, rather than in creating a story.

The question that arises from such a theory is, what about narrative poems? What about ballads, which “demonstrate principles of poetry and of story telling in a way that [is] basic to both arts?” (Ciardi 685) After all, narrative poems have always existed, and they are not any less ‘poetical’ than other non-narrative poems. (See Heiden 2014, McHale 2009) Their exclusion from the debate for a lyric theory insinuates that they are the ‘other’ of lyric, instead of the other way around. Does not Edgar Allan Poe’s *The*

Raven and *Annabelle Lee* contain fictionality – a story? Do narrative poems like Robert Frost's *The Death of the Hired Man*, Christina Rossetti's *Goblin Market*, Keats' *The Eve of St. Agnes*, Samuel T. Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* belong to a different category altogether?

This has repercussions on the study of suspense, because a “narrative without a plot is a logical impossibility” (Chatman 47), and if events (whether fictional or non-fictional) is not characteristic of lyric, it means that suspense cannot be developed. If nothing happens, then there is nothing the reader can grow concerned over; the poem has no character to root for – there is no development to follow.

2.2. Peter Hühn's theory: lyric as a form of narrative

For Hühn, the main difference between lyric and other text types is the sense of immediacy (Hühn and Schönert 3): in lyric, there is no narration from a covert or overt narrator: there is only the speaker. However, the same applies to drama, which also does not have a narrator, and yet lyric and drama are nonetheless distinct text types.

Regarding the application of narratology's concepts and analytical tools to lyric, Peter Hühn says that its “legitimacy [...] depends on the premise that narration is an anthropologically universal semiotic practice, independent of culture and period, used to structure experience and produce and communicate meaning, and is as such one of the basic operations at work even in lyric poetry.” (Hühn and Schönert 1) And one of narrativity's main components is *sequentiality* – “the temporal organization and linking of individual incidents to form a coherent succession” (ibid). Though he has no intention of conflating lyric with other genres, lyric, so he claims, contains all narratological components – sequentiality, mediacy (“the selection, presentation, and meaningful interpretation of [a succession of incidents] from a particular perspective”, 1-2), and articulation – as prose texts, because they

involve a temporal sequence of happenings (which are usually mental or psychological, but can be external, for example social in nature), and they also create coherence and relevance by relating these happenings from a particular perspective (the act of mediation). Finally, they require an act of expression with which the mediation finds form in a linguistic text. (Hühn and Schönert 2)

The temporal sequence consists of a series of events, whether internal (psychological or mental), or external, and are a “decisive turning point” – “a deviation from the expected continuation of the sequence pattern” – and are a “central component of a

poem's narrative organization" (Hühn and Schönert 7). Events do not happen in a vacuum, either. They are linked to characters, who either cause or are affected by them; and as is natural for both elements, they need a space in which they can exist.

The definition of events fits with other definitions from narratology, and indeed, the presence of such an event in a lyric poem would mean that it also contains suspense. The problem with this approach is that it assumes that all lyric is eventful, regardless of the poem in question. Moreover, the application of the term event to lyric poetry is always at risk of becoming too diluted. Let us take an example.

- Example: "*Hope*" is *the thing with feathers* by Emily Dickinson

"Hope" is the thing with feathers -

That perches in the soul -

And sings the tune without the words -

And never stops - at all -

And sweetest - in the Gale - is heard -

And sore must be the storm -

That could abash the little Bird

That kept so many warm -

I've heard it in the chillest land -

And on the strangest Sea -

Yet - never - in Extremity,

It asked a crumb - of me.

The poem is, as the title says, about hope. Hope here is compared with a bird – a “thing with feathers”. Though actions are described – “perches in the soul”, “sings the tune” (V2, 3) – there is no actual development to speak of. An event must lead to changes, which cannot be undone – it is not enough that the event portrayed be a symbol for something else, but it *must actually be taking place in the story world*. To twist the definition of character to include the bird would dilute the actual meaning of the term, and ‘reduce’ the poem to something that it is not.

2.3. Werner Wolf's narremes and lyremes

Werner Wolf sees issues with both aforementioned approaches. He proposes that texts should not be categorized between “yes/no” regarding narrativity or lyricality, but

rather in “strong” and “weak” (Wolf 148). He presents a list of *narremes* and *lyremes*, which represent typical features of both modes.

Core narremes, according to Wolf, are actants, a spatial and temporal setting (“chronotopos”) and events that bring about “changes in the represented world.” (Wolf 146) These narremes must be selected and structured (chronology, causality and teleology). Wolf also counts suspensefulness and tellability among this set of core narremes – the former, which keeps the reader engaged, and the latter which “elicits attention for, and interest in, the story in relation to cultural norms.” (ibid) It is important to note that Wolf argues against Culler’s proposal that lyric poetry is at its core non-mimetic and non-fictional, pointing out that narrative “can be both fictional and factual” and that the “simulation of a performative communicative situation [is] prototypical of the lyric.” (Wolf 153) By the “simulation of a performative communicative situation”, Wolf identifies the performativity of lyric as a core feature (*lyreme*). This communicative situation, the performance provoked by the poem, is not real, that is, it is fictional, (Wolf 151) even if the content of the poem may be based on facts.

Other core lyremes are versification, shortness, self-referentiality, and poetry’s tendential “general deviation from everyday language and discursive conventions” (Wolf 149). That these features may appear in narratives is clear, but Wolf points out that narratives which feature such characteristics are not typical for their genre, rather the exception. Meanwhile, these attributes are typical for poetry, which, due to its shortness, is ‘forced’ to semanticize “all textual elements [...] to a maximum.” (ibid). This level of semanticization is also tied to the “minimal world-building” attributed to lyric poetry, but this lyreme (“generality”) gives room for interpretation regarding the meaning (151).

Two more lyremes are relevant for the discussion: representationality (“poems constitute elements of represented worlds”) and experientiality (“human experiences (emotional ones in particular) are in focus and/or that what is being represented is meant to be re-experienced by the recipient”, 149). The first is also present in narratives, because they also represent factual or fictional worlds. With regard to experientiality, narratives too put a focus on human experiences, in particular as they trigger of the chain of events, which, in turn, affect these characters personally.

This is perhaps the starkest difference between lyric and narratives: eventfulness. Here Wolf accurately points out that by applying this core narreme to lyric poems, Hühn managed to simultaneously broaden the term “events” and dilute it (Wolf 156-157), as he considers changes in the discourse level and a “decisive change in attitude” on the reader’s side (Hühn and Schönert 7) to be a part of eventfulness. This approach is especially problematic because

not all noteworthy changes form narrative events. For a start, if events or “happenings” are to qualify as typically narrative, they must be located in the represented world, that is, on the story level rather than on the discourse level (or worse, on the level of the recipient). In addition, it is not only the level on which such changes typically occur but also their nature which must fulfill certain conditions. (Wolf 156)

These conditions are: “*die Realität der Veränderung*” (Schmid 320) within the story world, meaning that the changes are ‘real’ – they are neither wishful thinking on the part of a character nor a suggestion. Secondly, they must neither be trivial nor predictable for the characters involved – they must be a divergence from what is expected within the story world (321). And finally, an event must be irreversible, must be to a certain level unrepeatable, and lead to consequences in the story world (Schmid 322).

With regard to suspense, which is the central topic of this thesis, the inclusion of lyremes and narremes allows for an identification and distinction between the two text types. Eventfulness as a core narreme is central to the discussion, for suspense, as has been established, relies on it. If a text does not have the aforementioned key elements of an event, then that text cannot be suspenseful, as there is no stake in the narrative, no obstacle to overcome, no change or alteration in the established ‘normal’ in the story-world.

However, these approaches are perhaps best illustrated with an example.

- Example 1: *Much Madness is divinest Sense* by Emily Dickinson

Much Madness is divinest Sense -
To a discerning Eye -
Much Sense - the starkest Madness -
'Tis the Majority
In this, as all, prevail -
Assent - and you are sane -

Demur - you're straightway dangerous -
And handled with a Chain –

No character is discernible; neither is a narrator identifiable, and it is questionable who is being addressed by “you” – is someone specifically being addressed, or is the lyric addresser speaking to the audience in general? Nonetheless, there are narratives with barely discernible narrators as well, and this does not make them any less of a narrative. The poem, additionally, seems uneventful: nothing happens in this poem, except portraying the sense of madness – and the consequences if one refuses to assent to the “Majority” (V4; V8-9).

- Example 2: *The Dying Hunter to his Dog* by Susanna Moodie

Lie down—lie down!—my noble hound,
 That joyful bark give o'er;
It wakes the lonely echoes round,
 But rouses me no more—
Thy lifted ears, thy swelling chest,
 Thy eyes so keenly bright,
No longer kindle in my breast
 The thrill of fierce delight;
When following thee on foaming steed
My eager soul outstripped thy speed—

Lie down—lie down—my faithful hound!
 And watch this night by me,
For thee again the horn shall sound
 By mountain, stream, and tree;
And thou along the forest glade,
 Shall track the flying deer
When cold and silent, I am laid
 In chill oblivion here.
Another voice shall cheer thee on,
And glory when the chase is won.

Lie down—lie down!—my gallant hound!
 Thy master's life is sped;

Go—couch thee on the dewy ground—
 'Tis thine to watch the dead.
But when the blush of early day
 Is kindling up the sky,
Then speed thee, faithful friend, away,
 And to thy mistress hie;
And guide her to this lonely spot,
Though my closed eyes behold her not—

Lie down—lie down!—my trusty hound!
 Death comes, and we must part—
In my dull ear strange murmurs sound—
 More faintly throbs my heart;
The many twinkling lights of heaven
 Scarce glimmer in the blue—
Chill round me falls the breath of even,
 Cold on my brow the dew;
Earth, stars, and heavens, are lost to sight—
The chase is o'er!—brave friend, good night!—

The poetic structure and language give expression to *The Dying Hunter to his Hound* – it was never meant to be anything other than a poem. In terms of story, however, there are three elements that must be identified in order to count as narrative: events, characters, and setting.

Two characters can be identified: the hunter, who is dying, and his hound. What is the hound doing? The hound is barking (V2), he is attentive and excited (V5-6), and his master, who is dying, urges him to lie down beside him at the beginning of each stanza. The poem takes place in a “lonely spot” (V29) – presumably in the forest as can be gathered from “By mountain, stream, and tree; / And thou along the forest glade” (V14-15). It is also night and humid (V12 and 22). Thus, the spatial frame is established. In terms of event, little happens, because the main event has already happened – the deathly accident –; and is happening *right now*: the man is dying. The process of death itself, the movements of the dog, narrated by the hunter, and his orders or demands to the latter is the sole event: something *is* happening, but the turning point has already happened; now what is left is the wait for the demise, which is not fully confirmed to

be inevitable until the very end. What is happening ‘right now’ in the poem – the hunter is dying – is a direct consequence of an event that has already happened but that is mentioned in the text. Until then, the reader can hope for a last-minute rescue, and this uncertainty – this hope – allows suspense to develop.

*

I have outlined three theories from three different scholars. Culler and Hühn stand on two opposites, one which denies that lyric can be eventful, and one that applies a diluted term to lyric, so much so that the term itself loses any meaning. Wolf appears to have the correct approach, in the sense that he does not take a “yes/no” stance: his idea of approaching texts, in particular lyric text, according to how many of the features it contains, seems valid. This keeps the distinctiveness of lyric and narrative, while at the same time allowing for exceptions.

The two poems above meant to illustrate the complexity of this debate. Narrative poetry as a rule is easy to distinguish from lyric poetry, but not always. In some cases, the two merge, as it does, for example, in Susanna Moodie’s poem where narratology can be applied to it to some level. Nonetheless, so long as lyric poetry does not have the core narremes – the story-related elements of events, characters, and space – suspense cannot be developed.

Part II: The Analysis

1. Story-related elements and Suspense

1. The Events in Goblin Market

One of the first steps when analysing the role of story-related and formal elements, is identifying the turning points in the poem. To reiterate, a turning point is a deviation from the story world's established norm: something happens to someone/someone does something that cannot be reversed. The initiating event, as the term implies, initiates the rest of the story: every other event happens as a consequence of the first.

The **initiating event** in *Goblin Market* is Laura's trade with the goblins: she cuts a lock of her hair in exchange for their fruit (V115-140). Eating the fruit represents a breaking of the one rule in the story world ("We must not look at goblin men, / We must not buy their fruit", V42-43).

The **second event** takes place in the following evening (V225-268). The expected outcome – meeting the goblin men a second time – does not take place. Laura can no longer see or hear them. By eating their fruit, she has lost her maidenhood and is thus excluded from tasting the fruit again. Nothing happens in the sense that the expected event – a second meeting – does not happen, but it is nonetheless a turning point because it changes everything for Laura, and its consequences lead to the third event.

Because she has no longer access to the forbidden fruit, Laura grows deathly ill (V269-320), and this forces Lizzie, who can still hear and see the goblin men, to go out and meet them to buy the fruit her sister needs to live. This encounter (V330-445) is the **third and climactic event**, and it ends in violence, sparked because Lizzie refuses to cooperate with the goblins.

The **fourth** and last event happens when Laura takes the cure from her sister. She faints, leaving Lizzie to tend to her, uncertain whether she will awaken again. This event is the purification of Laura's body and soul, as she wakes up "as from a dream, / Laugh'd in the innocent old way" (V536-537). This event has the purpose of both surprising the reader by its unexpected occurrence, and to delay the long-awaited outcome.

*

The outline of the main events has two purposes. The first is that it provides a guidance for tracking suspense: it is in those scenes where suspense reaches a peak, hence suspense must be built up from one event to the next. The second is that it fully establishes *Goblin Market* as a narrative poem, instead of a lyric poem. In the second chapter of Part I, three different theories about lyric were presented to highlight narrative poetry's special status – or lyric's special status in literature. For lyric is, as has been established, not typically narrative: it is, as a rule, uneventful.

Moreover, to keep one from diluting the term 'event' to include changes in the discourse or in the reader's mindset, four features of this core narrative element were listed. These were, (1) unpredictability and un-trivialness for the affected characters; (2) irreversibility and unrepeatability; (3) realness (meaning that they actually happen in the story world), and (4) consequentiality (meaning that the events lead to real consequences in the story world). In the process of analysing *Goblin Market's* events, it becomes evident that all four features apply.

The initiating event: Laura buys the forbidden fruit from the goblins. In doing so, she breaks with the established order of the story world. This event initiates the plot of *Goblin Market*, and is it is irreversible, because Laura cannot undo this encounter and her decision: the encounter really happens in the story world. It cannot be repeated either, as in buying and eating the fruit has excluded her automatically from ever gaining access to it again. This realization is the result of the second event: Laura has been waiting to meet the goblin men again, but no longer can.

This inability leads to real consequences that the characters could not have predicted: since she has no longer access to the goblin men's fruit, Laura's decay begins. Her approaching death leads Lizzie to venture out to meet these creatures herself, in order to buy the fruit her sister needs. This third, and climactic, event fulfils, also, all the above-listed features.

Finally, the consequences of having "braved the glen" (V470) in the third event saves Laura from death. Taking the cure, however, makes her faint, a surprising turnabout after all that has transpired. This event is unpredictable for both characters and readers, and its consequences and its occurrence are, in the story world, real. It is also irreversible, because Laura's unconsciousness is not reversed – undone, that is –; it is simply overcome by the character, just as one does not reverse a fever, but rather recovers from it.

Without exception, all the events in *Goblin Market* are non-trivial, unpredictable, irreversible, and real. They are also unrepeatable, though the way they are structured are purposefully similar to each other to subvert them.

2. Characters

Regarding their contribution to suspense, it is important to keep in mind that characters serve a narrative purpose; they embody a particular role regardless of whether they are ‘flat’ or ‘round’ characters, and this role sometimes stands in contrast to that of other characters. The more characters, the more their dynamics might contribute to suspense, because their interactions also serve a purpose. Sometimes this purpose is to give context, to be the “comic relief”; to reveal something about a character which is relevant for the development of the story – sometimes, their dynamics bring about the event itself.

Christina Rossetti’s *Goblin Market* has two main characters, the sisters Laura and Lizzie, and a villain: the goblin men.

2.1. Laura and Lizzie: two contrasting characters

a) The curious sister and the prudent sister

As mentioned above, characters are not real people, they embody particular roles in a narrative. The ‘flatter’ a character, the more stereotypical his/her role may be, though this is not necessarily something negative.

This is no less true for Laura and Lizzie. The dichotomy between their roles is established early on, though it evolves throughout the story. The first thirty verses introduce the goblin men and clarify that maidens can hear and see them (V2). Verses 34 and 35 say this, however, “Laura bow’d her head to hear, / Lizzie veil’d her blushes”. Though nothing as to their physical appearance is stated, the reader nonetheless has enough to make an assessment about them: Laura is actively listening, while Lizzie is affected by the goblin’s cry. The subsequent lines help to expand that image.

“Lie close,” Laura said,
Pricking up her golden head:
“We must not look at goblin men,
We must not buy their fruits:
Who knows upon what soil they fed
Their hungry thirsty roots?” (V40-45)

This speech serves a twofold purpose. The first is to give the reader necessary context. The girls are not clueless: they are aware that they should stay away from the goblin men and their fruit, have presumably been told beforehand. The second pertains

characterization. Laura, in warning her sister, is also warning herself, she who is already on the verge of giving in to temptation (“Pricking up her golden head”, V41). The contradiction is not an accident, it is the point of this segment.

By this stage, it is evident that the goblin men and at least one sister will have an encounter, the question that remains is which one it will be. The following exchange between Laura and Lizzie confirms which one it is.

“Oh,” cried Lizzie, “Laura, Laura,
You should not peep at goblin men.”
Lizzie cover’d up her eyes,
Cover’d close lest they should look;
Laura rear’d her glossy head,
And whisper’d like the restless brook:
“Look, Lizzie, look, Lizzie,
Down the glen tramp little men.
[...]
“No,” said Lizzie, “No, no, no;
Their offers should not charm us,
Their evil gifts would harm us.”
She thrust a dimpled finger
In each ear, shut eyes and ran:
Curious Laura chose to linger
Wondering at each merchant man. (V48-70)

This exchange expands the dichotomy between the curious sister and the cautious sister. Lizzie first warns her sister (V48-49) once Laura’s interest in the goblin men becomes evident (V49, but also shown in V34 and 41), and then grows afraid: “‘No,’ said Lizzie, ‘No, no, no; / Their offers should not charm us, / Their evil gifts would harm us.’” (V64-66). Laura’s insistence, on the other hand, only increases. The “Look, Lizzie, look, Lizzie” (V54) is given proper context with the previous verse “whisper’d like the restless brook” (V53). The tone established with “whisper’d” and “restless brook” helps the reader to visualize Laura’s current state: she is almost entranced. This is only confirmed by the lines “She heard a voice like a voice of doves/Cooing all together: / They sounded kind and full of loves” (V77-79).

Another contrast between the characters, which further establishes them in their roles as the cautious and the curious sister, is in the ways they act. Lizzie takes precautions to protect herself by muting first her senses and then removing herself from the place of danger (V50-51; 67-68), while Laura “chose to linger / Wondering at each merchant man.” (V69-70). Removing the cautious sister is not just an act of self-preservation on the side of Lizzie but is also the removal of the voice of reason: there is no one left to hold Laura back.

b) The fallen woman and the sacrificial lamb

The initiating event is brought about by Laura, the climactic event and the closure by Lizzie. Both scenes involve the sisters being active, though one does so for a self-serving, and consequently self-harming, purpose, while the other becomes active out of love for another.

The initiating event (V81-114) takes place within a few lines, the build-up towards it is much longer. While much of the build-up is done by introducing the characters and the rules they must abide by, the active build-up truly begins once the goblin men notice Laura. Regarding Laura’s involvement, she begins as a passive bystander (“Laura stared but did not stir, / Long’d but had no money”, V105-106) while the goblin men try to lure her into buying their merchandise (V107-111). And when she does take action, she does so impulsively:

But sweet-tooth Laura spoke in haste:
“Good folk, I have no coin;
To take were to purloin:
I have no copper in my purse,
I have no silver either,
And all my gold is on the furze[”] (V115-120)

These lines highlight Laura’s innocence and impulsivity. It is a scene meant to evoke sympathy for this character, who just gave the goblin men the opening they need to take advantage of her.

Once Laura has eaten the goblin men's fruit, only the fall out of her actions is left. The following events revolve around her only, as she herself becomes the victim³. Her waning life increases suspense because the reader does not know if she will recover.

As Laura's role changes from the curious sister into that of the fallen woman, so is Lizzie's role called to change. When before she was 'merely' the cautious sister - the character whose purpose was to warn about the dangers and provide context as to the consequences of eating the fruit (V149-162) – she now must become the sacrificial lamb to save her sister from death.

The build up to the third event increases suspense, because Lizzie, by venturing out to meet the goblin men, puts her own life at a great risk. Moreover, Lizzie herself is conflicted: she wants to preserve her life ("Long'd to buy fruit to comfort her / but fear'd to pay too dear.", 310-311), but is aware that Laura will die if she does not act.

She thought of Jeanie in her grave,
Who should have been a bride;
But who for joys brides hope to have
Fell sick and died (V312-315).

The encounter between the goblin men and Lizzie subverts that of her sister's. Contrary to the first encounter, the goblins' speech is reported directly, and each time they are interrupted, because Lizzie refuses to engage them in their own game.

"Good folk," said Lizzie,
Mindful of Jeanie:
"Give me much and many: —
Held out her apron,
Toss'd them her penny.
"Nay, take a seat with us,
Honour and eat with us,"
They answer'd grinning:
"Our feast is but beginning.
Night yet is early,
Warm and dew-pearly,
Wakeful and starry:

³ As is common in fairy tales, transgressions are punished, as Laura transgressed against the rule of not buying from the goblin men.

Such fruits as these
 No man can carry:
 [...]Sit down and feast with us,
 Be welcome guest with us,
 Cheer you and rest with us.”—
 “Thank you,” said Lizzie: “But one waits
 At home alone for me:
 So without further parleying,
 If you will not sell me any
 Of your fruits though much and many,
 Give me back my silver penny
 I toss’d you for a fee.”— (V357-389)

Lizzie’s self-preservation becomes evident. She is focussed on her goal, which is to buy Laura the fruit she needs, and thus refuses to engage the goblins in their game. Moreover, the difference in these characters’ manner is telling: the goblins are “full of airs and graces” (V337), while Lizzie is direct and uncooperative. It is then, when the goblin men turn violent, that Lizzie’s desire to help her sister is tested, only to reveal that the attack itself gives her the means to save her.

Lizzie utter’d not a word;
 Would not open lip from lip
 Lest they should cram a mouthful in:
 But laugh’d in heart to feel the drip
 Of juice that syrapp’d all her face (V430-434)

Her role as the sacrificial lamb, however, is only fulfilled once she returns home (V454-464). Again, the two sisters are contrasted not just in their interaction with the villains, but also in their manner of return. Both of them are described to know “not was it night or day” (V139 and 449), but where one returned home elated after consuming the forbidden fruit, the other returns home elated because she has the fruit that will save her sister – and this at the risk of her own life.

2.2. The Goblin Men

The goblin men are not characters as Laura and Lizzie are. Where the sisters have a level of complexity due to their own contradictory desires (Laura desires the fruit despite her awareness of its dangers, and Lizzie approaches the goblins, despite her

desire to keep herself safe), the goblins have almost none. They are fairy creatures – “stable, stereotypical character that exhibit/contain nothing surprising” (Bal 81) – villainous beings with the purpose of tempting maidens with their fruit to lead them to death. As fairy tale creatures, and much like *Rumpelstilzchen*, they are connected with a line “Come buy, come buy”, (V4) which is reiterated numerous times throughout the poem, and which gives it an incantatory character. However, their status as villains gives them a key place in the story, for without them there would be no temptation, no conflict.

The incantatory element and their constant presence by the glen signals that they are tied to a certain ‘protocol’. Every day, they try to attract maidens to sell them their deathly fruit. If a maiden comes, an exchange begins: the goblins will show off their merchandise, the girl will either accept the offered price or not. It must be noted, however, that if any price was acceptable, then the goblins would have had no reason to attack Lizzie for insisting on buying with money. What makes their fruit so dangerous is that it must be bought under *their* conditions: *their* price. And the price they demand is a “golden lock” (V126), which stands for the maids’ virtue – something from her own self. A maiden refusing to engage them in their game, breaks with that ‘protocol’, giving them no other option than to turn to violence.

Additionally, it is this break that leads to their own destruction:

At last the evil people,
Worn out by her resistance,
Flung back her penny, kick’d their fruit
Along whichever road they took,
Not leaving root or stone or shoot;
Some writh’d into the ground,
Some div’d into the brook
With ring and ripple,
Some scudded on the gale without a sound,
Some vanish’d in the distance. (V537-546)

Their status as villains makes them relevant to the story, and thus, also, to suspense. For they are present in all events but one, and in that exception, it is their very absence that leads to this turning point.

2.3. Character interactions

Each character interaction in *Goblin Market* reveals something about the world and the characters, which is necessary for the reader to have the right context to be able to follow the story. Most notably, with the exception of one (which takes place right after), all character interactions occur during a turning point. They take place between Laura and Lizzie, Laura and the goblins, and Lizzie and the goblins. Furthermore, each interaction follows a particular structure that is simultaneously mirrored and subverted by another.

Lizzie and Laura's interactions are structured in the following way: Laura is tempted by the goblins and Lizzie warns her about them, only for the other to dismiss her concerns.

- Example 1: building up to the initiating event

“Oh,” cried Lizzie, “Laura, Laura,
You should not peep at goblin men.”
Lizzie cover'd up her eyes,
Cover'd close lest they should look;
Laura rear'd her glossy head,
And whisper'd like the restless brook:
“Look, Lizzie, look, Lizzie,
Down the glen tramp little men. (V48-55)

- Example 2: the aftermath of the initiating event

Lizzie met her at the gate
Full of wise upbraidings:
“Dear, you should not stay so late,
Twilight is not good for maidens;
Should not loiter in the glen
In the haunts of goblin men.
Do you not remember Jeanie,
How she met them in the moonlight,
Took their gifts both choice and many
[...]
Found them no more, but dwindled and grew grey;
Then fell with the first snow [.]

“Nay, hush,” said Laura:
 “Nay, hush, my sister:
 I ate and ate my fill,
 Yet my mouth waters still;
 To-morrow night I will
 Buy more;” and kiss’d her:
 “Have done with sorrow;
 I’ll bring you plums to-morrow (V141-170)

- Example 3: the second event

[...] “The sunset flushes
 Those furthest loftiest crags;
 Come, Laura, not another maiden lags.
 No wilful squirrel wags,
 The beasts and birds are fast asleep.”
 But Laura loiter’d still among the rushes
 And said the bank was steep.
 [...]

Till Lizzie urged, “O Laura, come;
 I hear the fruit-call but I dare not look:
 You should not loiter longer at this brook:
 Come with me home. (V220-246)

As their roles develop, however, so does this structure undergo a change.

[...]“Laura,” [...]

“Did you miss me?
 Come and kiss me.
 Never mind my bruises,
 Hug me, kiss me, suck my juices
 Squeez’d from goblin fruits for you,
 Goblin pulp and goblin dew.
 Eat me, drink me, love me;
 Laura, make much of me;
 For your sake I have braved the glen
 And had to do with goblin merchant men.”

Laura started from her chair,
 Flung her arms up in the air,
 Clutch'd her hair:
 "Lizzie, Lizzie, have you tasted
 For my sake the fruit forbidden?
 Must your light like mine be hidden,
 Your young life like mine be wasted,
 Undone in mine undoing,
 And ruin'd in my ruin,
 Thirsty, canker'd, goblin-ridden?" (V464-484)

This is a moment of triumph, though only one of them is yet aware of it. The structure reveals this role reversal and the lack of knowledge of the other: Lizzie returns home triumphant and joyful, but Laura, who does not know what happened, is afraid that her sister has suffered – or will suffer – the same fate.

The sisters' interactions with the goblin men also follow a structure that is eventually subverted. Here, one must keep in mind the nature of the goblin men. They are bound to a certain 'protocol' when it comes to conversation: their only aim is to sell their deathly fruit to maidens, but under their own conditions. This protocol can be gleaned from the dialogues they take part in.

- Example 1: Laura and the goblins

The whisk-tail'd merchant bade her taste
 In tones as smooth as honey,
 The cat-faced purr'd,
 The rat-faced spoke a word
 Of welcome, and the snail-paced even was heard;
 One parrot-voiced and jolly
 Cried "Pretty Goblin" still for "Pretty Polly;" —
 One whistled like a bird.

But sweet-tooth Laura spoke in haste:
 "Good folk, I have no coin;
 To take were to purloin:

I have no copper in my purse,
I have no silver either,
And all my gold is on the furze
That shakes in windy weather
Above the rusty heather.”
“You have much gold upon your head,”
They answer’d all together:
“Buy from us with a golden curl.” (V107-125)

The dialogue follows this structure: the goblins notice the maid, they tempt her with their merchandise, and she, having no money, is given an offer, which she, entranced as she is, will not deny. This offer is directly tied to the girl’s virtue, and hence her life force – all in exchange for a mouthful of pleasure.

Compare this interaction with the one between Lizzie and the goblins.

- Example 2: Lizzie and the goblins

“Look at our apples
Russet and dun,
Bob at our cherries,
Bite at our peaches,
Citrons and dates,
Grapes for the asking,
Pears red with basking
Out in the sun,
Plums on their twigs;
Pluck them and suck them,
Pomegranates, figs.”—

“Good folk,” said Lizzie,
Mindful of Jeanie:
“Give me much and many: —
Held out her apron,
Toss’d them her penny. (V352-366)

This interaction follows the same structure as the one between Laura and the goblins. This time, however, the goblins are faced with a character who is not just uninterested

in the pleasures they offer, but one who is also assertive about what she wants. This affects the protocol they abide by.

“Nay, take a seat with us,
Honour and eat with us,”
They answer’d grinning:
“Our feast is but beginning.
Night yet is early,
Warm and dew-pearly,
Wakeful and starry:
Such fruits as these
No man can carry:
[...]
“Thank you,” said Lizzie: “But one waits
At home alone for me:
So without further parleying,
If you will not sell me any
Of your fruits though much and many,
Give me back my silver penny
I toss’d you for a fee.”—
They began to scratch their pates,
No longer wagging, purring,
But visibly demurring,
Grunting and snarling.
[...]
They trod and hustled her,
Elbow’d and jostled her,
Claw’d with their nails,
Barking, mewling, hissing, mocking (V368-402)

The goblin men try to persuade Lizzie, but she continues to be ‘uncooperative’, and so they turn to violence as they are faced with an assertive character. The change in structure stems from this deviation: the maid is supposed to fall for their offers, is supposed to give in to their conditions. But when a girl does not, it changes the entire structure.

3. Narrative Space

Marie-Laure Ryan lists “four forms of textual spatiality” (Ryan 2019: Paragraph 4). Of these, only setting and spatial frames are relevant to the study of suspense.

Setting refers to the general geographical, historical and cultural environment of the story, and as it is “embraces the entire text” (Ryan Paragraph 7), it can be surmised that the patterns of this setting help the reader to understand the norms of the story’s world. Given that space is an element which need not be explicitly mentioned to exist, the same must also apply to the setting. *Goblin Market* makes no explicit mention of a setting, as, for example, *North and South* by Elizabeth Gaskell. From the genre, however, and the descriptions of the sisters’ lives – absence of a protective parent figure; owning poultry, going about their daily chores; living near a glen and a “reedy brook” (V216) –, the reader can surmise that the setting of the story is a “pastoral world” (Vejvoda 556), as is common in fairy tales.

Knowing the setting helps to adjust one’s predictions as to the development of the story: what is possible and impossible, what is allowed and what is forbidden. In a pastoral world, the peaceful life itself is threatened by an element that is embedded in the world itself. In *Goblin Market*, the pastoral world and the fairy world exist side by side, and these worlds meet at the glen. In a setting like *Goblin Market*, the fantastic is not questioned, and trespassing the rules leads to bad consequences. The reader must understand it, must accept it, in order to not just follow the story, but also be immersed in it.

Where the setting provides necessary context to follow the story, spatial frames occupy a different role in regard to suspense. To reiterate, spatial frames are “the immediate surroundings of actual events” (Ryan Paragraph 6). As with setting, they need not be referenced, as any activity implies a place where it happens. The lack of a necessary spatial description means that it is an element that is not indispensable for the development of suspense, and that its participation must be taken on a case by case basis.

3.1. Two examples: *The Raven* and *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (TROAM)

Edgar Allan Poe's *The Raven* is emblematic of how spatial frames can build suspense.⁴ It does so not by giving all the information at once, but by revealing something new about the frame one stanza after the other. The first stanza established not just the 'where' – the chamber (V4) – but also the 'when' – midnight (V1). We also know that the speaker is sitting somewhere in his chamber pondering "Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore" (V2). It is at this late hour that the speaker hears someone "rapping at my chamber door" (V4), startling him from sleep. That second stanza reveals that it is December – cold – and that the chamber is dimly lit by a fire, which only enhances the sense of coldness. That the chamber is dimly lit, however, is never explicitly mentioned, rather it is the line "And each separate dying ember wrought its ghost upon the floor" (V8) that creates this image. Lastly, it is in this stanza that we find out that the speaker is mourning the loss of Leonore, context necessary to his current (emotional) state.

Up to this point the following image has been constructed solely based on the spatial frames: "we" are in a chamber in the middle of the night in a "bleak December" (V7); the fire is dying, thus light is sparse, and the room is draughty, for the curtains are shifting (V13). This dark ambience creates suspense, because of the connotations with the words employed to describe the space. Furthermore, these spatial frames are connected to something happening, even if it happens away from the speaker's perception. The explicit details in the poem are added to incite anxiety in the reader, as s/he experiences the poem through the speaker.

Similarly, in Samuel T. Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (TROAM) the sea and the ship – the main spatial frames – has connotations which allow the reader to predict when or how the dangers will come about (Irusta 22-23). The mariner's ship and the crew are at the mercy of the elements; moreover, the sea itself changes as an event approaches. The second event, for example, is foreshadowed by the protagonist's own perception of distance, as well as the physical change in the scenery.

When looking westward, I beheld

⁴ I have touched on this same topic in my seminar paper *How formal and story-related elements build suspense in Samuel T. Coleridge's The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, (2020). In this paper, I include the same points of discussion and expand on them to draw a comparison to how *Goblin Market* uses space to build suspense.

A something in the sky.

At first it seemed a little speck,
And then it seemed a mist;
It moved and moved, and took at last
A certain shape, I wist. (V147-152)

Here, the ancient mariner sees a ship and watches it approach. “The distance adds to the mystery of the sudden appearance of this “speck”, and as it comes nearer, so does the shape become more distinct, increasing the suspense” (Irusta 22), particularly because the characters are trapped in a “silent sea” (V106). The fact that the other ship is steering towards them, despite there being no breeze, no current, signals danger and serves as preparation for the reader (and the characters) that another turning point is near.

3.2. Goblin Market: a different use of spatial frames

In *Goblin Market*, narrative space is used differently. On one side, the poem has the advantage of being superior in length to *The Raven*, on the other, space is not used to invoke a sense of anxiety (or any other feeling), as the spatial frames are described minimally, if at all. This difference does not elevate one poem over the other, but it does leave open the question whether space, with its minimal description, is relevant as a suspense-building element in *Goblin Market*.

To identify the spatial frames in *Goblin Market*, one must first take note of the characters and where they are throughout the story and pay attention to explicit mentions of places. The first explicit reference appears in line 33: “Among the brookside rushes”, right after the goblin men finish their “customary cry” (V231). The second refers to a glen (V47) and is also connected to the goblin men. The pastoral setting evokes a sense of innocence, of peace, which is, however, countered by the goblins’ presence nearby. The glen in particular receives a dangerous connotation, as both Laura and Lizzie encounter these creatures in that space, and the events take place there. This makes the glen the main spatial frame.

The second spatial frame is Lizzie and Laura’s home, and as with the other, little is said about it to construct a more detailed image. We know their home has a gate (V141), that it is within walking distance of the aforementioned brook (126); the sisters share

a “curtain’d bed” (V187) and they own poultry, bees and cows (V203-208) – all of which helps to mould the setting of a pastoral world.

With the setting and the main spatial frames established, the question remains as to how narrative space add suspense to the poem. Here, a comparison with the poems discussed above should prove helpful.

Two distinctions are important. The first is that just as suspense is dependent on events, so are event dependent on space. The second distinction is that just because suspense increases as a story approaches a turning point, it does not mean that narrative space as a story-related element is involved in that build-up. *The Raven* is an example where the scattered details of the spatial frame add to the uncanny ambience the poem is trying to evoke. In *TROAM*, space is affected by the upcoming event: it is used as a foreshadowing tool. Both poems, then, use this element to evoke a feeling of suspense in the reader by emphasising particular features of the spatial frame, and by showing a change in these frames.

Needless to say, *Goblin Market* is different. That difference is not merely due to the sparse descriptions of the spatial frames (descriptions, after all, do not automatically contribute to suspense), but it is rather due to the absence of them as an event develops. This is because *Goblin Market*’s focus is on the characters’ interactions, rather than the relationship between space and events. Nonetheless, this does not mean that space is wholly irrelevant to suspense in this poem. The glen plays a role as the main place of action, and the pastoral setting is important to know in order to understand how this particular world functions.

2. Formal elements and Suspense

1. Genre

1.1. Goblin Market – a children’s fairy tale or an erotic fantasy?

Though Christina Rossetti’s *Goblin Market* was initially intended for an adult audience, with time – and subsequent adjustments – the poem was also offered to children, as well. As such, questions may arise as to what genre it belongs to: is *Goblin Market* a fairy tale for children or for adults?

Scholars like Jack Zipes (2000) and David Mikics (2007), as well as *Das Handbuch der literarischen Gattungen* (2009) distinguish between the oral folk tale and the fairy tale, which emerges from the former (Mikics 116). From the beginning, fairy tales were “symbolic commentaries on the mores and customs of a particular society and the classes and groups within these societies and how their actions and relations could lead to success and happiness.” (Zipes xxi) The oral folk tale, or the *Volksmärchen*, on the other hand, is considerably shorter and cannot be attributed to one author. Characteristic for both, however, is that the presence of the fantastic is typically not questioned. Other common elements are obstacles that the characters must overcome, and happy endings (Rölleke 508, 509). When reading *Goblin Market*, it becomes clear that it “exhibits all the color, the cruelty, the mystery, and the capriciousness traditionally associated with” (DeVitis 418) the fairy tale. The goblin men provide the fantastic element and the obstacle, which must be overcome, and the symbolic commentary is delivered by the moral at the end.

Goblin Market is a fairy tale, its content is nonetheless dubiously appropriate for children. This is best illustrated with an example Lorraine Janzen Kooistra (1997) incorporates in her essay, where she debates the same issue:

In October 1861, publisher Alexander Macmillan read Rossetti’s manuscript to a working-men’s society in Cambridge. The workers’ reception suggests that they recognized that *Goblin Market*’s simple style was actually a vehicle for its mature content: “They seemed at first to wonder whether I was making fun of them,” Macmillan wrote to the poet’s brother Gabriel: “by degrees they got as still as death, and when I finished there was a tremendous burst of applause” (95). The men’s suspicion that Macmillan was “making fun of them” suggests that their immediate reaction to the poem’s nursery rhyme meters and skipping rhymes was that they were being patronized by a fairy tale meant for children. Their subsequent silence and

appreciation indicate their final approbation of the poem's subject matter and its appropriateness for grown-ups. (Kooistra 183)

In other words, the poem is an adult fairy tale and its reduction to a 'mere' erotic fantasy stems from the sexual connotations of the forbidden fruit, as well as the language used to describe the sister's embrace (V490-502), which eventually saves the fallen woman. The reason why some reduce *Goblin Market* to an adult fantasy would explain the heavily revised editions for children. This is because, to market an originally adult story for children, it is necessary to make

an adjustment of the text to make it appropriate and useful to the child, in accordance with what society regards (at a certain point in time) as educationally 'good for the child' and an adjustment of plot, characterization, and language prevailing society's perceptions of the child's ability to read and comprehend [...] (Shavit, qtd. in Kooistra: 190)

As a result, entire sections of *Goblin Market* were either rewritten or erased (Kooistra 190-193). Kooistra herself admits in her essay that her eleven-year old daughter praised the poem for "how much the sisters loved each other, and how one sister saved the other from the wicked goblins", but when it came to whether she had found the poem frightening she answered "I think I would have, *if I had understood it*." (Kooistra 1999, cursive in the original). While such revisions are understandable considering the age of the intended audience, it is important to note that neither by censoring the sexual connotations nor by hiding the religious elements can its full meaning be captured, because it is by including the former that the latter gains any meaning at all: if Laura did not fall by consuming the forbidden fruit, there would be no need for Lizzie's Christ-like sacrifice.

Stylistically, *Goblin Market* is also reminiscent of nursery rhymes, which adds to the aforementioned confusion. As is common for orally produced narratives, nursery rhymes contain formulaic phrases, "additive structures, repetition and redundancy, situatedness, empathetic and participatory elements, and polarisation of good and evil." (Pullinger 147), although a moral is not a condition of the genre. Another particularity of nursery rhymes is that the protagonists are predominantly adults and even if not, they are still "engaged in adult activities" (Pullinger 145). These elements – the formulaic phrases, the additive structure, repetition and the polarisation of good and evil (personified by Lizzie and the goblin men) – are all present in Rossetti's poem.

- Example 1:

All ripe together
In summer weather, —
Morns that pass by,
Fair eves that fly;
Come buy, come buy (V15-19)

- Example 2:

One had a cat's face,
One whisk'd a tail,
One tramp'd at a rat's pace,
One crawl'd like a snail,
One like a wombat prowl'd obtuse and furry,
One like a ratel tumbled hurry skurry. (V71-76)

But how is knowing the genre helpful for building suspense?

The first part established that the text contains prompts, which are meant to trigger suspense in the reader. The reader, of course, must pick up on these prompts – even if s/he does so automatically, without being aware of the generic conventions and patterns included in the text. Even the book cover alone can be enough to form predictions as to what type of story it is going to be.

As Kooistra points out, first readers of *Goblin Market* were surprised at its childlike tone, only to be surprised again when they realized its mature content (Kooistra 183) – Tucker refers to it being “[w]ritten to be read by adults in silence as if out loud to children” (Tucker 117). This hints at genre being as much about content as about style – after all, no one expects a psychological thriller to be narrated in the tone of a *Redwall* novel by Brian Jacques, adventure stories written for children that typically contains songs, riddles and comical creatures.

This ‘turn’ in expectations of *Goblin Market* met with the approval of those audiences, but it is questionable how much this ‘turn’ helped in generating suspense. For one, the unexpectedness is a source of surprise, which may spark the interest in the reader, and thus, having his/her interest, may lead to feeling suspense. The surprise, however, stems not from the unexpected development of the story itself: it is because there is a discrepancy between the expected style of a story aimed at adults and the style it is

being told. As Kooistra says, first audiences wondered if “they were being patronized by a fairy tale meant for children” (Kooistra 183), but once the elements of the content began to take form, the unexpected ‘childish’ tone of the poem stopped being a source of confusion.

Finally, despite the apparent discrepancy between the style and content, *Goblin Market* follows the expected genre conventions of the fairy tale. It has its heroines and a fantastic villain, all which occupy a particular narrative role. The heroines must face the obstacle in order to achieve their goals, and when Laura, one of the protagonists, breaks the one rule in her world, she is punished for it. Though fairy tales typically have a happy ending, the structurization does not foreshadow one: the final outcome, then, is something which must be waited out, creating suspense from the uncertainty.

2. Intertextual Patterns

Intertextual references refer to the “interconnectedness among texts” (Murfin and Ray 219) and can range from highly specific to implicit. It is not necessary for the reader to notice them nor for the author to be aware of them, nonetheless, these references are part of the public consciousness, and the more knowledgeable someone is regarding the origins of a text and/or its author, the more s/he may notice about the its intertextuality. For example, it is not necessary for the reader to know that Christina Rossetti was a very devout Anglican and that she worked at the St Mary Magdalene Home for Fallen Women⁵, but knowing this may shed light on some aspects of the text that might remain hidden otherwise. The following section outlines the main patterns which should be familiar to the casual reader. These patterns are related as much to the characters and their narrative roles, as to the development of the events themselves.

a) The “haunted glen” (V561)

The glen is the main spatial frame in *Goblin Market*; it is there where the sisters encounter the goblin men. A glen is a deep valley – a place between places. Liminal places symbolise a “threshold, a state of in-betweenness and of becoming” (Boller 15), making them into spaces of tension. In *Goblin Market*, the glen represents a space where two worlds collide: the fairy world (the goblin men) and the mortal world (the sisters), and both are put to the test in the glen, though only one passes. The use of the

⁵ For more information, see “Christina Rossetti”. *Poetry Foundation*. Chicago: Poetry Foundation, n.d. 23 September 2022 <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/christina-rossetti>

glen establishes this particular spatial frame as narratively significant: a place of dangerous encounters.

b) Fire

Only Laura is explicitly connected to fire. Fire symbolizes passion but also destruction (*Enzyklopädie des Märchens* 1066-1067). It is considered by many to be the *Lebenslicht* of every living creature – the “*Manifestation der menschlichen Seele.*” (1068) In Tolkien’s *The Silmarillion* (1977), for example, the god that creates the world is called Eru Ilúvatar, and he is the one who hold the Flame Imperishable, imperishable, which gives life to all. In *Goblin Market*, only Laura is attributed with fire: “She dwindled, as the fair moon doth turn / To swift decay and burn / Her fire away.” (V278-280). Here, the comparison signals that the character is dying, a development which generates anxiety over her ultimate fate.

The second instance where Laura and fire are used together occurs as the story is reaching its conclusion: “Swift fire spread through her veins, knock’d at her heart, / Met the fire smoldering there / And overbore its lesser flame” (V507-509). This segment takes place after Laura has received the cure from her sister. It is a subversion of the first instance where fire and Laura were paralleled. In the first, fire was used to show her life dwindling, in order to create a sense of urgency which would send Lizzie out to confront the goblin men. In the second example, fire is used to show Laura being filled with life again.

c) The fallen woman and the sacrificial lamb

The fallen woman, so does Andrea Anderson affirm, is a broad and fluid term that encompasses “prostitutes, unmarried women who engage in sexual relations with men, victims of seduction, adulteresses, as well as variously delinquent lower-class women. A wide umbrella term, the designation cuts across class lines and signifies a complex of tabooed behaviors and degraded conditions.” (Anderson 2) On the outskirts of society, the fallen woman is unable to save herself and depends on an outside force (the unfallen woman) for saving her (Anderson 3). Laura represents the fallen woman, the role of saving her is occupied by Lizzie. Here the Christian references are most obvious.

Sin – and consequently, death - was introduced into the world through Adam and Eve when they ate the forbidden fruit. To save humanity, God send his son Jesus Christ to pay for humanity’s sins. Just as the fallen woman is incapable of saving herself, so is

humanity unable to save itself: hence a sacrifice from an innocent person is necessary. Just as Jesus Christ takes up the role of the sacrificial lamb to save humankind (John 1:29), so does Lizzie sacrifice herself to save Laura (“Laura, make much of me; / For your sake I have braved the glen / And had to do with goblin men.”, V477-479)

To understand these patterns is crucial to understand the story. In fairy tales, wrongdoings are punished, even if these are made by the protagonist, so when Laura eats the forbidden fruit, the punishment is not unexpected. Neither are punishments mended without a price. In order for the story to have a happy ending, a sacrifice is necessary.

d) The forbidden fruit

The goblins, fantastic, villainous creatures, are introduced as merchants who attempt every day to convince maidens to buy their “orchard fruits” (V3). The fruit has, according to the *Enzyklopädie des Märchens* (2011), a symbolic meaning across cultures of any developmental stage (437). It typically stands for fertility and sexuality. In Christianity specifically, the forbidden fruit is also a symbol for the Fall: for sin. In the Old Testament, for example, God explicitly forbids Adam to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and when Adam and Eve disobey, they introduce sin – and death – into the world. The audience Christina Rossetti wrote for was likely familiar with the symbol of the forbidden fruit; and even contemporary audiences, who have probably mostly let go of their Christian roots, are likely to still know what it stands for.

The forbidden fruit in *Goblin Market*, however, stands not just for death and sin, but it also plays an important role in the dynamic of temptation and the prohibition, explained below.

e) The Temptation and the Prohibition

Temptation, prohibition and the forbidden fruit together create a conflict, which carries through from beginning to end in *Goblin Market*. This conflict leads to the initiating event, which, in its turn, leads to the others.

The forbidden fruit is the object of desire, made only stronger by its access being prohibited. A prohibition, explains the *Enzyklopädie des Märchens*, regulates “*alle Bereiche der sozialen Interaktion, ihr Bezugsrahmen sind Normen, Prinzipien oder Gesetze, die nicht verletzt werden dürfen, und Gefahren, die hierdurch abgewendet*

werden sollen.“ (1389). This prohibition exists in *Goblin Market* for a reason: consuming the forbidden fruit would kill the maiden. This makes the prohibition something that both needs to be neglected in order for the story to unfold (suspense depends on eventfulness; events create conflict), and something which is, simultaneously, justified, because of the terrible consequences such neglect leads to. It is also justified by the moral at the end, uttered by none other than Laura herself, the character who breaks the rule.

Laura would call the little ones
And tell them of her early prime,
Those pleasant days long gone
Of not-returning time:
Would talk about the haunted glen,
The wicked, quaint fruit-merchant men,
Their fruits like honey to the throat
But poison in the blood (V547-555)

In order for the story to develop, the prohibition is something that must be ignored. The excuse to consume the forbidden fruit – the object of desire – an excuse must be offered. Typically, the tempter “*bedient sich der Manipulation [...], indem sie implizit oder explizit ein Glücksmoment verheißt*” (*Enzyklopädie* 1432), sometimes even twisting the lessons imparted on the victim to give her the excuse she needs.

The role of the tempter in *Goblin Market* is occupied by the goblin men, and only one character is tempted: Laura. Given that she already covets the forbidden object, not much manipulation from the goblins is needed to convince her to buy from them.⁶ They only need to offer her a price she can pay.

Laura stared but did not stir,
Long'd but had no money:
The whisk-tail'd merchant bade her taste
In tones as smooth as honey,
The cat-faced purr'd,
[...]

⁶ This would explain, also, why their speech is narrated indirectly, as there is no need for persuasion. The goblins, however, speak directly when they encounter Lizzie, and the ensuing dynamic is therefore different.

“You have much gold upon your head,”
They answer’d all together:
“Buy from us with a golden curl.” (V105-125)

This dynamic of the forbidden fruit, the prohibition and the temptation, creates the central conflict of the story. To understand these patterns means to be able to follow the story and to make adequate predictions as to its development. To recognize these patterns in the characters and objects in the story is thus key.

3. The Narrator

The type of narrator is essential as its choice “decides what is to be told, how it is to be told (especially, from what point of view, and in what sequence), and what is to be left out.” (Jahn 27) The question that remains is whether a covert narrator is preferable to an overt narrator – or vice-versa – for building suspense. The answer, naturally, depends on the type of story and what the effect the author aims for.

An overt narrator, contrary to a covert one, makes him/herself known through the use of the first-person pronoun, does not hesitate to pass judgement and comment on the characters and the events they are involved in, and has, as such a “distinctive voice” (Jahn 28). A covert narrator is on the contrary distant – “one who does not intrude or interfere, one who lets the story events unfold in their natural sequence and tempo” (ibid). That the narrators may shift in degrees of overtness or covertness is clear. In *TROAM*, for example, “the heterodiegetic, covert, third-person narrator” (Irusta 6) lets the embedded first-person narrator, the protagonist, tell the story. This has the advantage of letting the audience experience the events through the eyes of the main character – “everything the mariner feels, the reader feels also: he/she is privy to every thought and impression, every change as the tale progresses.” (7) This choice allows, also, for the embedded audience – the character to whom the protagonist tells his story – to interrupt the narration, delaying any relief of the accumulated suspense (7-9).

The narrator of *Goblin Market*, on the other hand, is a heterodiegetic, covert third-person entity, an anonymous observer who recounts the events and characters, and lets the dialogue deliver the information necessary to follow the story. Even the moral at the end is delivered, not by the narrator, but by Laura, the protagonist.

“For there is no friend like a sister
In calm or stormy weather;
To cheer one on the tedious way,
To fetch one if one goes astray,
To lift one if one totters down,
To strengthen whilst one stands.” (V562-565)

In this case, the narrator is removed from the reader’s perception, allowing him or her to focus solely on the characters and the events. The distance is maintained throughout the story – with two exceptions that are nonetheless so seamlessly woven into the narrative that they could pass unnoticed if not read carefully. The first exception occurs

when Laura meets the goblin men. Here the narrator says, “But sweet-tooth Laura spoke in haste” (V115). The second occasion is when Laura takes the cure from her sister: “Ah! fool, to choose such part / Of soul-consuming care! / Sense fail’d in the mortal strife” (V511-513). It is not a coincidence that both these instances are connected to Laura. She is the protagonist, the character around whom the story revolves: without her actions there would be no story to tell. Her actions are also contrary to the moral of the story, which explains why the narrator passes judgement in these key scenes: to highlight her error.

With regard to suspense, of the two comments only the first is relevant. While the second (V511-513) is a lamentation of Laura’s actions, the other (“spoke in haste”, V115) is used to foreshadow her coming error, thus preparing the reader for the initiating event. Additionally, this verse cements her youthful and naïve character further: Laura is neither wicked nor prideful, but she is young, and her curiosity and lack of prudence mark her as the ideal victim for the goblin men.

The lack of personality of the narrator does much in letting “the story tell itself” (Genette qt. in Jahn 28). Indeed, it is the dialogue that brings about the turning points. The narrator ‘lets’ the characters speak for themselves, and as such ‘dig their own graves’, in a matter of speaking. However, while the build up to the turning points is mostly done through the characters’ interactions, it is the narrator who describes the actual occurring of the events and their aftermath.

- Example 1: Laura eats the fruit

She clipp’d a precious golden lock,
She dropp’d a tear more rare than pearl,
Then suck’d their fruit globes fair or red:
Sweeter than honey from the rock,
Stronger than man-rejoicing wine,
Clearer than water flow’d that juice;
[...]
She suck’d until her lips were sore;
Then flung the emptied rinds away
But gather’d up one kernel stone,
And knew not was it night or day
As she turn’d home alone. (V126-140)

The line before this example has the goblin men uttering their price; Laura does not answer: she only acts. This and her pleasure, as she tastes the forbidden fruit, are described through the narrator, but the latter does neither interfere or interrupt with a comment.

- Example 2: Laura no longer has access to the goblins' fruit

Must she then buy no more such dainty fruit?
Must she no more such succous pasture find,
Gone deaf and blind?
Her tree of life droop'd from the root:
She said not one word in her heart's sore ache;
But peering thro' the dimness, nought discerning,
Trudg'd home, her pitcher dripping all the way;
So crept to bed, and lay
Silent till Lizzie slept;
Then sat up in a passionate yearning,
And gnash'd her teeth for baulk'd desire, and wept
As if her heart would break. (V258-268)

The second event is unique among the other events in the sense that Laura's speech is reported indirectly, adding both a sense of distance to the character as well as highlighting her growing passivity. Moreover, suspense reaches in the first line of this segment its second peak. The lines before confirmed what the reader has so far only suspected: that Laura has no longer access to the forbidden fruit.

Additionally, one aspect that was mentioned in the aftermath of the initiating event comes to a closure in the aftermath of this second event.

The kernel stone – mentioned for the first time in line 138 – which Laura kept from her encounter with the goblin men, makes a reappearance as her condition worsens. This action is mentioned almost in passing, and it is relatively easy to overlook since it is overshadowed by the previous description of Laura's pleasure and the following conversation between her and Lizzie. Nonetheless, the kernel stone reappears at a moment when Laura is desperate for any solution to her problem.

One day remembering her kernel-stone
She set it by a wall that faced the south;

Dew'd it with tears, hoped for a root,
Watch'd for a waxing shoot,
But there came none (V280-285)

Aside from showing Laura's current desperation, the lack of result from this action is but a reveal of the truth behind the goblin men's fruit, foreshadowing, simultaneously, what will happen to her. Despite the pleasure it gives to the consumer, in reality, it is infertile – fruitless. Its seeds and kernel stones are unable to take root and give more fruit. And the same will happen to Laura.

- Example 3: Lizzie is attacked by the goblin men

They began to scratch their pates,
No longer wagging, purring,
But visibly demurring,
Grunting and snarling.
One call'd her proud,
Cross-grain'd, uncivil;
Their tones wax'd loud,
Their looks were evil.
Lashing their tails
They trod and hustled her,
Elbow'd and jostled her,
Claw'd with their nails,
Barking, mewing, hissing, mocking,
Tore her gown and soil'd her stocking,
Twitch'd her hair out by the roots,
Stamp'd upon her tender feet,
Held her hands and squeez'd their fruits
Against her mouth to make her eat. (V390-408)

The scene reaches its climax when the goblin men stop trying to persuade Lizzie and instead opt to attack her. The narrator describes the violence and proceeds to emphasise Lizzie's steadfastness by comparing her to a "lily in a flood" (V409), "a rock" (V410), "a beacon" (V412) and a beleaguered "virgin town" (418-420), among others. And yet, during the entire event and its aftermath, the narrator does not express any thought or judgment that could hint at a personality. That the title of heroine falls on Lizzie is clear given the narrative role she occupies. The stanza where Lizzie's virtues

are elevated, (V408-421) should not be seen as an instance of the narrator interrupting, but rather as the counterpoint to the stanza where Laura's loss of restraint is described:

Laura stretch'd her gleaming neck
Like a rush-imbedded swan,
Like a lily from the beck,
Like a moonlit poplar branch,
Like a vessel at the launch
When its last restraint is gone. (V81-86)

Neither of these instances are a narrator's interruption, but rather an emphasis on the character under focus. Both scenes are meant to emphasise each characters' features: in the case of Laura, this is her loss of restraint, which leads to her (almost) downfall. In the case of Lizzie, this is to highlight her resistance amid violence.

4. Narrative Structure

4.1. Order

It is important to distinguish between order in the discourse-level and order in the story-level. Only the former can be altered: events can be portrayed in chronological order or out of order (anachrony) in flashbacks or flashforwards (Jahn 63). The order of the events in the story-level, on the other hand, is fixed, simply because events are causally linked (Bal 51). Snow White cannot eat the poisonous apple and ‘die’ before her evil stepmother has prepared it. To change the causation would change the story completely, it would no longer be *Snow White*. At the same time, the story world and the characters’ lives operate in a particular manner – a routine. The initiating event represents a break with the order in the story world itself. Snow White lives in the castle doing a servant’s chores until her stepmother sends her out to get her killed – this is a disruption of Snow White’s routine, and it leads to her to leave the world she knows.

When it comes to the order in the discourse-level, the events of *Goblin Market* are narrated in chronological order, only once deviating to the past by recalling what happened to Jeanie (V147-161). The deviation is needed to give further context to the reader, in order to prepare them for what might come next.

The narration in chronological order is crucial to the build-up of suspense because it means that the entire construction of the story is geared towards the reveal of the final outcome (result-oriented suspense). Suspense in *Goblin Market* is thus about *what* is going to happen. Additionally, since the narrator is a distant entity that “lets the story tell itself” (Genette, qt. in Jahn 28), the lack of active foreshadowing by a meddling narrator allows the reader to stay ‘in the moment’, without receiving a hint as to what might come next. In contrast to this, the narrator of *Watership Down* (1972) actively foreshadows an upcoming development:

“[Bigwig said,] The day I call you Chief Rabbit, Hazel, that’ll be the day, that will! I’ll stop fighting that day.’ It did indeed prove a momentous day – and a momentous speech as well: but it lay in a future that none could foresee, and for the moment all that poor Hazel could do was turn aside with the disappointed feeling” (56)

On the other hand, the disruptions of the order in the story world are important, because just as they are caused by events, so do the disruptions themselves lead to further events. These changes are meant to capture the attention of the reader – they

are meant to increase suspense. In *Goblin Market*, the order is established in the following way: “Morning and evening / Maids heard the goblins cry” (V1-2), and, as Laura herself says after the introduction of the goblins, “We [the maidens] must not listen to goblin men / We must not buy their fruits” (V42-43). Thus the way the world operates is established. What happens if a maiden does give in to temptation is at that stage yet unclear, but given the well-known symbol of the forbidden fruit, the reader can begin to predict how the story will develop going forward.

The initiating event in *Goblin Market* disrupts the established order, as Laura actively disobeys the lessons imparted on her by others. The second event shows what happens to maidens who do so: they are no longer able to gain access to the fruit which their lives now depend on. What follows then is the consequence of such a disruption. The maiden, Laura, will die as she is deprived of accessing the fruit.

If the initiating event is a disruption of the societal order, then the third event takes the established way of interactions between maidens and goblins and destroys it. For when Lizzie goes out to meet the goblin men, they try to engage her in the same pattern of conversation, only to be continuously rejected. Lizzie’s refusal to engage breaks with the expected outcome of such an encounter – and ends with violence directed against her. This attack, however, is what makes the salvation of Laura possible.

4.2. Duration

Duration – or time - exists in two types: within the discourse level and the story level. By duration in the discourse level I mean the amount of space – in the case of *Goblin Market*, lines – a particular scene occupies⁷ (Bal 69). Story-time, in comparison, is harder to capture simply because the story itself is expressed through the discourse: the amount of time the events actually take up are captured only through “textual pace, intuition, and text-internal clues” and are thus “highly subjective” (Jahn 65). In an “isochronous presentation” (ibid.) of the events – as in dialogues, for example – discourse time and story time are almost the same. *Speed-up* or *summary* refers to scenes where events are summarised, as in “Steve moved houses three times” or “They tried for years”; and in an ellipsis, these events are omitted entirely. Finally, descriptions fall under the category of *pause*. By analysing what scenes are described

⁷ It also refers to how much time the reader needs to “read a passage, or, more globally, the whole text.” (Jahn 64). This, however, is irrelevant for the discussion, though it is likely that the faster someone reads, the more immersed s/he may be.

or shown in detail one could surmise which ones are most important for the story. Where the 'speed' picks up, the more compelling a moment is supposed to be.

a) Summary

Between the second event and the third, climactic event, days pass that are summarised in a few short stanzas. "Day after day, night after night," (V269), "She never spied the goblin men" (V274), "One day remembering her kernel-stone" (V281), "[Lizzie] night and morning / Caught the goblins' cry" (V302-303). The aim of these is to show Laura's decay in a sped-up form and to ingrain in the reader a growing sense of urgency.

b) Pause or Stretch

There are multiple occasions where the narrative stretches the discourse time while the story time does not move forward or does so little. One example is when Laura first approaches the goblin men:

[Lizzie] thrust a dimpled finger
In each ear, shut eyes and ran:
Curious Laura chose to linger
Wondering at each merchant man.
One had a cat's face,
One whisk'd a tail,
One tramp'd at a rat's pace,
One crawl'd like a snail,
One like a wombat prowl'd obtuse and furry,
One like a ratel tumbled hurry skurry.
She heard a voice like voice of doves
Cooing all together:
They sounded kind and full of loves
In the pleasant weather. (V67-80)

Here, the duration of the event shifts from a nearly isochronous portrayal with the dialogues and actions to a pause during the descriptions of what Laura sees. Later, beginning with "Laura stretch'd her gleaming neck" (V81), the description illustrates her current state and foreshadows the upcoming dangers and her involvement in them (V86).

The third event offers a contrast to the first.

White and golden Lizzie stood,
 Like a lily in a flood,—
 Like a rock of blue-vein'd stone
 Lash'd by tides obstreperously,—
 Like a beacon left alone
 In a hoary roaring sea,
 Sending up a golden fire,—
 Like a fruit-crown'd orange-tree
 White with blossoms honey-sweet
 Sore beset by wasp and bee,—
 Like a royal virgin town
 Topp'd with gilded dome and spire
 Close beleaguer'd by a fleet
 Mad to tug her standard down. (V408-421)

As Lizzie is attacked for refusing to engage with the goblin men, the isochronous presentation through the previous dialogue and the actions, shifts over to a description that highlights Lizzie's steadfastness.

4.3. Dialogue

Dialogue and action scenes are methods to present the events in an isochronous way. It has multiple purposes, these are: (1) exposition ("a source for narrative information", Chatman 175), (2) establishing characters (166), and (3) moving the plot forward; some may fulfil all of these at once. One needs, however, to also keep in mind the genre when discussing dialogue and their purpose.

4.3.1. The dialogue in *Rumpelstilzchen*, a fairy-tale

Given the relative short length of fairy tales, the space reserved for dialogue is rather constricted. Some of the dialogue is not even presented in direct speech but in indirect speech.

In *Rumpelstilzchen*, the first exchange takes place between the girl's poor father and the king.

Nun traf es sich, dass [der Vater] mit dem König zu sprechen kam, und um sich ein Ansehen zu geben, sagte er zu ihm: „Ich habe eine Tochter, die kann Stroh zu Gold spinnen.“ Der König sprach zum Müller: „Das ist eine Kunst, die mir

wohl gefällt, wenn deine Tochter so geschickt ist, wie du sagst, so bring‘ sie morgen in mein Schloss, da will ich sie zur Probe stellen.“ (Märchen 179)

Neither the father nor the king are given much depth to their characters – they are ‘flat’ (though the clarification that the former spoke to the king to gain in reputation is an implication of what type of man he is.) Primarily, however, the purpose of this dialogue is to lead to the conflict: the father promised the king that his daughter can spin gold.

The second instance of direct speech is only one sided, as is expected between a king and his subject. The king says, *“Jetzt mache dich an die Arbeit, und wenn du diese Nacht durch bis morgen früh dieses Stroh nicht zu Gold versponnen hast, so musst du sterben”* (179), and the girl is left to her own devices. This is the main conflict, which leads to the first event.

The girl cannot spin gold from straw, so when faced with an offer by a man who can, she takes it. This encounter happens three times – an important number in fairy tales. The third time, the girl has nothing else to give in exchange, so she promises Rumpelstilzchen her first born son.

- Example 1: the first encounter

“Guten Abend, Jungfer Müllerin, warum weint sie so sehr?“ „Ach,“ antwortete das Mädchen, „ich soll Stroh zu Gold spinnen und verstehe das nicht.“ Sprach das Männchen: „Was gibst du mir, wenn ich dir’s spinne?“ „Mein Halsband“, sagte das Mädchen. (179)

- Example 2: the second encounter

Das Mädchen wusste sich nicht zu helfen und weinte; da ging abermals die Türe auf, und das kleine Männchen erschien und sprach: „Was gibst du mir, wenn ich dir das Stroh zu Gold spinne?“ „Meinen Ring von dem Finger“, antwortete das Mädchen. (180)

- Example 3: the third encounter

Als das Mädchen alleine war, kam das Männlein zum drittenmal [sic] und sprach: „Was gibst du mir, wenn ich dir noch diesmal das Stroh spinne?“ „Ich habe nichts mehr, was ich dir geben könnte,“ antwortete das Mädchen. „So versprich mir, wenn du Königin wirst, dein erstes Kind.“ „Wer Weiss, wie das noch geht“, dachte die Müllerstochter und wusste sich auch in der Not nicht anders zu helfen; sie versprach also dem Männchen, was es verlangte[.] (ibid)

The three instances of dialogue between the girl and Rumpelstilzchen are structured the same: the girl's despair attracts the "Männchen", and he makes her an offer she cannot deny. The third encounter is the most important one, as it leads to the next conflict. The girl marries the king and her concern for her own survival are thus removed. When confronted, however, with the promise she made in a moment of desperation, any other offer is rebuffed: Rumpelstilzchen wants her child but concedes to leaving her alone if she can guess his name.

The characterization of both Rumpelstilzchen and the girl is sparse, but that is not the purpose of this fairy tale's dialogue. Instead, the dialogue establishes a dynamic: the man makes an offer which she accepts, and she is saved in consequence. The second purpose is to first delay the girl's death, delaying in turn also the ultimate outcome of the tale.

4.3.2. The dialogue in Harry Potter, a novel

In *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (1999), the long-awaited confrontation between Harry Potter and Sirius Black takes place almost entirely in dialogue form. It is the novel's most important turning point, as its outcome ultimately reverses the roles of many characters, revealing their true nature and involvement in the story. Its protagonists are Harry Potter, Sirius Black, and Remus Lupin: the hero, the (supposed) villain, and the mentor, who turns out to be an old friend of the second.

- Example 1: the confrontation between Harry Potter and Sirius Black

„Wirst du mich töten, Harry?“, flüsterte [Sirius].

[...] „Sie haben meine Eltern getötet“, sagte Harry mit einem leichtern Zittern in der Stimme, doch die Hand mit dem Zauberstab war vollkommen ruhig.

„Ich leugne es nicht“, sagte [Sirius] ganz ruhig. „Aber wenn du die ganze Geschichte kennen würdest -“

„Die ganze Geschichte?“, wiederholte Harry mit einem zornigen Pochen in den Ohren. „Sie haben meine Eltern an Voldemort verraten, das ist alles, was ich wissen muss!“ (Rowling 375)

- Example 2: establishing the dynamic between the three characters

„Peter Pettigrew ist tot!“, sagte Harry. „[Sirius] hat ihn vor zwölf Jahren umgebracht!“

[...] „Das wollte ich“, knurrte [Sirius] und bleckte seine gelben Zähne, „doch der kleine Peter hat mir ein Schnippchen geschlagen... aber diesmal passiert mir das nicht mehr!“

[...] „Sirius, NEIN!“, rief Lupin, stürzte sich auf Black und zerrte ihn von Ron fort. „Warte! So einfach geht das nicht – sie müssen es verstehen – wir müssen ihnen erklären –“

„Erklären können wir’s hinterher!“, fauchte Black und versuchte Lupin abzuschütteln [...].

„Sie – haben – ein Recht – alles zu erfahren!“, keuchte Lupin vor Anstrengung, Black zu bändigen. „Ron hat ihn als Haustier gehalten! [...] Und Harry – du schuldest Harry die Wahrheit, Sirius!“ (383)

- Example 3: the reveal

„Das ist keine Ratte“, krächzte auf einmal Sirius Black.

„Was soll das heißen – natürlich ist das eine Ratte -“

„Nein, ist es nicht“, sagte Lupin ruhig. „Es ist ein Zauberer.“

„Ein Animagus“, sagte Black, „mit dem Namen Peter Pettigrew.“⁸ (382)

This dialogue reveals not just important information regarding the characters’ backgrounds, it cements also the different personalities by establishing a dynamic (Sirius Black is angry, impulsive and set out for revenge; Lupin is trying to keep everyone calm; and Harry is angry, impulsive and set out for revenge, too). Furthermore, it becomes also apparent that Lupin is the link between Sirius Black and Harry Potter. The tension that the conflict between the characters creates makes this an explosive scene, one which reaches a turning point when the identity of the actual villain is revealed. All this is communicated through the dialogue.

4.3.3. The dialogue in *Goblin Market*

Through closer analysis it becomes clear that the dialogue is the preferred method of leading suspense to its peak. It is, also, where discourse and story time are almost isochronous, giving the scene a sense of immediacy. *Goblin Market* is a fairy tale, but it is longer than *Rumpelstilzchen*, which means it has more space to go into detail in certain aspects. But given its genre – that of a fairy tale – and its comparably small cast, it also means that its complexity cannot reach that of a novel.

a) The first dialogue: V40-66

⁸ The dialogue continues through three chapters; the last example is the “cliffhanger” of the second chapter. Reveals occur always at the end of a chapter; these interruptions help to keep the dialogue from getting boring.

The first dialogue happens between the sisters, but its way of building suspense is different to that of the others. First, it takes place during the introduction, meaning that the verbal exchange is meant to give the reader enough context to follow the story.

“Lie close,” Laura said,
Pricking up her golden head:
“We must not look at goblin men,
We must not buy their fruits:
Who knows upon what soil they fed
Their hungry thirsty roots?”
[...]
“Oh,” cried Lizzie, “Laura, Laura,
You should not peep at goblin men.”
[...]
Laura rear’d her glossy head,
And whisper’d like the restless brook:
“Look, Lizzie, look, Lizzie,
Down the glen tramp little men.
[...]
“No,” said Lizzie, “No, no, no;
Their offers should not charm us,
Their evil gifts would harm us.” (V40-66)

Their exchange also establishes the rules of their world: “We must not look at goblin men, / We must not buy their fruits” (V42-43). The reader has now been made aware of the rule the sisters must not break and given that this dialogue also establishes the characters – Laura as interested in the goblins, Lizzie as fearful of them – it gives the necessary clue to predict which one of them will break the rule. The fact that it is Laura who voices the rule becomes all the more noteworthy considering that it is Lizzie who calls her sister out on her dangerous behaviour (“You should not peep at goblin men.”, V49). This apparent contradiction only reveals how interested Laura is in the goblin men’s offer, despite the imparted lessons.

Furthermore, the actions between the segments of direct speech give context to the dialogue itself: they guide the reader into filling out the picture begun by the verbal exchange. “And whisper’d like a restless brook” (V53) gives the reader a reference to

assess the tone and state of mind the character speaks with. In this case, the action indicates that Laura is entranced, and the repetition “Look, Lizzie, look, Lizzie” (V54), which represents her insistency, reinforces this image.

b) The second dialogue (V107-120)

The second dialogue is significant not just because it leads directly to the initiating event, but because part of their conversation is reiterated through indirect speech.

The whisk-tail'd merchant bade her taste
In tones as smooth as honey,
The cat-faced purr'd,
The rat-faced spoke a word
Of welcome, and the snail-paced even was heard;
One parrot-voiced and jolly
Cried “Pretty Goblin” still for “Pretty Polly;” (107-113)

The dialogue that builds up to the initiating event is particularly effective, because Laura leaves a door open for the goblin men to take advantage of her. And just like in the first dialogue where the narrator makes explicit again that which Laura's words alone would imply (“whisper'd like a restless brook”, V53). By adding that Laura “spoke in haste” (V115), it suggests that she is speaking without much thought, and that her impulsivity will lead to bad consequences. Furthermore, by claiming she has “no coin”, “no copper” or “silver” (V116, 118-119), she admits that she has nothing to barter with. In response, the goblin men make her an offer (“You have much gold upon your head, /[...] Buy from us with a golden curl.”, V123-125), which she accepts without uttering a single word (V126-127). This lack of response on Laura's part is emblematic of her current state: she does everything to satisfy her craving.

c) The third dialogue (V143-183)

Immediately after the initiating event, the two sisters have another conversation. It takes place after suspense has reached its first peak, and it has to be built up again as the story nears its second turning point.

So far, Laura has eaten the fruit from the goblins, which she was explicitly cautioned against doing. Readers now await the reveal of the consequences of Laura's misbehaviour – *they* know what Laura did, Lizzie does not. So, when Lizzie admonishes her sister for staying out so late and reminds her of Jeanie, a maiden who

had dealings with the goblins, she does so unaware of what has just transpired, and by giving revealing the expected outcome after eating the fruit, she is also foreshadowing to the reader what is to happen to Laura.

“Nay, hush,” said Laura:
“Nay, hush, my sister:
I ate and ate my fill,
Yet my mouth waters still;
To-morrow night I will
Buy more;” and kiss’d her:
“Have done with sorrow;
I’ll bring you plums to-morrow
Fresh on their mother twigs,
Cherries worth getting;
You cannot think what figs
My teeth have met in,
What melons icy-cold
Piled on a dish of gold
Too huge for me to hold[”] (V163-176)

Laura’s response has a two-fold purpose. One, it is meant to show Laura’s current emotional state: she is ecstatic, and eager for the next evening, so that she can eat more of the fruit. Her cravings have not been sated; on the contrary, they have worsened. The reveal of Jeanie’s fate along with Laura dismissing her sister’s concerns, allows the reader to predict that Laura’s troubles will soon increase and what these may be. Her excitement, then, is but a delay of the inevitable outcome: a ruse to lure the characters and the reader into thinking that nothing bad will follow.

d) The fourth dialogue (V220-253)

The next dialogue culminates in the second event. Laura and Lizzie’s exchange is different to the ones preceding it. For one, Laura’s speech is reported in indirect form, while Lizzie’s is reported directly. This is a perfect reflection of the characters’ current state of mind: Lizzie is unchanged, but Laura is deeply affected. She turns inwards in the wait for the coming of the night. When the narrator reports that Laura “said the bank was steep. / And said the hour was early still / The dew not fall’n, the wind not chill” (V227-229), it is not just to convey *what* she is saying, it is also meant to show that she is delaying her departure, because to leave would mean to admit to herself that

she cannot eat the fruit she craves. At this stage (V230-231), it is clear that she cannot see or hear them, which is something that has been established by the narrative to be common. It is the first hint of what is soon to be revealed – and indeed, the second turning point happens when Lizzie admits that she herself “can hear the fruit-call” (V244), when Laura herself is unable to.

Directly after the conclusion of the second event are three verses, which offers a dilemma: “Must she then buy no more such dainty fruit? / Must she no more such succous pasture find, / Gone deaf and blind?” (V258-260) This is neither direct nor indirect speech. These are Laura’s thoughts, reported by the narrator in indirect form (Chatman 197). Do these lines contribute to suspense? On one hand they verbalize what the character thinks, but this can be inferred from what she does before (“Laura turn’d cold as stone”, V254) and after (“She said not one word in her heart’s sore ache; / But peering thro’ the dimness, nought discerning, / Trudg’d home, her pitcher dripping all the way”, V261-263). Moreover, her thoughts are expressed just as suspense has reached another peak: this scene takes place directly after. In that sense, these lines, these thoughts, do not add to suspense.

e) The fifth dialogue (V352-389)

The fifth dialogue occurs between Lizzie and the goblin men and is thus meant to mirror the conversation between the goblins and Laura. The scene does first appear to follow the same pattern, for the goblins notice the maiden and approach her, showing off their merchandise (V91-98 and V329-351). By comparing these two interactions, two deviations stand out. While in the first encounter, the goblins’ speech is reported in indirect form, in the fifth dialogue it is reported directly. The second deviation is that the goblins are interrupted twice (V362 and 382) – both times by Lizzie, who refuses to engage them in their game.

“Good folk,” said Lizzie,
Mindful of Jeanie:
“Give me much and many: —
Held out her apron,
Toss’d them her penny. (V363-367)

“Thank you,” said Lizzie: “But one waits
At home alone for me:
So without further parleying,

If you will not sell me any
Of your fruits though much and many,
Give me back my silver penny
I toss'd you for a fee." (V383-389)

The back-and-forth between the two characters create suspense, because it remains uncertain which side will win. The memory of the first interaction between the goblin men and Laura keeps the suspense high when Lizzie encounters these creatures, especially since lives are at stake. Additionally, the conversation shifts to one more instance of indirect speech from the goblins as a response to Lizzie's obstinacy ("One call'd her proud, / Cross-grain'd, uncivil", V399-400), before the dialogue escalates into a sudden burst of violence. The latter reaction would not be as shocking, however, if not for the dialogue's build up to that scene.

f) The sixth and last dialogue (V464-484)

The last dialogue takes place between the sisters, right after the climactic event. Here, Lizzie returns home with the juices of the fruit on her face – it is the cure she needed to save her sister. It takes place at a moment where suspense has reached its peak but has not yet faded completely: the outcome has, after all, not been revealed, yet. This sequence does not have the purpose to build up suspense as the previous ones, but rather to lead the story to its long-awaited resolution. So, when Lizzie returns to her dying sisters, crying,

"Laura," [...]
"Did you miss me?
Come and kiss me.
Never mind my bruises,
Hug me, kiss me, suck my juices
Squeez'd from goblin fruits for you,
Goblin pulp and goblin dew.
Eat me, drink me, love me;
Laura, make much of me;
For your sake I have braved the glen
And had to do with goblin merchant men." (V475-484)

It happens both with a sense of urgency (Laura's life needs saving) and elation, because Lizzie braving the glen has, in fact, defeated the goblins – defeated death. It is also a celebration of Lizzie's sacrifice, from which Laura can draw out her own salvation.

Part of the suspense is also relieved by Laura's reaction.

Laura started from her chair,
Flung her arms up in the air,
Clutch'd her hair:
“Lizzie, Lizzie, have you tasted
For my sake the fruit forbidden?
Must your light like mine be hidden,
Your young life like mine be wasted,
Undone in mine undoing,
And ruin'd in my ruin,
Thirsty, canker'd, goblin-ridden?” – (V475-484)

This dialogue is in a sense a summary of what has transpired: Laura got ill, because of her own doing, and Lizzie, in order to save her, risked her own life – did what her sister did, only with a different aim. Both Lizzie and Laura's speeches are meant to evoke the same sense of emotion in the reader.

5. Language

The first part of this thesis attempted to show the complexity of language involved in a poem: from rhyme and repetition to its sound pattern – all these are devices which help to affirm a poem's particular meaning. As most narrative poems, *Goblin Market* has as its advantage its length to tell a 'proper' story. Nonetheless, this does not exempt it from being any less 'poetical' than other lyric poems: the main difference is that it has a story, and the use of language its applied to telling that story. Of significance in constructing that story are rhyme and rhythm – both devices which encourage immersion – and repetition, to which belong other devices such as assonance, alliteration, and anaphora. It will become clear in the process that many of these devices cooperate, meaning that they are present in the same stanza or line, and that it is this interplay that makes them so effective in the first place. The separation into different subchapters was, however, necessary to (1) highlight their particular importance as a device, and (2) to make the discussion easier to follow.

5.1. Rhyme and Rhythm

Rhythm is created by a pattern of unstressed and stressed syllables, but also by devices such as rhyme, alliteration, assonance and anaphora and repetition. Rhythm can and will change within one poem, but it cannot be constrained to just one line or word. Furthermore, rhythm can have multiple purposes, but aside from making the poem more entertaining and influencing a certain mood, it makes the poem memorable: rhythm, with all the elements that help create it, make the poem easier to remember and recite later (See John Ciardi 668).

Take this stanza from John Masefield's poem *Sea-Feaver*.

I must go down to the seas again, to the lonely sea and the sky,
And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by;
And the wheel's kick and the wind's song and the white sail's shaking,
And a grey mist on the sea's face, and a grey dawn breaking. (V1-4)

The first stanza contains a couplet rhyme scheme (A-A, B-B); the word "sea" is repeated three times and almost every other noun included is related to it. This means that context also facilitates memorization – and so do devices such as alliteration (V1-2) and assonance (V3). At last, there is an anaphora, which repeats itself for three out of four lines, and is one that is taken up several times in the three stanzas. The commas

inside the lines, as well as the end-stopped lines, add to the rhythm in the sense that they break the flow of the sentences.

There is no such “consistent rhyme pattern” in *Goblin Market*, but “the rhymes are relatively few and recurrent” (Connor 445). Enlightening is the genre the poem’s style is based on. It has the formulaic phrases, the additive structures (parataxis) and repetitions characteristic of nursery rhymes.

Morning and evening
Maids heard the goblins cry:
“Come buy our orchard fruits,
Come buy, come buy:
Apples and quinces,
Lemons and oranges,
Plump unpeck’d cherries,
Melons and raspberries,
Bloom-down-cheek’d peaches,
Swart-headed mulberries,
Wild free-born cranberries,
Crab-apples, dewberries,
Pine-apples, blackberries,
Apricots, strawberries;—
All ripe together
In summer weather,—
Morns that pass by,
Fair eves that fly;
Come buy, come buy:
Our grapes fresh from the vine,
Pomegranates full and fine,
Dates and sharp bullaces,
Rare pears and greengages,
Damsons and bilberries,
Taste them and try:
Currants and gooseberries,
Bright-fire-like barberries,
Figs to fill your mouth,

Citrons from the South,
Sweet to tongue and sound to eye;
Come buy, come buy.” (V1-31)

I have cited the entire first stanza of the poem, because it is emblematic of the whole. It functions not just as an introduction to the world and its villain, but also establishes the type of rhythm. Connor is right that “no consistent rhyme pattern” (Connor 445) can be determined, but there nonetheless are rhyme patterns that are repeated throughout.

With regard to paratactic sentences, a contrast may serve best to make the point.

Early in the morning
When the first cock crow'd his warning,
Neat like bees, as sweet and busy,
Laura rose with Lizzie:
Fetch'd in honey, milk'd the cows,
Air'd and set to rights the house,
Kneaded cakes of whitest wheat,
Cakes for dainty mouths to eat,
Next churn'd butter, whipp'd up cream,
Fed their poultry, sat and sew'd;
Talk'd as modest maidens should:
Lizzie with an open heart,
Laura in an absent dream,
One content, one sick in part;
One warbling for the mere bright day's delight,
One longing for the night. (V199-224)

In contrast to this extract from *Goblin Market*, a stanza from Edgar Allan Poe's *The Raven*.

Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary,
Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore—
While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping,
As of some one gently rapping, rapping at my chamber door. (V1-4)

The stanza from *Goblin Market* has only one subordinating conjunction (“When”, V200), as opposed to *The Raven*, which has four. In the latter case, the hypotactic sentences help to create the intended mood, the rhythm thus is slower. In *Goblin Market*, on the other hand, the paratactic structure reflects the quick pace of nursery rhymes, which means to reduce the “distance between the poem and the reader, creating a sense of immediacy or intensified present” (Pullinger 148).

5.1.1. Variation in rhythm

The rhythm formed by the devices and language in a poem can lull the reader into a complacent state, as in an incantation. When the rhythm does not diverge, the reader is lured into a sense of safety. An interruption to this established rhythm can draw attention to it as much as it can simultaneously alert the reader that something is about to change.

There are three such interruptions in *Goblin Market*, and they all take place during an event.

The first interruption occurs during the second event. In it, Laura has been waiting in vain for the goblins, only to realize that her sister, who, unlike herself, has not eaten their fruit, can still hear and see them.

Till Lizzie urged, “O Laura, come;
I hear the fruit-call but I dare not look:
You should not loiter longer at this brook:
Come with me home.
The stars rise, the moon bends her arc,
Each glowworm winks her spark,
Let us get home before the night grows dark:
For clouds may gather
Though this is summer weather,
Put out the lights and drench us through;
Then if we lost our way what should we do?”

Laura turn’d cold as stone
To find her sister heard that cry alone,
That goblin cry,
“Come buy our fruits, come buy.”

Must she then buy no more such dainty fruit?
 Must she no more such succous pasture find,
 Gone deaf and blind?
 Her tree of life droop'd from the root:
 She said not one word in her heart's sore ache;
 But peering thro' the dimness, nought discerning,
 Trudg'd home, her pitcher dripping all the way;
 So crept to bed, and lay
 Silent till Lizzie slept;
 Then sat up in a passionate yearning,
 And gnash'd her teeth for baulk'd desire, and wept
 As if her heart would break. (V243-268)

The steady flow of the first three lines of the first stanza is interrupted by a short verse ("Come with me home.", V246). The second stanza narrates what Laura is feeling after the turning point. Again, just like in the first interruption, short lines interrupt the flow established by the previous lines (V256, 260). Additionally, the effect of end-stopped lines cannot be underestimated, as it gives the lines a sense of finality, signalling the end of the rhythm.

The second example of an effective rhythm variation occurs as the story nears its third and climactic event.

Till Laura dwindling
 Seem'd knocking at Death's door:
 Then Lizzie weigh'd no more
 Better and worse;
 But put a silver penny in her purse,
 Kiss'd Laura, cross'd the heath with clumps of furze
 At twilight, halted by the brook:
 And for the first time in her life
 Began to listen and look. (V320-328)

The variation in this example suggest urgency, and the end-stopped line concludes the stanza in a way that seems both final and preparatory: Lizzie's hesitation ends, opening the door for the third event to develop.

The third example appears just after Laura has taken the cure from Lizzie.

Swift fire spread through her veins, knock'd at her heart,
Met the fire smouldering there
And overbore its lesser flame;
She gorged on bitterness without a name:
Ah! fool, to choose such part
Of soul-consuming care!
Sense fail'd in the mortal strife:
Like the watch-tower of a town
Which an earthquake shatters down,
Like a lightning-stricken mast,
Like a wind-uprooted tree
Spun about,
Like a foam-topp'd waterspout
Cast down headlong in the sea,
She fell at last;
Pleasure past and anguish past,
Is it death or is it life? (V517-533)

The contrast between the first line and the last line of this stanza is noteworthy: one is long, the other short. Moreover, while the lines maintain approximately the same length, lines 528 and 531 break the flow with their abrupt shortness. So does the inclusion of exclamation break the rhythm by drawing attention and guiding the reader into adopting a certain tone when reading. In comparison to these exclamations, the question mark with which this stanza concludes does the opposite. While the exclamation served to 'raise' the tone and mood, the question mark 'lowers' it. This is no coincidence, for the question posed at the end leads directly into the story's conclusion: Laura recovers and awakes looking as if she had never been close to death at all (V546-551). The question, then, allows the text to seamlessly flow from one section into the final one. In that sense, the beginning of the stanza serves to delay the outcome, raising suspense.

5.2. Repetition

Repetition can feature in various ways in a text. It can be the repetition of a particular word; it can be the repetition of a particular sound pattern, like rhymes or other poetic devices like assonance, alliteration, and anaphora.

Repetition also has multiple functions. One of them is that by repeating specific features of the text, it creates a rhythm that facilitates memorization and elocution. Simultaneously, repetition is done to reinforce a message, “providing precious seconds for reflections and consolidation.” (Pullinger 148) It is important to note, however, that in the case of a repetitive sound pattern, it is not the sound itself that carries its own unique meaning, but that the sound gains a particular meaning through the context it is used in. It is a “two-directional process: first, certain meanings are transferred to a sound pattern, and then the tone of this sound pattern, coloured by such meanings, is transferred back to the level of meaning” (Hrushovski 42). This applies even to onomatopoetic words like “whoosh”, “bark” or “crack”.

Poe’s *The Bells* I used at the beginning of this chapter as an example to illustrate the use of language in a poem. I will do so again.

Hear the sledges with the bells—	A
Silver bells!	A
What a world of merriment their melody foretells!	A
How they tinkle, tinkle, tinkle,	B
In the icy air of night!	C
While the stars that oversprinkle	B
All the heavens, seem to twinkle	B
With a crystalline delight;	C
Keeping time, time, time,	D
In a sort of Runic rhyme,	D
To the tintinabulation that so musically wells	A
From the bells, bells, bells, bells,	A
Bells, bells, bells—	A
From the jingling and the tinkling of the bells. (V1-14)	A

In this stanza, two forms of repetition are present: that of words, and that of rhyme. In the case of the latter, there are three different types: type A, B, C and D. The first is repeated twice, as well. With regard to the repetition of words (*epizeuxis*), the word “bells” is repeated in total ten times, excluding the title; and so are “tinkle” and “time” repeated several times. What draw attention here, is that these words are repeated not just throughout the entire stanza, but often within the same line: “tinkle, tinkle, tinkle”

(V4), “time, time, time” (V9), and it culminates with a seven-fold repetition of the word “bells” (V12-13).

In the example above, repetition is meant to evoke the image of a ticking clock and mirror the tolling of the bells. Repetition is meant to evoke something else in *Goblin Market*, but the purpose – to draw attention to a message and to evoke a feeling – remains much the same.

In *Goblin Market*, couplet, alternate, and triplet rhymes abound.

Clearer than water flow'd that juice;	A
She never tasted such before,	B
How should it cloy with length of use?	A
She suck'd and suck'd and suck'd the more	B
Fruits which that unknown orchard bore	B
(V131-136)	
Wind sang to them a lullaby,	A
Lumbering owls forbore to fly,	A
Not a bat flapp' to and fro	X
Round their rest:	B
Cheek to cheek and breast to breast	B
Lock'd together in one nest.	B

(V193-198)

Aside from these repeated rhyme schemes, a second type of repetition is prevalent: the goblin men's “customary cry, / ‘Come buy, come buy’” (V231-232). This call appears whenever the goblins are near or referenced, thus reinforcing the “key structural features” (Pullinger 148) of the fairy tale, among which belongs the fantastic. The constant repetition of this cry creates an incantatory formula that connects Laura and Lizzie to the goblins and serves also as a warning sign: that danger is near.

The effect this particular type of repetition has on reinforcing the fairy tale aspect of *Goblin Market* becomes evident during the interaction between the goblins and Lizzie.

“Nay, take a seat with us,	A	
Honour and eat with us,”	A	
They answer’d grinning:	B	
“Our feast is but beginning.	B	
Night yet is early,	C	
Warm and dew-pearly,	C	
Wakeful and starry:	D	
Such fruits as these	X	
No man can carry:	D	
Half their bloom would fly,	E	
Half their dew would dry,	E	
Half their flavour would pass by.	E	
Sit down and feast with us,	A	
Be welcome guest with us,	A	
Cheer you and rest with us.” —	A	(V368-382)

The repetitive rhyme, and the recurring words and phrases are effective because they illustrate how the goblin men are trying to compel Lizzie into buying the fruit under their conditions. Because the goblins are fantastic creatures, their speech is full of rhymes and repetition, while Lizzie’s speech is comparably short and devoid of the same repetitive features.

“Thank you,” said Lizzie: “But one waits
At home alone for me:
So without further parleying,
If you will not sell me any
Of your fruits though much and many,
Give me back my silver penny
I toss’d you for a fee.” (V383-389)

Another example of reinforcing the key features of the poem through repetition is exemplified by these lines:

They stood stock still upon the moss,
Leering at each other,
Brother with queer brother;
Signalling each other,

Brother with sly brother. (V92-96)

Line 94 and 96 are an almost word by word repetition, the difference adjectives (“queer”, “sly”, V94, 96) reinforce each a negative quality about these villainous creatures, and the word “brother” signals familiarity among the goblins. This familiarity is reinforced by the lines 93 and 95. They are also an almost literal repetition, used to reveal something about the characters, with the difference that it is the gerund that changes. In this case, “Leering” and “Signalling” ties to the familiarity referred to in lines 94 and 96, and simultaneously shows that they are aware of the opportunity that is presenting themselves.

Repetition can not only serve to highlight a character’s features, as it does in the example above, it can also be a break in the rhythmic flow as well.

She thought of Jeanie in her grave,
Who should have been a bride;
But who for joys brides hope to have
Fell sick and died
In her gay prime,
In earliest winter time
With the first glazing rime,
With the first snow-fall of crisp winter time. (V312-319)

In this segment, Lizzie watches helplessly as her sister falls ill as she is deprived of the goblins’ fruit. The helplessness is mirrored through the change in rhythm: the first three lines are six to eight words long, and the lines shorten to just three to four words by line 315 to 317, only to lengthen at the end once again. The repetitive rhyme also serves to highlight this helplessness. The last three lines, however, help to reinforce the connection between Laura and her encroaching death, creating a sense of urgency in Lizzie and the reader.

A third form of repetition prevalent in *Goblin Market* is the repetition of words within one line (*epizeuxis*), which also serve as emphasis of a particular mood. The following examples are all related to Lizzie and Laura, and their own personal experiences. The first two, “ ‘Oh,’ cried Lizzie, ‘Laura, Laura, / You should not peep at goblin men.’” (V48-49) and “ ‘No,’ said Lizzie, ‘No, no, no; / Their offers should not charm us’” (V64-66) emphasise Lizzie’s worry and fear over Laura’s evident attraction to the goblin men. The other example – “Look, Lizzie, look, Lizzie, / Down the glen tramp little men”

(V54-55) – reflects an entranced Laura, and “‘Nay, hush,’ said Laura, / Nay, hush, my sister: / I ate and ate my fill” (V163-165) shows Laura in a similar state as before: still entranced, and dismissive of her sister’s concerns.

1.1.1. Alliteration and Assonance

Alliteration is the repetition of a consonant, assonance the repetition of vowels in a quick succession. These devices abound in *Goblin Market*, and all are to an extent relevant to suspense-building, because if rhythm encourages immersion and immersion is a necessary component for suspense, any presence of alliteration or assonance must thus be a contributory element. In terms of turning points, the meeting between the goblins and Lizzie is the climax of the story. Here, alliteration and assonance are also present.

But put a silver penny in her purse,
Kiss’d Laura, cross’d the heath with clumps of furze
At twilight, halted by the brook:
And for the first time in her life
Began to listen and look. (V324-328)

The sounds P, S, and L reoccur in a short span of each other, as does the vowel I. This happens when Lizzie prepares herself to meet the goblin men, so in this case, the alliterative and assonance elements help to shape this moment of determination.

Some linguists support the theory that sounds in and of themselves are meaningful, that “the aspect of a thing involved by the sound of a word may be its appearance, sound, shape, function, or any other associated quality.” (Pullinger 151, see also Höhle 68off). However, as Benjamin Hrushovski points out, “a specific sound does not have one specific meaning. It may join various directions of meaning to the point of creating an impression on the reader that the sound itself expresses certain meanings”, though it does seem as if “some sounds” are accompanied by “general qualities” (Hrushovski 44). So, for example, a repetitive S-sound pattern may create the sensation of silence⁹, but the sound itself is not exclusively reserved for that meaning alone.

⁹ Silence, conveniently, contains the S-sound, so do the words “still”, “sleeping”, “sigh.” Moreover, other languages have the same sound pattern with similar words. In Spanish, “silencio”, “sueño”, “suspirar”, in French, “silence”, “souponner”; in German: “Stille”, “Schlaf”, “seufzen”, etc. It is questionable, however, how applicable this theory – that particular sounds carry particular meanings – is globally.

What is more likely is that, as Hrushovski proposes, some words may be connected to natural sounds (whistle, shush, screech), but what primarily gives a sound its meaning is the meaning of the words combined – just like the interplay of formal and story-related elements create a narrative, so do meanings and sounds reinforce each other (Hrushovski 43). In *Goblin Market*, that is exemplified by the following segments:

- Example 1:

Chuckling, clapping, crowing, / Clucking and gobbling, / Mopping and mowing”
(V334-336)

- Example 2:

Though the goblins cuff'd and caught her,
Coax'd and fought her,
Bullied and besought her,
Scratch'd her, pinch'd her black as ink,
Kick'd and knock'd her (V429-433)

These examples are taken from the third event, when suspense reaches its peak. In it, the goblin men, having their attempts at tempting her rebuffed, grow vicious and attack Lizzie. The first example shows their escalating behaviour: they are no longer flattering her, appeasing her, but rather “crowing”, “Clucking”, “mowing” (V334-446) – they are becoming more animalistic. The second example contains the escalation itself.

Though it is questionable how onomatopoetic the K-sound is, in the combination above it gains the meaning of aggression and violence. The choice of combination is not coincidental, because the verbs –“cuff'd”, “scratch'd”, “Kick'd and knock'd her” – mean violent acts. In this case, thus, sound and meaning support each other.

1.1.1. Anaphora

Anaphora is a device where the first word is repeated at least twice in the beginning of at least two following lines. Sometimes this form of repetition is present across stanzas, as in John Masefield's *Sea-Feaver*. In *Goblin Market*, anaphoric elements are present throughout as a means of reinforcing a particular moment or aspect of character.

One had a cat's face,
One whisk'd a tail,
One tramp'd at a rat's pace,
One crawl'd like a snail,

One like a wombat prowl'd obtuse and furry,
One like a ratel tumbled hurry skurry. (V71-76)

This anaphora occurs again in a later scene: "One set his basket down, / One rear'd his plate; / One began to weave a crown" (V97-99). This type of repetition highlights the incantatory aspect characteristic of the goblin men.

Of greater importance, however, is this example.

Laura stretch'd her gleaming neck
Like a rush-imbedded swan,
Like a lily from the beck,
Like a moonlit poplar branch,
Like a vessel at the launch
When its last restraint is gone. (V81-86)

Aside from the alliterative element, the anaphora helps to emphasise the image of letting go of one's restraints. This is crucial to the development of the story, as it is Laura setting herself free that triggers the initiating event.

The use of "like" for anaphora is common (V188-199) and reappears at the climax, though it diverges significantly from the first example.

White and golden Lizzie stood,
Like a lily in a flood,—
Like a rock of blue-vein'd stone
Lash'd by tides obstreperously,—
Like a beacon left alone (V413-417)

While in the first example, the anaphora showed Laura freeing herself from her social restraints to bring about the first event, this example occurs at the story's climax. The two stand in contrast with each other (just as the sisters do themselves), and the repetition purposefully draws attention to it, as Lizzie remains steadfast and true, and triumphs for her sister's sake.

Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to identify the formal and story-related elements that contribute to the build-up of suspense in Christina Rossetti's narrative poem *Goblin Market*. To do this, the first part of this paper attempted to define suspense and list the formal and story-related elements that play a contributory role in its development. The definition concluded that suspense is a feeling of anxiety – a need to find out how the story develops and/or ends, which is prompted by the elements built into the text. This means that there exist two types of suspense: result-oriented and process-oriented. This shapes the structure of the story, as in result-oriented suspense the outcome is the last thing revealed, while in process-oriented suspense the focus lies on the development of that outcome.

The distinction between result- and process-oriented suspense furthermore implies that one of suspense's prerequisites is eventfulness – a chain of causally linked events that involve characters and contains a space where they can develop. This has repercussions on the question whether lyric poetry can, in fact, be suspenseful, as lyric is characteristically uneventful. The second chapter of Part I presented three theories from different scholars in order to determine whether lyric can hold suspense or not. If one bases themselves on Jonathan Culler's theory of lyric, it becomes clear that lyric cannot be suspenseful since lyric is characteristically uneventful, though exceptions do exist.

Peter Hühn's theory, on the other hand, insists that events are present in lyric as much as in narrative. His reasoning is that narrative is a form of communication (Hühn and Schönert 1), and since lyric also attempts to communicate something, the same terminology can be applied to this genre as well. However, in doing so, he dilutes the term 'event' into changes and developments that occur also outside the story-level: in the discourse (the construction of the text) and in the reader. This is a mistake, because events are changes that occur in the story itself: a character undergoes a change, his/her world undergoes a change, which affect everything else. Whatever change occurs in the discourse-level – or in the reader – is but a result of the developments contained in the story.

The fact that events are defined as "turning points" (Hühn and Schönert 7) in the way it is traditionally defined – as being constrained to the level of story – has ramifications on the analysis of suspense in lyric. First, events being changes in the story-level

implies the involvement of characters and a space, but since the latter is automatically inferred by an activity (which events naturally include) its absence in the text is not indicative of (un)eventfulness. To exemplify this, I analysed Emily Dickinson's "*Hope is the thing with feathers*". The poem contains neither a character, nor an event. Instead, it uses the bird as a symbol for hope. In this case, the poem follows more Jonathan Culler's assumption than Hühn's: that lyric poetry aims to make a statement of the real world than to portray an event.

The third theory presented was Werner Wolf's. He presents a list of characteristic features for narrative (narreemes) and lyric (lyremes). His definition of events is the same as above – a change in the story – but he also disagrees with Hühn's application. Instead, he offers a list of conditions which an event must fulfil: (1) they must be non-trivial and unpredictable for the characters involved; (2) they must be irreversible and, up to an extent, unrepeatable; (3) they must be real in the story-world, and (4) lead to real consequences. (Schmid 320-322). The analysis of two different poems – one by Emily Dickinson, the other by Susanna Moodie – helped to highlight the importance of such definition, for having the key features of an event at one's disposal helped to determine that the former is uneventful and therefore lacks suspense, while the second does fulfil, in part, the requirements of an event, and hence can qualify as an eventful poem.

When looking at the events of *Goblin Market*, it becomes clear that it fulfils all of these requirements. All four events lead to real consequences in the story world, consequences which, as is the case with the initiating event, lead to the other events. The events in *Goblin Market* are never repeated and are irreversible, and though the encounters with the goblin men are all similar to each other, they are so similar to subvert expectations and to change the outcome. For what is expected is for the goblin men to persuade Lizzie to buy their fruit under their conditions. That she resists and asserts herself is in itself unexpected and inconvenient for the villains – hence the sudden burst of violence. The events in and of themselves are never trivial, nor predictable, for the characters involved, rather they are life-threatening.

Having once outlined the events of *Goblin Market*, what followed was a discussion of the main characters' roles in the narrative and how these contribute to suspense. First, it was determined that Lizzie and Laura's roles contrast each other: Lizzie is the cautious sister, Laura the curious one. Their roles are prone to change, as the

characters are affected by the events in the story. When Laura consumes the forbidden fruit, she changes from the curious sister to the fallen woman. A fallen woman, however, is unable to save herself. Her salvation is provided by her sister Lizzie – turning her from a mere curious sister into the sacrificial lamb, reminiscent of Jesus Christ's sacrifice on the cross.

The discussion of their contrasting narrative roles took place in two different sections. On the level of story, they are characters that live in the established story world. Their involvement in the events lead to suspense because they are the figures the readers have at their disposal, to identify themselves with them, and to root for them. There is another layer involved, however. More than just characters, the roles they occupy are also part of intertextual patterns, which the reader should, ideally, be familiar with. Knowing these patterns (which belong to the formal elements) facilitates the understanding of the characters' place in the narrative. It helps, also, in making predictions.

Other patterns also became evident during the analysis. Aside from the fallen woman and the sacrificial lamb, relevant to suspense were also the dynamic of the forbidden fruit, the temptation and the prohibition. There can be no temptation without the prohibition of a forbidden object – in this case, the fruits of the goblin men. Moreover, the symbol of the forbidden fruit is familiar across cultures. To have one of the main characters covet this object, and another purposefully tempt her into buying it, should thus be familiar to the reader. Understanding the dynamic contributes to building suspense.

Genres also contain patterns which help the reader make predictions and understand the development of the plot. *Goblin Market* is fairy tale for adults written in the style of a nursery rhyme. This apparent contradiction between content and style can lead to startlement, if not confusion, until comprehension settles in, and suspense can develop as one allows him/herself to grow invested in the story. Otherwise, it is questionable how much the upholding of generic conventions – which *Goblin Market* fulfils, content-wise, as a fairy-tale – actually contributes to the build up of suspense. The one advantage is that its ultimate outcome is not revealed until the end. As such, the lack of knowledge can keep the readers on their toes until it is revealed.

As with genre, narrative space, a story-related element, also plays a questionable role in the development of suspense. Two distinctions were made between setting and

spatial frames. Setting, as was established, is relevant to understanding the overall geographical, socio-cultural context the story-world functions under: *Goblin Market's* setting is a pastoral, fairy tale world. As such, the peaceful setting is belied by the presence of the goblin men, who come by the glen every day. The glen, on the other hand, is the main acting place: the most important spatial frame. In that regard, it is a relevant element to the build up of suspense.

The comparison with Edgar Allan Poe's *The Raven* and Samuel T. Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* helped to elucidate how narrative space can be used to build suspense. In both poems, space is continuously referred to, and the descriptions have the purpose of either creating a particular mood (by emphasising the attributes fitting to that mood) or by showing, through spatial descriptions, how space itself is being affected by an upcoming event. In both cases, space is used as a foreshadowing tool. None of these uses apply to *Goblin Market*. Space, in that regard, is not considered an important suspense-building element.

Dialogue, on the other hand, and the consequential character interactions are the central elements that develop suspense in the story. The dialogue allows for a sense of immediacy, which helps to immerse oneself in the story, without a narrator interrupting. Furthermore, the interactions reveal something about the world, the characters themselves, and also drive suspense to its peak in three separate occasions: all three happen during an event.

The first takes place when Laura meets the goblin men. This encounter leads to all other events. The second event is delivered through the dialogue between Laura and Lizzie, when the former and the reader realize that the only one who can still hear and see the goblin men is Lizzie. This presents a problem, as Laura has become reliant on the goblin men's fruit. The third instance where suspense reaches a peak through the dialogue happen when Lizzie finally meets the goblins. Their interaction culminates in violence.

The prominence of dialogue and character interactions means that the narrator is 'overshadowed' by these elements. Nonetheless, a narrator is present, though s/he remains covert and distant. This distance allows for the sense of immediacy mentioned above that the dialogue can create. Instead, the sequences that are narrated primarily show what happens in the aftermath of an event, for example, when Laura takes the fruit or when the goblins assault Lizzie: the escalations are narrated, but the build up

to those turning points are reserved for the dialogue. Moreover, by keeping the narrator's interjections, judgements and opinions to a minimum, so is the foreshadowing a device that is minimally present in the text. This has the advantage that the reader is given no direct clue (aside from his/her knowledge regarding genre and patterns) as to the ultimate outcome of the story – which is the one question the story revolves around: how will the story end?

The inclusion of other poems in the discussion helped to elucidate the issue further, as the comparison gave insight into the ways suspense can be developed. For example, while in poems like *The Raven* and *TROAM*, narrative space had a prominent role in the build up of suspense, the opposite was true for *Goblin Market*. In the latter, the character interactions were the most prominent elements though this does not mean that the others are any less important. As mentioned in the introduction, it is the interplay of the formal and story-related elements that creates suspense. There can be no character interactions without events, without a language that expresses it. So do events need a narrative space where they can develop, but it also needs to be structured in a manner that is most appropriate for whatever effect the author is aiming to create.

In other words, it may be impossible to construct a list of formal and story-elements that always take a prominent role in the construction of suspense. Though the presence of events, characters and narrative space are an inevitability, given the nature of stories, there are simply too many ways to construct a story to make a finite list of ways suspense can be developed.

However, what does seem to be relevant, regardless of the object of analysis, is the language. Poetry allows for such a conclusion as the special use of language is a characteristic of the genre. Nonetheless, the way language shapes suspense is different in all these examples: *The Raven*, *TROAM*, and *Goblin Market* are all different to each other, and can be compared only to an extent in that regard.

More studies in this field would be necessary to make an adequate comparative list about the role each element plays in building suspense, and to gain a more accurate impression of the combinations possible in this genre.

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Abstract

Despite numerous studies on suspense in horror, thriller and crime fiction, suspense in poetry appears to be comparably neglected. This thesis is an attempt at filling this gap and will consequently analyse Christina Rossetti's *Goblin Market* to show how formal (genre, structure, language) and story-related elements (characters, setting, events) shape suspense. Suspense here is understood as Peter Vorderer understands it: as a feeling of uncertainty regarding the outcome or unfolding of events. Narrative theory provides the basis for this paper, as do previous studies on suspense. Results will show that these elements appear in combination with each other; their interplay is what strengthens or weakens suspense. It will also become apparent that language, which is so particular to poetry, is an element not to be underestimated, and is worth paying attention to in future analysis. Since this paper focuses on one poem alone, the gap in this particular field of study will remain large – especially with regard to lyric poetry. However, the methods and the results presented in this work might inspire and be useful for future research about suspense in poetry.

Abstrakt

Trotz der Anzahl an Studien, die sich mit Spannung (engl. suspense) in literarischen Werken befassen, wird Spannung in der Lyrik vergleichsweise weniger Aufmerksamkeit gerichtet. Diese Masterarbeit beabsichtigt mit einer Analyse von Christina Rossetti's *Goblin Market* einen Schritt in dieser Hinsicht zu machen. Das Ziel ist herauszufinden, wie formale (Genre, Struktur, sprachliche Elemente) und

geschichtsbezogene Elemente (Charaktere, Schauplatz, Handlung) zum Spannungsaufbau beitragen. Spannung wird hier als Unsicherheit oder Ungewissheit verstanden, bezogen auf den Ausgang oder die Entwicklung der Erzählung. Grundlagen für die Analyse geben die Erzähltheorie und Studien, die sich mit Spannung auseinandersetzen. Die Ergebnisse werden zeigen, dass diese Elemente in Kombination miteinander auftreten, und ebendiese Kombination die Spannung je nach Situation auf- oder abbaut. Offensichtlich wird auch, dass die sprachliche Ebene, die in der Dichtung in besonderer Weise auftritt, eine wichtige Rolle in dieser Hinsicht spielt. Da sich diese Arbeit auf ein einziges Gedicht konzentriert, bleibt die Lücke in diesem Bereich der Spannungsforschung groß – v.a. in der Lyrik (engl. lyric im Gegensatz zu narrative poetry). Die Herangehensweise und die Ergebnisse, die hier präsentiert werden, können aber zukünftigen Studien in diesem Forschungsbereich nützlich sein.

