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The Department of English and the Nordic Association for English Studies look forward to welcoming you to Aarhus in May 2004!

Mutual intelligibility of timber trade terminology in the North Sea countries during the time of the 'Scottish Trade' [1]

MARJORIE LORVIK

Introduction

This essay developed as a side-shoot out of an investigation into the possibility that the distinctiveness of the Scots dialect of the North-East of Scotland, often referred to as the Doric, may to some degree be a result of lexical borrowing from Norwegian in particular. Scandinavia is after all the area of Northern Europe closest to Scotland, with Norway having easiest access straight across the North Sea, especially to the North-East. Historically Scotland and Norway have a long record of contact back to the distant times of Viking rule and to the alliances between Scottish and Danish-Norwegian kings (Smout 1963: 153). Then there have been not only royal marriages such as that of James VI and I and Anna of Denmark-Norway, but also emigration of Scots to, and military service by Scots soldiers in, all the Scandinavian countries, all of which Murdoch (2000) describes and documents.

The possible lexical borrowing from Norwegian to Scots in the North-East would have taken place in or after the late Middle Ages. This was long after what is recognised as the main period of Old Norse influence on the Old English Northumbrian dialect from which Scots is descended, and also after the period of immigration from Northern England into Scotland during the Normanisation process in the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The borrowing would have occurred as a result of fairly close contact of some sort between North-East Scotland and Norway. In the course of searching for likely scenarios, there was one particular activity that stood out, for which there exists documentation in both Scotland and Norway from the

[1] I am very grateful to Dr. Robert McColl Millar, University of Aberdeen, for his most useful comments on this essay.

second half of the sixteenth century onwards, namely trade, especially in timber. However, this trade was certainly not restricted to the North-East of Scotland but rather included the whole of the eastern Scottish coast, as customs records from the sixteenth century, for example, have shown (Lillehammer 1986: 105). It is therefore unlikely that, as far as timber terminology is concerned, any lexical borrowing would only have been evident in the dialect of the North-East. Therefore it is Scots in general which is the focus of this essay.

Descriptions of this trade activity, written by present-day historians in both English and Norwegian, were consulted to find out more about the contact between the two linguistic communities. Some of these descriptions refer specifically to the main types of timber products involved. For that reason it was decided to examine some terms used for these products against the historical background of the timber trade, to try and find out to what extent they were either common to the two languages or mutually intelligible, or indeed bore similarities to terms in the languages of the other countries involved in the North Sea trade too. As Lythe points out, when Hansa control of trade was weakening even in the Bergen *kontor*, 'a cosmopolitan mercantile community was created by Dutch, Danish, Scottish and native merchants, under whose influence Norway's external trade acquired a greater degree of geographical flexibility' (1976: 147). How did they all communicate, in order to do business?

Historical background

There were fairly close trade links between Scotland and Norway due to several factors. As already mentioned, Norway was the nearest to Scotland of the Scandinavian countries. Also, there had been close contact for several centuries between the Northern Isles and Norway for political reasons. In addition, the east-coast ports in Scotland were responsible for the vast bulk of medieval Scotland's overseas trade and the west-coast ports in Norway were the most easily accessible by sea (Ditchburn 1990: 82). It was in fact easier to transport goods to Norway by sea than it was to send them over land, for example, to the central lowlands.

It was only after the water-driven sawmill was introduced into Norway early in the sixteenth century that trade in timber from Norway to Scotland became significant (Worm-Müller, ed, 1923: 328). As Lythe puts it:

> In both countries geographical and economic conditions facilitated the expansion of this sea-borne timber trade. For a timber user in Edinburgh or Aberdeen it was certainly simpler and probably cheaper to arrange direct shipment from a Norwegian port, for the alternative involved a devious cross-country haul from a forest in a remote glen. During the winter freeze, great stocks of timber were accumulated at the ports of south-west Norway from Larvik and Christiansand round to Bergen. The crossing from Scotland, given reasonable weather, took only about four days; there were no hostile waters to penetrate; there were no delays or complications such as those which skippers encountered on entry to the Baltic; the cargo was easy to handle and not liable to damage in transit. Hence it is hardly surprising that from the spring to the late autumn a substantial part of Scotland's merchant tonnage, supplemented by some Dutch and some Norwegian, was engaged in this movement of timber. (1976: 147)

This so-called Scottish Trade (*skottehandelen*) with Norway, according to Lillehammer, lasted from the mid sixteenth century till the beginning of the eighteenth in the fjords north and north-east of Stavanger. Other areas mentioned include Sunnhordland, Agder on the south coast and further east to Telemark, and the area around Oslofjord. Later the Møre-Trøndelag districts to the north were also involved (1986: 97). Lillehammer quotes a traditional story from the period which 'illustrates how one family got to know the trading foreigners so well when they arrived in their vessels during the summer that they looked upon them almost as relatives'. Some would have come on a regular basis almost every year and perhaps even two or three times each year (Lillehammer 1986: 107).

Lillehammer points out that the North Sea had become the centre of European trade, which was of benefit to mercantile communities in the Low Countries and Britain, and also that forestry had become one of the principal industries of Norway. Changes in agriculture as a consequence of the Black Death (Lillehammer 1986: 99) had resulted in the growth of dense woods that then had to be cleared to regain land for cultivation. The introduction of sawmills from the beginning of the sixteenth century onwards was an important technological advance that increased the volume of the trade (Lillehammer 1986: 100). While efforts were made to control trade generally and restrict it to citizens and burghers in towns, the timber trade was exempt from these regulations, which meant that the farmer in the fjords could do business directly with his customers. The oldest source of information about this trade is a list from 1567 detailing the vessels that had visited Ryfylke. Out of 38 no fewer than 28 were Scottish (Lillehammer 1986: 101).

After the turn of the century there is more detail to be found in the Norwegian Customs Books, including the names of skippers and their origin, and what and how much they loaded onto their ships. The books show that the Scots brought with them considerable quantities of grain, which was their most important medium of exchange for the timber. Four types of timber goods dominated, 'boards or deals, beams or baulks, barrel hoops and firewood' (Lillehammer 1986: 104). The books also show that, while the Scottish ships were more numerous, they were smaller in size than, for example, the Frisian/Dutch and the German ships (Lillehammer 1986: 102). With several Scottish ships sailing to this area regularly, there could have been a fair chance of lexical transfer, simply because those on the ships were being repeatedly exposed to Norwegian, some of which they may then have taken home with them. If several sailors were exposed in this way, there would have been a greater chance, in that respect, of borrowing.

Details about the origin of the ships reveal that most of the vessels came from 'the central part of Scotland's east coast', Montrose, Dundee, St. Andrews, St. Monans, Kirkcaldy and Leith. The others were from as far north as the Northern Isles and as far south as the English border (Lillehammer 1986: 105). Fraserburgh and Aberdeen are mentioned as 'in the first decades of the century [having] had repeated contact with the area' (Lillehammer 1986: 106). Some Scottish ships made several calls in the main trading period, from March till September, and stayed at their place of call for days at a time, even weeks, and in one particular case David Walker stayed for four months in 1642 for repairs to his ship (Lillehammer 1986: 107). As Lillehammer points out, 'frequent calls and long stays ... must have resulted in close connections between seller and buyer, between the east and the west side of the North Sea, just as the oral tradition reveals' (1986: 107).

The triangular trade in the North Sea

Much later in the seventeenth century the Norwegian Customs Books indicate a greater variety of imports to Ryfylke, and record that there was now a triangular trade, including Holland as well as Scotland (Lillehammer 1986: 108). Based on the evidence in the Customs Books, Lillehammer concludes that 'the Scottish vessels sailed from the burghs along the shores of the Forth and Tay, to Holland, traded there, and on their way back sailed to Ryfylke in order to change some Dutch goods for Norwegian timber before returning home to Scotland' (1986: 108). However, by the end of the seventeenth century the town of Stavanger had gained control of the

timber trade, and the number of Scottish vessels visiting Rogaland had dropped considerably. By early in the eighteenth century the time known as 'the Scottish Period' had come to an end (Lillehammer 1986: 109).

However, that was not by any means the end of Scotland's trade generally with Norway or indeed in the North Sea area, which carried on in many ways as before. Scotland's trade directly with the Low Countries had long been significant too, dating far back into the Middle Ages, and centred at the Scottish Staple in Veere in Zealand (Smout 1963: 185). The dominance of the Staple reduced somewhat after 1661, but this did not really have any great effect on trade with the Low Countries (Smout 1963: 188). Customs statistics for 1680-86 show that '41 per cent of all far-trading vessels leaving Scotland, and 31 per cent of all incoming vessels' were engaged in this trade (Smout 1963: 188). Smout describes what was frequently the trade route and cargo as follows:

> ... [M]ost of the outgoing ships were loaded to capacity with coal, some of them sailed on to Norway to pick up wood, and a high proportion even of those that returned from the Netherlands came back to Fife and the Lothians with no more than a barrel or two of Dutch goods. [...] Four-fifths of the vessels engaged on the Dutch trade sailed to and from the Firth of Forth, and almost all the remainder were based on the other east-coast ports (1963: 188).

After the decline of the Staple it was Rotterdam that attracted Scottish ships, this being given by about 85 per cent of those involved in the Dutch trade as their Dutch port of origin (Smout 1963: 189). However there were other Dutch ports as destinations too, and Dutch imports 'were overwhelming in their variety' (Smout 1963: 190).

Heerma van Voss talks, in fact, about a North Sea cultural area in the early modern period, based on intensive trade contacts (1996: 22), commenting that even the contacts between two relatively undeveloped areas such as Scotland and Denmark were extensive. He specifies North Sea contacts as follows:

> Norway provided wood for shipbuilding and other construction work in England and Holland. [...] Denmark exported grain and cattle to Holland and the North German cities. Denmark and Norway exported fish, as the Dutch did to the Baltic coasts. The fish trade carried the salt trade in its wake, which in its turn was followed by the trade in Mediterranean products. The Scottish lowlands and the Shetlands depended for many primary products

> upon imports from England, Holland and Scandinavia. In exchange the Shetlands exported fish to Bremen and Hamburg. Lowland Scotland exported grain to Norway and Rotterdam, coal – as did Northern England – and salt to the whole of Northern Europe and coarse textiles, fish and cattle. (1996: 24)

Trade was also carried on with the rest of the world but those contacts 'within the North Sea area were much more frequent and intensive than those with the outside' (Heerma van Voss 1996: 24).

Language and communication in the North Sea trade area

How, then, did merchants and sailors from different countries and linguistic backgrounds communicate in this hive of trade activity? According to Braunmüller, the term 'semicommunication', originally introduced by Haugen to refer to communication in a Scandinavian context, can be applied to the situation in which the speaker has chosen not to use a third or intermediating language, as the addressee can be expected to understand more or less two related codes which do not coincide in every instance and may thus cause some perceptional difficulties (Braunmüller 1996: 150). Using one's own language results in more natural expression. The hearer will concentrate, for instance, on the most meaningful elements, such as nouns, adjectives and verbs, making use of the genetic relationship between the varieties involved (Braunmüller 1996: 150). Scots and Norwegian, for example in the late Middle Ages, would probably only have had a slight degree of mutual intelligibility, no doubt less than Middle Low German and Norwegian, but other factors to consider are the speakers' flexibility and willingness to understand and be understood, to achieve communication of some sort. Giles' accommodation theory, discussed in Trudgill (1986: 2) comes into play here. Focussing particularly on speech, it attempts to explain why, how and how much speakers adjust their language in the presence of others. The point is made that 'if a speaker accommodates frequently enough to a particular accent or dialect, ... then the accommodation may in time become permanent, particularly if attitudinal factors are favourable' (Giles in Trudgill 1986: 39).

Sogner, describing trade contact between Norway and Holland in the early modern period, makes the point that communication at that time was still mainly oral (1996: 191). She comments that 'people in general had a better ear and a higher sensitivity of hearing than we [do], and their comprehension of spoken foreign languages may even have exceeded our

own' (1996: 191-192). Linguistic contacts included trade, mercenary armies, artisans' obligatory wanderings, technology transfer through the movements of workers, but it was also a fact that some states were multilingual (Sogner 1996: 192).

Sprauten refers to the Trondheim merchant Horneman who sent his son to Amsterdam in 1739 to learn the language and trade from Horneman's most important 'commissioner' in Amsterdam, Daniel Wesling. Horneman himself spoke and wrote fluent Dutch as a result of a similar stay in Amsterdam. Nor was he exceptional in this respect, as other young men who were destined to become leading merchants in Trondheim had received the same kind of training (Sprauten 2001: 25). Another son was also sent to Amsterdam to learn the language and trade, though he was to become a bureaucrat (2001: 26). According to Sprauten, at the beginning of the eighteenth century in a European context the Dutch were considered the experts in various areas, but particularly in trade and shipping. He suggests the reason why so many merchants sent their sons to learn the business and the language in Amsterdam was the great influence the Dutch had not only on Norwegian society between 1650 and 1750 but also on the rest of the world (2001: 26). Linguistically, a thorough grounding not only in trade but also in Dutch may well have facilitated, at the minimum, reinforcement of cognates, in trade terminology if not also in the social exchange in the trade situation.

What applied to the sons of Trondheim merchants most probably applied to sons of merchants in the other main trading centres in Norway, for example, Bergen. And it has no doubt also applied to Holland's other main trading partners at the time, such as Scotland. In fact the register of the Privy Council of Scotland contains numerous examples of permission being granted for this purpose, the languages in question being not only Dutch, German and French, but also Scandinavian, Russian and Polish. Often Scots were sent away for two years or so and were expected to pick up several languages (personal communication, Steve Murdoch, 27.03.03). The result would have been that at least certain key figures involved in trade would have been bilingual, to a greater or lesser degree, in the languages of the North Sea area.

A trade pidgin, or lack of such?

In more general terms, it seems reasonable to assume that there was some degree of mutual intelligibility among the parties in the North Sea area, certainly as far as doing business was concerned. Otherwise the language

situation would have been the same as in Finnmark in the north of Norway, where the Pomor trade between Russians and Norwegians resulted in *russenorsk*, the Russo-Norwegian trade pidgin (RN) used from after the middle of the eighteenth century up to the First World War. Broch and Jahr point out that in spite of its history spanning a period of 141 years RN never developed beyond a minimum of grammar and vocabulary, the main reason being its use only in seasonal trade during the summer months (1984: 16).

According to Broch (1992), the first two written examples of RN, one from 1785 and the other from 1807, both found in court records, provide clear evidence that RN was already developing at the end of the eighteenth century. As she points out, the two words displaying typical characteristics of RN would not occur unless the variety already was in use (Broch 1992: 130). She also quotes a conversation in RN written down by a customs officer in 1921 as evidence that it was not enough to understand Russian or Norwegian to be able to comprehend RN (1992: 131). It had to be learned. The vocabulary comprises roughly 390 words, which is the usual extent of a trade jargon. These are mainly from Norwegian, 47 per cent, and Russian, 39 per cent, along with odd words from other sources such as the international seamen's jargon, English, Dutch or Low German (Broch 1992: 133). The terms used for types of fish may indicate that Sami too was involved, which would not be surprising, considering the composition of the population in Finnmark (Broch 1992: 134).

The Pomor trade was in fact very similar to the Scottish trade, in that it was seasonal to a considerable extent, and that traders returned regularly to the same place to do business, thus setting up social contact as well. However, in the Pomor trade, RN developed to provide some common linguistic ground because there were two discrete languages, Russian and Norwegian, in contact. No similar pidgin has been found in connection with the trade further south in the North Sea, which is most probably an indication that there was at least some degree of linguistic mutual intelligibility among the parties involved, possibly even to the extent of what Braunmüller calls semi-communication, as described above. Certainly this would seem to have been the case as far as the terminology in the timber trade is concerned. A sample of this terminology is examined in the following.

Scots terms for timber used in the Scottish Trade

The following list of timber terms was found in the course of investigating Scotland's trade with Norway as a possible scenario for lexical borrowing

between the two languages. Lythe's account of the trade in timber between the two countries includes some of the Scots terms used in documents relating to this trade (1976: 148), and so it was decided to examine these terms closely. They have therefore been investigated first of all for their etymology, for evidence of any linguistic influence or possible borrowing specifically from Norwegian. Where other North Sea languages have also been mentioned, it has not been possible in this study to consider the etymology of each word synchronically. In other words, the approach taken has been one along the lines of that described by Macafee (1997: 202) in connection with the lexis of Older Scots: 'Where an Old Norse etymon is not known, a word may nevertheless be identified as Scandinavian by the discovery of parallels in the modern Scandinavian languages and dialects'.

The following abbreviations have been used for the various dictionaries consulted:

CSD	*Concise Scots Dictionary*
EO	*Etymologisk ordbok (over det norske og danske sprog)*
ESO	*Engelsk stor ordbok (Norwegian-English, English-Norwegian)*
JSD	*Jamieson's Scottish Dictionary*
NEO	*Nynorsk etymologisk ordbok.*
OED	*Oxford English Dictionary (electronic version)*
SND	*The (Compact) Scottish National Dictionary*
SNO	*Store norske ordbok*

The terms have been checked first in *OED, SND, CSD* and *JSD.* For most of the terms it was possible either to find a form in current use in English, eg deals for deallis or to find an etymological explanation for the Scots form. For example, arrow shaftis is obviously modern English arrow shafts. Norwegian dictionaries have also been consulted, to find out whether those terms, or anything like them, are still in use and to attempt to find out the etymology of the word in Norwegian as well as possible cognates in other North Sea languages. OED has also been the source of information about cognates in the other languages involved, namely Dutch, (Low) German, Danish and Swedish, though these languages have been mentioned in some of the entries in the Norwegian dictionaries too. In other words, the etymology has been investigated in order to consider to

what extent these terms indicate that there probably was a fairly international, mutually intelligible terminology in the North Sea timber trade.

It should, however, be borne in mind that in the case of Scots in general, the situation is very similar to what Melchers describes concerning the Low German and Dutch element in Shetland dialect. She states that 'it is often impossible to determine whether a word is of Norse, Scots or [Dutch / Low German] origin. It is also difficult to tell whether an alleged [Dutch / Low German] word is a direct loan or whether it has reached the dialect via Scots or Norn' (1987: 314). Words borrowed into Scots have very often not left clear traces behind them as to which entry route they have followed. It must therefore be remembered that Dutch words could have entered the language directly through contact between Scots and Dutch, or through Dutch words first taken into Norwegian and then passed on to Scots. In the context of trade, however, there is also the likelihood that a means of communication of some sort developed, so that each speaker could use his particular variant of a cognate term and still be understood. There would have been a strong desire to understand the fairly similar term in the other language in order to conclude the deal.

The terms are listed below in the order they appear in Lythe (1976: 148). Lythe's comment concerning the meaning is given beside each term.

deallis - 'boards ... an obvious word ...'

CSD lists dale and dell, meaning 'deal, a plank', dated late 16th – early 17th century and located in Angus and Perth. *OED* lists the third meaning of deal as 'a slice sawn from a log of timber'. It explains that in the timber trade in Britain and N. America a deal is understood to have specific dimensions for it to be thus classified. What is more interesting, however, is the cognates that are listed: modern Dutch deel, modern German diele, and also the fact that the etymology of deal can be traced back to c 1400, when its root was introduced from Low German. Smout states that 'deals', 'sawn fir planks of varying lengths', were the type of timber most frequently listed in the customs books in the second half of the seventeenth century (1963: 155).

No trace has been found in the Norwegian etymological dictionaries of a similar form with the same meaning. However Lillehammer, writing in Norwegian about Scottish and Dutch trade with the Agder and Rogaland coasts of Norway, in the south and the south-west of the country, says in the passing that cut boards were called delar (2001: 20). Also in Næss the word deler occurs, and is explained as meaning bord,

Norwegian for 'boards, planks' (1920: 24). In *Den norske sjøfarts historie*, vol. 1, reference is made first in English to 'Norway deales' and then in Norwegian to 'Norgesdeler' being delivered to Yarmouth (Worm-Müller, ed., 1923: 367).

The headword here has therefore most probably been one of several very similar forms found previously in the various languages of the North Sea trade area. It has apparently not survived in Norwegian, probably as it was only used in the commercial context of the timber trade.

sparris – 'spars ('an obvious word')'

OED defines spar as '1. one of the common rafters of a roof, ... 2. a pole or piece of timber of some length and moderate thickness'. Cognates include Dutch and West Frisian spar, Norwegian, Danish and Swedish sparre, indicating a broad geographical area of use. It is also suggested there may be a connection with French (modern French dialect épare). *EO* lists Norwegian sparre, ' and mentions Dutch spar meaning 'beam'. The entry also says that French espars is a derivative from Germanic. Norwegian sperre, 'bar, barrier; rafter' is also mentioned. These are obviously all cognates.

crukit tymmer – 'would be for roof principals or for ship framework'

This item can be found in English in *OED* under bracket 2 as crooked timbers, in an example dated c 1850: '...short, crooked timbers, resembling knees, for support or ornament'. These are most likely what Smout describes as ' pieces of oak, sometimes of specialised shape like "knee heads" ' (1963: 156). *OED* lists Dutch dialect timmer, Swedish timmer and Danish tømmer as cognates of English timber.

In Norwegian there seems to be no equivalent technical term, but native speakers find nothing wrong with the direct translation kroket tømmer, which can be translated literally as 'crooked timber'. This would mean that when the Scots trader used this expression, it would be more or less intelligible for his Norwegian counterpart, and vice-versa.

(arrow) shaftis – 'needs no comment'

For shaft *OED* gives Old English and Old Scots origins, sceaft and skaft respectively. *OED* says shaft is a cognate of Dutch schaft, German schaft, and Swedish and Danish skaft. *SNO* lists the Norwegian form as skaft. These forms must all have been perfectly mutually intelligible.

burnewood – 'emphasises the role of wood as fuel in this period'

Burnwood occurs in one example in *OED* from 1898 under knapple in a list of types of timber exported from Norway. It is not listed in *SND* or *CSD*, but occurs in *JSD*, meaning quite simply 'wood for fuel'. Smout comments that 'if there was little space left after the loading [of a ship], it was often filled with a fathom or two of "burnwood", perhaps used for kindling in Scottish households' (1963: 156). His use of quotation marks would suggest that this was not a standard term, to his knowledge, other than in the customs records.

There is no corresponding compound in Norwegian in the dictionaries listed above. However, both elements in the Scots compound noun have cognates in Norwegian: brenne, 'burn' and ved 'wood'. It is in fact listed in *Norsk ordbok: ordbok over det norske folkemålet og det nynorske skriftmålet* (1966, Oslo: Det norske samlaget). It has also been confirmed by native speakers that brenneved, referring to wood for heating purposes, exists certainly in dialect, differentiating it from settved, which is listed in *SNO*. Here the latter is defined as wood which was used in mines to heat up the rock face so that the stone would break into pieces. The headword here would therefore have been easily understood by both Norwegians and Scots, and may very possibly be a loan translation into Scots.

It is also possible that there is a cognate in Dutch, for example, as 'burn' translates as branden and 'wood' as woud. However, judging by the entry for 'wood' in *Cassell's English-Dutch Dutch-English Dictionary,* by far the more frequent form used in Dutch is hout, which is a cognate of German holz.

trein nellis – 'wood pegs used as dowels in carpentry or for hanging slates'

JSD lists trein as meaning 'wooden'. *SND* gives Old Scots treyn, meaning 'wooden'. *OED* suggests that there has been reinforcement for the modern English form with tr instead of dr because of its coincidence with Norse tré, a similar form not being present in Old High German, and now being obsolete in Low German and Dutch. Danish however has træ and Swedish träd.

As for the compound in the entry, *OED* lists treenail/trenail, 'a cylindrical pin of hard wood used in fastening timbers together, especially in shipbuilding and other work where the materials are exposed to the action of water'. Nail in this sense is listed under meaning II.4. a., and the cognates Swedish nagel, Danish negl, Icelandic nögl and Dutch nagel are given.

According to *SNO*, Norwegian has nagl/nagler, meaning 'short iron or wooden bolts'. For 'wooden' in Norwegian compounds, the prefix tre- can simply be attached. *EO* also gives nagle, and explains that this is a derivative of West Germanic negl. In connection with Norwegian tre, NEO refers to an adjective form treen, meaning 'wooden'. Again this is no doubt a case of cognates, though the first element in the compound places the entry more clearly in the northern part of the North Sea.

pype stavis – ' "pypes" were barrels'

According to *OED* pipe is derived from French, and has as one of its meanings 'a large cask, of more or less definite capacity ... used for wine, and formerly also for other liquids and provisions (as eggs, meat, fish, etc.), or other goods'. It is now obsolete or used in certain combinations, eg pipe-stave. However, pype is not listed with this meaning in *SND* or *CSD*. Nor is there any trace of a cognate in Norwegian.

Staves, according to *OED*, is the plural form of staff, stave being a singular back-formation. One meaning of stave is defined as 'each of the thin, narrow, shaped pieces of wood which, when placed together side by side and hooped, collectively form the side of a cask, tub or similar vessel'. Pipe staves were used to make pipes or casks, according to *OED*.

While pype, as mentioned above, does not occur in any form in the sense of 'cask' in Norwegian, stav is certainly used in Norwegian. *SNO* gives tønnestav, meaning literally 'barrel stave', which is current usage. Cognates listed under staff in *OED* include Dutch staf, modern German stab, Swedish staf, and Danish stav. There are, however, cognates with pype stav taken from Grimm listed in *OED* under clapholt: Low German pipenstäbe, Dutch pijpstave, Danish pibestaver, Swedish pipstafvar and English pipe staves. As there are so many cognates in the languages under consideration, it is very probable that there was some form used in Norwegian too, particularly as this type of timber product was one of the main exports of the time to Scotland. It is highly likely that if pibestaver occurred in Danish this could also have been the Norwegian form, though the Danish form in itself would have been perfectly understandable for Norwegians.

fathoill wode – '... quhairof the grite pypis are made'

The first word of this combination proved quite a challenge to track down because of its spelling. The only Scots dictionary that lists anything resembling it is *JSD*, which gives fatholt. This is defined as 'perhaps some kind of wood from Norway'. *SND* only gives fat, meaning 'a tub, a

wooden vessel', and says this is the Scots variant of English vat. *OED* indicates that there are many cognates of fat, meaning 'vessel', including Dutch vat, German fass, Danish fad and Swedish fat.

However, *OED* lists fatholt as Scots, obscure and rare, and gives the meaning '?staves for casks'. It also suggests it may be derived from Dutch vathout, comprising vat 'cask' + hout 'wood'. This could well be a case of lexical transfer, but when fatholt was borrowed originally, it was not realised that 'wood' was in fact already a part of the compound, and so wode, 'wood', was added as well. Furthermore, -holt would suggest that it is more likely to have been borrowed from Dutch or Low German, as *OED* in fact suggests. See knapholt below for further comments on -holt.

> **scowis** – 'Some etymologists hold that "scowis" were the offcuts of logs, but Jamieson's *Dictionary* calls them wattle for thatching.'

SND defines skow as 'a barrel stave, a thin plank from which barrel staves are made'. It gives Old Scots as scow, and also draws attention to Dutch schooven, meaning among other things 'a bundle of staves'. It also comments that scows were imported into Scotland from the Continent. *OED* lists scow/skow as Scots and obsolete, meaning strips of wood for wattle work, barrel-staves, fixing thatch, etc' and suggests this could be derived from an unrecorded sense of Dutch schouw which has the Low German cognate schalde. Edmonstons's *Etymological Glossary of the Shetland and Orkney Dialect* lists skowis as meaning 'outside boards of trees'.

There is probably a fair chance that scowis was a North Sea word used in the international timber trade in that area. There seems however to be no obvious cognate in Norwegian, though skava, meaning 'to shave' might be related.

> **steyngis** – 'poles'

SND lists as the first meaning for the noun stang 'pole, wooden bar or rod in general'. In *OED* stang is classified as dialect, and steng is given as one of the variations. Cognates listed include modern German stange, Dutch stang and steng, Danish stang and Swedish stång.

In Norwegian *SNO* lists stang, meaning ' long, narrow, straight object, for a particular purpose'. The plural form is stenger. There is, however, a reference in *Den norske sjøfarts historie*, vol. 1, (1923) to a delivery of 'steingis' to Dundee in 1589, where the term is explained as meaning 'barrel hoops' (366). Once again, these are obviously cognates.

> **knapholt** – 'with numerous variant spellings ... planking or staves, at all events cut and squared wood'

CSD dates this particular form late 15th – early 17th century, and defines it as 'clapboard, split oak smaller than wainscot, chiefly used as barrel-staves and as panelling or boarding', with the general dating late 15th – 20th century. *SND* lists knappel from Old Scots knappold, which it states is a reduced form of Old Scots knapholt, the English being clapholt. *OED* comments that the Scots form has knap substituted for clap. The *OED* entry for clapboard explains that this is 'a partially englished form of CLAPHOLT, with *board* for Low German *holt,* 'wood' '. The derivation given for clapholt in *OED* is that it is of Low German origin, from klappen + holt.

The form knapholt occurs in the Norwegian article about the Scottish Trade, in Næss (1920: 24). Reference is made to a particular set of accounts dated 1577 (Bergenhus lensregnskap / accounts for the county of Bergenhus) and a variety of timber products are mentioned. Judging from the fact that knapholt is mentioned there, it is then a fair assumption that this word in the one form or the other would be mutually intelligible among the timber traders, if not indeed that it was also used in Norwegian. It would now seem, however, to be obsolete in Norwegian.

Knorhald, according to Murison (1971: 165), was the earliest Scots form from 'Middle Dutch knorhout, a variant of knarholt, knapholt, clapholt, a word of Low German origin from East Prussia. Probably this type of squared wood came to Scotland first through Holland from its original source in the Baltic'.

> **wainscot** - '... came predominantly from Danzig, ... was better quality planking'

OED defines this item as 'a superior quality of foreign oak imported from Russia, Germany and Holland, chiefly used for fine panel-work', and gives a long list of variant forms. Judging from the many old forms given for various languages, including Middle Low German wagenschot, Flemish waegheschot and Dutch wagenschot, this is a word that has occurred in some form in many of the languages spoken around the North Sea for a long time. *OED* comments that the English examples of the word are earlier than those given in the Middle Low German and Middle Dutch dictionaries. *CSD* states the spelling of the headword dates from the late 16th century, with wanskoth 15th and wynscott 16th century.

There is no trace of this word in the Norwegian etymological dictionaries, probably because this was not something that was produced in Norway. In *ESO* wainscot is translated into Norwegian as veggkledning ' wall covering', and a 'British explanation' of the word is also given, which would suggest that the word is unknown in Norway. As Lythe points out, Scotland's bulk timber imports came from Norway, whereas wainscot was relatively valuable and came in 'smallish consignments' from Danzig and Riga (1976: 146). There is therefore the possibility that this type of panelling was first transported to Norway, perhaps via Holland, and then sent along with the main Norwegian timber exports to Scotland.

What is nevertheless striking is the fact that even Norwegian academics with knowledge of the period of history in question and expertise from museums involved in cultural conservation are not familiar with any term in Norwegian for this type of material (personal communications). One explanation could be that Norwegian buildings similar to those in other countries where wainscot would have been used would most probably have had tapestries or similar wall hangings. Wainscot would certainly not have been high up on the list of possible types of wall covering.

garronis – '... vague'

Garron, acording to *CSD* means 'wooden beam'. It is dated 16th century onwards and is now found in Orkney and Caithness. *SND* defines it as 'a length of squared timber, a beam'. *OED* gives Old Scots garro(u)n, 'short wooden beam', from 1543, but this is of uncertain origin, perhaps Old North French garron, from Old French jarron, branch of a tree. *JSD* lists garron nails, 'large nails of different sizes', but there is no explanation for garron. *The Shetland Dictionary* (Graham 1999) lists garron as meaning 'a large, square-shaped nail'. There would seem to be no cognate in Norwegian.

Mutual intelligibility of terms in the North Sea timber trade area

The sample above of fifteen timber terms in Scots is indeed a small one, but it is very probably representative of the linguistic situation at a time when there was considerable trade activity in the North Sea area, particularly in timber as far as Scotland and Norway were concerned. What is most striking is the fact that at least eleven, and probably thirteen, can be said to be cognate with terms used in Norwegian and other North

Sea languages (the two exceptions being wainscot and garronis). They would therefore have been mutually intelligible.

Braunmüller (1997) points out that 'trading contacts differ from other forms of linguistic contacts by being single-minded: the only thing that really counts is to sell as much as possible and to establish firm contacts for expanding these trading relations in the future' (367). He also sees a parallel between the time of the Hansa's influence and the communication situation in Scandinavia today, where:

> each participant uses his/her own language, vernacular or even dialect when meeting another Scandinavian. He/she can be sure of being fairly well understood, not only because of some more or less perspicuous linguistic coincidences, but also on the basis of feeling themselves to be members of a common Scandinavian community. These historically and pragmatically motivated dimensions in inter-Scandinavian contact situations of the present-day correspond with the economic aims and vital interests of all trading participants in the Baltic area and in western Norway at the time of the Hansa (in the Middle Ages and later). (Braunmüller 1997: 367)

Jahr comments that with regard to the Scandinavian languages between 1350 and 1500 Low German was a mutually intelligible language that occupied a prestigious position (in Jahr ed., 1999: 127). Scandinavia was then what he calls a large common-language area, and the term Middle Low German refers generally to varieties of Northern German dialects and not to an established, standardised language (Jahr 1999: 128). There was no common 'Hansa language' (128), and no one so far has proved that a pidgin or mixed language of Low German and the Scandinavian languages existed during the Hanseatic period (Jahr 1999: 134). One telling point in this respect could well be the fact that there were early Russian textbooks for Hanseatic merchants, Low German and Russian obviously being two discrete languages, but there are no similar textbooks that are known of for the Scandinavian languages (Jahr 1999: 130). The fact that none have been found suggests that probably none existed, most likely because traders speaking these different yet related languages were able to communicate to a greater or lesser degree.

Scots was not so closely related to the languages in question on the eastern coasts of the North Sea as these were to each other. However, Scots was nevertheless fairly closely related through its Germanic roots in Old Northumbrian, and was no doubt far more similar to them in and immediately after the Middle Ages than it is today. It would therefore not

have been necessary for the traders to develop a pidgin. Instead they could have been what Braunmüller calls 'passive bilinguals', making use of 'correspondency rules as well as some lexical variants' (1997: 366). In other words, they would not have felt it necessary to achieve an active command of the language in question but would have been satisfied with just understanding what the others were saying. Scots-speaking traders would possibly have been in the lucky situation of having a greater chance than those from fairly far south in England of understanding the other North Sea languages. As Heerma van Voss comments, 'in general the dialects of English spoken along the North Sea coasts, especially north of the Wash, have more in common with other North Sea languages than standard English' (1996: 27). This would also have applied to Scots.

It is also worth remembering that in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries there could be problems of mutual intelligibility between local variants of a language within a state's borders. This was after all the time when states and standard languages were still emerging in Europe, and political and linguistic borders were not necessarily as fixed as they are today. People would therefore have been used to being more flexible in understanding those who spoke a variety of language not quite the same as or even fairly different from their own. A highly relevant, present-day example of this situation is in fact found in Norway, where people are accustomed to communicating with other Norwegians who may speak quite a different, not very intelligible dialect altogether. Braunmüller makes the point in connection with the Hanseatic period that traders in particular would be exposed to different languages and dialects at the various market places and fairs they visited. They would consequently be linguistically flexible and able to adjust to new linguistic situations, gradually becoming 'passive multilinguals' (1997: 372). This must also have applied to the hectic situation in the sixteenth and seventeenth century heydays of North Sea trade.

Such passive bilingualism would have created a situation that facilitated lexical borrowing. Gass and Selinker refer to a study of nonnative speaker (NNS) speech in which it was found that native speakers understood more of NNSs' speech, the more experience they had in listening to it. The study found three factors in particular that facilitated comprehension: (1) familiarity with a particular NNS, (2) familiarity with nonnative speech in general, and (3) familiarity with the discourse topic (1994: 206). These factors would all have been

common denominators in the discourse situation in the North Sea timber trade.

Conclusion

Based on the evidence in the etymological examination above, limited as it is to these fifteen items, there would seem to be an indication that the terms for timber used in the Scottish Trade between Scotland and Norway were very probably mutually intelligible. What also seems to be the case is that the other North Sea languages, such as Dutch, Low German and Danish, also had mutually intelligible terms for the products being traded. Furthermore, the fact that no trade pidgin seems to have emerged from this language contact situation, even though the Scottish Trade had several features in common with the Pomor trade, such as regularity of mainly seasonal visits and duration of the trade, could be seen to support this. This could indicate that there was a certain level of mutual intelligibility among those actively involved in trade, perhaps even what Braunmüller calls passive bilingualism or semi-communication. There must have been a fair degree of comprehension certainly in some cases, considering the more social aspects of the contact described by Lillehammer, for example, and quoted above.

There is little evidence of lexical borrowing among the terms investigated (possibly two), particularly from Norwegian into Scots, certainly in the period in focus here, from the mid-1500s to approximately 1700. However, this limited study seems to suggests that some form of semi-communication, certainly in a trade context, has existed in the North Sea area. Such a conclusion could, of course, only be drawn definitely on the basis of broader and deeper research into this hypothesis.

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Thematic Progression in Translation from English into Norwegian

SYLVI RØRVIK

1 *Introduction*

The focus of the present study is on thematic progression in texts translated from English into Norwegian. The objective is to analyze and compare thematic progression in an English source text and five different translations of the same English text. (See section 2 for a more detailed description of the material.)

According to Daneš, "text connexity is represented, *inter alia*, by thematic progression (TP)" (Daneš 1974: 114). Thus the study of thematic progression is interesting because it is one of the factors that contribute to making a text a text, as it were. The study of thematic progression in translated texts adds another dimension to this, insofar as it also sheds light on the translating process. A translation is meant to convey the same meaning as the source text; it should have the same communicative effect. This does not necessarily entail a process of word for word translation, in fact it rarely does. But does the freedom to choose other wordings extend to choice of theme? After all, if the theme is seen as the starting point of the clause, "the peg on which the message is hung" (Halliday 1970:161 as quoted in Fries 1995: 318) and "that with which the clause is concerned" (Halliday 1994: 37), then the choice of a different theme will alter, if only subtly, the meaning/content of the message (Ventola 1995: 88). Such a change will, in turn, cause a change in the surrounding sentences, since it will alter the progression of the argument. Alternatively, is it possible that word order, thematic progression, and the content of the message are not as closely linked as one would expect? It is questions like these that the present study aims to answer.

2 *Material and method*

The material used in this study has been taken from a multiple translation project initiated by Stig Johansson and Linn Øverås at the University of Oslo. For this project, ten different translations of the same English source text, a scientific article by Colwyn Trevarthen called "Communication and cooperation in early infancy: a description of primary intersubjectivity", were commissioned. The present study makes use of the source text and five of the target texts. Each text has 270 sentences, so the total number of sentences in the material is 6x270 = 1,620 sentences. The source text and the translations have been entered into a database and analyzed for various features to do with thematic progression; mainly whether the theme is a participant, process, or circumstance, whether it represents given or new information, and, if given, where it was last mentioned.

The advantage of this material is that it permits the comparison of different translations of the same source text. This is useful in that it enables one to see which features of the translations result from the translators' idiosyncrasies, and which are results of lexicogrammatical differences between English and Norwegian.

3 *Definitions of theme and thematic progression*

3.1 Theme

Theme has been defined in many different ways. The present study primarily makes use of Halliday's definition, which states that "the Theme extends from the beginning of the clause up to (and including) the first element that has a function in transitivity" (Halliday 1994: 53), i.e. a participant, circumstance, or process (Halliday 1994: Chapter 5). However, in a few cases it seems sensible to stray somewhat from this definition.

When it comes to the construction labeled *thematized comment* (equivalent to sentences with anticipatory subject *it* in Quirk *et al* 1985: 1391) and constructions with existential *there*, theme will be defined along the lines suggested by Thompson (1996: 129-130 and 138). In sentences with thematized comment, Thompson argues that not just *it* (as Halliday would have it), but also the verb and the comment should be included in the theme because "in many cases, thematised comment occurs at key transition points in the text and it obscures the method of development of

the text if one simply labels 'It' as Theme" (1996: 130). Example (1) shows the theme-rheme analysis of a Norwegian sentence with thematized comment (the topical theme (Halliday 1994: 52) is underlined).

> (1) Det er tydelig at det fins en optimal tilpassning fra mors side overfor babyen. (TT4)

Similarly, with existential *there*, Halliday again holds that only 'there' is theme. Thompson, on the other hand, argues that the existence of the phenomenon is "signalled not just by 'there' but by 'there' plus existential process" and that including the process in the theme also "means that the Theme includes experiential content" (1996: 138). Thus he has shown, using Halliday's terms and criteria, that it makes sense to view the process as topical theme in sentences with existential *there*, as has been done in the analysis of example (2). In consequence, 'there' will be a structural theme, cf. Halliday (1994: 61-62).

> (2) But there is an essential difference between a person doing things in relation to the physical world and the control of communication between persons. (sentence 15)
>
> Men det er en avgjørende forskjell mellom hva en person kan utføre i forhold til den fysiske verden og det å kontrollere kommunikasjon mellom mennesker. (TT4)

There are also a few problems that arise when comparing theme and thematic progression in English and Norwegian texts. These problems stem from the fact that Norwegian, unlike English, is a V2-language; i.e. in the vast majority of cases the second constituent in any Norwegian declarative sentence will be the finite verb (Faarlund *et al* 1997: 859). This means that whenever a conjunctive Adjunct or a modal Adjunct (equivalent to conjuncts and disjuncts in Quirk *et al* 1985: 503) is fronted, the writer has no choice but to put the finite verb second. Since the present study focuses on thematic progression it seemed sensible to try and work around this problem so that the theme in such sentences could contain a participant or a circumstance. To this end it was decided to follow the strategy set out in Hasselgård (1998: 148): "In the present study, I choose to regard this finite verb as a structural theme[1], so that in cases where the fronted non-subject is a conjunct or a disjunct adverbial,

[1] I.e. a textual theme, cf. Halliday 1994: 52-54 and 61.

the theme will include the first experiential element after the finite verb." Thus we get analyses like that in example (3):

> (3) Derimot kommuniserer de med mennesker ved uttrykksfulle bevegelser. (TT2)

3.2 Thematic progression

The concept of thematic progression (TP) was introduced in section 1 above. At this point, however, it would be useful to say something about the way in which Daneš's patterns of thematic progression (1974: 118) have been applied in the present analysis. Daneš outlines three main types of TP: *simple linear TP*, where the rheme of sentence 1 becomes the theme of sentence 2 and so on (see example (4), where "Sir Alexander Fleming" in the rheme of the first sentence becomes the theme of the second sentence as "He"); *TP with a continuous (constant) theme*, where consecutive sentences have the same theme (see example (5), where "The Rosseauist" is introduced as theme in the first sentence, and is also used as theme in all subsequent sentences); and *TP with derived themes*, where all the themes are derived from a hypertheme (see example (6), where "New Jersey" is the topic of the entire paragraph, and the theme of each sentence is related to this topic). Of course, one rarely finds just one such strategy in a text; most texts have a combination of strategies.

> (4) The first of the antibiotics was discovered by **Sir Alexander Fleming** in 1928. **He** was busy at the time investigating a certain species of germ which is responsible for boils and other troubles. (from Daneš 1974: 118)

> (5) **The Rosseauist** especially feels an inner kinship with Prometheus and other Titans. **He** is fascinated by any form of insurgency... **He** must show an elementary energy in his explosion against the established order and at the same time a boundless sympathy for the victims of it...Further **the Rosseauist** is ever ready to discover beauty of soul in anyone who is under the reprobation of society. (from Daneš 1974: 119)

> (6) **New Jersey** is flat along the coast and southern portion; the northwestern region is mountainous. **The coastal climate** is mild, but there is considerable cold in the mountain areas during the

> winter months. **Summers** are fairly hot. **The leading industrial production** includes chemicals, processed food, coal petroleum, metals and electrical equipment. **The most important cities** are Newark, Jersey City, Paterson, Trenton, Camden. **Vacation districts** include Ashbury Park, Lakewood, Cape May, and others. (from Daneš 1974: 120)

In the present study, the database used for the analysis was set up to include fields for these features, so that the topical theme of each sentence was labeled according to where it came from[2]. For the purpose of this study, only the origin[3] of the topical theme was considered relevant, as one would expect the progression of the argument to be carried out primarily by the element with experiential content. The categories were: 'theme from rheme in preceding sentence' (Daneš's simple linear TP), 'theme from theme in preceding sentence' (Daneš's continuous theme), 'theme from hypertheme' (Daneš's TP with derived theme), and 'other'. This makes it possible to calculate which strategy is predominant in each of the translations and the target text.

4 Topical themes

This section gives an overview of the texts in terms of what sort of topical themes were found. Table 1 shows the distribution of the various types of topical themes in the source text (ST) and the target texts (TT). The number of occurrences for the most frequent category in each text is in bold type.

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[2] Obviously, this is only relevant for sentences where the theme represents given information. For present purposes, 'given' is defined as something mentioned before, or inferable from the context (cf. Chafe's 'active' and 'semi-active' (1987: 25) and Jones's 'foregrounded frame' (1983: 50)). Anything that does not fit this description will be termed 'new' information. This may seem a somewhat subjective and haphazard way of judging what constitutes given information. However, great care has been taken to ensure that all the texts used in this study have been analyzed in the same way, thus ensuring the comparability of the resulting figures. Of course, there is no guarantee that these figures can be compared with those of other studies. This is clearly a problem, and one which is compounded by the fact that so many definitions of 'given' and 'new' exist as to make it almost impossible to ensure the general comparability of the different definitions. It is to be hoped, however, that by making readers aware of the problem one may avoid, at least in part, invalid conclusions and generalizations.

[3] I.e. where the referent of the thematic element was last mentioned, if the theme is analyzed as given.

Table 1: Realization of topical themes in the source text and the target texts

Topical theme	Occurrences ST	Occurrences TT1	Occurrences TT2	Occurrences TT3	Occurrences TT4	Occurrences TT5
Participant	206 (76.3%)	197 (72.96)	193 (71.48%)	203 (75.19%)	198 (73.33%)	191 (70.74%)
Circumstance	48 (17.8%)	54 (20%)	51 (18.89%)	48 (17.78%)	49 (18.15%)	50 (18.52%)
Thematized comment	5 (1.84%)	4 (1.48%)	7 (2.59%)	6 (2.22%)	8 (2.96%)	13 (4.81%)
No theme	5 (1.84%)	5 (1.85%)	5 (1.85%)	8 (2.96%)	7 (2.59%)	5 (1.85%)
Process	4 (1.48%)	6 (2.22%)	13 (4.81%)	3 (1.11%)	5 (1.85%)	7 (2.59%)
Predicated theme	1 (0.37%)	3 (1.11%)	1 (0.37)	1 (0.37%)	3 (1.11%)	3 (1.11%)
Other	1 (0.37%)	1 (0.37%)	-	1 (0.37%)	-	1 (0.37%)
Total	270 (100%)	270 (99.99%)	270 (99.99%)	270 (100%)	270 (99.99%)	270 (99.99%)

It is perhaps not surprising that the overwhelming majority of topical themes in the source text are participants (see example (7)), or that the second most frequent type is circumstantial constructions (see example (8)). The category labeled 'no theme' may seem to contain more instances than one would expect in a formal text, but these are exclusively titles of subsections, and so are not as mysterious as they may at first appear (see example (9)).

(7) He does so by means of this delicate and specifically human system for person-to-person communication. (sentence 7)

Barnet gjør dette ved hjelp av et finstemt og særegent menneskelige system for mellommenneskelig kommunikasjon. (TT1)

(8) In the second month after birth their reactions to things and persons are so different that we must conclude that these two classes of object are distinct in the infant's awareness (Trevarthen forthcoming). (sentence 31)

I annen måned etter fødselen reagerer de så forskjellig på ting og mennesker at vi må gå ut fra at barna skjelner mellom dem (Trevarthen, kommer). (TT2)

(9) 1 Introduction (sentence 2)

1 Innledning (TT3)

It is evident from Table 1 that there are differences between target text 1 and the source text as regards types of topical themes found. The source text has 206 instances of theme = participant, target text 1 has only 197. As regards circumstances, the source text has fewer than target text 1, 48 vs. 54. When it comes to processes, however, the target text has two more than the source text.

We can see from Table 1 that target text 2 has fewer thematized participants than both the source text and target text 1. The number of processes in thematic position, however, is twice that of target text 1, 13 vs. 6, and over three times as high as the number of thematized processes in the source text (example (10)). The number of circumstances functioning as topical theme is slightly lower than in target text 1, but slightly higher than in the source text. In target text 2, as in target text 1, the three most frequently thematized constructions are participants, circumstances, and processes.

> (10) They seem to be trying to communicate feelings to things as well as to people. (sentence 35)
>
> Det virker som om de vil vise både ting og mennesker at de føler noe for dem. (TT2)

Target text 3 is the only text so far where the category of 'process' is not the third most frequently occurring thematized construction. Also, there are more "sentences" with no theme in this translation than in any of the other target texts involved in this study.

Target text 4 has the highest number of thematized comments out of the texts described so far. It follows the pattern set in target text 3 in that it has a low number of thematized processes, and a relatively high number of "sentences" without any theme at all.

The most notable aspect of the figures for target text 5 is that this text has an unusually high proportion of thematized comments (see example (11)). With 13 occurrences in this category, this text really stands out.

> (11) Blindness easily goes undetected in early infancy because looking movements seem normal (Freedman 1964; Fraiberg this volume). (sentence 128)
>
> Det er lett å overse blindhet i tidlig spedbarnsalder fordi blikkbevegelsene tilsynelatende ser normale ut (Freedman 1964; Fraiberg, i denne boken). (TT5)

To sum up, in the Norwegian target texts slightly fewer themes are participants. In most of the target texts, a slightly higher number of circumstances occur in the theme. Other differences are less constant.

5 *Origin of topical themes*

Let us now turn to the issue of where these themes come from. An overview of this is given in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Origin of themes in the source text and target texts

Theme from	Occurrences ST	Occurrences TT 1	Occurrences TT 2	Occurrences TT 3	Occurrences TT 4	Occurrences TT 5
Rheme in the preceding sentence	**80 (30.19%)**	**83 (31.32%)**	78 (29.43%)	75 (28.63%)	79 (30.04%)	**81 (30.57%)**
Theme in the preceding sentence	46 (17.36%)	40 (15.09%)	37 (13.96%)	47 (17.94%)	41 (15.59%)	35 (13.21%)
Theme referring to new information	46 (17.36%)	54 (20.38%)	57 (21.51%)	49 (18.7%)	52 (19.77%)	63 (23.77%)
Theme not in the preceding sentence	32 (12.08%)	29 (10.94%)	30 (11.32%)	32 (12.21%)	34 (12.93%)	29 (10.94%)
Rheme not in the preceding sentence	29 (10.94%)	30 (11.32%)	28 (10.57%)	29 (11.07%)	26 (9.89%)	27 (10.19%)
Hypertheme	21 (7.92%)	21 (7.92%)	22 (8.3%)	21 (8.02%)	21 (7.98%)	19 (7.17%)
Other	11 (4.15%)	8 (3.02%)	13 (4.91%)	9 (3.43%)	10 (3.8%)	11 (4.15%)
Total	**265 (100%)**	**265 (99.99%)**	**265 (100%)**	**262 (100%)**	**263 (100%)**	**265 (100%)**

Again, there are some unsurprising tendencies in the source text, like the fact that the most frequent origin of themes is the preceding rheme (Daneš's simple linear theme, see example (12)).

> (12) In the first few months, before manipulation is effective in exploring objects, **an infant** establishes the basis for a deep affectional tie to his mother and other constant companions. (sentence 6)
>
> He does so by means of this delicate and specifically human system for person-to-person communication. (sentence 7)

On the other hand, it is slightly surprising that the two categories of 'other theme' and 'other rheme' are more common than 'theme from hypertheme', although it is of course possible that many of these instances can be seen as examples of Daneš's TP with a continuous theme, despite the fact that they sometimes occur fairly far apart in the text (cf. example (13)). Alternatively, one might introduce a fourth strategy of thematic progression, one which comprises a more complex kind of linear progression (cf. Butt *et al* 2001: 142-143) where either the theme or rheme of a sentence can be used as the theme of a sentence later in the text. This seems a sensible way of explaining the occurrence of thematic origins such as the following, where the theme of sentence 40 is derived from a rhematic component in sentence 25.

> (13) Acts of these kinds have been found in research with infants that obeys the observational tenets of **Piaget** in his studies of cognitive development (1936). (sentence 25)
>
> Piaget (1936, 1946) records expressions of "pleasure in mastery" and "serious intent" with respect to cognitive tasks, and Wolff (1963, 1969) observed that smiling and cooing or crying of young infants may accompany and signal recognition of a familiar toy. (sentence 40)

If we compare the results for target text 1 with those of the source text, we see that they are somewhat different, though not dramatically so. Simple linear thematic progression is the most common strategy in target text 1, as it was in the source text. This is illustrated in example (14):

> (14) Et seks uker gammelt barn **kan vise glede** over en riktig forventning og mishag over å mislykkes, selv om det er tilfreds og avviser fysiologisk "belønning." (sentence 45, TT1)
>
> **Uttrykk for glede** er knyttet til den erkjennelsesmessige (subjektive) forutsigeligheten (Papousek 1969, Zalao 1972). (sentence 46, TT1)

However, the second most common thematic origin in target text 1 is 'new', and it is perhaps slightly surprising that this should be so. Whilst thematizing an element containing new information is useful insofar as it allows the writer to emphasize something or to establish a contrast, it nevertheless lessens the readability of the text, since it entails the loss of an explicit link to the preceding context (cf. Vande Kopple 1986:87). In such cases, the translator must decide which is more important: explicit discourse relations, or the achievement of the desired emphasis on some element. If one believes what Baker says about the universals of translated texts (1993: 243-245), one would expect the explicit

discourse relations to take precedence. However, one must also take into account the translators' idiosyncrasies and the nature of the texts in question.

Compared with target text 1 and the source text, target text 2 has a slightly lower percentage of simple linear thematic progression. On the other hand, target text 2 has a higher proportion of themes containing new information than both target text 1 and the source text. The figures for continuous theme show that target text 2 has fewer instances than both the source text and target text 1. The figures for theme derived from hypertheme, on the other hand, are almost identical for the three texts discussed so far.

The patterns of thematic progression in target text 3 are generally very similar to those of target texts 1 and 2. Target text 3 differs from the source text in the same way that target text 1 and target text 2 do, namely in that the second most frequent category of themes is that of themes referring to new information. In the source text the categories of 'new' and 'preceding theme' had the same number of occurrences.

Target text 4 clearly has very similar patterns of thematic progression to those of the other target texts. The main difference from the source text is once again that there are more themes containing new information in the target text, and fewer that are part of a TP strategy with continuous theme.

As regards the origin of topical themes, target text 5 very much follows the same pattern as the other translations. It does, however, have a slightly higher proportion of themes containing new information than any of the other target texts. It is not immediately clear what the reason for this difference may be, since, as mentioned, the thematization of an element containing new information leads to a potential decrease of readability through the loss of an explicit link with the preceding discourse. However, as will become clear from Tables 3 and 4, target text 5 differs in many ways from both the other target texts and the source text (except, perhaps, target text 2), and the higher proportion of themes containing new information in target text 5 could therefore result from the fact that this translation is relatively free.

6 *Grammatical change leading to change of theme*

The five target texts all exhibit a varying number of sentence changes that lead to a target-text theme which is different from that of the corresponding source-text sentence. Table 3 shows the various patterns of change. The most important of these are exemplified in section 7.

Table 3: Grammatical change leading to change of theme in the target texts

Type of change	Occurrences TT 1	Occurrences TT 2	Occurrences TT 3	Occurrences TT 4	Occurrences TT 5
Passive to active	3 (18.75%)	15 (28.85%)	1 (7.14%)	2 (8.33%)	7 (13.46%)
Fronting of circumstance	3 (18.75%)	3 (5.77%)	2 (14.29%)	5 (20.83%)	6 (11.53%)
Due to difference in preceding sentence[4]	3 (18.75%)	7 (13.46%)	1 (7.14%)	2 (8.33%)	12 (23.08%)
Into construction with 'det virker som' or similar	2 (12.5%)	6 (11.54%)	-	1 (4.17%)	4 (7.69%)
Noun phrase to adverbial clause	2 (12.5%)	1 (1.92%)	-	-	2 (3.85)
From existential 'there'[5]	1 (6.25%)	1 (1.92%)	1 (7.14%)	1 (4.17%)	2 (3.85)
Into existential 'det' (existential 'there')[6]	1 (6.25%)	4 (7.69%)	1 (7.14%)	2 (8.33%)	2 (3.85)
Active to passive	1 (6.25%)	-	-	-	-
Change in word order	-	5 (9.62%)	2 (14.29%)	2 (8.33%)	2 (3.85)
From fronted circumstance	-	3 (5.77%)	1 (7.14%)	3 (12.5%)	4 (7.69%)
Into thematized comment	-	3 (5.77%)	2 (14.29%)	4 (16.67%)	8 (15.38%)
Nominal construction to verbal construction	-	4 (7.69%)	-	-	1 (1.92%)
Sentence to phrase (no theme)	-	-	3 (21.43%)	2 (8.33%)	-
Other	-	-	-	-	2 (3.85)
Total	16 (100%)	52 (100%)	14 (100%)	24 (99.99%)	52 (100%)

Of the 270 sentences in target text 1, 16 (5.93%) have a theme that is in some way different from the theme in the corresponding sentences in the source text. However, not all of these have caused a change in the thematic progression. For instance, in some instances where the translator has chosen a different theme, both the source text theme and the new target

[4] This category refers to instances where the themes are identical in the source text and target text, but because there are differences in the theme-rheme structure in the sentences they originate from, the themes are considered to have different origins.

[5] In this category we find translations where the source text has a construction with existential *there*, but where the translator has chosen a non-presentative construction, which makes an unmarked theme possible (cf. section 3.1).

[6] This category refers to instances where the translator has gone from a non-presentative construction in the source text to one with existential 'det' ('there') in the target text, i.e. the opposite of the one described in footnote 5.

text theme come from the preceding rheme. Thus, we only find 9 cases where the choice of a different theme has led to differences in the thematic progression (as defined by Daneš).

Target text 2 has 52 sentences (21.85%) with a theme which is different from that of their corresponding source text sentences. As with target text 1, though, only some of these thematic changes have led to a change in thematic progression. Target text 1 had 9 cases of change in TP; target text 2 has 39 such cases.

In target text 3 there are 14 sentences (5.19%) where the translator has changed the theme. The most surprising point in connection with this aspect of target text 3 is the fact that the most frequent change is a change from a verbal construction to a nominal construction (see example (14), where the verb has been left out in the translation). The translator has thus reduced the number of verbal constructions in the target text as compared to the source text. This is in stark contrast to the results of Fabricius-Hansen (1998), who showed that Norwegian relies more heavily on verbal constructions than English does. However, because there are so few occurrences of this, and because it mostly does not occur in the other target texts, it is impossible to draw any conclusions, except to say that this may well be an area in which the translator's idiosyncrasy shines through.

> (14) This <u>is</u> because they fail to support the infant's expressions of pleasure or his prespeech and gestures. (sentence 235)
>
> Dette fordi de mislykkes med å støtte spebarnets gledesuttrykk eller dets førtale eller gester. (sentence 235, TT3)

In 8 of the 14 cases mentioned above the alteration in topical theme leads to a change in thematic progression.

The translator of target text 4 has changed the theme in 24 sentences (8.89%). As Table 3 shows, the changes are distributed over a wide range of categories, with only a few instances in each. This makes it difficult to draw any firm conclusions, but it should be noted that for the first time, the most frequent grammatical change leading to a change of theme is the fronting of a circumstance in the target text. Of the 24 sentences with a different theme from their corresponding target text sentences, only 15 lead to a change in the thematic progression as compared to that of the source text.

Target text 5 has the second highest number of changed themes out of all the target texts analyzed in this study. The theme has been changed

in 52 of the 270 sentences (19.26%). As noted above, thematized comments feature quite prominently in target text 5. In the source text there are only 5 such constructions (cf. Table 1), so it is not surprising that the remaining 8 in the target text are listed as causes of change in thematic position. Also, there are quite a few instances of change from passive to active in this text.

7 *Grammatical change leading to change in thematic progression*

As mentioned, not all of the grammatical changes causing a change in theme result in a different pattern of thematic progression. Table 4 below shows the number and distribution of changes in thematic progression in the five target texts (for explanations of the types of change, see Table 3 (footnotes)).

Table 4: Grammatical change leading to change in thematic progression in the target texts

Type of change	Occurrences TT 1	Occurrences TT 2	Occurrences TT 3	Occurrences TT 4	Occurrences TT 5
Due to difference in preceding sentence	3 (33.33%)	6 (15.38%)	1 (12.5%)	2 (13.33%)	10 (27.78%)
Into existential 'det' (existential 'there')	1 (11.11)	4 (10.26%)	1 (12.5%)	1 (6.67%)	2 (5.56%)
Passive to active	2 (22.22%)	12 (30.77%)	-	2 (13.33%)	4 (11.11%)
Into construction with 'det virker som' or similar	2 (22.22%)	5 (12.82%)	-	1 (6.67%)	4 (11.11%)
Fronting of circumstance	1 (11.11)	1 (2.56%)	-	3 (20%)	3 (8.33%)
Into thematized comment	-	2 (5.13%)	1 (12.5%)	2 (13.33%)	5 (13.88%)
From fronted circumstance	-	2 (5.13%)	1 (12.5%)	2 (13.33%)	3 (8.33%)
Change in word order	-	3 (7.69%)	1 (12.5%)	-	2 (5.56%)
Nominalization to verbal construction	-	2 (5.13%)	-	-	-
From existential 'there'	-	1 (2.56%)	-	-	1 (2.78%)
Noun phrase to adverbial clause	-	1 (2.56%)	-	-	2 (5.56%)
Sentence to phrase (no theme)	-	3 (37.5%)	3 (37.5%)	2 (13.33%)	-
Total	9 (99.99%)	39 (99.99%)	8 (100%)	15 (99.99%)	36 (100%)

Table 4 shows that target text 1 has 9 instances where the change of theme leads to a change in thematic progression. Of these 9 instances, two result from a change of voice, from passive in the source text to active in the target text (see example (15)). Two are cases where the translator has chosen the Norwegian construction 'det kan virke som/det virker som' ("it appears that/it seems that"), one is due to the translator using the Norwegian equivalent of existential 'there', and one is a case where a circumstance has been fronted. The final three cases are sentences where the different origin of the theme is caused by a change in the sentence from which the theme is derived. In other words, the themes themselves are identical in the source text and the target text, but because there are differences in the theme-rheme structure in the sentences they originate from, these themes belong to different strategies of thematic progression.

(15) Facial expressions closely similar to those of adults for the emotions of pleasure, displeasure, fear, surprise, confusion and interest may be distinguished in newborns, or young infants (Charlesworth & Kreutzer 1973; Oster & Ekman forthcoming).

These movements are automaticallv perceived as "emotional" by adults. (sentences 41 & 42)

Ansiktsuttrykk som ligner svært på ansiktsuttrykkene til voksne når de føler glede, mishag, frykt, overraskelse, forvirring og interesse kan skjelnes hos nyfødte, eller hos spedbarn (Charlesworth & Kreutzer 1973, Oster & Ekman, under utgivelse).

Voksne mennesker oppfatter automatisk disse bevegelsene som "emosjonelle". (sentences 41 & 42, TT1)

Overall, the differences between the source text and target text 1 are neither many enough in number nor consistent enough in the patterns they exhibit to enable conclusions about the relationship between different structures of thematic progressions and differences in meaning.

Target text 2 has 39 sentences where the theme change has caused a change in thematic progression. Clearly, the fact that the number of changes in TP is so much larger in target text 2 than in target text 1 enables us to draw some tentative conclusions which we could not do based on the figures for target text 1. The change that most frequently leads to a change in TP is that from passive voice in the source text sentence to active voice in the target text sentence.

(16) **What they say** gives us access to how they perceive infants.

The content of baby talk to one two-month-old infant girl, in films taken under the conditions we have standardised, has been analysed by Sylvester-Bradley (Sylvester-Bradley & Trevarthen 1978). (sentences 259 & 260)

Det de sier, viser hvordan de oppfatter barna.

Sylvester-Bradley (Sylvester-Bradley og Trevarthen 1978) har analysert innholdet av småsnakk med en liten jente på to måneder, tatt opp på film under de forholdene vi har standardisert. (sentences 259 & 260, TT2)

It is not surprising that this change leads to change in TP, as it involves a complete reordering of sentence elements. But why does this change occur at all? The passive voice has been shown to be very frequent in academic texts (e.g. Biber *et al* 1999:938), so the change is not motivated by the genre of the texts. One explanation might be the tendency of translators to explicitate discourse relations (Baker 1993: 243-245); the change from passive to active entails the explicit mentioning of a subject which performs the action, and this makes the progression of the argument easier to follow. The change from passive to active accounts for over 30% of all the changes leading to a change in thematic progression, so it seems fair to conclude that the translator of target text 2 considered the need to have an explicit agent an important reason to stray from the source text. Compared with the other target texts, target text 2 has a much higher number of changes from passive to active. If the total number of changes made in all target texts is taken into account, the shift from passive to active is actually the second most frequent. However, as over half of these occur in target text 2 (12 of 20), it seems that, on the evidence of the present material at least, we must conclude that the change from passive to active resulting in a change in TP probably reflects the idiosyncrasy of the translator of target text 2. (It might also be useful to see how many similar sentences there are in the texts where the translator has not found it necessary to change the voice from passive to active. Unfortunately, this is outside the scope of the present study.)

As regards target text 3, there are 8 cases in which the alteration in topical theme leads to a change in thematic progression. As mentioned above, it is extremely surprising that a change from a verbal construction in the source text to a nominal construction in the target texts should occur at all. However, as many of the changes involve the headlines of subsections, this figure is not as strange as it might appear.

Target text 4 has 15 sentences where a thematic change leads to a change in the thematic progression as compared to that of the source text. Again, the fact that there are so few instances of these changes makes it difficult to base any firm conclusions on the figures presented above. It should be noted, perhaps, that the most frequent cause of change in thematic progression in target text 4 is the fronting of a circumstance (see example (17)), but the extremely low number of occurrences in each category makes it all but impossible to say that this suggests a general pattern.

> (17) The techniques used have been designed to obtain detailed records of both **mother** and infant while they are in close communication. (sentence 54)
>
> **Mothers** visit the laboratory from the time their babies are two to three weeks old. (sentence 56)
>
> Fra tid til annen kommer mødrene på besøk til laboratoriet sammen med barna sine fra de er to til tre uker gamle. (sentence 56, TT4)

In target text 5 we find 36 cases of change in thematic progression. Table 4 above shows that the various causes of change in thematic progression are more or less equally common in this text as far as the number of occurrences go, but the percentages vary somewhat more. Example (18) shows the change from a construction with 'seem' in English into 'det virker som' in Norwegian, which occurs four times in target text 5 (for more on the translation of English 'seem' into Norwegian, see Johansson (2001)). This way of translating 'seem' causes a more complex clause structure in Norwegian, where a matrix clause with an empty subject is introduced, thus leading to a change in TP.

> (18) Experiments with artificial stimuli show that even **neonates** prefer to look at simplified face-like patterns (Fantz 1963).
>
> **They** seem to explore the configuration of the face, being most attracted to the eyes (Lewis 1969; Carpenter et al. 1970; Wolff 1963, 1969). (sentences 161 & 162)
>
> Forsøk med kunstige stimuli viser at til og med nyfødte foretrekker å se på enkle ansiktslignende mønstre (Fantz 1963).
>
> Det virker som de er opptatt av å finne ut av ansiktets form, og særlig er de opptatt av øynene (Lewis 1969; Carpenter et al. 1970; Wollf 1963, 1969). (sentences 161 & 162, TT5)

8 *Summary and conclusion*

In the introduction to this study two opposing hypotheses were introduced. One stated that the choice of a different theme from that of the source text would alter the content of the target text message. The other introduced the possibility that word order, thematic progression, and the content of the message may not be as closely linked as has been assumed. Through the discussion of the five target texts it has become clear that the number of thematic changes made by the different translators varies considerably, and, furthermore, that not all of these changes lead to a change in the thematic progression of the texts. This is partly due to the fact that a theme can be different from that of its corresponding source text sentence, but still come from the same part of a preceding sentence (for instance, if two different parts of the same rheme have been thematized). However, despite the fact that some of the texts have what seems to be a fairly large number of changes in thematic progression, they nonetheless follow the pattern of the source text pretty closely, excepting the general trend that the proportion of themes containing new information is slightly larger in the target texts than in the source text. In other words, the percentage of sentences belonging to each of Daneš's strategies of thematic progression is almost identical. This could be seen as a hint that the translators try to the best of their abilities to follow the thematic progression of the source text, and could thus be taken as proof of the importance of TP in ensuring the communication of a message that is equivalent in meaning to that of the source text. However, as mentioned, there are quite a few instances where the translator has chosen a different theme from that of the source text, but since both themes come from the rheme, say, of the preceding sentence, no change in thematic progression is recorded. Thus, it is impossible to say anything about the link between word order and thematic progression without looking at each theme in more detail. In other words, it is still possible that the second hypothesis outlined above is correct, namely that word order, thematic progression, and the content of the message are not closely linked.

Ventola (1995) gives examples of "thematic changes in translation which are likely to complicate the reading process of a translated academic article" (1995: 102). She seems to take this as proof that changes in thematic progression will alter the content of the target text message, or at least the way the message is perceived. However, although this seems to hold true for the examples she gives, there is no clear evidence that this is the case in general. Ventola's paper contains examples from only a few

texts, which makes generalization difficult, but she nevertheless concludes that a failure to closely follow the theme-rheme structure of the source text will complicate the target text to a point where it may be extremely difficult to read. This conclusion seems a bit premature; at the very least, the study of a much higher number of texts is required to allow such a general conclusion. Another point to bear in mind is that the problems concerning translations between English and German are not necessarily the same as those concerning the translation between other languages. Clearly, the evaluations of the target texts will always have to be based on subjective criteria, and the definition of theme employed by Ventola (1995: 87) is not the same as the one used in this study. I cannot, however, at this point find conclusive evidence in my material to support Ventola's broad claim that a thematic change as compared to the source text will make the target text considerably more difficult to read. The claim that the choice of a different theme will change the viewpoint of the sentence certainly seems to hold true, though, and might be an indication that one needs to distinguish between the clause level and the discourse level when discussing the readability of sentences with thematic changes. In other words, while choosing a different theme from the source text will subtly change the content of the sentence in question, it will not necessarily change the content of the target text message as a whole.

As mentioned above, it is impossible to say anything about the link between word order, thematic progression, and the content of the message conveyed without a closer investigation of each theme. This is due to the fact that Daneš's patterns of thematic progression, as applied in this analysis, do not distinguish between themes coming from different parts of the same rheme (for instance), so that even if, as in this case, the English and Norwegian sentences have a different theme, it has not been analyzed as a change in thematic progression if both themes came from the same rheme. What is needed is a more detailed analysis of the rhematic components. With such a system of labeling in place, one could more clearly see the connection, if one exists, between changes in word order/thematic progression and changes in the content of the message. This seems to be a fruitful area for further research.

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The Language(s) of Hierarchy in Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*[1]

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Angus Ross, in the introduction to his edition of Daniel Defoe's *The Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe, of York, Mariner* of 1719, notes that

> Crusoe sets out to subdue his new environment, to construct in his tropical island a standard of living [...] equivalent to life in his native England. He masters the new environment to produce the 'norm' he is accustomed to (Ross 1985: 17).

Most modern studies of Defoe focus on the study of the representation of ideology in his writings. In that sense, Maximilian E. Novak, Defoe's most recent biographer, identifies the variety of modern approaches to *Robinson Crusoe* as those that highlight the meanings of the text as "economic parable, a spiritual autobiography, an adventure story, and a fable illustrating human development" (Novak 2001: 536). The aim of this paper, however, will be to consider the particular function that Defoe assigns to language when he uses a discourse that is not explicitly political or societal but which nevertheless conveys the narrator's intention of establishing a hierarchical order regarding those with whom he deals, that is, the humans on his desert island, animals, and the reader himself.

1.

At the beginning of Defoe's novel, the first-person narrator Crusoe gives a sample of how he is able to establish narrative as well as hierarchical authority within the contexts of his adventures by saying:

[1] I would like to express my gratitude to Professor Angus Ross (University of Sussex) for a critical reading and comment on an earlier version of this essay.

I was born in the year 1632, in the city of York, of a good family, tho' not of that country, my father being a foreigner of Bremen, who settled first at Hull. He got a good estate by merchandise, and leaving off his trade lived afterward at York, from whence he had married my mother, whose relations were named Robinson, a very good family in that country, and from whom I was called Robinson Kreutznaer; but by the usual corruption of words in England, we are now called, nay, we call our selves and write our name, Crusoe, and so my companions always call'd me (Defoe 1966: 5).

This starting passage is representative of the authority that the speaker assumes throughout the novel. The assertive character of the text demands that the narrator be aware of his position and the force reflexive language may exert on those who listen to,[2] or in the reading process, read the text and are then actively involved in conveying meaning onto the situations presented. Analysing the narrative structure will show that the narrator, already at the very beginning of his story, is assertive, authoritative, and that he aims to establish an hierarchical order, and that man and animal will fall into that as the story unfolds. In the above passage, the adjective "good" is used three times to illustrate the excellence of Crusoe's family. The pride the narrator takes in supplying the reader with details of his family's wealth is used to enhance their merit and the position in life that his father (but unfortunately not himself) had acquired. It will be this unacknowledged rivalry and implicit competition between his father's achievement and his own so-called "wandering inclination" that will induce Crusoe to set out to establish a more perfect hierarchy, that is, a hierarchy not only based on words but on actions. These actions, as has been pointed out by Erwin Wolff, however, are always conditioned by situations that might question or endanger Crusoe's ideally conceptualised order of hierarchy (Wolff 1983: 112–13). Wolff, for that reason, suggests a terminological substitution of the protagonist's supposed 'actions' by 're-actions' to a number of developments that require Robinson's immediate decision and response. Further, it is the protagonist's awareness that his father's family (of which Crusoe appears to be so proud) is better than his own (consisting of Friday, his dog, cats and Poll, the parrot). Importantly, however, in spite of Crusoe's rebellion against parental (or fatherly) domination, he yet confirms an hierarchical system that is based on male

[2] The performative or theatrical aspect in Crusoe's narrative is highlighted when, apart from using direct speech, he uses markers such as "said I aloud" to highlight the uniqueness of utterance on an island where there is no other human being.

authority. In this essay, though, I shall concentrate on Robinson's rhetoric of power and authority.

At times, as at the beginning of the narration, there are two competing voices, the one asserting narrative superiority and complete individuality, whilst the other accepts and affirms the societal links, the interrelation, and interdependence between Crusoe and the people he meets. Semantically and lexicologically, the tension between these two competing voices is expressed in the use of the active and the passive voices. Thus, when Crusoe talks about his name, he starts by saying that "we are now called" Crusoe, but then realises that he has to change the grammatical mode in order to assert his narrative authority; he continues by saying that "we call our selves and write our name." This then implies that he dominates his own existence by self-consciously using his name in speech and, what is more important, in writing, using the active voice (see Jager 1985: 360–82). Interestingly, his mother is not mentioned as the person who gave birth to her son but who conferred the identity of the name "Robinson" onto him. He cannot impose his sense of hierarchy and domination on his birth, though, for he was born and, in a predestined or Calvinian sense, could not help being born to the parents whose authority he would deny later on. As early as the description of his origin, it becomes evident that Crusoe's identity is not family-centred but that his notion of individuality is one of self-sufficient independence. Despite Crusoe's rejection of the traditional family structure and its insistence on a son's obedience to his father's commands, he notes that, although he did not accept his father's advice of not going to sea, he accepted 40 *l.* from his family to support his first adventure: "This 40 *l.* I had mustered together by the assistance of some of my relatives whom I corresponded with, and who, I believe, got my father, or at least my mother, to contribute as much as that to my first adventure" (Defoe 1966: 39). In a sense, this support can also be understood as their implicating themselves in his misfortunes, adopting partial responsibility for his "first adventure."

There is no indication that Crusoe rejects or despises slavery; rather, the immediate realism of his experience as a slave (without authority) should have shown him that inequality between the ruling authority and those meant and made to serve unquestioningly (without any individuality) was unacceptable. By opting for the easy option of an absolutist ruler that defines the hierarchical structure on his island, however, he demonstrates his conservatism, as well as his resistance to the Enlightenment rights of man entailing equality among all men, as well as

the abolition of slavery. Ross notes: "This confident, paternalistic, attitude would have been Crusoe's natural one (and was probably Defoe's) [...] Crusoe is of his own day, and though intellectually puzzled, acts towards the Indians in the all-conquering way of the successful, mercantile civilization which Defoe so admired" (Ross 1985: 20–21). In that sense, when Crusoe and Xury have escaped together and are forced to find food, Xury kills a hare and presents it to Crusoe. Crusoe, in the narrative, remarks that "we filled our jars and feasted on the hare we had killed" (Defoe 1966: 48). The "we" seems to imply that Crusoe has had a part in killing the hare – an assumption that reveals how Crusoe takes credit for actions for which he has not been responsible. Also, the "we" might not only be understood as Crusoe and Xury but as Crusoe's use of the *pluralis maiestatix*, indicating that he is responsible for all action and that it is he who takes decisions to survive without any guiding authority.

He skilfully manipulates linguistic authority by calling the captain that saved him so selflessly "my good steward" (Defoe 1966: 57). Before that, however, Crusoe informs the reader that "he would take nothing from me, but that all I had should be delivered safe to me when I came to the Brasils" (Defoe 1966: 54). The captain has saved his life, but nevertheless, as soon as Crusoe has established his authority in Brazil as a tobacco-planter, the captain, in Crusoe's view, turns into "my good steward," thereby (if not in reality, but at least in Crusoe's view) becoming a dependent of Crusoe, a dependent that may be defined as an "official who controls the domestic affairs of a household, supervising the service of his master's table, directing the domestics, and regulating household expenditure" (OED, s.v. steward). In a similar way, Crusoe demonstrates a surprising ability to understand the captain's foreign language, for, when first coming on board of the captain's ship "they [the crew] asked me what I was, in Portuguese, and in Spanish, and in French, but I understood none of them" (Defoe 1966: 53). As soon as he arrives in Brazil, however, he seems to be perfectly proficient in the captain's language so that he can give him detailed directions for the recovery of his fortune in London. His mastery of language, in that sense, seems to reflect the general authority that he will assume on his desert island.[3]

[3] How contradictory Crusoe's account of his mastery of foreign languages is is indicated by the fact that "I had no body to converse with but now and then this neighbour" (Defoe 1966: 56) who, although a "Portugueze of Lisbon" (Defoe 1966: 55) was born of English parents.

When Crusoe is stranded on the island, he attempts to secure as many goods from the wreck of the ship as possible. After he has collected and accumulated a number of items that could somehow be of use to him he says: "I had the biggest maggazin of all kinds now that ever were laid up, I believe, for a man, but I was not satisfy'd still" (Defoe 1966: 42). Crusoe is an 'unreliable' narrator in that he provides catalogues of items he was able to secure from the ship which, however, lack the specificity he tries to establish through circumstantial detail. Enumerations like the following indicate that he wants his stock keeping to be convincing although it is far from being accurate as indicated by his frequent use of the imprecise "or": "We had several spare yards, and two *or* three large spars of wood, and a spare top-mast *or* two in the ship" (italics mine) (Defoe 1966: 68). In the same unspecific manner, he notes later on: "I ty'd four of them fast together at both ends as well as I could, in the form of a raft, and laying two or three short pieces of plank upon them crossways" (Defoe 1966: 68). The narrative authority of Crusoe is counteracted by his use of "or." However, for his 'rule' on the island, it is important that he possesses these items nominally whilst the exact quantity of the items he names is less important than the establishing of his authority.

It is evident that Crusoe seeks security. This security however is not one-dimensional. He hankers after social, political as well as linguistic security. His self-awareness is strongly motivated by the use of superlatives, but even the superlative once it has been achieved, has to be superseded again. Narratologically, the repeated use of anti-climax would counteract his successful establishing of an hierarchical order on his island. For that reason, failure or shortcomings are never explicitly admitted except for those instances where his eloquence is overcome by the hardness of his situation. In these situations, however, references to the Bible (by means of citation or prayers to God) help him to maintain his position of supposed authority in that he is then able to display intellectual superiority and religious faith. The following passage is expressive of the ambivalence between his unquestionable self-confidence and his sense of not being willing to admit disappointment:

> I was gotten home to my little tent, where I lay with all my wealth about me very secure. It blew very hard all that night, and in the morning when I look'd out, behold, no more ship was to be seen; I was a little surpriz'd, but recover'd my self with this satisfactory reflection, viz. that I had lost no time, nor abated no diligence to get every thing out of her that could be useful to me, and that indeed there was little left in her that I was able to bring in if I had had more time (Defoe 1966: 44).

This "satisfactory reflection," however, is utilitarian in that he only thinks of the accumulation of objects he might use at some point. It is certain that he would have discarded the ship as soon as he had completely exploited her. According to Mark Kinkead-Weekes, Robinson "keeps our attention fixed on the man, so that although the sea threatens to overwhelm him, we never doubt that he is in control. The verbs accumulate to establish our response; for a while they belong to the sea, but the loose syntax turns, the object becomes the subject and the passive the active" (Kinkead-Weekes 1986: 197). Kinkead-Weekes goes on to say that "Crusoe is Everyman, isolated on his desert island in order to reveal Man as he 'really' is" (Kinkead-Weekes 1986: 198).

2.

After he has spent almost two weeks on the island, he realises that he should "lose [his] [...] reckoning of time for want of books and pen and ink." He therefore resolves on cutting calendar marks into the surface of a piece of wood and establishes a temporal framework according to which he can organise his life. Importantly, however, he imposes his own authority on the reckoning of time, and is not forced through necessity to measure the time that elapses while he is on the island. Narratologically, though, he controls time in that the *erzählte Zeit* may be manipulated, condensed or prolonged, as Crusoe, the writer of the journal, thinks fit. Crusoe creates a 'parallel' world with a new temporal start, a new beginning, a new genesis. The circumstantial detail mentioned earlier is here used to establish his authority over the readers and to destroy possible doubts or questions that might arise from incoherences in the narrative. On the other hand, the chains of details are overpowering and, during the reading process (when the reader is following the story), do not leave the reader the opportunity of pausing and checking critically the probability of the narration. Crusoe's insistence on keeping a calendar, as well as the narrator's enumeration of detail highlight Defoe's technique of authenticating the actions of the protagonist and of making them more probable to the enlightened early eighteenth-century reader. One passage representing a catalogue of circumstantial detail is the following:

> [...] we are to observe, that among the many things which I brought out of the ship in the several voyages, which, as above mention'd, I made to it, I got several things of less value, but not at all less useful to me, which I omitted setting down before, as in particular, pens, ink, and paper, several parcels in the captain's, mate's, gunner's,

> and carpenter's keeping, three or four compasses, some mathematical instruments, dials, perspectives, charts, and books of navigation, all of which I huddled together, whether I might want them or no (Defoe 1966: 49).

Criticised by some scholars as Defoe's inability to be coherent, these long catalogues of detail are meant to constitute the capital on which a functioning society depends. According to John Richetti, Robinson is "a representative of capitalist ideology, driven to acquire, control and dominate" (Richetti 1975: 23). Richetti identifies as Crusoe's motivation the "internalised ideology of capitalism" (Richetti 1975: 25). Crusoe realises, however, that his attempt at exerting power by uttering his domination through speech is ineffectual if he does not receive any response to his demonstration of linguistic power and authority. This point is evident when he speaks about his dog, for "I wanted nothing that he could fetch me, nor any company that he could make up to me, I only wanted to have him talk to me, but that he would not do" (Defoe 1966: 49). Up to this point, Crusoe has managed to create a linguistic hierarchy in that he establishes and emphasises his narrative and individualist superiority in relation with the reader. Although he apparently longs for a human being that can communicate with him, it would be a type of communication that does not question but confirms his authority at all times. The parrot, Poll, in that respect, has learnt phrases which it reproduces without changing their meaning or challenging Crusoe.

Crusoe has traditionally been called the classical 'homo oeconomicus' as well as the colonizer per se. Speaking of his property, he says: "You are to understand that now I had, as I may call it, two plantations in the island; one my little fortification or tent, with the wall about it under the rock, with the cave behind me, which by this time I had enlarg'd into several apartments or caves, one within another" (Defoe 1966: 111). He establishes a linguistic code by which he creates synonyms that in reality and common usage are two different things. For Crusoe, thus, a "fortification" and a "tent" are identical. He introduces *termini technici* that he defines by means of synonyms, too: in that respect, he mentions "my little pale or surrounded habitation" (Defoe 1966: 82), "my pale or fortification" (Defoe 1966: 85) as well as "a canoe or periagua" (Defoe 1966: 137). Also, he appropriates the primitive living conditions on the island to what he perceives as civilised discourse. So, the tree in which he seeks shelter for the first night on the island, is defined in terms of civilised western culture. The tree is not only termed "lodging" or "apartment"

(Defoe 1966: 67) but, through Crusoe's act of naming, is turned into a "lodging" that provides security to the stranded protagonist.

His attempt at colonising and developing the island as well as his taking possession of the environment establish, on the one hand, his setting up an order of authority and possession whilst they, on the other, counteract what Jean-Jacques Rousseau called the *état naturel*.[4] Crusoe further points out that "I spared no pains to bring to pass whatever appear'd necessary for my comfortable support" (Defoe 1966: 112). Instead of adhering to the ideal of a life in accordance with the bounty of nature as Rousseau did, Crusoe interferes with the order of nature in that he considers himself the master of the island who has been instated by God. This supposedly successful establishing and confirming of (a self-created) hierarchy is completed when Friday arrives on the island.

Repeatedly, Crusoe blurs the distinction between what he actually does and what he says he does. While narrative and linguistic authority enables him to counteract the strict rules of realism, his colony on the island can only start to work after Friday arrives and is integrated in the rhetorical hierarchy that Crusoe developed in the absence of anybody else. Only then is Crusoe's rhetorical hierarchy turned into a 'real' hierarchy. Novak, in his *Daniel Defoe: Master of Fictions*, compares Crusoe to the prodigal son. Crusoe's domination of his environment, however, culminates in a subversion of the story of the prodigal son. On his return to Brazil, the "news of his newfound wealth leaves him overjoyed, and it might be said that the story of the prodigal son's loving reception by his father is replaced by an accumulation of money, that family relationships are replaced by the power relationship of capitalist accumulation" (Novak 2001: 541).

In moments of despair, Crusoe, however, does not affirm the hierarchy he is establishing throughout the novel, but is lamenting his isolation and rhetorically questions his position in the *catena aurea*, another hierarchy of which he is an inherent part. More generally, however, the protagonist negates his position in the *catena aurea* and propagates an extreme version of individualism, an individualism, however, that only and exclusively applies to himself. It is this type of

[4] See Novak 1963: 22ff. According to Novak (23), some "writers believed that the isolated natural man might, through the use of his reason, achieve the same moral and intellectual condition as the human being raised in society. [...] The majority of writers, however, argued that man was a social animal, that the bestial life of the solitary savage was insecure, and that so far from being happy, the isolated natural man lived in constant fear of death."

individualism which Raymond Williams calls "a new stress on a man's personal existence over and above his place or function in a rigid hierarchical society" (Williams 1976: 135). This "uneven state of human life," however, is interpreted ambivalently throughout the text, for at one moment the protagonist is proud of establishing his power whilst at another he can hardly bear to be alone and reproaches God for punishing him for his restlessness and the 'wandering inclination.'[5] It is only after several years that the authority he had assumed is threatened by his discovery that cannibals celebrate their slaughtering feasts on the beach of 'his' island.

I came to reflect seriously upon the real danger I had been in for so many years, in this very island; and how I had walk'd about in the greatest security, and with all possible tranquillity; even when perhaps nothing but a brow of a hill, a great tree, or the casual approach of night had been between me and the worst kind of destruction, vis. that of falling into the hands of cannibals and savages, who would have seiz'd me with the same view as I did of a goat or a turtle, and have thought it no more a crime to kill and devour me, than I did of a pigeon or a curlieu. I would unjustly slander my self, if I should say I was not sincerely thankful to my great Preserver, to whose singular protection I acknowledg'd, with great humility, that all these unknown deliverances were due, and without which, I must inevitably have fallen into their merciless hands (Defoe 1966: 143).

Crusoe realises that his notion of "security" had been an illusion only. On the other hand, he relativises the cannibalistic life-style he witnesses by comparing it to his own carnivorous eating habits of eating a pigeon, for instance. Until then, it was Crusoe who had been responsible for maintaining "greatest security," and it is only in moments when the protagonist is confronted with extreme danger and fear that he turns to God and "with great humility" acknowledges his piety.[6] Thus, there is one element in the *catena aurea* that frightens him, that is, his dependence on being delivered by God. Read in terms of executive sovereignty, this would mean that the presence of savages contradicts his absolute authority and "thus [...] all the harmony he has enjoyed."

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[5] Sill 1983: 160 notes that Crusoe's "mastery of his natural environment is an outward sign of his mastery of himself, which he acquires through the discovery of human limitations. This discovery is often painful, as he attests in his account of the labor wasted on the boat that he is unable to bring to the water."

[6] See Richetti 1975: 24: "[...] to get away from the destructive effects of isolation, he realizes on the island that he is part of providential design. He experiences and accepts divine control but that control can only be realized in the free context he has himself created."

By injecting the suggestion of another's interest in the island, it makes Crusoe's dominance questionable, and necessitates all the cultural formations that follow from a division of interests, including surplus accumulation, military fortifications, and private property (Sill 1983: 162)

3.

The climax of the novel is reached when Crusoe encounters Friday. After he has delivered him from the savages, he sets out to describe his physical appearance, a description whose detailed character might be read as being the characteristic descriptive detail so necessary for the genre of the novel, but it may at the same time remind the reader of a warehouse catalogue in which property is advertised.

His hair was long and black, not curl'd like wool; his forehead very high and large, and a great vivacity and sparkling sharpness in his eyes. The colour of his skin was not quite black, but very tawny; and yet not of an ugly yellow nauseous tawny, as the Brasilians [...] but of a bright kind of a dun olive colour, that had in it something very agreeable, tho' not very easy to describe. His face was round and plump; his nose small, not flat like the negroes, a very good mouth, thin lips, and his fine teeth well set, and white as ivory (Defoe 1966: 150).

The narrator describes Friday in terms that single him out and distinguish him from the slaves Crusoe had met in Brazil. However, the physical appearance of Friday as well as its description are meant to convey the great material value of Friday who will have to take his place in the two-man society of his master. To show Crusoe that he has absolute power over Friday, he

> lays his head flat upon the ground, close to my foot, and sets my other foot upon his head. [...] and after this, made all the signs to me of subjection, servitude, and submission imaginable, to let me know how he would serve me as long as he liv'd. I understood him in many things, and let him know that I was very well pleas'd with him; in a little time I began to speak with him, and teach him to speak to me; and first, I made him know his name should be Friday [...]. I likewise taught him to say Master, and then let him know, that was to be my name; I likewise taught him to say yes and no, and to know the meaning of them (Defoe 1966: 150).

This primitive (yet universally understandable) gesture symbolises that Crusoe's absolute power is acknowledged and that he is recognised as the

supreme being on the island.[7] The tone of the description, however, is expressive of the social and linguistic superiority that the protagonist possesses, for phrases such as "to let s.b. know" and "I understood him in many things" illustrate that the narrator is the central person and that the whole life on the island revolves around him. It is not clear from the above quotation whether Friday did indeed grasp the meaning and the complex ideological implications of "mastership." Crusoe, to make matters more difficult, makes the distinction between the "name" of "master" and the function and power mastership entails.

It has never been questioned why Defoe chose the name of 'Friday' for Robinson's companion. The reason Robinson himself provides is not reflective of the general subtlety of the novel. An etymological reading of 'Friday' may be suggested, for the word derives from OE and reflects the heathen contexts we might associate with Anglo-Saxon mythology and superstition. In that respect, Friday could mean the power that is inherent in the wild nature of the savage. This meaning, however, is counteracted by the context of the calendar which attempts to introduce order to the different days of the week. So, an order is imposed on a set number of days and, metaphorically, the wild and heathen character of Friday, the savage, is tamed and embedded into a civilised context. Crusoe's ambivalent notions of religion and faith have already been mentioned. In the context of the protagonist's conferring a name to Friday, we might consider the act of naming as an attempt to create an independent religion, or in other words, a fusion of the heathen culture, the primitive environment Crusoe encounters on the island and the Christian, and more strongly Puritan, faith. However, apart from establishing superiority only, Crusoe when "he comes to instruct Friday in the faith, [...] instructs himself, and this is the one place where Friday is admitted, as noble savage, to human equality" (Kinkead-Weekes 1986: 200). While Friday possesses those virtues that Novak has characterised as essential for the "state of nature," that is, "gratitude, honesty, and courage," and therefore is the "perfect natural man," Crusoe makes him "abandon[...] the state of nature for the advantages of civilization" (Novak 1963: 37) and thereby corrupts him. In addition to linguistic hierarchy and authority that are being established constantly throughout the novel, a new religious authority as opposed to

[7] On a system of absolute executive power, see Schonhorn 1977: 22, who notes that Defoe presents the view that *Robinson Crusoe* is essentially "an examination of, even the necessity for, a unitary executive sovereignty."

Crusoe's original faith may be discovered. According to Novak, we thus "have to conclude that Crusoe's rebellion, his overthrowing the authority of his father, has its reward within the work, and that its creation has [...] psychological rewards" (Novak 2001: 542).

Neither Novak nor any other recent critic of *Robinson Crusoe*, however, has realised the pertinent importance of the protagonist's language of authority. Not only does language in Defoe's novel inform the reader of what Crusoe actually does to establish an hierarchical order on the island, but it is also revealed that Crusoe makes plans he does not put into effect. Instead, he uses these ideas to complement the practical realization of his hierarchy. A prominent example of this divergence is expressed when he develops a language code by which "fortification" and "tent" mean the same. The eighteenth-century reader would have been aware of the difference, but Friday, a native not acquainted with the English language, will learn a linguistic code from Crusoe, and Crusoe will not only serve as master but also as sole authority in matters of language. As has been shown in the reading of Friday's name, Defoe seems to have been conscious of the etymological undertones and the use he could make of them to express the pagan and uncivilized character of his 'subject'. Further, the author's use of grammatical modes such as the active and the passive voices, enables Crusoe to centre on his own existence and individualism, whilst a skilful use of gender patterns (grammatical and contextual) provides strong support for Crusoe's male-dominated system of authority on the island.

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Engendering a New Republic: Charles Brockden Brown's *Alcuin, Carwin* and the Legal Fictions of Gender

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On the surface it would seem that Charles Brockden Brown's *Alcuin, A Dialogue* (1798/1815)[1] and his *Memoirs of Carwin, The Biloquist* (1803-5) have little in common. The former is a fictional dialogue in which the rights and legal strictures of women is discussed by Alcuin, a self-conscious schoolteacher, and Mrs. Carter, the host of a liberal and ingenious lyceum. The latter is the fragment of a prequel to *Wieland* in which Carwin, the ventriloquist, becomes involved with the mysterious Ludloe, a man who belongs to a secret society devoted to political and legislative utopianism. However, these texts both include meditations upon the gendered hierarchies of the law; for in them, marriage, education, professionalism and human rights are all placed in the context of the homosocial male kinship of the law-makers who orchestrate the birth of the nation. Alcuin, for instance, questions the justice of those laws set down by male legislators--laws which place women in the position of slavery--and "Carwin" depicts a masculine community that equates political advancement with the fraternal bonds of male companionship.

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The dialogue between Alcuin and Mrs. Carter begins when he asks her the following question: "Pray, Madam, are you a federalist?" (Brown 1970: 7). This topical question is, of course, also a political and legal one; it is a query that not only refers to the 1787 Philadelphia Federal Convention meeting in which a new Constitution was drafted allocating broader legal powers to the central government, but it also invokes the eighty-five *Federalist Papers* composed by lawyers such as Alexander Hamilton, James Madison and John Jay (Wills). Published under the pseudonym "Publius" between 1787 and 1788, these essays--compiled as *The Federalist Papers* in

[1] Part 1 of *Alcuin* appeared in 1798 and Part 2 was first published in 1815.

1788--appeared in newspapers and gained a wide readership. The aim of these lawyers was to convince the general public to ratify the new Constitution by outlining the importance of implementing new Constitutional laws that would ensure personal freedom under a central government strong enough to provide national unity (Strong 1981: 18). Legal language is used throughout these papers: James Madison, for instance, maintains the importance of what he calls "the rules of justice" and the laws protecting private property and other capitalist interests (Hamilton 1982: 448). This is consistent with the rhetoric of Alexander Hamilton, who opens the series by appealing to the "evidence of truth" and the "informed judgment" that will ensure the "rights of the people" under this new Constitution (444). Not surprisingly, this lawful idiom is combined with the language of male kinship and masculine unity, for Hamilton speaks to "candid men" who are "capable . . .of establishing good government from reflection and choice" (444-5). Here, Hamilton's language is not only influenced by the fact that he is addressing a white, male audience who have the power to vote; he is also assuming that the fundamental rationalism of the male mind will see the profound justice of the new laws which are being proposed. From this perspective, Hamilton's call for a united America--a "UNION" to ensure "the safety and welfare of the parts"--is also a homosocially charged appeal to an American fraternal kinship that will unite the nation (444). It is the rational men of the country, Hamilton suggests, who will ensure the social harmony of the republic by forming a brotherhood to protect the "security of liberty" (445).

Mrs. Carter is dismissive of Alcuin's question; in fact, she exposes the query to be patronising and ignorant. "What have I, as a woman, to do with politics?," Carter asks. "We are excluded from all political rights without the least ceremony. Law-makers thought as little of comprehending us in their code of liberty as if we were pigs, or sheep" (Brown 1970: 22). Here, Carter makes it clear that Alcuin's question is insulting: she does not have the legal power to vote, so she cannot possibly pledge allegiance to a specific political theory or even a particular party. As a result, Carter not only questions the party system of government, but she also points out that the American republic is not based upon liberty, justice and freedom for all. Instead, it is a system of government that perpetuates discriminations by treating women as animals and slaves. This strong assertion of women's rights, a forceful condemnation of gender injustice, may be read as both a repudiation of Alcuin's query and a reaction to those law-makers--like Hamilton and Madison--who proposed

Constitutional laws that excluded woman and advocated a fraternity of male kinship. Carter's explicit reference to "law-makers" in the context of the question at hand, as well as her reference to the "code of liberty" (an expression that echoes the language used in Hamilton's Federalist writings), can be read as a clear attack on the exclusionary and masculinist politics published in *The Federalist Papers.*

Carter's argument then rebuffs the prejudicial laws that discriminate against women. And she appears before Alcuin as a plaintiff who presents an appeal. Legal constraints based on gender, she says, are absurd:

> mere sex is a circumstance so purely physical; has so little essential influence beyond what has flowed from the caprice of civil institutions, on the qualities of the mind or person, that I cannot think of it without impatience. If the laws should exclude from all political functions everyone who had a mole on his right cheek, or whose stature did not exceed five feet six inches, who would not condemn without scruple so unjust an institution? yet, in truth, the injustice would be less than in the case of women. (Brown 1970: 29)

Although the analogy in this argument is partly tongue-in-cheek, Mrs. Carter employs a logical argument that counters Hamilton's claim that rationality is an exclusively male characteristic. Why should legal distinctions in the new republic take the physical distinction of gender as a marker of privilege or subjugation? If physical features are so important, Carter asks, then why not propose legislation based on the distinctions of height or eye colour? Such questions challenge the fundamental structure developed by the architects of the United States, refuting eighteenth-century beliefs that women lacked the rational faculties required to participate in political life. The very terrain of the law, not just its institutions, is put under scrutiny in Carter's appeal. All Alcuin can do is consent to the spurious logic behind the male-centric laws of the United States: "True it is, laws, which have commonly been male births, have treated you unjustly" (Brown 1970: 20).

Much is at stake in Carter's appeal. She lucidly points to the irrational foundations of the law--lapses in logic which Alcuin cannot refute--but her position as plaintiff does not give her the power to dismiss the law. Simultaneously, Alcuin's many questions amount to a kind of cross-examination that attempt to expose her appeal as illogical and false. Carter's position is thus a dangerous one because Alcuin, who represents the voice of the law, is in a position to dismiss her as lacking rationality and a coherent line of thought.

It is possible that Brown is drawing here on Judith Sargent Murray's essay "On the Equality of the Sexes," which appeared in the *Massachusetts Magazine* in 1790. Indeed, Mrs. Carter's language is reminiscent of Murray's refutation of the assertion that "the minds of females are so notoriously deficient, or unequal" (Murray 1790: 132). The laws of nature, Murray maintains, have not made women "deficient in reason"; instead, the laws of men have conspired to deprive women of "an opportunity of acquiring knowledge" by limiting the "employment of a rational [female] mind" in the public sphere (Murray 1790: 134). Murray thus contends that men formulated the rules of society for their own benefit and without regard to women's desires or needs. As in Carter's remarks to Alcuin, Murray invokes the law; but rather than limiting her discussion to acts of legislation, she appeals to a higher law--the law of nature--in which women's minds are equal to those of men. This higher law doctrine suggests that there is a body of eternal principles of nature that transcends the laws composed by men. In fact, Murray implies that human laws might be in direct conflict with higher laws, suggesting that civic legislation is decreed by politics rather than universal justice. For Murray, natural law is ascertainable by human beings through the employment of reason, and women not only have the rational faculties to attain such knowledge, but they must be encouraged and educated to develop these abilities.

Murray thus links rationality to education. A woman's education, she urges, must be cultivated from "the first dawn of [her] reason" and she must be taught to "fill up time rationally" (Murray 1790: 134). "If we are allowed an equality of acquirement," she continues, "let serious studies equally employ our minds, and we will bid our souls arise to equal strength. We will meet upon even ground, the despot man" (Murray 1790: 134). Such an address to the gentlemen of the early republic rejects the ornamental status accorded to women of the late 18th-century. Murray laments the fact that women are relegated to the domestic duties of preparing meals and mending clothes; her argument thus challenges the dominant mode of thought which presumes that women lack the intellectual capacities of rationality, logic, rhetoric and wit. Such ideas anticipate Mrs. Carter's position in Alcuin, for she argues that women are not limited by inferior capacities of reason, memory or judgment, but rather they ought to be given the same opportunities as men to acquire knowledge; if women were encouraged to use these faculties, they would demonstrate them more often:

What think you of female education? Mine has been frivolous. I can make a pie, and cut a gown . . . They [men] think a being of this sex is to be instructed in a manner different from those of another. Schools, and colleges, and public instructors are provided in all the abstruse sciences and learned languages; but whatever may be their advantages, are not women totally excluded from them? (Brown 1970: 16-17)

Here, Mrs. Carter echoes Murray's bid for a non-segregated form of education in which women are taught natural philosophy, mathematics and geography. This position is also expressed in Brown's *Ormond*, for Mr. Dudley decides to educate his daughter, Constantia, in the subjects customarily only taught to male students. It would seem that Brown was interested in the education of women and it is possible that he realised that without equal education the women of the United States would not achieve independence.

But Murray's "On the Equality of the Sexes" was not the only feminist text to influence Alcuin: Wollstonecraft's better known *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* includes striking similarities to Alcuin, and focuses not only on the enslaved positions of women, but also on the importance of equal education under the law. For instance, Wollstonecraft, writing in the wake of Thomas Paine's *Rights of Man*, expresses opposition to the natural law doctrine that has excluded women from the public realm based on the absurd assumption that a woman's reason and logic is naturally inferior to that of a man. This call for justice on behalf of the "other half of mankind" does not only result in verifying the natural rights of women, but it also upholds the fundamental right of professional education for women (Wollstonecraft 1787: 11, 67). Wollstonecraft saw education as a precondition for the development of selfhood and independence in women, as well as the path to public acknowledgment and legal empowerment. In her *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters* (1787), for example, she argues that segregated education is a criminal inconsistency of society that amounts to the denial of every woman's humanity; human understanding, she writes, has been, strictly speaking, denied to women and as a result women have been dehumanised, stripped of their Cartesian birthright, in a way totally contradictory to the basic principles of the Enlightenment (56). Indeed, the principle by which a being is distinguished from a non-being derives from the fact of its thinking or awareness; this is put forward by Descartes's 1641 formula *cogito, ergo sum*, which established a direct link between existence and thought. Women, as Wollstonecraft's arguments

demonstrate, are not deficient in their capacities for thought. As a result, women should not, following Cartesian logic, be reduced to a position of non-being. But because of the conspicuous lack of proper education, "women are not allowed to have sufficient strength of mind" and they are not encouraged to develop the capacity for thought that is born out of their very existence (Wollstonecraft 1992: 18). Thus the social conditions and legal strictures surrounding womanhood confine a woman to a warped sense of priorities; instead of nurturing a Cartesian link between being and thought, she is barred from certain spheres of knowledge by the legal and social restraints of segregated education.

Education is not only a key to knowledge and human understanding; it is also a passport to freedom. For Wollstonecraft and Murray, a woman's slavish dependence on a man is a direct result of her lack of instruction. Such thoughts are echoed by Mrs. Carter in *Alcuin*. How can a woman gain the same employment as a man, she asks, if different standards of education exist between the sexes? How can a woman gain freedom and economic self reliance, if she does not have the same training as a man? Without equal education, she argues, women cannot choose their occupations, and a person's profession is made dependent on gender identification: "of all forms of injustice, that is the most egregious which makes the circumstance of sex a reason for excluding one half of mankind from all of those paths which lead to usefulness and honour" (Brown 1970: 11). If the laws of the Republic were based on justice, Carter suggests, women would have the same opportunities as men to demonstrate their skills and become useful to the commonwealth. As things stand, women cannot pursue careers in the legal profession--or indeed other professions--because of their lack of intellectual training: "I think we have the highest reason to complain of our exclusion from many professions which might afford us, in common with men, the means of subsistence and independence" (Brown 1970: 12). If Carter wants to open up the legal profession for women, it is not only in order to give women better opportunities for intellectual and moral self-realisation; she also wants to make women economically self-sufficient and give women a voice in the construction of the legal statutes of the Republic.

Carter thus identifies educational and professional constraints based on gender difference as "abuses of the law" (Brown 1970: 15). To rectify these injustices she appeals to the Platonic forms of honesty, liberty and equality. In so doing, she turns to the arguments presented in Plato's *Republic*, a dialogue that influenced Brown's choice of form as well as

Carter's appeals to "truth and reason" (Brown 1970: 19). Indeed, Carter's egalitarian views echo Book V of *The Republic*, in which Socrates and Glaucon discuss the true place of women within the state. According to Plato, women are physically weaker and bear instead of beget children, but he does not see these physical distinctions as evidence that women should be treated differently under the law. Like Carter's mock suggestion that legislation be based on eye colour or height, Plato dismisses physical distinctions as an argument in favour of hierarchical distinctions. In fact, his down-playing of the body in establishing the status of the being is central to the rationalist tradition in which we later find Descartes's mind-body split. The only important differences between men and women, Plato argues, are those that are relevant to pursuits: "if the difference appears to be that the male begets and the female brings forth [children], we shall conclude that no difference between man and woman has yet been produced that is relevant to our purpose. We shall continue to think it proper for our Guardians and their wives to share the same pursuits" (Plato 1941: 152). A dialectical opposition arises here: on the one hand, Plato has Glaucon argue that women are inferior and that different natures ought to have different pursuits; on the other hand, we have the assertion, which Plato voices through Socrates, that gender difference is not hierarchical and thus the same pursuits should be for all. The reconciled upshot of Plato's claim is that natures are the same and the differences between men and women are irrelevant to the ends of the state. As a result, the law should reflect this equality and education should not be segregated.

Likewise, might is not right. Carter points out that "Man is strongest," and this is the reason why, "in the earliest stage of society, the females are slaves . . . [but] the tendency of rational improvement is to equalize conditions; to abolish distinctions, but those that are founded on truth and reason" (Brown 1970: 19). Here, Carter draws on the rational tradition of Plato's dialogue to reject the division of genders into separate spheres, replacing it with an appeal to liberty, equality and human rights based on the rationality of the individual. For women, she continues, the state is an artificial product of irrational legal perimeters which gains legitimacy only if all who are subjected to its jurisdiction have given their consent. But because women do not participate in the construction of the state's laws, the American Constitution is not a contract to which women can pledge consent. Women should only recognise the Constitution, Carter says, if its language is taken literally and equality is applicable to the entire nation regardless of gender. Such an interpretation of the founding

document would necessarily include equal education, professional opportunities and a voice in legislation for every citizen of the nation.

Questions of citizenship are also central to Mrs. Carter's condemnation of the inequitable laws of marriage. American law, she says, denies women the rights of citizenship by placing a woman's property in the hands of her husband: "By marriage [a woman] loses all right to separate property. The will of her husband is the criterion of all her duties. All merit is comprised in unlimited obedience. She must not expostulate or rebel" (Brown 1970: 18). Here, Carter is referring to the laws of matrimony that uphold the institution of coverture, stripping a woman of her autonomous subjectivity and reducing her to the status of non-being. Her appeal thus challenges the public law, especially the matrimonial law, that puts into practice the gender inequities of the public law. That is, in most American states, the male law-makers held up the Law of Coverture, which was based upon the principles of English Common Law and transferred the civil identity of wives to their husbands (Kerber 1980: 351). This meant that men alone had dominion over the property of their wives, and it was men alone who had the power to dispose of their wives' possessions. The American legal system thus maintained and supported British laws that defined women was members of their respective state, but could not be citizens in their own right (Dippel 1999: 344).

Women, Carter points out, do not have legal access to citizenship because their rights are determined by the "laws" of their husbands. The legal system, then, upholds the principle that a wife must not transgress the rules set down by her husband, maintaining an inequality whereby the rules that govern her behaviour are much stricter than those that govern his. Statutes overseeing marriage thus appoint as many arbiters as there are domestic spaces, whereby the law "disclaims" responsibility for that space having transferred authority to the husband. What Carter's appeal then illustrates is the arbitrary nature of the law as it moves into the domestic realm. As the wife has no legal power to dispose of her property, she is completely at the mercy of her husband whose actions are not determined by a fixed body of laws. Her status as a being is therefore one of complete dependence, for she has no access to the legal space in her own right, but only via her husband whose actions are not policed. As such, the rules and regulations set down by the husband are dictated at random; there are no established set of principles--no legal canon--to determine his actions as the voice of legal authority in the domestic sphere.

Such exclusion from citizenship was disguised as legally justified by lawyers such as Theophilus Parsons of Massachusetts who argued in his *Essex Result* (1778) that women had "no sufficient reason" for

administering their property or for participating in the political sphere (Parsons 1778: 324). For Parsons, women were suited for "various domestic duties" and he called for the legal sanction of domestic ideologies that would segregate women in their own "separate sphere," rebutting those who were attempting to extend equal rights arguments to women (Parsons 1778: 341). This segregationist line of argumentation promoting the ideals of womanhood and domesticity was influential on the legal arguments of the early republic. In 1790, for instance, James Wilson, a justice to the Supreme Court of the United States, argued that the role of government and law was to "protect and improve social life" and that a woman's role in that social life was to take on the "task of forming [their] daughters . . .and the education of [their] sons [to] the refinement of their virtues" (Wilson 1967: 88). Within an effective system of law and government, Wilson argued, the role of the woman was to be a good mother and educator of domestic ideals and moral duties. Wilson was then able to dismiss the notion of female citizenship or women's demands for taking an active role in legal and political life.

Part III of *Alcuin* returns to the subject of marriage in the United States. It is here that the school teacher gives a somewhat tongue-in-cheek account of a Utopian community, a radically egalitarian society, in which class and gender differences have been abolished: men and women wear the same clothes, have the same education, and play the same roles in the community. Professions are not, in this fantasy world, divided along gender lines, but according to the talents and skills of the individual. Here, the institution of marriage is unheard of and the laws of matrimony do not exist. This utopic society clearly draws on William Godwin's *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* (1793), particularly Chapter VII in which Godwin expresses his disapproval of the legal bonds of marriage. "Marriage is law, and the worst of all laws," Godwin writes, "marriage is an affair of property, and the worst of all properties. So long as two human beings are forbidden by positive institution to follow the dictates of their own mind, prejudice is alive and vigorous" (Godwin 1989: 263). Marriage, from Godwin's perspective, is based upon a law that limits freedom; it impedes individuality and restricts both parties by forcing them to conform to the laws of social custom and the prejudices of the court. Under this institution, as Mrs. Carter points out in Part II of *Alcuin*, the marriage bond is based on a contract whereby a woman forfeits her right to property; she herself thus comes under the proprietorship of her husband. As such, marriage is defined by Godwin as a business

transaction designed to maintain a monopoly over women's bodies, reducing a wife to a mere commodity.

But Alcuin's new position in Part III--his proposed dissolution of marriage in the wake of his utopic fantasy--is somewhat problematic. As a man, Alcuin is secure within the authoritative discourse of the law; he thus holds a privileged place in which he can shift positions and move outside of the strictures of logic and rationality, moving into the world of fantasy. As a woman, Mrs. Carter does not have the same privilege. She cannot diverge from her rational line of thought, for such a detour could be used as evidence to prove that women are non-rational beings, thus justifying their exclusion from the law. Alcuin's shifting position, then, is above all an attempt to undermine Carter's appeal by pointing to the dissolution of marriage as a way of moving toward gender equity. However, his proposed rejection of the institution does not change the foundations upon which the institution is based. Carter's appeal, her plea for justice, does not require the abolition of marriage; instead, it calls for a fundamental change in the structures of power so that the gendered voice of the law is not exclusionary. While Alcuin believes that he is responding justly to Carter's appeal, he is in fact simply maintaining the gender hierarchies of which she is opposed. He simply changes the goal-posts while remaining on the same field. As a result, there is no stable ground upon which Carter can base her appeal; the overall significance of any law that she may challenge lies in the power structures that it represents, not in the law itself. Simply changing the law in one isolated instance, then, would not in any way alter the underlying power structures. As such, Alcuin offers a facile solution: revising, altering or repealing any one law would not essentially change the status of women. The dialogue thus illustrates that it is the slipperiness of the law, its ability to be revised by the powerful male voice of authority, that maintains the law's fixity as a tool of command and coercion.

Contrary to Alcuin's Godwinian position, Mrs. Carter argues that marriage need not be abolished; it just needs to be reformed so that women do not remain slaves to men. Cathy Davidson argues that there is an ambivalence to this position: Mrs. Carter proposes a radical transformation of eighteenth-century gender roles, but then shies away from accepting the abolition of the institution that has long been responsible for maintaining sexual inequality (Davidson 1981:75). Some critics have read this contradiction as a sign that Alcuin registers an uneasiness about equal gender roles, and that despite its argument against

enslaving women it is a profoundly conservative text (Person 1981: 33). Other critics see the ambiguity of Part III as a symptom of its late publication and a reaction to the debates on marriage and free love that followed the appearance of Mary Wollstonecraft's *Memoirs* by Godwin in 1798 (Davidson 1981: 73). But I would suggest that it is Alcuin's line of argumentation, not Carter's, that shifts and alters. Mrs. Carter maintains a rational and logical position, whereas Alcuin moves from the realm of realism to that of fantasy, from a rational mode of expression to a whimsy scenario that defies logic. Such shifts and alterations are, as I have suggested, available to Alcuin rather than Mrs. Carter because, as a man, he holds the discursive power and is the voice of the law--the judge to whom Carter makes her appeal. Alcuin can thus shift from one discourse to another and from one frame of reference to another; but Mrs. Carter, as a woman, must remain rational and logical otherwise she runs the risk of being dismissed as intellectually feeble and thus inferior.

What Alcuin highlights, then, is the power of the law for men. Alcuin's position is so powerful because he holds discursive control over the law and he can thus change existing rules or make new ones up as he sees fit. So while the law claims to maintain unity and order through narrative coherence, Alcuin exposes that this coherence is an illusion, something that can be altered by those in power. The law, after all, relies upon the very narrative coherence that Alcuin resists, for the letter of the law depends on clear narration in order to claim its authority. Speaking in the voice of absolute truth, the law must maintain the illusion of order and stability through structural coherence. Moreover, the law of the early Republic needed to be written in a clear textual narrative form because, in the Enlightenment imagination, narrative coherence stood in for unity, fixity and stability. This position is unshakable, even though the very textuality of the law recognises its own changeability and multiplicity through the constant introduction of new statutes and the repeal of those that are out of date. Laws, though, are always articulated in a clear and unified voice, for legislation is thought to function as a boundary to guard against disorder.

What is overlooked here, and what Brown recognises, is the fact that the clarity of the law is always subject to obfuscation through reading and interpretation. What the text of the law cannot permit, where legal language becomes mute, is under the auspices of narrative incoherence and the dissolution of clarity; the narrative of the law can only speak from a position of hermeneutic clarity, rationality and binary logic. Yet, the

fluctuations of the law expose legal discourse as a creation and manipulation of texts, interactions with discursive bodies that are always subject to change. What I want to suggest here is that Alcuin's narrative "incoherence" dismantles the authoritative discourses of the law. And because the discourses of the law are constantly open to change and modification by those in power, the situation is particularly terrifying for women like Mrs. Carter. To whom can she turn for justice? Who will hear her appeal? Nobody. Any representative of the law--any man--can simply change the law, alter its discursive framework and dismantle existing regulations in order to maintain her disenfranchised position. Brown's text thus enacts those complicated and confused moments of rhetoric and narrative inconsistency in which the law is questioned and the boundaries which had once seemed to be fixed and concealed now appear to be unstable and permeable.

* * *

The fragmented and incomplete narrative of *The Memoirs of Carwin, the Biloquist*, Brown's prequel to *Wieland*, also includes a significant discussion of the legal bonds of marriage and the rights of women. Here, the paternalistic and mysterious Ludloe tries to convince Carwin, whose inheritance has been usurped by his Aunt's servant, to marry a wealthy Irish heiress. "By virtue of the law," Ludloe tells Carwin, "[you will receive] a revenue of some thousands a year, a stately mansion in the city, and another in Kildare, old and faithful domestics, and magnificent furniture" (Brown 1998: 267). To gain authority over this property, Ludloe says, Carwin simply needs to marry an affluent widow whom he has never met. As a result, marriage is not seen to be a bond of mutual love and affection; it is rather a legal transaction in order to acquire wealth and private property. After considering this proposal, Carwin inquires about his responsibilities if he were to make this transaction. Ludloe replies with the following statement: "Both law and custom have connected obligations with marriage, which, though heaviest on the female, are not light upon the male . . . You will receive absolute power over the liberty and person of the being who now possesses it. That being must become your domestic slave; be governed, in every particular, by your caprice" (Brown 1998: 268-9). Carwin's responsibilities would be those of a master to a servant: his wife would be stripped of any legal right to property and her subject position would be reduced to that of a non-citizen.

Ludloe thus recognises that marriage is a man-made institution that benefits men, not women. On the one hand, he tries to convince Carwin

to enter into a matrimonial bond and embrace the privileges of having absolute power over a wife and her possessions. On the other hand, Ludloe paints a Godwinian portrait of marriage that condemns "the present institution of marriage as a contract of servitude, and the terms of it unequal and unjust" (Brown 1998: 269). This tension is partly explained away when Ludloe implies that this marriage would serve a higher good, for the law of Coverture would provide Carwin with the wealth needed to gain membership into a secret all-male society. The upshot of Ludloe's proposal is that Carwin should enter into a heterosexual marriage so that he can forge homosocial relationships with a group of anonymous men. What Ludloe exposes here are the male rituals that surround the marriage contract, for his plan highlights an asymmetrical gender triangle that develops out of a transaction whereby the woman and her possessions are "given away." Carwin's marriage would then follow a homosocial custom in which the woman is passed from one man to another--from the paternalistic Ludloe to the young Carwin--in order to cement the bonds between the two men. Indeed, Ludloe's proposal is motivated by his desire to secure Carwin's devotion, as well as to incorporate Carwin into a male fraternity that is committed to developing a Utopian community.

The text's discussion of marriage, then, is also a loosely disguised discussion of male ritual and all-male societies. In fact, during the 1790s, Brown was not adverse to the homosocial kinship found in male associations. At this time, he was an enthusiastic participant in the New York Friendly Club, a fraternity that gathered weekly to discuss the transcendent laws governing nature and human society. These men, all of whom were young professionals, included Dr. Elihu Hubbard Smith, William Dunlap (Brown's biographer), Reverend Samuel Miller and Dr. Edward Miller. Men trained in the law and political legislation--such as the lawyer Anthony Bleeker, the senator Samuel Latham Mitchill and the jurist William Johnson--were also frequent participants in the discussions which often attempted to propound a new world order of personal relations that corresponded to the imagined universal laws of science and nature. The activities of this club were many and diverse: anti-slavery discussions were accompanied by political letter-writing; dramatic productions were combined with publishing ventures; new medical practices were debated alongside the laws of citizenship. In the diversity of their discussions, the Friendly Club sought to develop social and intellectual exchanges that would benefit the community through a philosophical investigation of the terms of social progress. Such an agenda

meant that members did not let their various opinions or political beliefs factionalise their gatherings; instead, the conservative bent of a member like Smith, a vocal Federalist, was as acceptable as Mitchill's Jeffersonian opinions and Republican allegiances. The ideal of the Club was friendly criticism and affectionate debate centred around the principles of liberty and brotherhood. Intellectual exchange, not partisan polemics, was the medium on which their friendship was grounded.

These men sought to create a public culture separate from politics. Each member saw himself as a critic of entrenched authority and a monitor of society's welfare, as well as a disseminator of information (Clark 1952: 128-31). The group insisted upon the continued critique of social institutions--including marriage--and discussed legal statutes that fostered inequality over egalitarianism. However, the homosociality of the Club also meant that its members could extend the purview of professional male authority and provide an all-male arena in which members could consolidate partnerships with other authoritative males. As such, the group legitimised a professionalism based on male bonding, generating an ideology of exclusive male friendship that justified itself under the guise of objective relations combined with subjective sympathy. So even while Brown's clubbical friends were discussing the importance of sexual freedom and gender equality, and while Dunlap was praising Alcuin for its radicalism, the homosocial dynamic of the company was defining distinct professional and domestic realms along gendered lines: a women's sphere was, by the very actions of these men, decisively domestic, while male space was defined by social debate in the public realm (Hinds 1997: 12).

To return to *Carwin*, I would suggest that the male bonds developed between the members of the Friendly Club were similar to those cultivated by Ludloe's secret sect. Like the social commitment and close friendship found in Brown's group, Ludloe refers to the "brotherhood" of his own "fraternity" as a fellowship committed to "a new model of society" (Brown 1998: 261-2). Social commitment here is combined with strong bonds of friendship; in fact, love and affection are cited by Ludloe ("I love you," he tells Carwin) as the reason why he has selected Carwin for membership (Brown 1998: 261). While his motives are never quite clear, it seems to be that Ludloe's affection for Carwin prompts him to choose his friend as a successor in the utopian project: "Each of us is ambitious to provide himself with a successor," he tells Carwin, "to have his place filled by one selected and instructed by himself" (Brown 1998: 284). This nomination provides us with a fascinating view into the social structure of the

organisation. In order to fulfill the duties of being Ludloe's successor, Carwin must first be educated in the of nature of man: "Man was the chief subject of my study," Carwin says of his instruction under Ludloe, "and the social sphere in which I principally moved" (Brown 1998: 254). It is Ludloe who provides the means for this exclusive education--a form of education that is not only segregated, but which also takes the subject of man as its primary interest. Such an education highlights the professional and homosocial dynamic of the organisation: the young male student is instructed by his mature school teacher in the nature of man. But the professional framework of this group also extends the sphere of male sociality well beyond professionalism by relying on the love and affection of its exclusive members. Indeed, the rituals of friendship and brotherhood are promised in the egalitarian emotional exchange between each member, but not before the asymmetrical and hierarchical structures of mentorship have sufficiently instructed a potential member to meet his social responsibilities.

Eventually, though, Ludloe's sect relies on a merger of self and other in which the individual must give way to the social body of the collective. In fact, Carwin's apprenticeship is described as an educational process that is only complete when, in Ludloe's words, "you are what I am" (Brown 1998: 285). Within this organisation, then, education and authority are not just passed on from one man to another; one's studentship necessitates a merger, an all-absorbing concord, in which one man is united with another. Such togetherness is significant in relation to Ludloe's earlier comments on marriage: while he views heterosexual marriage as a legal contract detailing the transfer of wealth and private property, he sees the male kinship of his organisation as replicating a union of two individuals that echoes a more romantic notion of marriage. In other words, he suggests that a marriage-like bond will eventually join himself to Carwin as the two are increasingly united in love, affection and common professional interests. This kind of coupling provides the basis for an exclusionary political and social logic based on the kinship of male homosociality, consolidating white male authority and professionalism through education. Male cultural hegemony is thus upheld by a sect that seeks to form a secret nation, suggesting that a professionalised identity of manhood, whiteness and class privilege is necessary to create the legal and political framework of a Utopian community.

But it would be misleading for me to conflate the structure of Ludloe's sect with that of the Friendly Club. While a homosocial dynamic

is central to the social patterns of both groups, one organisation conceives of itself as transparent and public, while the other depends on secrecy and privacy. Indeed, on September 14, 1798, when Charles Brockden Brown read parts of *Carwin* to the Club, Dunlap failed to connect the kinship and political discussions of the all-male Friendly Club to the membership and agenda of Ludloe's sect. Instead, Dunlap writes in his diary that Brown's new book, "Carwin," has "taken up the schemes of the Illuminati" (Dunlap 1931: 339). In connection to this, Dunlap also notes that one of the publications discussed by the Friendly Club was John Robison's anti-Illuminati manifesto, *Proofs of a Conspiracy* (1798), a text that documents the growing paranoia in both Europe and the United States about the secret activities of the Freemasons, Illuminati and other all-male societies. Robison argued that the French Revolution was part of an international plot designed by secret fraternal societies to overthrow organised religion and state governments. "Their first and immediate aim," Robison says of the Order of the Illuminati, "is to abolish Christianity; and then dissolute manners and universal profligacy will procure them the adherence of all the wicked, and enable them to overturn all the civil governments in Europe; after which they will think of farther conquests, and extend their operations to the other quarters of the globe" (Robison 1798: 102). Such ideas were disseminated in the United States by the minister Jedediah Morse--praised by Brown in the *Monthly Magazine*--who feared that the Illuminati had established several chapters in New England. In actual fact it is unlikely that this Bavarian organisation, founded by the law professor Adam Weishaupt in 1776, existed in the United States at the turn of the century; by 1787, a mere decade after its genesis, the Illuminati disbanded under the pressure of the Bavarian authorities (Stauffer 1919: 98-120). Nevertheless, the idea of a conspiratorial society took hold in the new republic, generating a fear of potential lawlessness at the hands of a hidden homosocial society that was committed to overthrowing the government.

The strict privacy of the Illuminati lay in sharp contrast to the seemingly open and public policies disseminated in the *Federalist Papers*. As we have seen, Hamilton contributed to this transparency by signing his political documents "Publius," insisting upon a complex nexus of publicity, democracy and male constitutional citizenship. Rhetorically at least Hamilton rejected the concealment and enclosure of Feudal law by calling for open discussions of political ends and legislative policies; for him, national order and a strong union could only be maintained if a civic

representative--a white man--articulated his belief publicly and "stood for" the "laws to which he gives his assent" (Hamilton, Madison, and Jay 1982: 168). A healthy national body, for these Federalists, relied on a body politic that was comprised of white men who bound themselves to the publicly voiced letter of the law. Hamilton thus sanctioned political debate that was aired in the public sphere--a sphere gendered male--that was placed in opposition to the private, domestic sphere of women. By contrast, the Illuminati provoked a fear of social incoherence and threats to the status quo due to the combination of covert activity and fraternal kinship. Because the group was founded upon links between the politics of secrecy, a secret political agenda and the gendered politics of exclusion, the Illuminati formed a fellowship that not only excluded women, but also excluded the male (general) public from its rituals, aims and political agendas. This organisational structure, then, fostered anxiety among those men who were not members of the fraternity, generating a fear about the breakdown of private and public realms--two spheres of life which were, according to Elizabeth Hinds, being defined along gendered lines of access in Brown's America (Hinds 1989: 10-14). The Iluminati thus sought to influence the public realm, which was increasingly defined as masculine space, while maintaining a private domain that was generally associated with domesticity. As a result, the private basis of kinship mimicked domestic relations--the non-public realm of husband and wife--and opened up a space where transgressions could be concealed. Within such a secret space, homosociality could potentially enter the realm of desire and homosocial bonds could fluidly move into homosexuality.

The fluid movement from homosociality to sexual desire is hinted at in the merger of Ludloe and Carwin, a merger that must remain closeted from the public gaze. Indeed, secrecy is an important part of their unity, for while Ludoe's organisation works under a veil of silence, it also cements homosocial kinship by requiring its members to reveal all. That is, in order to gain membership, Carwin must tell Ludloe the entire narrative of his life, including all of his private transgressions and deepest secrets. "Before anyone could be deemed qualified," Ludloe tells Carwin, "he must be thoroughly known to his associates. For this end, he must determine to disclose every fact in his history, and every secret of his heart" (Brown 1998: 263). Allegiance and "mutual fidelity" within the sect, then, depends upon a double imperative: secrecy is required in the public realm, but, in the private sphere of the fraternity, no secrets can be kept from one another (Brown 1998: 281). Thus, while the sect remains covert, its

members are unified, they become one, through a confessional process in which all personal secrets are revealed. This openness is meant to symbolise that each member is joined to the collective as one, as if they are all of one blood. A domestic and familial model is then assumed by the organisation, and the sect's homosocial framework challenges the gendered spaces of convention, as well as the heterosexual division of private and public realms.

The act of confession, which is so central to the social structure of Ludloe's sect, functions as a ritual that constitutes the affective exchange of brotherhood. Such a ritual of friendship promises equality, even while it depends upon an elaborate and hierarchical structure of apprenticeship in order to symbolise the exchange of brotherly affection. An illusion of fraternal "sameness," uniting the group's white male members, offers Carwin an all-male universal family through rituals that promise to reveal great mysteries and impenetrable secrets. In fact, the sect provides an imagined haven where Carwin can be recognised beyond the strictures of public politics, legal and social restraints, and give him an economic privilege that would separate him from the demands of the market place. And by confessing, by participating in the ritual, Carwin would further the asymmetry of heterosexual relations and align himself with the homosocial world of male authority. As such, Carwin would give up one family--rejecting his father--and enter a new family, an all-male secret brotherhood.

But this ritual also features a kind of symbolic death, for it would demand the "death" of his private self, the loss of his individuality and difference. For the communal network requires that Carwin give himself over to the group, replacing his individuality with a "pure" form of masculine affiliation, a new masculine space that is seen to be segregated and uncontaminated. However, Carwin's relationship to male authority remains ambivalent: he desires an authoritative voice, and yet he is unwilling to conform to the laws by which he could gain access to it. For instance, early in the text, he transgresses the law of his father--yet not breaking the state's law--when he is assigned to bring his father's cattle in from the pasture. Finding that the cattle are gone, Carwin does not return home to deliver the news to his father, as the paternal law dictates. Instead, he tries to figure out the cattle's means of escape. He then finds himself delayed and worried about punishment, so he attempts to take a short-cut home through the forest. It is here that he discovers a new voice, the voice of his ventriloqual powers, that will enable him to plot a break from his father and travel to Europe. For it is this voice--a voice that he

discovers outside the law, in the realm of the Pennsylvania wilderness--which he uses to challenge the laws of nature by mimicking the speech of his dead mother and thus undermining his father's authority. This early rejection of male authority is echoed in his relationship to Ludloe, for the power of Carwin's ventriloquism is determined by its secrecy; it is a command that cannot, under any circumstances, be disclosed or its effectiveness will be disabled. As a result, when faced with Ludloe's command of a complete confession, Carwin remains silent concerning his "other" voice. He will not reveal this secret, thereby transgressing the laws of Ludloe's all-male sect. Perhaps this is because, for Carwin, disclosure would mean giving up his voice, or at least giving it over to the machinations of the collective. Because his voice is disembodied, an imitative power, it could be divorced from his power and work to the advantage of the utopian organisation. He thus refuses to speak, a refusal that hints at his ambivalent situation: just as he desires the fraternal kinship of this covert group, Carwin is unwilling to give up his autonomous and yet othered voice. He will not relinquish its power or place it in the hands of others.

By holding onto his secret, Carwin violates the marriage-like ritual that would merge him to Ludloe. It is as if the retention of the secret is also the retention of himself, the possibility of an independent subjectivity that has the power to speak in its own voice. And it is here that Carwin reflects upon the relationship between personal subjectivity, confession and American law. For Carwin's concealment questions the place of confession in the law and echoes the 1791 adoption of the Fifth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution which clearly states that "No person . . . shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself." This legal amendment regulates confession and is not only meant to protect the rights of the accused; it is also a way of policing confession to assure that the accused is not reduced to a state of abjection in which he is forced to condemn himself. This right to remain silent, the right against confession, evidently exposes the law's profound skepticism about confessions. Indeed, a confession, in the face of the law, always raises a number of crucial questions: How was the confession extracted from the accused? Under what condition was the confession made? Who was the confessor and who was the confessant? The law seeks answers to these questions because a confession, depending on its conditions, may be an ethical violation, somehow an invasion of human dignity. In fact, the Fifth Amendment to the constitution meant that a plea could not be

extracted by human authority, for to require a confession would insist that the state was superior to the individuals who composed it, instead of their instrument.

Yet the law of Ludloe's sect demands confession as a crucial form of self expression. For Ludloe, Carwin's revealed transgressions would have a special stamp of identificatory authenticity by bearing private witness to the truth about his individual personality, his secret voice. That is, the extraction of truth, the initiation ritual of the sect, is seen to necessarily involve a confessional gesture, a requirement to lay bare that which is most intimate in order to make oneself known. A double imperative thus develops here. On the one hand, the confessional act, and Ludloe takes this position, is a dominant form of self-expression, one that bears witness to the "truth" of the individual. From this perspective, the truth of the self and to the self are markers of sincerity, and the spoken confession becomes both the speech act and the narrative form that will lay bare one's most intimate self. The act of confession, then, reveals one's self knowledge and makes that self known to others, exposing the most hidden truths about selfhood. On the other hand, Carwin recognises that the demand for transparency, in which the confessant is open to the sect without dissimulation, is an act of tyranny through the policing of the very privacy that is required for selfhood. For if confession implies the criminal implication of oneself, then it also includes a potential state of abjection wherein the individual's intimate sense of self is violated or even stripped away.

Carwin, then, reveals the confessional narrative to move in at least two directions: it can be read as a text that is necessary for the expression of a "core" self and interpreted as a text that contributes to the dissolution of self, rejecting the privacy that selfhood requires. By revealing his private voice, Carwin would indeed reveal his hidden self to Ludloe, but such an act would also potentially destroy that "inner" self, along with the unique subjectivity that defines his individuality. But the confession is not mutual; Ludloe, as the confessor, keeps his subjectivity in tact, for he is not required to disclose his transgressions to Carwin. And if knowledge is power, knowledge of secrets--of that which is consciously held back from knowledge--is the supreme and vertiginous power, offering Ludloe a particular position of dominance in regard to Carwin. As a result, the relationship between confessor and confessant is not unlike the relationship between husband and wife as seen in *Alcuin*. Not that I seek to conflate confession and marriage, but I do want to suggest that by revealing his voice, his inner self, Carwin would give himself over to Ludloe,

while Ludloe has nothing to lose and everything to gain. Carwin's confession would thus be an act that traded in his individuality in favour of relationship that, like marriage, is based upon an asymmetrical division of power.

* * *

The violation of selfhood in the discussion of marriage in *Alcuin* and the marriage-like ritual of Carwin's confession raise important questions about power and subjectivity in the developing nation. Who has a voice within the new Republic? Should the fraternity of white men, which is based on an illusion of brotherhood and equality, construct the laws of the new country? Should women be given a voice? And should men give up their individual, private and secret voices for the imagined good of an all-male community? Both texts pose these questions by exploring a general anxiety about who has an authentic voice and who is the voice of authority in the new nation. Such anxieties, moreover, are articulated in gendered language, one by questioning the legal status of women and the other by inquiring into the homosocial bonds of all-male organisations. In the end, though, *Alcuin* and *Carwin* pose more questions than they provide answers: Brown's dialogue moves in two different directions, upholding the rights of women while simultaneously satirizing the woman's movement, and Carwin accepts the authority of homosocial kinship while simultaneously refusing to give himself over completely to Ludloe's all-male community. As such, we are left with a kind of Brownian ambivalence in which the laws of structural coherence, Enlightenment rationalism and clear generic classification fall away, leaving us to flounder in the dark and lawless realm of the gothic.

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Morality, voyeurism, and 'point of view': Michael Powell's *Peeping Tom* (1960)

JEREMY HAWTHORN

I have a lingering affection for that outmoded term 'point of view'. Recent narrative theorists have disliked the term because it obscures distinctions (for example between perspective and voice in literary narrative), and because its reliance upon a visual metaphor seems ill-suited to the various ways in which a narrator or reader is positioned by and in a literary text. But its reliance upon a visual model is less of a disadvantage so far as the analysis of film is concerned, and it has the important virtue that it links technical and ideological position. This latter virtue is of paramount importance when one's concern is with issues of morality – how a text encourages its readers or viewers to position themselves with regard to issues of moral conduct.

Morality is intimately concerned with our perspective on the events and situations that we witness, and how we act in response to them. In the non-technical sense of the term, our point of view on things has thus a moral dimension. Action in a literal sense is not an option when we are reading a book or watching a film, but to the extent that imaginative involvement in art hones our powers of moral discrimination, the form of our metaphorical positioning with regard to what we read, or view in the cinema, has moral significance. A scene in a film involving the murder of a woman by a man can be experienced by a male viewer in very different ways. Is he led to feel the horror of the event and to experience vicariously the terror and suffering of the woman? Is he, alternatively, invited to experience the perhaps perverted pleasure attributed by the film to the murderer? Or is he perhaps encouraged not to empathize with either character, but to follow the scene in a more distanced and intellectual manner? Whose eyes do we see through? These are crude alternatives, but even expressed in such an unsophisticated manner one can see that the choice of a point of view, a proffered narrative perspective, has major implications of both a technical and a moral character.

Michael Powell's 1960 film *Peeping Tom* raises these issues in a stark way. A film about a man who films women while murdering them and

which seems more concerned to direct the audience's sympathy towards the murderer than towards his victims can hardly expect to escape censure, and indeed it seriously damaged its director's career and destroyed that of its writer. Publicity for the film unambiguously invited the audience to indulge a salacious voyeurism in watching the film: one publicity poster pictured the doomed first victim Dora staring at the camera/murderer, accompanied by the text: 'Can you see yourself in this picture? Can you see yourself facing the terror of a diabolical killer? Can you guess how you'd look? You'll live that kind of excitement, suspense, horror, when you watch "Peeping Tom"'. The publicity text is clearly concerned to prepare viewers to adopt unusual points of view, but revealingly it hedges its bets with regard to *whose* point of view can be expected to be thrust on the viewer. 'Can you guess how you'd look' has a sort of double purchase, inviting a woman to imagine what she would look like as victim, while inviting a man to imagine looking *at* a female victim. The words 'excitement, suspense, horror' also seem to offer the chance to experience vicariously emotions associated both with crazed killer and terrified victim.

But if the publicity dangles the prospect of a sort of sensationalist voyeurism in front of the prospective viewer, the film itself also explores voyeurism. Leo Marks the screenwriter, who had been a coding expert during the war, was fascinated by Freud (who once visited his parents' bookshop), and originally proposed to Director Powell a 'biopic' of Freud (Christie 1994, 85). According to Marks, 'The greatest code of all was the unconscious, and Freud appeared to have deciphered it. Perhaps not accurately, altogether, but what an attempt he'd made!' For Marks, 'whilst psychotherapy is the study of the secrets a person keeps from him or herself, codes are the study of secrets nations keep from each other' (1998, xii). The film and the published screenplay are full of reference to 'keys', and a psychologist in the film talks of the murderer's scoptophilia. There is no doubt that the film does at times attempt to get the viewer to adopt the perspective of sympathetic analyst of the murderer in the film; his murderous voyeurism is related to a conventionally Freudian view of the effects of childhood trauma.

One unfortunate aspect of this is that readings of the film can easily slip from interpretation to decoding, uncovering precisely those Freudian meanings that screenwriter Leo Marks put into his script in a circular cycle of transformations. But to bring a critical and morally alert intelligence to bear on the film we need to go beyond the clues to be found in the film's screenplay, and to look at the positioning of the viewer by the whole range of filmic techniques that the director makes use of.

The opening scene

The opening of *Peeping Tom* is cinematically highly crafted. First we are presented with the names of the producers against a neutral background, and then with a realistic archery target coloured like an RAF roundel with concentric circles of red (outside) white, and blue (centre), into which a number of arrows have already been fired. ('The Archers' was the name given to the production company formed by the collaboration of Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger, so that this shot has iconic and intertextual-generic significance.) The brief sequence opens as a close-up with only the centre of the target visible, but the camera then pans backwards to reveal the whole of it. The twang of a bowstring and the swish of the arrow then accompany the image of an arrow which is fired into the centre of the bull. After a few seconds the words 'A Michael Powell production' appear on screen bottom left. After a half fade we then cut suddenly to the image of a closed right eye. Almost immediately it jerks open, filling the screen as did the target. The eye is blue, like the centre of the target into which the arrow has been fired (a duplication that reinforces a sense of the eye's vulnerability). The sudden opening of the eye suggests surprise or fear – a suggestion underwritten by a dramatic double chord on the film's sound track. The first chord is struck while the eye is closed, the second, which modulates upwards, after it has been opened. In spite of the expectations raised by the film's title, this brief opening shot strongly evokes a sense of the eye of the observed rather than that of the observing person. Something has shocked the possessor of this eye, perhaps something represented by or simultaneous to the first dramatic chord on the soundtrack: the eye is not narrowed in a manner suggestive of surveillance, but wide in the manner of a scared potential prey. It appears too to be the eye of a woman: something that suggests not a Peeping Tom but his traditional victim. As Carol J. Clover aptly remarks, 'In case we doubted which of the eye's two operations *Peeping Tom* wishes to privilege in its analysis of horror cinema, this opening minute spells it out: not the eye that kills, but the eye that is "killed".'

There is a sense in which this very brief scene (which, like the film's final shot, is never given intradiegetic anchoring or correlated with the rest of the film's action), serves nonetheless as a sort of ideological establishing shot. Traditionally an establishing shot is, as Frank Beaver has it, 'A shot that establishes the location of a film story or scene' (1994, 134). Here however it is not so much physical or geographical location as ideological

positioning or point of view that is established. We look at a woman's eye opening in apparent terror in response to a perceived threat.

The eye appears to be looking into the camera, although it is hard to be absolutely sure; ascertaining eye focus and direction is hard when one is faced with one eye rather than two, and without being able to correlate eye movement with head inclination. Indeed it is not easy quickly to establish whether it is the right or the left eye on the screen; in the cinema this may be impossible. The pupil also makes small flickering movements, suggesting that it is not fixedly focussed upon one stationary object. So that although the eye does indeed seem to be focussed upon camera, it is not necessarily the case that the effect is, as Reynold Humphries claims, that of making spectators 'suddenly finding themselves being looked at' (1995, 40); the primary effect is that of allowing us to observe the eye of a woman frightened by something that is not us. It is, after all, worth asking why Powell focusses in on one eye rather than on a pair of eyes: the immediate answer is that this enables him to establish a parallel with the archery target. More generally, however, it is possible to surmise that this sense of not being sure whether we are being looked at helps to establish the ambiguity at the heart of voyeurism: the voyeur both wants to be invisible *and* to have his identity confirmed in interaction. Thematically, then, this opening sequence introduces the notion of an economy of gazing which is asymmetrical: we observe from a position of power, no threat is directed against us. At the same time, no recognition of our own humanity is vouchsafed by the observed eye. At its most extreme: we are invited to enjoy observing a fear that we have not caused and can not alleviate.

The film now moves directly into the first dramatic scene in which the murderer Mark encounters, then murders, the prostitute Dora. After a brief shot showing a cine-camera concealed at chest level behind the duffel coat of the (as yet anonymous) Mark, we switch to something akin to subjective camera as we follow what we assume is being filmed by this intradiegetic camera. I say 'something akin to', because we see the cross of the viewfinder imposed on what is in front of us, so that although Dora in one sense appears to look at, and talk to, 'us', 'we' are looking through the viewfinder of a camera she cannot as yet see, and through which no-one is actually looking. The effect is thus like subjective camera but with a weird distancing effect. The viewer cannot sink into the fantasy that he or she is in the world of the film, being addressed by Dora, because we are presumably seeing something that the still anonymous Mark is not seeing in quite the same form, as we know that he cannot be looking through the

camera's viewfinder. This particular ciné camera has to be held at eye-level for the viewfinder to be used; moreover, Mark cannot be looking through the viewfinder at the start of the encounter, otherwise Dora would notice this and not be shocked later on when she becomes aware of the camera. Thus although Kaja Silverman is correct to state that Mark's relation with the women he murders is mediated by his camera, she is in error when she states that 'from the moment that he first sights one of them as a bridge to phallic identification, he never looks away from the view finder' (1988, 33) – both with regard to Dora and, subsequently, also to his later victims Vivian and Milly.

Once the two have reached her bedroom and she has started undressing, Dora does notice what Mark is doing after he has turned to his bag, retrieved something, and has started to project a light on to her face, and we may be expected to assume that at this point he is holding the camera up to his face. It is worth stressing that prior to Dora's awareness of what Mark is doing, this opening sequence places the viewer in what, were the scene to be treated as 'realistic', is a disturbingly double (or ambiguous) relationship to what is displayed. Our point of view is in one sense human: Dora appears to be looking at and talking to Mark/us, but 'we' are represented by a lens of which she is at least initially unaware. In another sense, however, our point of view is non-human (we are seeing through a viewfinder that no one is looking through, so that when Mark projects his film later on we see the captured events for the second time, but he sees them *in this form* for the first time). Although this precise perspective is not repeated later in the film (we do have shots which appear to be taken through the camera viewfinder, but they represent what Mark is actually seeing), it sets a particular distantial 'tone': we follow Mark's watching, but without feeling a close identification with him.

This sense of seeing from someone's perspective without seeing through their eyes is one of the things that makes this opening sequence so very disturbing. On the one hand it invites the use of words such as 'vicarious' and 'voyeurism', but on the other hand it does have a defamiliarising effect, forcing the viewer to, as it were, *see* the voyeur while *being* the voyeur. Dora's bemusement followed by terror is offered up to 'us' to witness and experience, and 'we' indeed appear to be addressed as the source of her fear, but at the same time 'we' are not Mark, so we are not accountable for what she suffers. We are offered the chance to be surrogates for Mark, without responsibility for what he does. 'We', in fact, are not even a person (Mark) at the start of the scene; we are only a

camera, filming with no-one looking through the viewfinder. What then this opening sequence does, among other things, is to combine and confuse points of view so as to present the viewer with the voyeuristic experience in its impossibly purest form. We see without being there. We are both the murderer causing Dora to react in terror, and also the empty space behind the viewfinder. We are powerful and feared, and absent and impotent.

Reynold Humphries has interpreted this opening sequence in a slightly different way. He has argued that because Dora looks the viewer straight in the eye (in his words, 'the woman's look is on the same level as that of the camera, whereas we know from Shot 3 that the camera is hidden on the level of the man's waist'), and because Dora is unaware of the existence of the camera, 'only one interpretation is possible: it is the camera of *Peeping Tom* and not the man's camera which allows this exchange of looks, which is thus an exchange between spectator and prostitute' (1995, 44). But if the camera is as he suggest, 'the camera of *Peeping Tom* and not the man's', then why do we see the cross of the viewfinder imposed upon the screen? And why when Mark replays his film, is Dora looking straight at him/us as she does while Mark is filming? I agree with Humphries that this scene presents the viewer with an interpretative problem: on a realistic level, it provides us with contradictory information. For if Dora were unaware of Mark's camera, she would not be looking at it (i.e. at Mark's chest or stomach rather than at his eyes). But this is not the only such contradiction in *Peeping Tom*: as I will argue below, another one is when we appear to be watching Vivian seconds before her death through Mark's camera, at which she is looking, although this time we do *not* see the viewfinder cross although what we see during this second murder sequence shares an identical camera point of view with Mark's later projection of his filming of this scene.

Realism and the conventional

'Contradictions' such as this have to be understood at least in part in terms of filmic conventions. When we move from shot to reverse shot of a dialogue between two people we can work out that the scene must have been shot twice, because we never catch sight of the 'other' camera. But this is not how we read, or are meant to read, such a scene. Similarly, when Dora looks us in the eye, in a frame that includes a viewfinder cross, I suspect that few spectators respond: 'That's impossible!'. How viewers read this scene can only be guessed at on the basis of one's own responses. I

suspect that most viewers live through what is an impossible experience in the real, extra filmic world, while retaining a shadowy and disturbing-defamiliarising sense that it *is* impossible. After all, we are looking from a concealed viewpoint but we are simultaneously being acknowledged, interacted with. And it is this contradiction that is precisely the impossible wish of the voyeur: to combine invisibility, invulnerability and power with human interaction. It is important for director Powell to place the viewer in the situation of experiencing being looked at by Dora, placed in a position in which we appear to be recognized by Dora and sharing what we assume to be *Mark's* rather than *his camera's* viewpoint, while at the same time enjoying the security and voyeuristic privilege of being given access to the eye of a hidden camera. In this opening scene we are given what for the voyeur is the best of both worlds: complete secrecy along with human interaction and recognition of our own existence. The important point, I think, is that the film offers members of the cinema audience exactly that illusory and impossible combination of perspectives that the Peeping Tom yearns for: on the one hand anonymity and symbolic power through undetected observation, and on the other hand interaction and existential recognition. The offer is made only to be rescinded, however. It is clearly revoked later on during Mark's screening of the film, when we watch Mark from the back, watching the film (remember that when the film was first shown almost everyone in the cinema will have had someone behind him/her, watching *them* watch Mark watch the film . . .).

In the earlier of his two articles on *Peeping Tom*, Reynold Humphries has demonstrated that in this film the unacknowledged conventions that guide and construct our viewing are defamiliarised and foregrounded at crucial points in the film. One particularly important insight of Humphries involves a brief moment in the opening sequence of the film when Mark approaches so close to the extradiegetic camera – what Humphries refers to as 'the camera of the *énonciation*' – that his screen image is blurred. This blurring draws the attention of the viewer to the existence of an extradiegetic camera, and this along with the sense that we can now be looked at by Mark's intradiegetic camera unsettles our sense of voyeuristic invulnerability. What we see is no longer the result of the observation of an invisible eye, but of the operation of a very physical camera, one subject to the laws of physics. Because our point of view is thereby physically anchored in the film's diegesis, it can be observed, and as Humphries notes, we 'are now looked at by Mark's camera, i.e., our look is no longer safe, we are the object of a look and our unity is

disrupted' (1979, 194). This unsettling of our sense of an invulnerable, invisible extradiegetic perspective continues, according to Humphries, through the film. In the scene during which Mark films the police as they take away Dora's body, for example, Humphries shows how the cutting between intra- and extradiegetic cameras again makes the viewer aware of the existence of the normally 'invisible' camera. As I will argue below, such disorienting and defamiliarising effects are compounded in the long scene with Vivian, where we are shown an additional intradiegetic camera as well as Mark's. What is important, however, is Humphries's conclusion:

> Thus the film achieves three things here: it reinforces identification (Mark's point of view = the spectator's point of view) and undermines it on another level (Mark's point of view ≠ that of the director of *Peeping Tom*). Given these two elements, a third comes into play: when the spectator does not see via the camera of the *énoncé*, he/she cannot but see via that of the *énonciation*. There are therefore two cameras involved, but they are not filming the same thing all the time and one 'depends' on the other. (1979, 195)

The conclusion is important, I think, because by undermining the audience's voyeuristic activity the film draws attention to the contradiction at the heart of voyeurism itself: the simultaneous desire for both distance and involvement, for invisibility and human recognition and acknowledgement. Humphries also draws attention to a comparable unsettling effect in the screening of Mark's father's film, when the young Mark turns his newly acquired camera (the acquisition of paternal authority) on to the camera of the father, and thus on to Mark's tenant Helen (who is watching the projected film), and on to us, too.

> For her, it is too much and she asks Mark to stop the film. Her voyeuristic status is even more clearly revealed to her than at the point where he started to set up his camera to film her. Now the screen is doing what it is not meant to do: it is looking back at her/us, returning her/our look, showing itself to be the Real that is beyond our grasp, outside the realm and reach of desire, what we thought we could grasp in reality and quite unproblematically; that imaginary unity into which we re-inscribe ourselves anew with every film-going experience is split apart. (1979, 198)

The viewer's complex and contradictory experiences during the film's opening sequence are founded upon assumptions that have to be established very rapidly as this opening scene develops. The shot showing the camera inside Mark's duffel coat is not included in Leo Marks's

screenplay, and had the film not included this shot then the viewer would be led to assume that Mark is filming while looking through the viewfinder. Moreover, the control of the camera suggests the control of someone able to see what he is filming – especially in its final zoom forward closer and closer to Dora's face, a movement which even on first viewing we may assume accompanies some sort of threat. (The final shot in the 'live' scene is of Dora's face filling the screen with her eyes almost shut in terror, but when we watch the same events in Mark's replayed film immediately afterwards, the final shot is of Dora's open, screaming mouth, which this time fills both Mark's and our screen: her eyes are not to be seen.)

There is of course a point at which realistic assumptions cease to be appropriate to this sort of analysis. In 'real life' a camera with no eye at the viewfinder could not film as accurately as does the camera in this scene, but to object to the film on this basis would be to ignore the way in which cinematic conventions control the way in which the audience reads this scene. The typical viewer responds to this scene, one suspects, just as he or she was presumably intended to: vicariously sharing Mark's experience of first meeting the unsuspecting Dora and then observing her terror as she is murdered (a terror that seems aimed at and caused by the observer) – while also knowing that Mark is also capturing this sequence of events on film. Nevertheless, the contradiction that exists at the diegetic level in this scene (Dora is looking both at the camera and at Mark) is crucial to the film's exploration of the experience of voyeurism, for this 'impossible' unifying of the unseen camera and the seen eyes represents the impossible dream of the voyeur: to watch while hidden and unperceived and at the same time to be interacted with, to exchange intimate recognition of self with another. Most important: this uniting of mutually exclusive points of view has a defamiliarising effect upon the audience, and this, it seems to me, is of *moral* significance.

Up to the final few moments in this scene (that is, those following Mark's turning away from Dora and then turning back as he plays a light on her face), Dora certainly seems unaware of the camera, so that the effect of the scene is partly that of making the viewer a concealed observer of *both* Mark and Dora, an effect confirmed when we immediately proceed to a scene subsequent to the murder in which we are placed behind Mark, watching him watch Dora's projected image on screen. At the same time, because we know that no-one within the film's diegesis can be seeing, or could see, exactly what we are seeing (Dora *and* the viewfinder cross) because the viewfinder cross would not be visible when the film is projected, there is a strong sense of *staging* in this scene, one buttressed by

the urgency of the soundtrack music, about which more will be said below. This is a *performance* arranged for us; its artifice reminds us, makes us conscious of the fact, that we are watching a film, not just in the sense that in the film's diegesis we are observing a process of filming, but more importantly that what we see and hear is being controlled and metaphorically orchestrated for us. We are invited to enjoy being a camera through which no-one is looking, we are invited to sink into the safe and surrogate fantasy world of the cinema, while having these experiences defamiliarised, deconstructed, laid bare. We are invited, in short, to luxuriate in the sensation of being a Peeping Tom while looking at the hopelessly impossible desire of the Peeping Tom. The film gives and the film takes away – but we retain a knowledge and understanding of what we have been both granted and deprived of.

Reynold Humphries has drawn attention to the fact that the projected film of Dora's murder which Mark is shown watching has been edited down from the film we see being made as we look at a screen containing the cross of Mark's viewfinder. As he notes, although the film lingers on the rubbish bin, it does not include a shot of the film packet being discarded, and the sequence on the stairs where he and we meet with a second woman who is coming down the stairs is also missing. Humphries argues that it cannot be Mark who is to be taken as the film's editor.

> If he removes the sequence on the stairs, why keep the shot of the bin? As I have insisted, the shot remains held for several seconds, despite the fact that we do not see the box of film. There is no reason for this on the level of the *énoncé*, but once we foreground the role of editing as part of the *énonciation*, a coherent explanation is possible. (1995, 48)

Humphries's 'coherent explanation' falls into two parts: first that that experience of being treated by the woman descending the stairs as an object of contempt is removed for both Mark and for us, and second that it is redundant so far as the story goes: reaching the victim's bedroom and killing her are paramount. The spectator's desire to get to the essential thus has alarming repercussions for his/her viewing position(s). (1995, 48)

The cinema viewer is unlikely to be aware of these cuts on initial viewing, and is perhaps not intended to be so: in a private communication Reynold Humphries has suggested that we are dealing here with the working of unconscious coding: as a result of eliminating certain materials between the filmed and the projected scene, 'the film brilliantly gives the spectators what they want and what they are there for: 'to see the gory details and to *enjoy* them'. Thus the cuts are important not in spite of the

fact that they may not be noticed by the audience, but precisely *because of this fact*: they focus on Mark's and the (male) spectator's desire. The speeding-up of the sequence as projected by Mark helps to emphasize an element of sexual excitement, clearly displayed in him as he watches the film. And as has been noted, the projected film gives us both less (the cuts) and more (the final shot of Dora's screaming mouth) than the 'live' sequence. As to whether it is reasonable to assume that Mark may have edited his own film, I think that my primary response is that like the question of how many children Lady Macbeth has, this is not something that the viewer is encouraged to think about, as he or she is unlikely to notice the cuts. (Which does not, it should be stressed, mean that he or she is unaffected by them.) Nevertheless, the lingering shot of the rubbish bin does have thematic force, and Mark's interest in it could be given an intradiegetic explanation.

Comparison of Powell's film with Leo Marks's screenplay is interesting at this point. In the screenplay the woman descending the stairs (described by Humphries as a prostitute) is presented as follows.

> A Woman with hair like a two-toned car comes down the stairs, winks at Dora – looks at us for a moment with great curiosity ...winks... then passes out of camera. (1998, 7)

The description actually gives greater backing to Humphries's description of her as a prostitute than does the filmed sequence, in which I had taken her expression of distasteful impatience to extend to Dora's profession and her client. Again in the screenplay, the cuts in the sequence are achieved by the screen's being obscured by Mark's head, but importantly the sequence of the woman on the stairs *is* included. Powell's compression of the sequence creates a greater urgency and suggestion of sexual excitement, and Humphries is certainly right that the exclusion of the sequence on the stairs – whether as a result of the editing activity of the intradiegetic Mark or the extradiegetic Powell – has the effect of removing both those elements which are unconnected to the murderous sexual chase, and also the descending woman's contemptuous gesture, a defamiliarising challenge to Mark's camera which threatens both his and our voyeuristic enjoyment. Before moving on from this quotation, it is worth noting Marks's use of 'us' rather than 'Mark'.

Watching watching

A foregrounded playing around with reflexive processes of double observation recurs throughout *Peeping Tom*. Mark's father films the young

Mark watching a couple embrace (and the young Mark is played by director Michael Powell's own son – so that the representation of a father filming his son involves a father filming his son); Mark wishes to film Helen watching a film of himself ('wanted to photograph you watching'); Mark explains to Vivian that he is 'photographing you photographing me'; Mark is watched by a detective as he himself observes Helen leaving work; and as he arranges his own death he says of the cameras he has set to film his own death: 'Watch them Helen, watch them say good-bye!'. The repetitive pattern cannot but remind the viewer that he or she is *also* watching someone watching someone: Kaja Silverman has suggested that on a general level, 'obsessive self-referentiality works to uncover the pathology of male subjectivity', and that

> *Peeping Tom* gives new emphasis to the concept of reflexivity. Not only does it foreground the workings of the apparatus, and the place given there to voyeurism and sadism, but its remarkable structure suggests that dominant cinema is indeed a mirror with a delayed reflection. It deploys the film-within-a-film trope with a new and radical effect, making it into a device for dramatizing the displacement of lack from the male to the female subject. (1988, 32)

Certainly those scenes of the film which take place in a fictionalised film studio during the production of the intradiegetic *The Walls are Closing In* have a strongly reflexive quality, allowing us to watch the intradiegetic director Arthur Baden watching the scene that he is creating for an intradiegetic audience, a scene that comprises part of another scene which is what the actual director Michael Powell has created for us. Like the players' scene in *Hamlet* the reflexive quality of such strategies of duplication has an alienating effect, causing us to be aware of the cinema's artifices. As a result, one can I think isolate two opposing forces in *Peeping Tom*. On the one hand, a set of filmic conventions that from the first shot of the jerked-open eye onwards encourage us to situate ourselves with regard to the depicted action as uninvolved observers – voyeurs. On the other hand, a set of self-reflexive elements that make us conscious of our own voyeuristic activity and of the existential impoverishment and potential violence it carries with it.

The challenges to the audience's voyeuristic enjoyment in *Peeping Tom* are generally indirect and implicit rather than overt and explicit. If for example we compare the film's final scene with that in Alfred Hitchcock's 1954 film *Rear Window*, we can note that although there are clear parallels between the two scenes – the main male character's space is invaded, a

camera is used as or mistaken for a weapon – the manner in which the viewer is situated with regard to the diegesis in the two works is quite different. In *Rear Window* it is as if murderer Lars Thorwald is threatening us, invading the space (first visually, then physically) which stands for the cinema auditorium. When the door bursts open, we are facing it from Jeff's perspective, Thorwald is bearing down upon *us*. When the door is battered down by the police in *Peeping Tom* the camera is standing to one side, allowing us to watch Helen and Mark as the police rush over to them. We witness the scene neither from the perspective of the police nor from that of either Mark Lewis or Helen. The camera at this point is like the teacher of languages in the confession scene in Joseph Conrad's *Under Western Eyes* (1911): an unobserved observer. But if the viewer of *Peeping Tom* is repetitively situated as unobserved observer, he or she is also repetitively reminded of the fact. Thus at the very end of the film, the shot of the blank screen-within-a-screen, a shot which comes just prior to the cinema audience being faced with an actual rather than a depicted blank screen, causes us to recognize parallels between our situation in the cinema and Mark's situation in the diegesis. Time and time again we are granted the experience of being a voyeur, only to be forced to observe – our own observing.

The scene in the film studio leading up to Vivian's murder is also worthy of note in this respect. If we follow this scene from Vivian's attending to her makeup alone in the dressing room, we can follow a series of shifts of perspectival positioning. In the dressing room the soundtrack is strictly intradiegetic: natural noises, voices from outside, and the music which ostensibly emanates from Vivian's portable tape recorder. The camera pans and cuts to follow Vivian as she hides from the security guard, then slips out along the corridor and into the studio, but our attention is focussed on her and not on camera technique, which is such as to render itself invisible to the spectator. Then as she enters the studio the camera cuts from a close, sideways-on angle, to a high shot down. In retrospect (and perhaps in prospect, as hypothesis) we may see this particular shot as representative of Mark's viewpoint, as he eventually appears high up on a hoist. But there is no sense at this point that camera angle and movement, or cutting, have any intradiegetic anchoring; technique does not draw attention to itself, but encourages the viewer to concentrate upon Vivian and her situation from a spectatorial and uninvolved position. We are encouraged to adopt the familiar role of cinematic voyeur. As Vivian moves into what appears to be an inner studio, she starts to call Mark's name. He does not answer, but arc lamps are switched on, one at a time.

As each lamp is switched on, a jarring chord on the soundtrack – clearly this time *extra*diegetic – signals 'surprise', and Vivian looks appropriately shocked and disturbed. The conventional element in this use of the soundtrack to accentuate suspense represents a significant transition here, from a soundtrack which is ostensibly intradiegetic to one which is clearly extradiegetic (the chords have no realistic source within the world of the scene). It is at this point that our sense of staging is strongest: the film at this point conforms to the conventions of a thriller, in which sudden and unexpected sounds and images cause the viewer to duplicate that tension and fear that is being represented by one or more characters. The sudden chords may of course be conventionally interpreted as transpositions or displacements of the successive shocks experienced by Vivian as one by one the lights are illuminated, but they also serve as strong generic markers, causing the viewer to entertain expectations appropriate to the genre suspense/horror film. And of course in shocking the audience, they evoke empathy between viewer and Vivian: we experience what she is portrayed as experiencing.

Sound and diegesis

Familiar cinematic conventions work so as to cause the viewer automatically and unconsciously to interpret particular aspects of a film soundtrack as overt markers of the subjective experience of characters, and indeed there is one fine example of this elsewhere in the film: when Mark is watching the film of Vivian's murder, the urgent background piano music already associated with murderous sexual and voyeuristic excitement in him is played, but when he hears a knock on the door (it is Helen) and switches off his projector, the music stops abruptly at exactly the moment that he switches off the film, as it does, too, in a later sequence when Helen makes Mark switch off the projector. It seems clear at this point that this music is the external marker of sexual excitement in Mark, one which displays rather than comments upon his subjective state. Thus the viewer's understanding of the significance of this music develops in the course of the film; it is first heard during the film's main credits, which are run after the scene in which Dora is murdered, beginning as Mark watches the film that he took of Dora. The sense of urgency, crescendo and climax in the music, accompanying Mark as he watches the film (as Reynold Humphries points out, 'The fact that the man rises from his chair as the woman undresses and sinks back into it as she dies is an obvious moment of *jouissance*' [1995, 49]), and the strong culminating chords suggestive of

closure as the film ends on Dora's open mouth, all encourage the viewer to read the music as a depiction or 'objective correlative' of Mark's increasing sexual excitement and climax. Then when Helen first enters Mark's darkroom, and she asks to see the film that he has just been looking at, Mark picks up the film which, we know, shows the police removing Dora's body, and the recognizable piano music starts in a slower, more reflective form, but stops when Mark on second thoughts returns the film to the cupboard. On its first use in the film, then, this piano music is given a double identity: accompanying the credits and so extradiegetic, yet associated with Mark's voyeuristic replaying of his film and so betokening his perverted sexual excitement, and thus in a sense intradiegetic. But as scene follows scene, and especially after the music stops when Mark switches off the projector subsequent to hearing the knocking on the door, the music increasingly tends to be read more as a marker of Mark's dark subjectivity and less as extradiegetic accompaniment.

To a much more limited extent this can also be said of the dramatic chords that accompany the switching on of the arc lights in the deserted film studio – they represent subjective shock experiences in Vivian while at the same shocking us and thus allowing us to empathize with her. But their more familiar and conventional nature also brings a greater sense of staging to the scene, more of a sense of an extradiegetic controlling organization, which is not there in the scene in which Mark is watching his film.

Blindness and insight

The scene in which Mark shows Helen his father's films of himself falls in between these examples: the piano music comes to a sudden dramatic climax on two occasions: first when the lizard is dropped on the young Mark's bed, and second when Mark shocks Helen by revealing that the woman whose arms are seen in his film is his (dead) mother.[1] In both cases it can be argued that although the mood-changes signalled by the music represent an objectification of subjective experiences, first the young Mark's and subsequently Helen's, the music has more of an extradiegetic feel to it than it does in the earlier scene where Mark is watching his film alone. The music is repeated again while pictures of the development of

[1] Mark's gift of an 'insect' brooch to Helen seems intended to replay this horrifying scene in a revised form that renders it safe and thus undoes the previous trauma. The brooch is however shaped not like a lizard (as Kaja Silverman claims: 1988, 35) but a dragonfly.

the film of Vivian's murder are being shown – pictures which are cut to, and imposed as double exposures upon, the pictures of Mark and Helen at the restaurant. And the music is again repeated when Mark projects this film depicting Vivian's horrified face in the presence of the blind Mrs Stephens (leading to one of the most striking visual effects of the film when that part of the frame projected on to Mrs Stephens's body produces an image which resembles a skull, the clearest point at which the association between representation and death is made).

Linda Williams has noted that 'many of the "good girl" heroines of the silent screen were often figuratively, or even literally, blind', and she suggests that one of the ways that female blindness functions in classical narrative cinema is to allow 'the look of the male protagonist to regard the woman at the requisite safe distance necessary to the voyeur's pleasure, with no danger that she will return that look and in so doing express desires of her own' (1984, 83). Mark does not kill Mrs Stephens, although it appears that he is preparing to do so, and we are led to surmise that this is because he cannot see fear in her eyes, nor can he reflect her own terrified eyes back for her to witness. Thus although Williams's point seems essentially correct, Mark's need for his victims to see is a perverted recognition of the fact that their inability to see him would (and does) ignore his existential needs and rights just as he ignores theirs. Generally speaking one would assume that a blind woman would represent an ideal target for a Peeping Tom, allowing more extensive unobserved observation than in the case of a sighted individual. The fact that Mark's psychosis cannot operate with the blind Mrs Stephens suggests that he is portrayed as more than simple Peeping Tom.

Cameras and points of view

In the climactic scene immediately prior to Vivian's murder there are at least three anchor points which serve to determine the viewer's perspective. First there is (a) the extradiegetic camera (actually cameras, as we cut between different angles), filming first Vivian and then Mark and Vivian, ostensibly invisible to them and representing no intradiegetic presence. Next there is (b) the studio camera through which Vivian looks, and through which on occasions the viewer may imagine that he or she is looking. And then there is (c) Mark's own ciné-camera, the one with which he actually films Vivian's death. In the closing seconds of this scene it is not always clear whether we are being given (a) or (c). Shots of Mark

filming are clearly from the perspective of (b), as we see his own camera from an angle incompatible with that of the observed studio camera. And early shots of Mark filming Vivian are clearly seen 'through' the lens of his own camera, as we see the cross of the viewfinder. But later head-on shots of Vivian give the impression of being seen from the perspective of Mark's camera, although Vivian is actually looking (I think) very slightly to our left. As the knife-ended tripod leg is held in Mark's left hand we may assume that it is this that fixes her gaze, and that this is why her eyes are not pointed directly at the lens. We can indeed see the shadowy tripod leg along with what we may later assume is the attached mirror, the 'something else' mentioned by Mark, although side-on shots of the blade-carrying leg do not reveal it. But, paradoxically, although we do not see the cross of his camera viewfinder as we have earlier in this scene and in the film's opening sequence, our perspective seems so close to that of Mark's own camera that although logically the perspective would seem to be (a), the viewer does I think assume that it is actually (c). Although the cross disappears from the viewfinder in this reading, Mark's chalking of a cross on the floor to mark the spot on which he wishes Vivian to stand may be taken as some sort of wish to transfer that reality that he observes through his viewfinder on to the world outside the camera. When she does stand in the allotted space, Vivian obscures the cross (which is proleptically the cross over her grave); her presence thus deletes the reminder that we are seeing through Mark's viewfinder, so that the subsequent absence of the viewfinder cross seems oddly appropriate. This invisibility of the viewfinder cross captures Mark's subjective experience of the scene: for him the camera is invisible, just as it will be when he views the film that he is taking. Also important is the fact that in the closing seconds of this scene, after Mark has said, 'There's something else', the soundtrack restarts the 'dramatic' music, warning the audience of the impending dramatic climax and increasing our sense both of Mark's growing sexual excitement and also of the managed nature of the presentation.

It is hard to be definite concerning the precise results of such a mix of elements, but my own response to the film suggests to me that during this scene we never simply feel either that we are seeing and experiencing from the perspective of one of the characters, or that the scene has been staged for us. Generally our sense is of a transparent narrative that allows us to observe from a neutral and extradiegetic position, but this sense is on occasions coloured by an impression of staging which is undoubtedly called up by the dramatic chords, the

extradiegetic music, and the final climax shot of a blood-red arc light. Only at the close of the scene are we placed precisely in Mark's position, looking with him through his viewfinder. My assumption is that the absence of the viewfinder cross is something of which the audience is unaware given the dramatic nature of the sequence, and Powell may indeed have chosen to omit the cross so as to increase the dramatic impact of the scene, so as to focus on Vivian-being-frightened-of-Mark rather than on Vivian-being-filmed. It is also the case that the film's relentless and repetitive portrayal of processes of reflexivity produces a constant sense of multiple meaning that is in tension with our experience of being an uninvolved observer of a realistic sequence of actions.

All of these elements *prior* to the final shots of the terrorized Vivian release strong generic expectations which dilute our sense of a realistic scene and thus cause us to distance ourselves from the characters and lessen our involvement with their fate. Another way of expressing this would be to suggest that these elements heighten the voyeuristic element in our experience of the scene, because the generic markers increase our sense that 'it is only a film'. The scene also invites voyeuristic engagement because our looking does not mirror anyone's looking in the film's diegesis – which would counter our sense of unobserved watching and give us a greater sense of vulnerability – but neither do we feel the strong presence of an organizing intelligence with a design upon us, something that again would reduce that sense of privacy and secrecy central to the experience of the voyeur. (The organizing intelligence is of course there, but because it is dissolved into the fluid movements of the extra-diegetic camera to which our attention is not drawn, its conventional nature renders it invisible to us.) But at the end of the scene our placement changes: we are in the scene, being looked at and responded to by Vivian, we are Mark. This movement from invisibility and non-existence to object of fear brings together the two aspects of the Peeping Tom's desire: to be safe, invulnerable, private, and to be responded to. The fact that these two aspects are irreconcilable is *not* foregrounded to the same extent at this point, indeed by allowing the viewer to experience them successively rather than simultaneously, it is concealed.

In this scene, then, the film presents the (male) viewer with a double sense of invading a privacy. We are first positioned to invade Vivian's privacy by voyeuristically observing her when she believes herself to be alone, and then we both watch and partake in Mark's invading of Vivian's privacy in the most brutal manner possible.

Defamiliarising voyeurism

If I am right, then the extent to which *Peeping Tom* is filmed in such a way as to encourage especially the male viewer to become aware of his voyeuristic tendencies varies from scene to scene. But even in scenes in which the defamiliarising process is less apparent, the *cumulative* force of the shifts of point of view is generally destabilising. The viewer is made a self-conscious voyeur while watching a film about a self-conscious voyeur.

Such reflexive parallels might be felt to underwrite the attempt to garner sympathy for Mark Lewis, especially as little attempt is made to evoke the viewer's compassion for either Dora or Milly – although some such attempt is perhaps made in the case of Vivian. Interviewed by Chris Rodley, Leo Marks denied that the similarity between his name and that of Mark Lewis was deliberate or significant (from a man who used to set the *Times* crossword this is not wholly convincing, especially as the name he gives the director *in* the film – Arthur Baden – is obviously an in-joke, suggesting a link with the director *of* the film Michael Powell through the name of founder of the boy scouts Lord Baden-Powell), but he does link Mark to the cinema viewer.

> I believe that the cinema makes voyeurs of us all. And I wanted to write a study of one particular voyeur, from a little boy to the time that he died. I wanted to show, visually, what made him a Peeping Tom, and scatter throughout that as many visual clues as I could find, in the hope that the audience would want to discover the clear text of this man's code for themselves. (1998, xx)

The comment seems almost divided against itself. On the one hand it suggests that in watching a film about a voyeur we will all become aware of our own voyeurism as film viewers. But on the other hand the comments about Mark Lewis here suggest that there is something special about *his* upbringing that has turned him (but not most people) into a Peeping Tom. In like manner, I feel that *Peeping Tom* is a film divided against itself. Aspects of the film are such as to encourage the viewer to relate his or her own cinematic watching to Mark Lewis's scopophilia, but other aspects discourage such a drawing of parallels.

If the viewer recognizes her- or (especially) himself in Mark Lewis, then coming to terms with this shared experience of being a voyeur should mean that understanding Mark Lewis will cause the audience to have greater insight into its own voyeuristic impulses and, conversely, that confronting the voyeuristic element in our cinematic experience will help

us to understand – and sympathize with – Mark Lewis. But if we see Mark Lewis as an isolated oddball, the one-off result of his father's perverted treatment of him in childhood, then we are unlikely to see similarities between his scopophilia and our cinematic viewing.

Our choice of interpretive strategy has, I think, much to do with the extent to which we recognise the ways in which *Peeping Tom* engages with what Elisabeth Bronfen has described as the 'perverse economy of gazing' in our society. For in spite of its moral and aesthetic lapses the film does uncover the violence implicit in the trade in representations of women's bodies. Although in one sense Dora, Vivian and Milly are on the margins of society, in another sense their trades symbolize structurally central elements in the Britain of 1960. I find it interesting to compare the tobacconist's shop in which Mark takes his pornographic photographs with the shop in which Mr. Verloc, the title-character in Joseph Conrad's *The Secret Agent* (1907), uses as front for his political spying. Both shops display pictures of naked and semi-naked women, and both shops – because they *are* shops, open to the general public – serve as points of contact between the taboo, the marginal, and the perverse on the one hand, and the public, the normal, and the respectable on the other.

The male viewer's intermittent identification with Mark Lewis is crucial, for it draws the men of a whole society into Mark's perverse economy of gazing. Even the way in which the film divides women into those who 'ask for it' and 'good girls' like Helen is deconstructed by the way in which Mark is connected to both: he is both charming dinner companion and shy conversationalist with Helen, and also murdering pervert with Dora, Vivian and Milly. The four women all play different parts in the same system, just as the prostitute in William Blake's poem 'London' is related to 'the marriage hearse'. It would be bizarre to categorize *Peeping Tom* as a feminist film, and yet it makes available insights central to that second wave of feminism that was to flourish at the end of the decade in which it was first shown. Before the arguments of second-wave feminists gained currency, the idea that prostitution, pornography, or even the work of the glamorous female film star were linked both symbolically and directly to structures of violence in society seemed absurd. And yet such a link is to be found clearly delineated in *Peeping Tom*. In this film, the fact that a man filming a woman is *literally* involved in violence against her has crucial *symbolic* force. We can note in passing that this same association of filming and violence is picked up in a work for which the term 'feminist' does not seem inappropriate – Margaret

Atwood's 1972 novel *Surfacing*, in which a husband who abuses his wife also forces her to perform naked while he and his partner film her.

Moral decisions

In an interview first published in 1989 the American film director Martin Scorcese comments at length about the effect that *Peeping Tom* had on him when first he saw it in 1962. Summing up his view of the film, he states:

> I have always felt that *Peeping Tom* and *8½* say everything that can be said about film-making, about the process of dealing with film, the objectivity and subjectivity of it and the confusion between the two. *8½* captures the glamour and enjoyment of film-making, while *Peeping Tom* shows the aggression of it, how the camera violates. (Thomson and Christie 1996, 18)

How is it, then, that the film caused such outrage on its first release? The answer may not be simple. On the one hand, there seems little doubt that the film does offer the male viewer the possibility of vicarious enjoyment of acts of voyeurism and violence against women. On the other hand the film's implicit association of this violence with wider patterns of accepted objectification of women seems to have challenged a conventional view of the murderer as other rather than as an extreme version of the accepted. And the attempt to *explain* the leading character's murderous second self certainly would have aroused the ire of those who believed that evil was *sui generis* and not accessible to analysis or explanation. I believe, too, that the very success of the film in allowing the male viewer (for a while) to voyeuristically enjoy the sadistic murder of women also came with a sting in the tail: the final view of Mark as pathetic and impotent carries the implication that the empathising male viewer was equally pathetic and impotent. The extremely complex movements of point of view in the film thus betray the male viewer into a knowledge of things about himself that he would rather not know.

A changed view of the film must also in part relate to a changed cultural context. Seen by viewers familiar with the arguments of feminists in the 1970s and the 1980s, the film is less sympathetic to a murderer and more critical of a culture. And that reminds us that point of view in a film or a novel can never do more than provide a point of departure for the reader's or viewer's own responses and interpretive processes.

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"Working Through Contradiction Interminably": Towards a *Mathesis Singularis*?

ØYVIND VÅGNES

In *Camera Lucida*, Roland Barthes describes the paradox of infatuation with an object and the problems of simultaneously addressing it "scientifically." He is torn between languages and describes a desperate resistance to "any reductive system":

> Then I decided that this disorder and this dilemma, revealed by my desire to write on Photography, corresponded to a discomfort I had always suffered from: the uneasiness of being a subject torn between two languages, one expressive, the other critical; and at the heart of this critical language, between several discourses, those of sociology, of semiology, and of psychoanalysis - but that, by ultimate dissatisfaction with all of them, I was bearing witness to the only sure thing that was in me (however naïve it may be): a desperate resistance to any reductive system. (Barthes 1981: 8)

This conflict is constitutive to the book; it is reflected in its form: *Camera Lucida* is not only a personal narrative on memory and death, it is also a philosophical discourse on central questions of representation, and, by extension, on theory and method. Barthes raises the question: how do we look at photographs? He arrives at what he calls a "curious notion": "why mightn't there be, somehow, a new science for each object? A *mathesis singularis* (and no longer *universalis*)?" (Barthes 1981: 8).[1]

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[1] Barthes does not elaborate on his use of the two terms. The Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy (http://www.rep.routledge.com/philosophy; all the following quotations are from the web site and can easily be searched there) refers to Ramón Llull who in the Spanish middle ages "developed a complicated combinatory logic ... which offered an ingenious foretaste of our current axiomated logics." According to the encyclopedia, his thought "contains the seeds of the *mathesis universalis*, which served as the basis for European Rationalism as developed later by Descartes and Leibniz." Descartes' rules of method "were interpreted as recommendations to start with a few simple and acknowledged notions (axioms) and thence to proceed to unkonwn ones (theorems). ... The supporters of such an interpretation maintained that the axiomatic-deductive method should replace logic and be the

A *mathesis universalis* implies a systemic approach to the object to be analyzed, the establishment of a theoretical apparatus.[2] Such an approach values the insights that come from comparing and differentiating, and considers them essential for the application of the apparatus in analysis.[3] Thus, the construction of for example a collective memory may seemingly invite a parallel construction of several versions of a *mathesis universalis*, of "sciences" of collective memory within the humanities and/or the social sciences.

In my ongoing work with a PhD dissertation, *Kennedy Dying*, I analyze how certain narratives evoke a particular historical event, the assassination of John F. Kennedy in 1963, and reflect upon how they are part of the shaping of a collective memory of the event. Such a memory is shaped culturally and, to a tremendous degree, by a transgressive narrativity that seems always to suspend classification. Modern storytelling affects our notions of the past in various and significant ways and encountering motion or still pictures, graphic or textual novels, short stories, epic poetry or theatrical performances, to mention a few of the forms I have come across, I am inevitably left with a sense that the narratives simultaneously both invite and resist classification. Such paradox can easily result in a theoretical impasse. The narratives share

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model for the right conduct of understanding." According to Cartesian logic, such understanding would serve as a universal science of invention, a "universalis."

Gilbert of Poitiers (c. 1085-1154), theologian, philosopher, and logician, distinguished between three branches of theoretical knowledge: physics, mathematics, and theology. At the time Aristotle's *Metaphysics* was not known in the west. Gilbert differs between *concrete* and *abstract* objects of knowledge, where theology is the science whose object is the non-concrete. The concrete can be considered as it is ('natural consideration'), or, when we attend only to forms (and not matter), in an abstract way (mathematical consideration). For the last type of consideration, *mathesis* or *disciplina* is used; *mathesis* concerns "not quantities but abstracted forms ... Mathesis is special because it is a certain way of knowing, consisting in conceptual analysis. Its inquiry concerns the meaning of concepts such as corporeity or life. Thus concepts of forms are freed from the concrete state of affairs with which they are connected. Mathesis concerns itself with the question of what other concepts are implied by the range of meaning of a certain concept: with what other concepts is a given concept compatible or incompatible? ... Gilbert emphasizes explicitly that the categories are referred to more adequately by abstract than by concrete terms."

[2] In "Unity of Science", an essay from *The Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy* web site by Jordi Cat, Isidore, the Bishop of Seville who compiled etymologies in the sixth century, Llull (see endnote 1), and Petrus Ramus, who "introduced diagrams representing dichotomies" all represent an "organization of knowledge" that reflects "the idea of a world governed by the laws dictated by God, creator and legislator." This organization is systemic.

[3] Petrus Ramus (see endnote 2) argues that "the starting point of all philosophy is the classification of the arts and the sciences" (http://www.rep.routledge.com/philosophy)

fundamental features that need to be taken into consideration: they invent the past as much as they record or retell it, and even if the strategies vary, they all relate to that same event, and often in profoundly similar ways, across or beyond generic boundaries. There are essential intertextual relations between all the narratives in question. And yet, each narrative resists sweeping statements: needless to say, as narrative, a graphic novel differs widely from a movie or a novel. Each narrative stages and re-enacts the event in its own way. Significantly, the generic forms I have suggested ("novel," "epic poetry") often fall short in "defining" the constitutive elements of the narratives.[4] As a result, I indeed find myself wishing for a *mathesis singularis* for each new form. It is this conflict I wish to address here. Particularly, I wish to contrast how the wish for a *mathesis universalis* finds expression in recent attempts to re-articulate theories of "nonfiction," and how, at the same time, the practice of interdisciplinary analysis calls for theories that revolve around "conceptualizations" rather than systemic methodology, an approach reminiscent of Barthes' "curious notion" of a *mathesis singularis*.

The attempt to describe a type, to distinguish it, and to test its occurrence and systemic function in relation to other types can be identified in literary theories of the twentieth century, such as Northrop Frye's theory of archetypal structures or structuralist theory.[5] Mieke Bal presents a break with such traditions in a second and revised edition of her 1985 book *Narratology*, in 1997. In her introduction she explains how she grew uneasy with the first edition when working with the second. She felt uncomfortable with the "tone of it," the references "to being sure," and "all those remnants of the positivistic

[4] Although Steve McCabe's *Wyatt Earp in Dallas, 1963* (1995) can be read as an epic poem, it is a postmodern version of the epic, a genuine hybrid.

[5] See Frye 1957 and any introduction to structuralism. Frye believes that literary criticism should "acquire something of the methodological discipline and coherence of the sciences", but several critics have found his approach "excessively schematic" (Lodge 1995: 421). "There is a place for classification in criticism ... The strong emotional repugnance felt by many critics toward any form of schematization in poetics is again the result of a failure to distinguish criticism as a body of knowledge from the direct experience of literature, where every act is unique, and classification has no place," Frye claims in his "Polemical Introduction" to *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957: 29).

"Structuralism," as proposed by cultural anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss, normally refers to a form of analysis informed by Saussure's linguistic model. Structuralism considers cultural phenomena as a signifying structure, "a combination of signs that have a set significance for the members of a particular culture," and analysis explains how phenomena achieve their "cultural significance, and what that significance is, by reference to an underlying system" (Abrams 1993: 280).

discourse of my training that inhere in structuralist thought" (xiii). Bal found that there was a discrepancy between her practice as an analyst and the systemic approach to narrative, between her encounters with narrative as "object-language" and her analysis as "meta-language." In the afterword of her new edition, she claims that there is "no direct logical connection between classifying and understanding texts":

> Asking whether or not an object 'is' narrative is both obvious and futile, just as the notion that an image 'is' visual hardly calls for visual analysis to make that point. On the other hand, if so much of culture 'is' narrative, or, if not, at least 'has an aspect of' narrative, doesn't any invocation of narratology initiate a circular argument that begs the question of specificity? This is why traditionally, narratology has been used to differentiate 'types' of narrative, narrative situations, 'modes' of story-telling ... But what's the point of *that*? ... Delimitation, classification, typology, it is all very nice as a remedy to chaos-anxiety, but what insights does it yield? ... There is no direct logical connection between classifying or understanding texts. (Bal 1997: 221)

Bal's contention is that initial classification and the application of a consistent theoretical apparatus in analysis too easily promotes dichotomy. When a value system is appropriated to the apparatus, it potentially disqualifies a specific kind of narrative that is formative for collective memory in particular ways. A classification that promotes a "fiction"/"nonfiction" dichotomy can therefore potentially seclude the historical event from the realm of "fiction," and leave it to the documentarist or the historian to treat it in narrative. Bal therefore cautions against a confusion of understanding and axiology, against a sense of "value inherent in narrative." The danger is that narrative is either understood as "true, hence, good" or as "intrinsically false, fictional, manipulative, hence, bad" (223). In either case the essential tension that is integral to a specific vision of history is neglected.

The reasons for cautioning against an axiology of "fiction"/"nonfiction" are, then, partly ideological. Bal's approach to "close reading" is definitely anti-totalitarian. She insists that no academic discipline can function without a notion of the concept of *meaning* (26), a view that is reminiscent of for example Bakhtin's textual/cultural approach, since Bakhtin insisted on any text as simultaneously "polyphonic" and "laden." Bal does not, however, embrace "the disabused endorsement of undecidability" (91-2). Meaning is not forever delayed, it is rather articulated and re-articulated in interpretation, securing an ongoing questioning of textual authority.

In the case of the Kennedy assassination the narrativity in what John Hellmann refers to as an "unbounded cultural space" is a battle of cultural authority (Hellmann 1997: x).[6] On this battleground, the narratives I analyze co-exist with an abundance of narratives that claim to be "objective" and "scientific," and thereby present a closure in terms of meaning. They "stage" the historical event and may therefore be said to "play with meaning." The question of "truth" is as contested as ever when a story of the past is told, and this is particularly the case in the unsolved murder mystery of a president.[7] Numerous Kennedy assassination narratives problematize the very distinction between "fiction" and "nonfiction" narrative by *not* resolving this basic tension. Novels such as Don DeLillo's *Libra* (1988) or movies such as Oliver Stone's *JFK* (1991), which are about events surrounding the assassination, are routinely placed in "fiction" shelves. Readers and spectators are familiar with the contrast implied, but the process of *reading* and *watching* is more complex, and invites a particular kind of interactivity. Of course, the reader/spectator does not interpret a movie or a novel in the same way as for example the first official interpretation of the event, the Warren Commission report in 1964.[8] Whereas the documentary approach of the Commission attempted a necessary but flawed conclusive interpretation, the artistic narratives cannot and will not achieve such a truth-telling status, and their power is rather of a negative character; they are free from burdens of *empiri*, open for artistry, and they raise questions about knowledge and the authority of knowledge. Their own considerable authority is thus of a different character.

The anti-totalitarian polyphony of the narratives depends on their hybridity, on a textual play that frustrates generic and formal classification. They operate in a zone fittingly described by Bill Nichols as "between boundaries," where "the world put before us lies between one not our own and one that very well might be" (1994, ix), hence their troubled mimetic character. The novel *Libra* and the movie *JFK* address the assassination by way of montage of documentary material and reenactment, by way of

[6] In Vågnes 2002 I discuss the implications of this kind of narrativity for the formation of collective memory.

[7] One result of this is that critics simultaneously classify narratives as "fiction" and performs ethical criticism; a novel or a movie is first labelled as a work of the imagination, then criticized severely for its representation of history.

[8] See an extensive list of titles that present criticism of the Report in Parenti, 1999: 206. In 1978, a House Select Committee concluded against the Warren Report that there was more than one assassin involved in the Kennedy shooting.

combining what is imagined with indexical data, never settling in one mode, always disrupting what is simulated with what is real, always telling what may have happened.[9] The use Stone makes of the 8 mm film of the assassination shot by Abraham Zapruder is highly controversial, because he "mixes Zapruder's real vérité with his own simulated vérité" (Williams 1999: 311). According to Marita Sturken it is this montage that defines the dialogical relationship between narrative and spectator, that allows the viewer to raise fundamental questions of meaning:

> The meanings of the Zapruder film continue to shift each time it is reenacted ... The Zapruder film replaces personal memories of the Kennedy assassination, becoming those memories, and *JFK* has the capacity to replace the Zapruder film. All subsequent depictions of the Zapruder film are irrevocably altered by its inscription in *JFK*. (Sturken 1995: 35)

Sturken claims that it is "the reenacted image that carries the weight of historical narrative, that allows for a sense of participation in history" (1995:

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[9] On the hybridity of *Libra*:

"*Libra* preserves the historical texture of everyday life the [Warren Commission] Report offers in its countless interviews and empirical facts and details ... DeLillo assembles and organizesthe historical materials of The Warren Commission Report in conjunction with several conspiracy theories of the assassination. *Libra*, however, does not vindicate either narrative of the JFK assassination, but rather negates each plot by revealing its moment of untruth, the blind spot that enables each narrative to restore meaning and/or stability to social reality." (Willman 1999: 622-23)

"What [DeLillo] has done in *Libra* is given us one perfectly shaped, intention-driven narrative while folding within it, every other chapter, a second narrative, his imagined biography of Oswald ... With his double narrative DeLillo toys with conventional political and novelistic expectations. ... Oswald is a contemporary *production*, a figure who is doubled everywhere in *Libra*, even, most harrowingly, in strategic places, in the narrative voice that DeLillo invented for this book." (Lentricchia 1991 b), 201-3)

On the hybridity of *JFK*:

"Upon the film's release, the criticism continued along two fronts: Stone's decision to base his narrative on the much-discredited Jim Garrison, former New Orleans district attorney, and the film's visual strategy of intercutting archival footage with reenactments of alleged events." (Simon 1996: 205)

"Everything is presented as if it were of the same ontological order, both real and imaginary - realistically imaginary or imaginary real, with the result that the referential function of the images of events is etiolated ... All of the events depicted in the film - whether attested by historical evidence, based on conjecture, or simply made up in order to help the plot along or to lend credence to Stone's paranoid fantasies - are presented as if they were equally historical, which is to say, equally real, or as if they had really happened." (White 1999: 68, 69)

35).[10] The meanings "continue to shift," and ongoing participation leaves history open-ended. The kind of spectator participation that Sturken describes thus depends fundamentally on the essential tension that characterize this kind of narrative. This interpretational activity resembles the one preferred by Bal, a Gadamerian approach: one should always allow the object to "speak back" and allow a "suspension of certainties" (Bal 2002: 45). Theory, according to Bal, is not an "instrument of analysis" as much as "a discourse that can be brought to bear on the object at the same time as the object can be brought to bear on *it*" (65). The point of interpretation is, Bal claims towards the end of *Narratology*, to ever raise "Gadamer's perpetual questions" (Bal 1997: 224).

This dialogic relation between "object-language" and "meta-language," where both can be said to problematize and investigate epistemological authority, disqualifies readings that insist on a clear-cut distinction between the two. Several of the narratives "do theory" in the sense that they both reflect and invite reflection on, say, "history as institution" or "the epistemological claims of historical representation."[11] The narratives can make claims that are theoretical.[12] In *Libra*, one of DeLillo's characters is a retired senior analyst of the CIA, and as we follow him in his work we are bound to share his historiographical reflections. Similarly, if we read Norman Mailer's *Oswald's Tale* (1995), a historical novel of almost 800 pages, we are bound to read through an immense amount of "documentary" material (interviews, records). This should not surprise us. In his essay on the relations of science and art, Thomas Kuhn points out that there are "close and persistent parallels" between science and art, the two enterprises he had been taught (as a former physicist) to regard as "polar."[13] One cannot, according to Kuhn, apply "classic

[10] For elaborate discussions on how narratives such as *JFK* can engender a new kind of historical consciousness, see Nichols 1994, 1996.

[11] For an essay on how literary texts can "do poetics," and how interdisciplinarity problematizes further distinctions between meta- and object-language, see Bal 2000. Bal's *Quoting Caravaggio* (1999) examines how art works "theorize cultural history" (5) and "do history" (7).

[12] W. J. T. Mitchell explains in an interview how he, when working with *Picture Theory* (1994), wished to "silence the theoretical chatter" and "let pictures talk and to allow images to attain some kind of theoretical status" (Mitchell 2000: 2). Instead of trying to "replace" the object with commentary, Michell wishes to "let pictures 'do' theory and give theory a physical, visible, figured body" (ibid): "the aim is to investigate the ways in which these forms theorize *themselves*, not to apply theory imported from some academic discipline" (3).

[13] In the humanities, the rise of a journal such as *Rethinking History* reflects a need for "a new form of historical writing" (cfr. call for papers, http://hsozkult.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/termine/1998/cminia10.htm) that problematizes a polarity of "object-language" and "meta-language." The editors of the journal invite contributions that are

dichotomies" between "the world of value and the world of fact, the subjective and the objective, or the intuitive and the inductive" and use these to distinguish art from science (Kuhn 1977: 340). Kuhn finds "disquieting" that "the distinction between artist and scientist or between their products seems to evade us" when we are "deploying our subtlest analytic apparatus." However, this is "due less to their intrinsic similarity than to the failure of the tools we use for close scrutiny." Kuhn propagates a search for an "alternate set" of tools, and hopes to find "entry points" in a reconsideration of parallels between science and art drawn by E. M. Hafner from three areas, "products," "activity," and "response" (341). Central to Kuhn's argument is the difference between the goals of art and science. In the arts "the aesthetic is itself the goal of the work," whereas in the sciences it is "a tool" (342). Sciences are to "unlock the puzzle." Whereas the artist "also has puzzles to solve, whether of perspective, coloration, brush technique, or framing edge" their solution is not "the aim of his work but rather a means to his attainment" (347).

Obviously, Kuhn refers in these passages to the painter-artist, the epitome of traditional artistimages. However, the conflicting modes of thought described by Kuhn in a different essay as "convergent" and "divergent," resulting in a "tension" which is "essential" to "the very best sort of scientific research" is a better characterization of what is achieved in the artistry of some of the JFK assassination narratives (226). The dynamics of a narrative that evokes the assassination of a head of state does not merely depend on its aesthetic elements, and if it is to provoke reflection on our understanding of the event, it demands of the artist something resembling what Kuhn finds in the "successful scientist": an ability to "simultaneously display the characteristics of the traditionalist and of the iconoclast" (227). Even if few would think of *Libra* or *JFK* as scholarly or factual accounts, or expect them to tell the *truth* about what happened, it would be reductive to think of their primary goals as merely the development of a specific aesthetic. They also suspend the unlocking of the puzzle of an historical event, to remain with Kuhnian metaphor. They invite "play," but serious play, in the Gadamerian sense of the term. (See Gadamer 2002: 101-133: "Play as the clue to ontological explanation."). They are not uninterested in questions of truth.

"Miniatures," for which the only requirements are that the topic "be in some way historical and the length no more than 1500 words ... the subject matter of a Miniature need only be limited by the imagination and inventiveness of the historian. Like all contributions to *Rethinking History*, Miniatures will be refereed - by standards appropriate to the form." Editors Robert A. Rosenstone and Alan Munslow suggest that contributors send them "vest pocket biographies, poetic reflections, personal encounters, outrageous reinterpretations."

Does a classification of narrative as "fiction" or "nonfiction" have to obscure this "essential tension"? Or can it help the interpreter to understand each narrative better? Two views that differ radically from that of Bal are presented in a recent debate between Eric Heyne and Daniel Lehman. Both share a firm belief in distinguishing in analytical practice between the "fictional" and the "nonfictional." They have, however, different views on how this may be done. Heyne believes in the application of a theoretical apparatus that can help the interpreter define narratives as "fiction" or "nonfiction" narrative, whereas Lehman rests heavily on the metaphorical in his conceptualization of a specific version of "nonfiction."

Heyne outlined his first vision of a "theory of literary nonfiction" in *Modern Fiction Studies* in 1987, where he stated his interest in finding a way "to distinguish between fiction and nonfiction" (Heyne 1987: 483).[14] Thirteen years later, in *Narrative*, Heyne rejects what he refers to as his "earlier binary model for the fiction/nonfiction distinction," but has not given up hoping that a more complex systemic theory is possible:[15]

> I have spent the last decade waiting for renewed critical attention to focus on 'the theory of nonfiction reportage.' The practice of various kinds of 'creative nonfiction has proliferated ... and surely theory would follow practice. Unfortunately, it hasn't happened. Not only has there been little progress in our theoretical understanding of ambitious nonfiction, but there is no more

[14] "In order to evaluate a complex nonfiction narrative, it is essential to understand the exact truth-claims being made and how they fit into the author's overall intentions. ... I think it is important to frame our discussion of literary nonfiction in terms that recognize its potential success as both a useful model of reality and an aesthetically pleasing verbal pattern of human meanings" (488-9).

[15] One such attempt can be found in Marie-Laure Ryan's "Postmodernism and the Doctrine of Panfictionality" (1997). She considers "the crisis of the dichotomy [of fiction and nonfiction] as a challenge to sharpen our definitions" (Ryan 1997: 165). Her alternative in the essay is an expansion of the dichotomy "into a three-, and then four-term model for the epistemological classification of genres" (166). Her model is problematic in a number of ways: 1) It develops a typology based on truth-telling status as parameter; 2) It reduces narratives to homogenous and consitent structures; 3) Like Heyne, she envisions literary production as isolated from other cultural production. The result is the conceptualization of a theoretical appratus that is bound to operate as a reductive in the interpretation of recent narrative (and significantly so in the case of Kennedy assassination narrative).

For further reading, see also *The Distinction of Fiction*, in which Dorrit Cohn addresses the "uniqueness" of fiction, which according to her can be "precisely identified and systematically examined" (Cohn 1999: vii).

> widespread agreement about the nature of the fiction/nonfiction distinction than there was twenty years ago. (Heyne 2001a: 322)

Heyne submits these views in a critical review of Lehman's *Matters of Fact* (1997), a book whose "single most important theoretical claim," according to Heyne, is "that the presence of flesh-and-blood characters in a narrative makes the experience of that narrative qualitatively different, creating a 'boundary' or 'edge' that must be crossed by writers and readers of nonfiction" (323). It is not difficult to agree with Heyne that Lehman's reliance on a single spatial metaphor to characterize the "fiction"/"nonfiction" distinction represents an oversimplification of a complex phenomenon (326). Nevertheless, Heyne's alternative is problematic. According to Heyne, there is need for a theory that can address a "the human ability to process narrative in terms of categories like fiction and nonfiction" (326), an approach that "offers us some help with identifying the 'criteria of validity' for nonfiction status" (329). Such "criteria" have to be established rather than identified, and a theoretical apparatus must be conceived accordingly. Paradoxically, however, Heyne claims that a "sorting mechanism" for "fiction" and "nonfiction" is "something we all employ routinely every day," and that it "operates as a complex individual algorithm for each person, based on that person's experience, belief, knowledge, and desire" (331). Does this mean that we apply a *mathesis singularis* in our individual interpretations of these narratives but that we need to construct a *mathesis universalis* in a practice of analysis? Is not a scientific approach that merely suggests a systematization of the intuitive trivial? Lehman (like Bal) problematizes the notion of differentiation as significant for analysis. In his response to Heyne, he claims that he leaves to others "the task of sorting stories into piles" (Lehman 2001: 334). Rather, he remains with metaphor of movement and claims his interest in "the heft and shape of nonfiction, its ability to alter space and make noise" (335).

Heyne and Lehman disagree, then, on how to address this ability to distinguish "fiction" from "nonfiction." Their debate may reflect a period of crisis in the practice of critical analysis, where classification, generic and otherwise, is increasingly problematic because of a genuinely hybridized cultural production. One result of this may be that much more work has been done in recent years on for example narrative theory than on modern genre theory (Gorman 2001). Heyne considers genre theory relevant for analysis, whereas Lehman questions its ability to produce insights that can prove helpful in the challenging reading of a particular kind of narrative.

Hence the debate is not only theoretical, but also institutional, there is also a divergence in their views on critical practice. In yet another response, Heyne defends classification because it is to him a *joyful activity*:

> There is some intrinsic joy for me in hearing the names of things, in learning how to distinguish among the many different kinds of things in this world. I feel the same joy when someone identifies for me a new literary subgenre in such a way that I can see it more clearly, understand it as not merely a unique instance but a type of literary production that shares crucial features with others of its type. I have the same sense of having learned something solid and useful, a pattern that helps me make sense of this complex and fascinating world. Some might argue that no learning is possible without classification; without going that far, I have to say that sorting things out makes me happy. (Heyne 2001 b, 343)

Is this an example of what Bal refers to as classification as "a remedy to chaos-anxiety" (Bal 1997: 221)? Such "chaos-anxiety" implies that textual production is chaotic. According to Larry McCaffery, an understanding of what is often referred to as "postmodern" narrative depends on an ability to accept and reorientate oneself within a "culture of mass media" that "has conspired against the ways in which art was previously created and received" (McCaffery 1995: xiv).[16] One of these ways is the genre-based interpretation of narrative. Recent historiography suggests an awareness of a narrative's epistemological claims by implying that we consider how narratives make us think of "knowledge," rather than the "truth-status" of a given narrative. Hayden White, a central proponent of this historiography, has been misplaced as a post-structuralist or has been accused by fellow historians of proposing a constructivist historiography because of his ongoing study of the figuration of historical narrative.[17] Richard T. Vann points out, in "The Reception of Hayden White," how White has been

[16] The reorientation McCaffery refers to implies a keen awareness of new and "innovative strategies of narrative approaches modeled on more kinetic, dynamic, nonliterary forms of art" (xxii), of which McCaffery lists quite a few (xxii-xxiii). What McCaffery describes is a culture of extensive visual/textual transpermutation, the recognition of which any interpretation of narratives such as *JFK* or *Libra* depends upon. Both Heyne and Lehman are astonishingly devoted to a study of literary narrative that takes the technological reality (an immense production of visual narrative) that surrounds literary production in to account only to a limited degree in their readings.

[17] Particularly "The Modernist Event" (1999), an essay in which White discusses questions of representation and the Holocaust, has been controversial.

referred to increasingly as a "literary critic" (Vann 1998: 148). This is partly because White recognizes "the basic impulse to create narrative form from whatever reality presents" (Partner 1998: 167).[18] It also, in effect, suggests that many of his critics think of his particular interest in narrative structure as more relevant for literary analysis - or the analysis of "fiction" rather than "nonfiction." According to White, the historical event, "by which one used to mean something like 'the assassination of the thirty-fifth president of the United States,' has been dissolved as an object of a respectably scientific knowledge" (White 1999: 71).[19]

It is difficult not to see these developments in how art/history are created and received as effects of the rise of a culture of mass media: the unprecedented mediation of the event of the assassination, which is still considerable, is fundamentally intertextual, or, to use Hellmann's phrase again, located in an "unbounded cultural space."[20] Kennedy famously became the first "tv president" (Watson 1990), and no Kennedy narrative does not reflect this. Significantly, Kennedy assassination narrativity coincides with what W. J. T. Mitchell refers to as the "pictorial turn," or "the age of electronic reproduction," an age of "new forms of visual simulation and illusionism" (Mitchell 1994: 15). Both Mitchell, McCaffery, and Bal envision all textual production in such an age as "contaminant," and consequently conceptualize analysis, unlike Heyne or Lehman, *interdisciplinarily.*

Towards the end of *Picture Theory*, Mitchell speaks for a "terminological economy":

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[18] F. R. Ankersmit claims that the traditional criticism of White by historians is "misguided," and that historians "customarily distrust historical theory" (Vann 1998: 182). One would suspect that Ankersmit places Perez Zagorin in such a category, since Zagorin refers to a "postmodernist syndrome" that has been "largely inspired by Hayden White's book *Metahistory* (1973)" (Zagorin 1999: 17), and a postmodernist philosophy that is characterized by "its skeptical and politicized view of historical inquiry [which] is deeply mistaken" (1). Vann, Partner, Ankersmit, and Zagorin are all quoted from editions of *History and Theory.* For White's views on "post-structuralism" cfr. the essay on Foucault and (particularly) the closing essay in *Tropics of Discourse* (1978), and essays on Foucault and Jameson in *The Content of the Form* (1987).

[19] "Indeed, such singular events as the assassination of a head of state are worthy of study only as a hypothetical presupposition necessary to the constitution of a documentary record whose inconsistencies, contradictions, gaps, and distortions of the event presumed to be their common referent itself moves to the fore as the principal object of investigation." (White 1999: 71)

[20] See Scott, A Reference Guide to the Kennedy Assassination, 1999.

> A book called "picture theory" should, I suppose, end with a picture of the whole argument, a visible architectonic that would diagram the relation of all the parts and leave the reader with a grid to be filled in with infinite detail. Unfortunately, I have no such picture to offer. ... The list of new theoretical concepts and terms is deliberately short and unoriginal. ... This terminological economy is partly a result of my conviction that we already have an overabundance of metalanguages for representation and that no 'neutral' or 'scientific' vocabulary (semiotics, linguistics, discourse analysis) can transcend or master the field of representation. (Mitchell 1994: 417)

Mitchell resists the notion of a *mathesis universalis*, and instead introduces two concepts, "imagetext" and "metapicture," that have a power, he claims, that "is largely negative" (417-18). As concept, "imagetext" enables Mitchell to analyze a narrativity that depends on the visual as well as the literary. The negative power comes in part from the distinctly interdisciplinary character of the concept, and especially the implications of this particular conceptualization for analysis. To Mitchell such a conceptualization is inevitable since the Saussurean sign is a "mixed medium":

> I prefer to think of [the imagetext] as the name of a recurrent gap or structural relationship among symbolic practices, a trope that signals a boundary or fold in the field of representation. ... When I take the theory of representation to sign theory, I point out that Saussure's picture of the sign is not, as it first appears, based in a simple binary opposition between the signifier and the signified. It has, you will recall, a third element, the bar between them. ... Why does it turn out that in order to show the structure of the sign, Saussure needed to use three different kinds of signs - what Peirce would have recognized as a symbol (the word), an icon (the image) and an index (the bar)? It suggests that the internal structure of the sign is a mixed medium. (Mitchell 2000: 16)

The consequence of this is that a master key to semiosis is impossible, "an illusion projected by the hope for a master theory."[21] Representation always involves a mixed medium. Mitchell is reluctant to define the goals of the conceptualization of "imagetext." He rather considers it productive for working with theory dialogically and dialectically, "not in the Hegelian sense of achieving a stable synthesis, but in Blake's and Adorno's sense of working through contradiction interminably." In place of a *mathesis*

[21] Marie-Laure Ryan attempts a systemic theory very much in this spirit (1997).

universalis, then, Mitchell proposes an ongoing examination of image and narrative that is open for rearticulation and reorientation, an examination of "cultural formations as contested, conflicted forms of mediation" (17).

When McCaffery submits that a culture of mass media conspires against previous ideas of artistic creativity, he refers, then, to this fundamental contamination of narrativity that in the "pictorial age" is unprecedented, and that characterizes Kennedy assassination narrativity. Born out of such a culture is a narrative that McCaffery loosely calls "AvantPop," a phenomenological rather than a generic description; a flexible "concept" open for reconceptualization.[22] AvantPop narrative is characterized by an originality that McCaffery recognizes in its rich texture, in its particular "spirit of subversion and emphasis on radical formal innovation" (McCaffery xviii). The intertextual play of AvantPop narrative resists a logocentric approach:

> Avant-Pop shares with Pop Art the crucial recognition that *popular* culture, rather than the traditional sources of high culture - the Bible; myth; the revered classics of art, painting, music, and literature - is now what supplies the citizens of postindustrial nations with the key images, character and narrative archetypes, metaphors, and points of reference and allusion that help us establish our sense of who we are, what we want and fear, and how we see ourselves and the world. (McCaffery 1995: xviii)

McCaffery describes a "popular" culture defined by its hybridity, by textual transpermutation of all kinds. Images of Kennedy occur in poetry, crime novels, television series such as *X Files*, *Red Dwarf*, and *Seinfeld*, and in music videos from artists such as Marilyn Manson.

Interestingly, if we turn to one systemic and well-conceptualized approach to narrative, White's *Metahistory* (1973) in which he adopts the tropology of Northrop Frye to the analysis of historical narrative, White expresses reservations about the systemic approach in a footnote: Frye's method of analysis works well enough on "second-order literary genres, such as the fairy tale or the detective story," but "it is too rigid and abstract to do justice to such richly textured and multileveled works as *King Lear*, *The Rememberance of Things Past*, or even *Paradise Lost*" (White 1973: 8n). Textual complexity may not be a contemporary (or "postmodern") phenomenon, but this does not mean that the textuality of recent narrative

[22] McCaffery uses the term for literary narrative; however, he opens up for a wider use of the term.

may not differ from that of earlier times. I would argue that the textual play McCaffery refers to resists the systemic approach that Heyne proposes. It also resists or an updated version of the systemic theory Frye proposed, like White seems to suggest. Bal claims she "would prefer first to explore messiness" rather than be delimited by the order of White's "system that neatly coordinates figures, literary genres, and historical periods" (Bal 1999: 45).

What characterizes Mitchell's own approach? In an interview he submits that his attempt (in *Picture Theory*) at a synthesis of contemporary thinking about representation and art theory did not issue "in any system or method," and that it instead tended to be "somewhat anarchistic and eclectic, working by essayistic forays into concrete problems rather than an architectonic elaboration" (Mitchell 2000: 5). "Imagetext" as envisioned by Mitchell is what Bal calls a "travelling concept" (Bal 2002: 56-95), and Mitchell claims that he believes "in 'travelling light' when it comes to technical terminology" (Mitchell 2000: 5). He is more comfortable working with "mutable concepts" (6). Bal proposes a use of "concepts" as tools for analysis, not in order "to label" but because concepts can "offer miniature theories" (Bal 2002: 22). Bal's contention of "theory" differs distinctly from "theoretical apparatus" in ways similar to that of Mitchell. "Concept" is to be understood not as "clear-cut methodological legislation," but rather as "territory to be travelled" (23). According to Bal, interdisciplinary analysis benefits from the projection of "working concepts" (99), concepts that have a history from more than one academic discipline. The movement back and forth between disciplines she envisions metaphorically, hence "travelling concepts."[23] A trajectory is proposed for the reader/spectator instead of definitions or truth-claims (60). Textual hybridity invites an analysis that draws on different disciplines, an analysis that is to lead the analyst to resist "sweeping statements and partisanship as well as reductive classification for the sake of alleged objectivity" (44). Bal even conceptualizes "messiness" in cultural analysis, by deliberately "messing" (as she puts it) with concepts. (Bal 2002, 178-82).

A systemic theory that relocalizes boundaries of "fiction"/"nonfiction" cannot address messiness: Bal's argument is that the intertextuality of the work motivates an interdisciplinary analysis that constantly invites reconceptualization. "Messiness" is thus as serious a concept as "play." In her critical practice, Bal addresses the uniqueness of the work's aesthetic effort,

[23] Bal points out that the destinations are bound to be uncertain, as you find that "after returning from your travels, the object constructed [for analysis] turns out to no longer be the 'thing' that so fascinated you when you chose it" (4).

and, significantly, recognizes "messiness" as a helpful concept when confronting the danger of ethical criticism in any theory of art that depends heavily on notions of generic purity or strict classification. Ethical criticism advocates a form of narrative that is "fictional" but that also addresses history and therefore needs to be "truthful." I would argue that an analysis that addresses the performativity of the narratives in terms of historical accuracy is reductive. Their performativity is defined by their "messiness."[24] An analysis that presents "concepts as miniature theories" in ways similar to what Mitchell and Bal suggest is more appropriate for an interdisciplinary approach.

Nevertheless, the considerable challenge of such a contention of theory cannot be underestimated. Mitchell warns against interdisciplinarity as "buzz word," against the absorption of "everything into this undifferentiated soup" (Mitchell 2000: 10). Bal presents similar warnings in her introduction to *Travelling Concepts*. In spite of this, Mitchell and Bal insist on a more pragmatic kind of "labour of reading" (Bal 2002: 26), which, if successful, might (but only might) result in what Richard Rorty refers to as an "inspired" kind of "unmethodological criticism":

> Reading texts is a matter of reading them in the light of other texts, people, obsessions, bits of information, or what have you, and then seeing what happens. ... [W]hat excites and convinces is a function of the needs and purposes of those who are being excited and convinced. (Rorty 1992: 105)

A reading is only one out of many, and cannot "explain" or systemically "place" a narrative. Such a pragmatic conceptualization of analysis is bound to both frustrate and inspire the analyst. Another pitfall is that a notion of narrative as value-neutral can result in analysis that is value-less, and consequently propagate a nihilistic interpretational activity that is radically unethical. Such criticism may canonize narratives that are open-ended in a way that undermines the significance of a particular historical

[24] A number of the fiercest critics of *Libra* and *JFK* blamed the narratives for their "messiness," and argued that it defined their manipulative character. One of *JFK*'s fiercest critics, Janet Maslin in the New York *Times*, commented that "[i]mages fly by breathlessly and without identification ... Real material and simulated scenes are intercut in a deliberately bewildering fashion" (quoted from Kagan, 204). An astonishing amount of the criticism of the movie focused on its montage and whether it was "manipulative," that is, false and "bad." In a similar manner, as different voices as George Will and Jonathan Yardley both condemned DeLillo's novelistic treatment of the assassination story in *Libra* for its textual play. In his syndicated column, Will blamed the novelist for his "bad influence." See Frank Lentricchia, "The American Writer as Bad Citizen" (1991 a)).

event. Several critics have recognized such a tendency in the interpretation of Holocaust narrative.[25] Recently, the television series *Live from Baghdad*, which aired on HBO in the fall of 2002, was accused of depicting the CNN coverage of the bombing of Baghdad as an act of heroism on the part of reporter Peter Arnett. FAIR (Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting) criticized the series for repeating manufactured and untruthful news stories from 1991.[26] The producers of the series claimed a truth-telling status (unlike Stone or DeLillo) that invited protest. Merely to write off the series as "untruthful" does not, however, prevent its historical vision from having a formative effect on the collective memory of the event. The task of the analyst of such a narrative is, hence, to initiate a theoretical approach that depends on the viewer as *participant* rather than passive "receiver." When historical reality is, in the words of Bill Nichols, "under siege" (Nichols 1994: 2), the analyst must scrutinize each narrative that depicts an historical event with attention to *how it addresses* knowledge and truth. Some of the Kennedy assassination narratives can thus perhaps, by "doing theory," engender a new kind of historical consciousness, very much in the way that Nichols or Bal envisions:

> [R]e-visions of baroque art neither collapse past and present, as in an ill-conceived presentism, nor objectify the past and bring it within our grasp, as in a problematic positivist historicism. They do, however, demonstrate a possible way of dealing with 'the past today.' This reversal, which puts what came chronologically first ('pre-') as an aftereffect behind ('post') its later recycling, is what I would like to call a *preposterous history*. In other words, it is a way of 'doing history' that carries productive uncertainties and illuminating highlights - a vision of how to re-vision the Baroque. (Bal 1999: 6-7).

> It is the ceaseless dialectic of past, present, and future that sustains historical consciousness for the historical actor as well as the historical spectator ... Collage ... retains the paradox while simultaneously aiming it in the direction of a will to transform. Realism alone clearly will not suffice ... A crisis of representation ensues from the failure of classic realist narrative models to convince us of their commensurability with the reality we experience beyond them. Different models arise and contend ... Questions arise that cannot be answered by traditional storytelling techniques. (Nichols 1996: 56-58)

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[25] See Zachary Braiterman, "Against Holocaust-Sublime" (2000) for a thought-provoking discussion.

[26] Lismoen 2003.

Such a consciousness depends on what Sturken refers to as "participation," and serves as what Mitchell refers to as "the dialectic between illusion and reality," in which illusion can only "be in some kind of dialectical relationship with the real" (Mitchell 2000: 20-1).

Only by way of close readings can one hope to investigate how such consciousness can be activated in different instances of narrativity. This may be a difficult task, but is not difficulty and resistance what interpretation is all about? Mitchell refers to the disillusion of the analyst as a "positive symptom of the fact that somehow we do keep on learning as we think our thougths" (3). Even if the title of this paper may sound somewhat sisyphean, it may also serve as a motto for a particular conceptualization of theory and analysis. I leave it open whether one must, as Camus proclaimed, "imagine Sisyphus happy" at the foot of the mountain.

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Contrasts: A Defence of Desert Writings

RUNE GRAULUND

The Taklamakan.
The Empty Quarter.
The Kalahari.
The Mojave.
The Gobi.
(and, of course,)
The Sahara.

All are evocative names. Yet Edward Abbey, desert lover and self-proclaimed protector of all that is arid, complained in his 1968 *Desert Solitaire* that the desert was a place which had 'scarcely been approached in poetry or fiction'. If Abbey was right, that 'the desert waits ... untouched by the human mind' (Abbey 1968: 302-303), such an oversight obviously needs to be redressed. Unless, of course, it truly is as bland a subject as the literati, according to Abbey, seem to think.

Proof to the contrary is provided by the endless streams of travel writings that these harsh, dry landscapes never cease to pour forth. Among many recent examples one can name Marq de Villiers and Sheila Hirtle's *Sahara: The Life of the Great Desert* (2002) and Fergus Fleming's *The Sword and the Cross* (2003). This list will grow much longer if we add past desert travellers such as Charles M. Doughty, Richard F. Burton, Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, Laurens van der Post, T.E. Lawrence and Wilfred Thesiger. If we allow fictions[1] to be added to the list, one may likewise point to the writings of Gustave Flaubert, Andre Gide, Paul Bowles, Bruce Chatwin, Thea Astley, Randolph Stow, Patrick White, or, as most people will promptly answer when asked to name a "desert story", Michael Ondaatje's *The English Patient* (1992). It is even possible to find

[1] In this paper 'fiction' will refer to works of a purportedly 'fictional' nature whereas 'travel' and 'explorative' writings will refer to works claiming to be based on 'actual' experiences of the landscapes described. That some works bridge these distinctions, as eg. Bruce Chatwin's *The Songlines* (1987) does it, will for the purposes of this paper be ignored.

Norwegians and Swedes writing of the hot, gritty wastelands, making comparisons to cold Scandinavia in the realization that driving between 'drifts of sand' outside of Tan-Tan in the Sahara is like driving between 'heaps of snow in Stockholm at winter' (Lindqvist 1990: 9)[2]. So, we may ask, exactly what was Abbey griping about? Westerners apparently have been, and still are, 'approaching' the desert in all sorts of imaginable ways. Western nations, certainly, have 'approached' the desert more than once in recent years. They did so under Rommel and Montgomery, and they have done so under Schwarzkopf and Franks. Deserts, one may rightfully claim, have had a powerful grip on Westerners for centuries past, be it on their imagination, security agendas or oil policies.

Yet Abbey's complaint is not entirely off the mark. We do not find prose praising the desert as Thoreau praised the woods or Hemingway the sea, nor do we find an Ode to Sand by Wordsworth, Keats or Shelley. Yet in a way we do. The texts are out there, floundering on the desert dunes for lack of attention. Critical opinion just never bothered to spend a lot of energy on the subject. At least not till recently.

Since Abbey put forth his complaint, critical investigations of specific deserts and national desert traditions[3] have flourished, much thanks to the growing interest for the emergent field of literary geography. Plentiful as these may have become, one will still be hard pressed to dig up more than a handful of critical accounts bridging literary genres, national traditions and geographically diverse deserts. Belden C. Lane's *The Solace of Fierce Landscapes* (1998) and William L. Fox' *The Void, The Grid & The Sign* (2000) come close, but the former is too preoccupied with the monastic tradition and the latter with the specific American vision to offer truly wide-ranging accounts encompassing the host of Western desert writings. And in the texts originating from the tip of van der Post's South Africa to the top of Axel Jensen's Norway, from Abbey's Arches National Monument in southeast Utah to Stow's desert of Central Australia, one is

[2] For a Norwegian example of the genre, see Axel Jensen's *Ikaros* (1957).

[3] For investigations of the American and Australian traditions see eg. Marc Reisner, *Cadillac Desert* (1986), Peter Wild, *Opal Desert: Explorations of Fantasy and Reality in the American Southwest* (1999), William L. Fox, *The Void, The Grid & The Sign* (2000), Craig Leland Childs, *The Secret Knowledge of Water: Discovering the Essence of the American Desert* (2001), Roslynn D. Haynes, *Seeking the Centre: The Australian Desert in Literature, Art and Film* (1998) and Lesley Head, *Second Nature: The Historyand Implications of Australia as Aboriginal Landscape* (2000).

indeed able to find similarities that need not necessarily be described within a more specific framework but that of 'the West'.

Whereas this paper lays no claim to offer one such definite account, it will argue that Western desert writings are to some extent all centred on what Sven Lindqvist calls the 'contrast between surface and depths [that is] the fundamental experience of the desert' (Lindqvist 1990: 57). A contrast that is so rich in imagery that one cannot but wonder why critical opinion never bothered to give more than the occasional cheer for Lawrence and Exupéry and forgot all the rest.

Tales of Dare

Used as a narrative ploy in a work of fiction, we most often meet the desert in narratives in which the setting is either partially or completely replaced by elements of a fictional world. That is, in fictions that would normally be classified as belonging to the genres of science fiction, fantasy or magic realism. Exceptions such as Paul Bowles' *The Sheltering Sky* (1949) or Thea Astley's *Drylands* (1999) do, of course, exist, but it is in texts like Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's *The Little Prince* (1946), Walter M. Miller's *A Canticle for Leibowitz* (1959), Randolph Stow's *Tourmaline* (1963), Frank Herbert's *Dune* (1965) and J. G. Ballard's *Vermillion Sands* (1971) that we most often meet the desert as a protagonist in its own right. Here, the desert is either employed to provide the atmosphere for a futuristic or fantastic setting, or, alternatively, acts as a gateway to other worlds. Occasionally, the desert also makes an appearance in adventure writing, but as Richard Phillips has said of the desert of the Australian interior, so it goes for the relationship between the desert and adventure writing in general. Since there is nothing but sand and heat for the intrepid hero (rarely the heroine) to explore, it is, as Phillips says, 'unsuitable as the setting for conventionally epic exploration history' (Phillips 1997: 75). It may act as yet another piece of troublesome landscape that the hero must traverse before he reaches the treasure trove at the end of the road, but it is not often in the desert itself that the quest is completed. Adventurous souls like Alan Quartermain may make a perilous journey across the desert (Haggard 1885: chap. 5-6), but it is not here that he finds the gemstones of King Solomon that he covets.

Most Western desert tales, however, are couched in the framework of travel and explorative writings. That Westerners' literary engagement with

the desert mainly comes in the form of exploration and travel is no great surprise when we consider that these hot sandy wastes are to be found on all of the continents with the exception of Antarctica and Europe. Practically all such deserts are located in countries once colonised or at least under heavy influence of (European) colonial powers. Consequently, as a large amount of Western desert writings can be classified as being the products of non-indigenous writers, aspects of the colonial/postcolonial debate can hardly be ignored. Writings such as Charles M. Doughty's *Travels in Arabia Deserta* (1888), Charles F. Burton's *Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to Al-Madinah and Meccah* (1893), T. E. Lawrence's *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* (1935) and Wilfred Thesiger's *Arabian Sands* (1959) can easily be placed within the theoretical framework provided by postcolonial theory and have indeed been so many times in the past. The writers' donning of 'native clothes' (Lawrence 1935: 51) in order to perform a 'journey in disguise' as well as the urge to see country 'not yet seen by a European' (Thesiger 1959: 8 and 7) is typical of the genre as is the language in which it is put, the constant desire to 'penetrate' and 'conquer' the 'virgin lands'. As investigations into this particular aspect have been explored thoroughly elsewhere we will not dwell upon it here, but only note that, as Barry Lopez expresses it, '[d]ifficulty in evaluating, or even discerning, a particular landscape is related to the distance a culture has traveled from its own ancestral landscape' (Lopez 1986: 12). That European travellers and explorers projected their desires and pre-conceived notions on a landscape utterly alien to them to a large degree explains why they had a hard time coping with the desert landscapes that they were at the same time also enthralled by. One would, however, presume that this 'difficulty' should diminish with time as the foreign invaders settle down and begin to make the desert landscape their own. For the cowboys of the American West and the bushrangers of Central Australia it may have become so, but for the average citizens of these preponderantly urbanised societies, it is still a landscape that has not been assimilated in the national psyches. In a reading in which Abbey's own *Desert Solitaire* is compared to desert writings ranging from a variety of different national traditions, genres, and geographic and fictional locations, we will attempt to explain why that is.

Mind under Matter

Whether they are defined as travel writings, fictions, sociological accounts or ecological polemics, it is a rare piece of desert writing that does not express a

belief in the 'origin' of the desert. One may find the desert invoked as a romanticised dream of a pure and forgotten past, or, inversely, as a cruel and malignant entity bound to destroy all that invades it, hence as a space that must be either traversed or 'greened' in order to conquer it. No matter what the form or purpose of the texts in question, though, the desert and its peoples are almost always seen as primeval, untainted and pure. The Arabian scholar Ibn Khaldûn spoke of the desert's ability to keep its inhabitants 'closer to the first natural state and more remote from evil habits' (Khaldûn 1381: 94) already in the fourteenth century, but we find his claim mirrored in Lawrence's description of the 'abstraction of desert landscape [that] cleansed me' (Lawrence 1935: 506), in Bowles' claim that 'the sun is a great purifier' (Bowles 1949: 136), in Thesiger who speaks of 'a cleanness which was infinitely remote from the world of men' (Thesiger 1959: 32) and in Chatwin's thesis that 'man was born in the desert [and] by returning to the desert he rediscovers himself' (Chatwin 1987: 65). Whether this 'purity' is benign or not is, however, an entirely different story. Exupéry may express admiration, passion even, for a place that 'does not open itself to transient lovers' (Exupéry 1939: 48), but for the explorers vanquishing of dehydration or the assaults of the desert dwellers, the 'purity' of the desert - its ability to thwart all plans of invasion - will seem a rather doubtful trait.

Abbey's *Desert Solitaire* takes the middle road. His introductory lament, stating that:

> This is not a travel guide but an elegy.
> A memorial.
> You're holding a tombstone in your hands (Abbey 1968: xii).

may fool one into believing that the tone of Desert Solitaire will be akin to the romanticising one encounters in Thesiger and Exupéry. Reading on, however, Abbey's claim that:

> The personification of the natural is exactly the tendency I wish to suppress in myself ... I want to be able to look at and into a juniper tree, a piece of quartz, a vulture, a spider, and see it as it is in itself, devoid of all humanly ascribed qualities, anti-Kantian, even the categories of scientific description. To meet God or Medusa face to face, even if it means risking everything human in myself (Abbey 1968: 7)

hints what it is that sets him apart from the glorified myths of his predecessors.

'I'm a humanist; I'd rather kill a *man* than a snake' (Abbey 1968: 20), Abbey wryly observes as he ponders which of the two species he would prefer to exterminate if he was given the chance. According to Lynn White Jr., 'Christianity is the most anthropocentric religion the world has seen' (Glotfelty and Fromm 1996: 9), and if one finds Abbey's remark provocative (which it is certainly meant to be), it is probably in this Christian conception of the world that the root of one's annoyance should be found. As White argues, we may be rationally aware that the earth revolves around its own axis and that, consequently, the sun does not *rise* in the east, yet few of us think otherwise when we watch a rosy dawn. For as Umberto Eco says it:

> if our knowledge is by now Copernican, our perception is still Ptolemaic: we not only see the sun rise in the east and travel through the arc of the day, but we behave as if the sun turns and we remain immobile. And we say, "the sun rises", "the sun is high in the sky", "it sinks", "it sets". Even your astronomy professors speak Ptolemaically (Eco 1999: 23).

For White, this means that,

> [d]espite Copernicus, all the cosmos rotates around our little globe. Despite Darwin, we are *not*, in our hearts, part of the natural process. We are superior to nature, contemptuous of it (Glotfelty and Fromm 1996: 12).

No one is going to tell *us*, talking creatures with enormous brains who drink our morning coffee as we watch the sun*rise*, that a slithering snake can be more important than a bipedal man. As Cristopher Manes has said it, the possibility that 'intellect or self-consciousness' could be deemed inferior to 'photosynthesis, poisoned fangs or sporogenesis' (Glotfelty and Fromm 1996: 24) lies as far from our conception of our place in the universe as the belief that the life of a snake could possibly be more valuable than the life of a man. The insignificance of man is, however, exactly what Abbey attempts to convince us of in *Desert Solitaire*.

Away with all 'personification of the natural' and all forms of interpretation. Welcome 'surfaces – [for] what else is there?', Abbey asks. Though a philosopher by trade, Abbey seems determined not to linger over the age-old conflict between body and mind longer than absolutely necessary. He is reputedly perfectly content with there being nothing but surfaces in the world, that the 'surface is also the essence' (Abbey 1968: 32), and that, as a consequence, we can do away with all forms of

interpretation and wranglings about inner and outer, simulacra and real. Notions of 'solipsism, like other absurdities of the professional philosopher is a product of too much time wasted in library stacks' (Abbey 1968: 121), Abbey says, and to refute such a creature, 'all that you have to do is take him out and throw a rock at his head' (Abbey 1968: 122). Instead of theorising too much, Abbey commends us to make a leap of faith and simply accept the world as it is without trying to wrench any 'meaning' from it.

This advice of Abbey's is one that we find elsewhere in desert writings (though by no means in all), for as Lane says, 'one initially enters the desert in order to be stripped of self' (Lane 1998: 6). The opposite lesson, taught by many but especially by Lawrence, is therefore far removed from the sentiment of *Desert Solitaire*. For instead of praising it for producing a creed of mind-over-matter in which bodily wants and desires can be conquered or quelled by a strong mind[4], Abbey cherishes the desert for its ability to merge the two into one. Rather than elevating the mind to some superior position far removed from the body, Abbey argues that in the desert where 'the sun reigns' in 'arid intensity of pure heat ... all things recede to distances out of reach ... annihilating all thought' (Abbey 1968: 165).

In Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's concept of a 'nomadology', we find much the same advice expressed. Instead of abiding by the strict dichotomies and goal-oriented structures of the 'arborescent culture' in which we live, Deleuze and Guattari urge us to think in the patterns of a 'rhizome', realising that 'the distinction to be made is not at all between exterior and interior', but rather that 'everything is connected' (Deleuze and Guattari 1980: 36 and 115). Accordingly, the lesson of the desert (or to be more precise, of the desert peoples, the nomads), is therefore the realisation that 'a path is always between two points, but the in-between has taken on all the consistency' (Deleuze and Guattari 1980: 350). For unlike the 'striated', 'sedentary' space of the cities that we (Westerners) live in, the desert dwellers are aware that there is 'no line separating earth and sky ... no intermediate distance, no perspective or contour' (Deleuze and Guattari 1980: 382). It is, as Lane and Fox point out, in the desert which

[4] According to Lawrence, the body is 'coarse ... rubbish', sex an 'unhygienic pleasure', the optimal Beduin army is envisioned as 'a thing intangible ... like a gas', Lawrence and his bodyguard 'see our bodies' with 'hostility' and Lawrence himself on several occasions experiences that he is 'dividing into parts', 'detaching' from his body and 'hovering above' his 'flesh' (Lawrence 1935: 12, 338, 182, 460, 12 and 443).

has 'no middle ground' (Fox 2000: 51) that we are confronted 'with a vast *horizontal* edge, a horizon of emptiness into which we find ourselves absorbed and lost' and 'little distance is made between the self and the environment' (Lane 1998: 38 and 40).

It is this form of spatial conception and living that Abbey advocates as an escape from the mind-boggling 'absurdities' of Western philosophers, an experience described by Maurice Blanchot as being one that 'tends towards the inexplicable in order to explain ... an experience which is one not of knowing but of being' (Holland 1995: 309). Instead of attempting to prove (or disprove as it is so common these days) the existence of the world in which he seeks to immerse himself, Abbey similarly chooses to face the void unquestioningly, ignoring all questions of ontology in his decision to simply *be*. The desert offers Abbey 'a hard and brutal mysticism in which the naked self merges with a non-human world' (Abbey 1968: 7), the epiphany of which is the realisation that,

> *out* there is a different world, older and greater and deeper by far than ours, a world which surrounds and sustains the little world of men as sea and sky surround and sustain a ship. The shock of the real (Abbey 1968: 45).

Unlike Lawrence who 'reverenced my wits and despised my body' (Lawrence 1935: 527), Abbey therefore believes 'that man is a dream, thought an illusion, and only rock is real' (Abbey 1968: 244).

The belief that 'the "real" us ... is concentrated in some disputed recess of the body, a precious cocoon, separate from the world of matter' in a place called 'the mind', is a belief that Neil Evernden rightly diagnoses the Western world as having suffered from ever since Descartes (Glotfelty and Fromm 1996: 98). Consequently, the 'hyperbolic doubts' of Descartes' *Meditations on First Philosophy* should, Abbey agrees with its author, 'be rejected as ludicrous' (Cahn 1977: 377). But so should the concept of the 'evil genius' and its counterpart, the benign God, that had Descartes going in the first place. For as Abbey puts it, '[u]nder the desert sun, in that dogmatic clarity, the fables of theology and the myths of classical philosophy dissolve like mist' (Abbey 1968: 45). In the beautiful but trying terrain of the desert, when your 'thirst becomes so intense' that you 'cannot seem to drink any liquid fast enough to quench it' (Abbey 1968: 161) and the heat is 'thick and heavy on [your] brains' (Abbey 1968: 107), one cannot deny that body and world most certainly exist. Abbey, at least, cannot, and there is no one else around to object.

Kenosis, Silence and Solitude

It is the paradox of the desert that although it is a place of desertion and loneliness, it is also a place where one can rarely survive for long without companions. Consequently, one must often let go of one's immediate individual needs in order to serve the long-term welfare of the group/tribe. Abbey, however, claims that 'man can never find or need better companionship than that of himself' (Abbey 1968: 121), and it is a rare instance in *Desert Solitaire* when Abbey is not praising the many qualities solitude has over companionship. For this reason alone, if not for any other, it would be wrong to insist that Abbey does not operate with the concept of 'the individual'. One only has to remember that Abbey does not, like Descartes and countless other Western thinkers, see 'the individual' as an intangible kernel shut off from the rest of the 'world' or 'reality'. For Abbey, the path to 'the individual' does not go through the pineal gland as Descartes would have it, but *is* the pineal gland, the brain in which it resides, the skull which vaults the brain, and the skin that keeps in blood, bone and gristle yet exudes sweat; sweat that evaporates and mix with air, some day to condense again and perhaps fall upon the very same head as rain. For Abbey, '[t]here is no such thing as an individual, only an individual-in-context' (Glotfelty and Fromm 1996: 103), and individual and context are constantly interacting.

Though Abbey fiercely denies all thinking of a religious nature and, as Lane puts it, 'would have scoffed at the very idea' that there is anything holy about the desert, Abbey's desert paradoxically seems akin to the desert of the desert fathers on many points. According to Saint Jerome, the desert was the place in which those 'who desire to live a remoter life, stripped of all its trappings, withdraw themselves' (Waddell 1936: 58). For Jerome as well as for later mystics, the desert was therefore the place in which *kenosis*, the 'emptying of the ego that opens one [to God]' (Lane 1996: 15 and 13), could take place. For Abbey, too, the desert is a silent, solitary, contemplative place in which one often loses one's sense of self yet gains something in return. Although the contents of this return certainly differs from that of Saint Jerome and his fellow desert fathers, the process of solitude, silence and lack of urban comfort through which it is gained is similar to the experiences of the desert fathers in many respects.

Having spent the 'The First Morning' (chapter one) and subsequent hours of daylight together with the superintendent and the chief ranger of Arches National Monument (the geographical desert in which most of

Desert Solitaire is set), darkness falls on Abbey's camp. It is only then, free from all companionship, that Abbey becomes aware of 'the immense silence in which I am lost'. This 'silence', Abbey assures us, is not so much a 'silence as a great stillness'. A few sounds can be heard, 'the creak of some bird in a juniper tree, an eddy of wind ... - slight noises which break the sensation of absolute silence', yet this only serves to 'exaggerate my sense of the surrounding, overwhelming peace' (Abbey 1968: 13). This is the stillness of the wild, the opposite of what Abbey later terms the 'confusion and clamor' (Abbey 1968: 200) of urban life that he is trying to get away from. Having dispensed with the noise of urbanity, Abbey next decides to rid himself of 'the small device stripped to my hand' in order to attain a 'suspension of time, a continuous present' (Abbey 1968: 13). Thus freed from the restraints of civilisation, solitary, silent and timeless, Abbey begins to perceive his surroundings in a different light, metaphorically and literally speaking.

As he finishes his supper, the remaining daylight disappears and Abbey experiences one of the telltale characteristics of the desert night. Stars, 'bold and close' canopies the desert world of 'arches and cliffs and pinnacles and balanced rocks of sandstone' (Abbey 1968: 13). To keep him company, Abbey decides to light a 'little squaw fire' that, though man-made, is comparatively 'natural' enough to avoid yoking him back to the man-made world he has just escaped. As the fire dies out, however, Abbey shortly relapses into modernity as he fiddles with the thought of using a flashlight and tries to start up the generator of his housetrailer in order to light the light bulbs inside. The idea of the flashlight is quickly discarded, for 'like many other mechanical gadgets [it] tends to separate a man from the world around him'. Instead, Abbey ventures into the darkness with limited vision, but remaining 'part of the environment' (Abbey 1968: 15). As he returns to his housetrailer after his stroll, he does, however, start the generator in order to write a letter. In contrast to his recent experience of a flashlight-less walk, the bright lights of the light bulbs and the 'clatter of the generator' make him feel 'shut off from the natural world and sealed up, encapsulated, in a box of artificial light and tyrannical noise' (Abbey 1968: 15). At the end of the chapter, it is therefore with great pleasure that he relinquishes housetrailer, generator and every other man-made appliance. As a result of this abandon, 'the night flows back, the mighty stillness embraces and includes me' once again. Freed from the constraints of modernity, he can 'see the stars again and the world of starlight' (Abbey 1968: 16). He is, we are tempted to say, One.

That he is One with his surroundings is not equivalent to saying that he is One with God, for as Abbey himself proclaims, 'Why confuse the issue by dragging in a superfluous entity?' Those who claim that they find God in the desert should realise that there is nothing there but 'heat waves' (Abbey 1968: 230), nothing 'but me and the desert' (Abbey 1968: 231). Abbey's desert experience is therefore strictly speaking not *kenosis* in the full import of the word. Having emptied his ego, what possesses him is not the Holy Spirit, but Nature.

Immersion and Meaning

'To really experience the desert you have to march right into its white bowl' (Reisner 1986: 4) Marc Reisner claims in *Cadillac Desert*, for as Fox expresses it, 'keeping hold of the desert means staying in it' (Fox 2000: 30). Of all Western desert travellers who have advocated the slowness of travel as a way in which to immerse oneself in the landscape, no one, however, surpasses Thesiger:

> I had no desire to travel faster. In this way there was time to notice things - a grasshopper under a bush, a dead swallow on the ground, the tracks of a hare, a bird's nest, the shape and colour of ripples on the sand, the bloom of tiny seedlings pushing through the soil. There was time to collect a plant or to look at a rock. The very slowness of our march diminished its monotony. I thought how terribly boring it would be to rush about this country in a car (Thesiger 1959: 60).

Thesiger thus realised that 'for me the fascination of this journey lay not in seeing the country but in seeing it under these conditions' (Thesiger 1959: 310).

Abbey likewise claims that 'wilderness and motors are incompatible and that the former can best be experienced, understood, and enjoyed when the machines are left behind' (Abbey 1968: 59). For Abbey, the difference between a trip in the wilderness with or without technology is, in the words of Don Scheese, 'the difference between perception and blindness, immersion and non-participation' (Glotfelty and Fromm 1996: 312). Flashlights, motorised transport and power generators act as a bar to our access to the natural world, but that is not all. It is also destroying it. The result of our technologically near-total mastery of nature - explosive demographics and careless (ab)use of natural resources - are fast diminishing the sorry remains of what wilderness we have left.

Most people, Abbey realises, are compelled to 'tame, alter or destroy what they cannot understand, to reduce the wild and prehuman to human dimensions' (Abbey 1968: 240) and they do this by building parking lots, diners, tarmac scenic views and road signs. This is understandable, for, as Fox says, 'the need to control our ancestral fright of the dark and the empty' (Fox 2000: 211) is completely natural. We need the 'pretense of ruling the void with rationality' (Fox 2000: 123). Without the structuring of human presence, many people feel 'dread ... in the presence of primeval desert' (Abbey 1968: 240) and even cynical, pragmatic Abbey is sometimes forced to 'push a stone over the edge of the cliff' simply to convince himself 'of the reality of change' (Abbey 1968: 243) that the ancient and silent desert in which 'nothing has happened for a thousand years' (Abbey 1968: 44) seems to belie.

Yet we need that space, the desert, 'the dark and the empty', Fox, Reisner and Abbey claim. We need it for ecological reasons since it acts as an 'indicator region for the rest of the planet' leading us 'into reconsidering how we see the rest of the world' (Fox 2000: 117), and we need it for personal reasons, leading us to reconsider how we see our own private world. We need it because our 'imagination need places of habitation', places in which, as Fox says, we can 'contemplate space in both positive and negative manifestations as part of our understanding of the universe, which is, after all, more void than not' (Fox 2000: 28). In all its desolation, quietude, indifference and emptiness, the desert acts as a counter to our lofty ideas of what it is that makes us human. Philosophical theories of surface, essence, self and world, theological notions of spirit and God, or, indeed, the simple, steadfast belief in our own importance; all are challenged and therefore set in a new perspective by the desert, reminding us 'of our place' (Fox 2000: 206) in the greater picture.

In one of Abbey's many digressions from the main narrative of Arches National Monument, we are told of how he once went for a trip to Havasu Creek. During the five weeks he stayed there he 'lived alone' (Abbey 1968: 248), 'wandered naked as Adam', and on a moonlit night 'slipped by degrees into lunacy' and 'lost to a certain extent the power to distinguish between what was and what was not myself' (Abbey 1968: 251). At other points, back in the desert, he has similar experiences of 'sinking into the landscape' (Abbey 1968: 271), of having a feeling that all 'human melted with the sky and faded out beyond the mountains' (Abbey 1968: 121). That Abbey is capable of performing a merging with landscape both while catching 'a few rainbow trout' (Abbey 1968: 249) on the shores of Havasu

Creek and as he is 'surrounded by a rolling wasteland of stone and dune' (Abbey 1968: 271) in Arches National Monument, could lead one to suspect that any form of landscape will make him lapse into this ecstatic mode of ego-abandonment. As long as the prerequisites of being solitary in a location of unsullied nature are fulfilled, this is to some extent true. Yet the desert has a quality that no other place can compete with. Or rather, it has not.

Near the end of *Desert Solitaire*, Abbey asks the same question we asked in the beginning. What is it that makes the desert special? What does it mean? What does it say?

> The restless sea, the towering mountains, the silent desert – what do they have in common? And what are the essential differences? Grandeur, colour, spaciousness, the power of the ancient and elemental, that which lies beyond the ability of man to wholly grasp or utilize, these qualities all three share. In each there is the sense of something ultimate, with mountains exemplifying the brute force of natural processes, the sea concealing the richness, complexity and fecundity of life beneath a surface of huge monotony, and the desert – what does the desert say?
> The desert says nothing (Abbey 1968: 300).

The ocean is there to be crossed, the mountain peak to be climbed, but the desert is simply there, 'passive, acted upon but never acting' (Abbey 1968: 300). It is 'clean, pure, totally useless' (Abbey 1968: 35). As we have said it before, so Abbey reiterates. In the desert, there is nothing to do but *be*.

Now one might rightfully claim that, for some, 'the desert was there to be crossed' (Blackmore 1995: 104), as Charles Blackmore so bluntly puts it in *Crossing the Desert of Death*. True as that may be for travellers and explorers, it is not true for Abbey, and he does have a significant point when claiming that once you reach a mountain peak, 'there is nothing to do but come down again' (Abbey 1968: 301-302). Likewise, though theoretically possible, no one stays sea-borne forever whereas many people have, and do, stay/ed in the desert for a lifetime.

Whatever the merits or faults of Abbey's theory, it is clear that, for him, the qualities of the desert lie exactly in its *non*-qualities, in its *non*-voice. 'What does it mean? It means nothing. It is as it is and has no need for meaning' (Abbey 1968: 244). Waiting 'on the shore of time' (Abbey 1968: 170) in the desert, one may try to wrestle 'signals from the sun' or a response from a tree' (Abbey 1968: 44), but you will receive no answer from that 'lovely, sweet, remote, primeval world' (Abbey 1968: 207).

Instead of constantly trying to infuse meaning into everything, man should 'learn to perceive in water, leaves and silence more than sufficient of the absolute and the marvelous' (Abbey 1968: 221) and leave it at that. For Abbey, there is no place quite like the desert to teach us this.

Moderate Extremism

If Abbey is right, that we need to 'immerse ourselves' in order to gain anything valuable from the desert, *Desert Solitaire* renders its own existence invalid. What need do we have for a book that tells us that 'too much time wasted in library stacks' will only result in 'absurdities'? Is it not itself, then, absurd?

As so much else of Abbey's colourful discourse, claims like these should, however, be taken with a pinch of rhetoric salt. Just as it is doubtful whether Abbey would actually rather kill a man than a snake if presented with the choice, his complaints about Western philosophers' incessant discussions of 'meaning' are hardly meant to be taken quite as harshly as they are expressed. If so, he should at least lob a few pebbles at himself now and then, as he himself is certainly very much concerned with the 'meaning' of it all, from the meaning of life to the manner in which we should depart from it.

What redeems Abbey somewhat is the clear realisation that, for all his rabid outbursts, he really wants a '[m]oderate extremism' and the 'best of two worlds' (Abbey 1968: 331). This is most clearly seen in the fact that as *Desert Solitaire* nears its ending, so does Abbey's stay in the desert. Having enjoyed the solitude and purity of the place for half a year, he leaves stars, snakes and housetrailer behind in order to employ several motorised vehicles of varying levels of modernity and machinery, only to emerge in metropolitan New York. Abbey thus steps into every single trap that he avowedly wants to avoid, but he does so happily and with eyes wide open. He personifies the wild, quotes Balzac and Baudelaire, and plunges back into bustling urbanity when he gets tired of all that sun, dust and solitude. As long as we get his main points, Abbey does not seem to mind his share of scorn. A bit of credibility is a petty sacrifice for vividness and force of argument. For Abbey knows that, when dealing with the desert, the argument can easily swing either way.

Conclusion

On one hand, the desert is often seen as the centre of all origins and as the ultimate place to go to in a quest for pre-modernity, Oneness and a way of

life in which one does not need to ponder about the difficulties presented by signifier and signified, source and representation. For many a Western desert writer, the desert has therefore acted as the unlikely gateway to the garden; the garden of Rousseau's simplistic conception of 'a small community with a "crystalline" structure' that is 'completely self-present' (Derrida 1967: 137).

On the other hand, it makes little sense to talk, or rather, *write*, of an experience that promises to merge the dichotomies of post-Babel in an experience of immersive *being* when such a message is conveyed through the medium of the book. For such a project, however well-meant it may be, can never quite avoid a tinge of the ironic. Not only will the large majority of these desert books (if not all) have been written, printed, distributed and read in the urban societies that they so desire us to abandon. The subject matter and the way in which it is presented to us also cannot but remind us that 'you cannot get the desert into a book any more than a fisherman can haul up the sea with his net' (Abbey 1968: x). For apart from the paradoxical desire to *describe* a feeling that can only be experienced in situ, the unique place in which this experience can be gained – the desert itself - can easily be construed as a metaphor of the exact opposite argument. In its emptiness that is void of all meaning, in its vast horizon that forces one to ponder on the distinction between inner and outer, and in its flickering mirages - the simulacra of all simulacra - the desert is a treat for all who wish to embark on lengthy arguments about the 'contrast between surface and depths'. Solipsists, deconstructionists, postmodernists and their like may be deemed absurd by Abbey, but they will be able to find as much validation for their claims in the desert as Abbey finds for his.

The desert may therefore not be an entirely 'blank slate', yet it is 'empty enough ... that we're prone to transform it in our imaginations into a literal void that happily receives our mythic inventions' (Fox 2000: 38). It is therefore 'the ultimate example of ... uninscribed space' (Haynes 1998: 53) and a place that beckons to be filled with whatever *meaning* we desire to give it, yet it is also a place that forces both reader and writer into considering the *form* in which this meaning is conveyed. Abbey may be highly concerned about getting people off the roads, away from their cars and comfy housetrailers and out into the blistering, all-encompassing experience that the desert has to offer. But the fact remains that as long as he, and others, advocate their message through the medium of the written word, a second void, one very similar to the void these writers wish us to bridge, becomes apparent.

That, if nothing else, should be proof that the desert, and the texts in which it is presented to us, are indeed worthy of whatever amount of time we are willing to invest in them. For the 'contrast between surface and depths' is not only 'the fundamental experience of the desert'. It is also that of Western thought.

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Muthos as *Logos*: The Concept of Truth in the Poetry of Ted Hughes

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1. Introduction

My dissertation deals with the quest for truth in the poetry of Ted Hughes, as made manifest through tropes such as metaphor, paradox and anthropomorphism. For Hughes, poetry seems to represent a truth-revealing process with the potential of enabling the human being to establish contact with the world-as-it-really-is. Not as an empirically comprehensible entity, but as a presence that seems at once terrifyingly familiar and alien to human comprehension. In short, I will argue that the poetry represents an approach to truth governed by the multitude of traditions and meanings incorporated in the concept of *logos*. Interestingly, the poetry seems to acquire its driving force through the impenetrability of metaphor and the non-reconciliatory force of paradox. With Hughes, the paradox generally lies in the poetry's refusal to unite in singular, coherent meanings. It remains obscure to the extent that truth can only be found in the opposing, multifarious meanings of the words and phrases. Similarly, the Hughesian metaphor appears to be tautegorical in the sense that it is not constructed on the basis of similarity. This statement is inspired by Schelling's claim that myth refers only to itself as truth as well as Hans Blumenberg's definition of the 'absolute metaphor' as an expression that cannot be reversed into a logical sphere of thought and reasoning. For Blumenberg, philosophical and scientific language is built upon a number of absolute metaphors that express truth. These metaphors do not refer to some thing else and are consequently not transferable into any other type of discourse. The indeterminacy and lack of allegorical reference dominating this kind of metaphorical expression seem to result from it being an expression only of itself as truth. Truth, in this context, has nothing to do with Platonic 'agreement', but has everything to do with letting something be seen, or, to quote Heidegger: 'The 'Being-true' of *logos* as *aletheia* means that in *legein* as *discourse* the entities *of which* one is talking must be taken out of their

hiddenness, one must let them be seen as something unhidden (*aletheia*), that is, they must be *discovered*' (Heidegger 1962: 56).

Due to the indeterminate basis of the metaphorical expression, it might seem difficult to establish a terminology capable of adequately analysing and describing these poetic processes. In order to establish a framework, however, I intend to employ the concepts *muthos* and *logos* as points of departure. In this paper, I will discuss the various meanings of *muthos* and *logos* as they have been interpreted within a Western metaphysical tradition, in order to establish a foundation on which to base my investigations into the truth-revealing processes in the poetry of Ted Hughes. *Muthos* and *logos* incorporate and generate innumerable nuances, gaps and possibilities of truth, not just as a dynamic binary, but as movements contained within and transcending the operation of language. In order to make use of these terms within an analytical context, however, it is mandatory to investigate the premises that underpin an understanding of *logos* and/or *muthos*. In Christian tradition, *logos* is God, both as the word and as the will of God. In philosophical tradition, it represents a window into what is. I distinguish between two general definitions of truth (*logos*), that is, between Plato's understanding of *logos* as truth in the shape of an analytical tool revealing a world that is definable in logical terms, and Heidegger's designation of *logos* as disclosing truth present within and beyond specific discourse. In relation to the latter's definition of *logos* I will also discuss a chapter of Jean-Luc Nancy's *The Inoperative Community*, in which Nancy, by founding his discussion on readings of Heidegger and Bataille, shows how literature may function as a *muthos* which opens up to *logos*. In order to determine the functions of *muthos* and *logos* within my dissertation, it seems relevant to discuss them within the context of these philosophical traditions. A clarification of the foundation underlying my readings of the terms will enable me to employ them as a basis for the study of metaphor and as epistemological points of departure in relation to the quest for truth within the poetic universe of Ted Hughes.

2. *A transition from* muthos *to* logos?

In philosophical tradition, the Greek *muthos* and *logos* were originally used interchangeably. Although etymologically unrelated, they belong to the same semantic field as both nouns, among other things, can mean 'word'. Their verbal forms, moreover, *mythein* and *legein*, both mean 'to speak'. The pre-Socratics frequently used the two terms synonymously. According

to Marcel Detienne, in his book *The Creation of Mythology, muthos* was a synonym for *logos* in various contexts throughout the sixth century and even in the first half of the fifth century (Detienne 1986: 45). Detienne holds that the scholarly work of philosophers from Xenophanes to Empedocles 'belies the opinion of our contemporaries who attribute to "rational thinking" the purpose of eliminating any other form of thought such as "myth" in the sense of sacred narrative or discourse on the subject of the gods' (1986: 46). In establishing rules for addressing the deity, Xenophanes says that men should sing 'with auspicious texts (*muthoi*) and pure words (*logoi*)' (Xenophanes 1992: 1.21-22). This quotation attests to the neutral status of *muthos*, which Detienne also finds in the philosophical work of Parmenides and Empedocles (1986: 46). Increasingly, however, the differences between the two became an issue in Greek philosophical writings. *Muthos*, belonging to an oral tradition where elements such as chanting and repetition worked to convey what one might term a trans-logical truth, was increasingly regarded as inferior to the rational and balanced arguments of *logos*. According to Detienne, we can detect this tendency in Pindar and Herodotus, in whose works any mention of myth is rare (1986: 47). In fact, Pindar states that *muthos* was born of rumour and demands that it must be cast aside and removed from the ranks of 'reliable witnesses' (Pindar 1997: 1. 54). For Pindar, it seems, myths represent only the illusion of real life and not the true word, the *logos* (Detienne 1986: 48). The result of this reasoning was that *muthos* and *logos* developed into concepts with opposing status, one belonging to a category of unreliable fiction, whereas the other acquired status as bearer of truth.

By the time of Platonic philosophy they had been established as binaries both as far as form and fundamental significance were concerned. *Muthodes* now designated the marvellous, that which was suited to oral expression and the poetic genres (*Rep* 522a8; *Tim* 26e5), while *alethinos logos* characterised truthful, verifiable discourse. The concept of *muthos* thus came to be regarded as non-rational fiction, whereas *logos* was placed in a category of rigorous analysis and the strict ordering of conceptual material. This mode of rigid classification was more or less concomitant with the transition from oral to written discourse, whereby *logos* came to mean demonstrative truth. Even so, Platonic philosophy makes room for *muthos* through the compound *mythology*. One might assume this compound to subordinate *muthos* effectively within the rational hegemony of *logos*. Some scholars, indeed, regard it as an effacement of *muthos*, that is, a refusal to retain it as an independent, sanctified practice. Although

muthos still has a mediating function, it is only seen to benefit the state within the paradigm of the logical reasoning that had come to dominate Greek consciousness. Figurative language was superfluous within philosophy and furthermore belonged primarily to rhetoric, the art of persuasion, which Plato viewed with great suspicion. As argued by Nickolas Pappas, the primary function of myth within Platonic philosophy is merely to remind the reader that there is a higher tribunal of justice than the poetic imagination (Pappas 1995: 216). This view is also adopted by Luc Brisson who, in his book *Plato the Myth Maker,* contends that when Plato employs the word *muthos* he both describes it as a particular kind of discourse and criticizes it from the perspective of philosophical discourse (*logos*) (Brisson 1998: 7). At the same time, however, myth, although morphologically synthesised with *logos,* in fact assumes an ambiguous rôle within the philosophical universe. Rather than an inherent part of the dialogue, myth frequently emerges as an autonomous element. In *Phaedo,* for instance, a myth justifying belief in the immortality of the soul concludes the logical demonstration, whilst the *Republic* ends with the myth of Er, depicting a process of reincarnation which dramatises the rewards of justice and philosophy. In these instances, the structural formation of the dialogue establishes myth as an appendix beyond the reach of the rational dialectic. In his article 'The Theatre of Myth in Plato', Jean-Francois Mattei reads this ambiguity as an affirmation that there are elements that cannot be sufficiently explained through the speech of logos: 'Logos is capable of elaborating a *theory of knowledge* at the conclusion of dialectical conversations only after muthos has oriented the philosopher with a *knowledge of theory*' (Mattei 1988: 68). The ambiguity that we find here may of course result from a lack of coherent theory of myth in Plato. Even though Plato overtly regards myth as inferior to the discursive practice of philosophy it still occupies an essential space in the dialogue. Although Pappas may be right in asserting that the official role of myth within the dialectic is to remind the reader of the primary status of philosophical discourse, *muthos* simultaneously appears to function as a basic foundation for *logos.* Hence, Mattei's conclusion that *logos* can never be elaborated on its own. Although *muthos* is overtly discarded as secondary, it permeates the Platonic dialogue, quietly subverting the hegemony of truth as the conformity of things and intellect.

It should be noted, that Plato's enunciated partiality towards argumentative discourse diverges radically from the preference for myth found in the poetic universe of Ted Hughes. Poems such as 'Wings',

'Crow's Account of St George' and 'Revenge Fable' moreover exhibit a fundamental mistrust of the Socratic dialectic, which Hughes appears to find abhorringly rationalistic. The sequence *Cave Birds,* originally entitled *The Death of Socrates and His Resurrection in Egypt,* is underpinned by a basic theme which Hughes describes as 'the psychological crime, punishment and compensation of Socrates' (Gifford and Roberts 1981: 260). For Hughes, Socrates, as presented through the Platonic dialogues, represents a form of misguided rationality which functions to shut out everything that cannot be explained or conceptualised. In general terms, this rationality could be equalled with a definition of *logos* as true speech, applauded by Plato as philosophical discourse based on agreement, whereas the kind of truth that Hughes would subscribe to is found in the 'magical-religious archaic source of intellectual life' (Gifford and Roberts 1981: 260), which, it would seem, can be interpreted as a form of *muthos,* or, at least, as related to a pre-socratic understanding which poses *muthos* and *logos* as more or less interchangeable in a trans-rational whole.

As indicated above, however, *muthos,* although overtly discarded for the sake of *logos,* does inhabit an important space both within and beyond the dialogues, functioning as an epistemological basis upon which *logos* is positively founded. Brisson, for example, suggests that for Plato reason can never be liberated from myth (Brisson 1998: 3). He finds evidence of this in dialogues such as *Meno* and the *Phaedo,* which show how the doctrine of Forms has its origin in what the priests and priestesses relate. According to Brisson, an analysis of *muthos* in Plato reveals that he understands it as synonymous with what one might term 'oral literature'. This is important because of what seems to be a predilection for the oral word throughout Platonic philosophy. The Socratic dialectic is generated by the principle 'to know oneself through the detour of the language of the other' (Derrida 1981: 121). This is a practice, then, governed by the presence of the other's, as well as one's own, direct speech. *Phaedrus* exhibits a fundamental distrust of the written word, specifically through the myth of Theuth. In telling this myth Socrates illustrates the dangers of displacing speech by writing, and posits writing as inimical to the philosophic exercise of memory of the good and the practice of dialectic. In contrast to living memory, which represents truth and self-knowledge, the written word offers only 'forgetfulness in the learners' souls' (*Phae* 323). In his 'Plato's Pharmacy', however, Derrida investigates the dimensions of text in the *Phaedrus* that counter the presumption that the dialogue unequivocally condemns writing, positing direct speech as the proper vehicle for dialectics and Truth. Derrida

reads Plato's *pharmakon* as signifying his ambivalent attitude towards writing through its double meaning of 'poison' as well as 'remedy'. Plato's of towards writing, Derrida furthermore claims, resulted in the formation of the hierarchical oppositions that have come to dominate Western thought, classifying writing as an imperfect representation of the pure ideas contained in the living voice of speech. Plato's distrust of writing, however, is not totally unambiguous. Derrida shows how the text itself complicates Plato's enunciated misgivings towards writing, and says that even an insensitive reading would show that Plato is not merely dismissing the writer's role. Furthermore, the mythological basis of the argument is not as straightforward as it might seem. In fact, according to Catherine Pickstock, in her book *After Writing: On the Liturgical Consummation of Philosophy,* Egyptian mythology links Theuth as much with orality as with writing (Pickstock 1998: 26). In this context, the Platonic dialogue cannot be read merely as resting upon a mere binary between the written and the oral word. More importantly, however, the relationship between *muthos* and *logos* is more intertwined and indeterminate than what is explicitly enunciated on a thematic level. It seems most significant that Socrates' condemnation of writing and his appraisal of direct speech as the proper vehicle for the dialectic comes in the form of a myth rather that as a balanced argument. Derrida also states that writing could not have done without myth, despite its dismissal by the Western tradition that he criticises. As a result, one might assume that the speech/writing, *muthos/logos* binaries are not as firmly separated as they might seem. Even though Plato may seem to discard one and favour the other, the inclusiveness of the text appears to tell a different story.

3. Heidegger: Throwing oneself in the draft of Being

In the same manner as Plato eulogises memory Heidegger emphasises its value in the lecture 'What Calls for Thinking?' (1993b). Here, he establishes Socrates as the purest thinker of the West, because he placced himself in what Heidegger terms 'the draft of Being' (1993b, 382). For Heidegger, *muthos* was never destroyed by *logos* because 'nothing religious is ever destroyed by logic; it is destroyed only by the god's withdrawal' (1993b, 376). In order to reconnect with the god, that is, Being, the human being must let itself be drawn into the god's withdrawal. This is the only space in which thinking can be attained – 'even though he may still be far away from what withdraws, even though the withdrawal may remain as veiled as ever' (1993b, 382). This perception of man's potential

of moving towards truth is similar to the one found in Hughes' poetry, where truth 'reveals herself, and is veiled' (Hughes 1977: 185). Truth, here, is not about conformity with facts, but about opening oneself up to a revelation that rather than light brings a more pervading darkness.

Because Socrates placed himself in this draft, he remains the purest thinker of the West and wrote nothing. Heidegger claims that 'anyone who begins to write out of thoughtfulness must inevitably be like those people who run to seek refuge from any draft too strong for them' (1993b, 382).[1] It seems that for Heidegger, as for Plato, writing is connected with forgetfulness, whereas memory – the recalling of things past – connects us to *aletheia.* In fact, Heidegger deems memory essential because it constitutes the foundation for poetry: 'Memory, Mother of the Muses – the thinking back to what is to be thought – is the source and ground of poesy' (1993b, 376). Paradoxically, however, the point where Heidegger and Plato seem to converge is also the point where they drastically diverge, as Heidegger continues:

> Surely, as long as we take the view that logic gives us insight into what thinking is, we shall never be able to think how much all poesy rests upon thinking back, recollection. Poetry wells up only from devoted thought thinking back, recollecting. (1993b, 376)

What Heidegger seems to say here, is that poetry and thinking are intrinsically connected in what one might term a dialectic schema; each of them opening up towards and enabling the other. Thought, or, thinking back, underpins poetry, and poetry enables the human being to make the leap into the realm of thought, that is, Being. Unlike Socrates, however, Plato fails to make this leap, despite his focus on the importance of processes of recollection. This failure stems fundamentally from what Heidegger terms a focus on reason as such rather than on the origins of reason (Heidegger 1984: 60). In short, Heidegger claims, Platonic philosophy is based on a misguided interpretation of *logos.*

Discarding metaphysical interpretations of *logos* as relationship, cosmic order, judgement and meaning, Heidegger retreats to what he sees as its original meaning as a derivative of *legein* which signifies 'gathering' or

[1] It should be noted that what Heidegger terms 'thoughtfulness' here does not coincide with 'thinking' in the true sense of the word. In the essay 'What Calls for Thinking' Heidegger argues that we do not yet know what thinking is. 'Thoughtfulness' is not thinking, because it is something one does rather than something that calls on one. Thinking comes to us, which is why we must stand in the draft of Being. We must assert less and listen more.

'laying' (Heidegger 1962: 55). *Logos* names that which gathers together and lays out all that is present in its presence. That is, *logos* makes open or reveals that which is hidden or veiled, allowing Being to disclose itself in its own presence. The disclosure of Being through and as *logos* is furthermore the emergent aspect of *phusis,* authentically collected in and by the *logos,* which is truth as *aletheia,* that is, the opening up of the hiding place (Heidegger 1962: 261-63). Heidegger emphasises that *phusis* is the emergence that can be experienced everywhere, not as nature, but an aspect of Being itself by which beings first become and remain observable (Heidegger 2000: 15). By virtue of this revealing function of *logos* truth is unveiled.[2] Not as *homoiòsis* or some form of 'likening' between things and the soul's experience of them, however. As indicated in the introduction, Heidegger posits the idea of agreement as secondary to the concept of *aletheia.* The 'Being-true' of *logos* as discourse means that the elements of which one is talking must be seen as unhidden (*aletheia*), that is, they must be discovered (Heidegger 1962: 56). Thus, *logos* is not the seat of truth but, rather, that within and through which that which is present takes place and is discovered. Moreover, while *logos* as gathering and disclosing is manifested through language, discourse is not the seat of truth. This thought contrasts with the Platonic perception of truth as agreement, resulting in a perception of discourse as the locus of truth through its adherence to an *idea.* Here, the character of truth changes from fundamental unhiddenness of the *essent* to the reasonable value of a statement, or correctness. Consequently, Heidegger asserts, there can be no relation with Being within this parameter of thought.

The divergent approaches represented by Heidegger and Plato as regards the concept of truth can be exemplified through an extract from *Phaedo,* where Socrates proposes the following analogy:

> I thought that [...] I ought to be careful that I did not lose the eye of my soul; as people may injure their bodily eye by observing and gazing on the sun during an eclipse, unless they take the precaution of only looking at the image reflected in the water, or in some similar medium. [...T]his was the method which I adopted: I first

[2] *Logos* is equivalent to letting something be seen to the extent that it can mean 'discourse'. According to Heidegger, *logos* as 'discourse' means 'to make manifest what one is 'talking about' in one's discourse. [...] The logos lets something be seen [...], namely, what the discourse is about; and it does so either *for* the one who is doing the talking (the *medium*) or for the persons who are talking to one another, as the case may be' (Heidegger 1962, 56).

> assumed some principle which I judged to be the strongest, and then I affirmed as true whatever seemed to agree with this, whether relating to the cause or to anything else; and that which disagreed I regarded as untrue (Plato 1956: 165-166).

In the context of this quotation, the difference between Heidegger and Plato can be stated as follows: Where Plato regards *logos* as that which protects us from the sun, Heidegger sees it as that within and through which one might stand directly in the sun's light. For Plato, it is better to withdraw during an eclipse than to be caught in the draft of the withdrawal. In *Dissemination,* Derrida quotes a translation of the *Phaedo* where the Socratic method is described as a quest for truth through 'recourse to the world of *idea* (*en logois*)'(Derrida 1981: 83-84). Platonic philosophy can consequently be regarded as an immobilisation of Being, in the sense that it withdraws from the world in order to seek the truth through agreement with a static, metaphysical idea. Within this schema, *logos* is elevated to a position of supremacy whilst *phusis* becomes frozen in the aspect presented by it and Being is reduced to a constancy of presence. The true *phusis,* that is, a continuous emerging and appearing, is pushed aside for the benefit of the static idea, which becomes the singular, proper meaning of Being. What Heidegger seems to suggest, on the other hand, is a dualistic perception of *logos,* arising from the aforementioned contention that *logos* is both that within and through which presence takes place. Heidegger points out that early Greek philosophy held *logos* to be at one with, or, at least, belonging together with *phusis* in and as Being. This aspect of *logos* seems to transcend the human being in the sense that it is described as 'apprehension', which, as Heidegger stresses, is not a constitutive essence of man. *Phusis,* as Being, is 'that for the sake of which apprehension happens' (Heidegger 2000: 184). In spite of this fundamental beyondness, however, the human being will always seek truth as Being and attempt to render Being manifest through, or in, the *essent.* This act renders *logos* a constitutive essence of man. Occurring in and through man as the gathering and apprehending of the being of *essents, logos* becomes a feature of the constitutive essence of the human being and, in this sense, ceases to be an element of Being itself.[3]

In its former state, then, *logos* is a possibility and necessity within Being itself, whilst in the second aspect it has been made manifest in and

[3] It should be noted that this does not mean that *logos* is at any time not a part or not in accordance with Being, it is merely part of Being in a different sense.

through the human being. As *logos* becomes manifest through and in the *essent*, the human being leaps into language. This is a fundamental movement, in the sense that language is that which gives form to the *essent* and opens it up in its being. For Heidegger, language is *logos* in the sense that it is a collecting and a gathering together, and, thus, it also functions to disclose *logos*. Accordingly, the human being becomes a gatherer through language, with the task to fulfil and preserve the disclosure of Being, that is, to unveil and keep open Being to itself and others.

The main ways of bringing Being to stand in and among the being of things are poetry and philosophy. Heidegger asserts that language was established in the 'breakaway of humanity into Being. In this breakaway, language, the happening in which Being becomes word, was poetry' (Heidegger 2000: 182-83). Language is an offering handed over from Being to thinking, that is, to the essence of man that has already been handed over from Being in order to establish a relation to the latter. In fact, language is 'the house of Being. In its home man dwells. Those who think and those who create with words are the guardians of this home. Their guardianship accomplishes the manifestation of Being insofar as they bring the manifestation to language and maintain it in language through their speech' (Heidegger 1993: 217). This kind of discourse is defined by Heidegger as speech or talk [*Rede*], which involves not only speaking out and asserting, but also hearing and listening, heeding and being silent and attentive (Heidegger 1962: 55-58).

What is particularly relevant about Heidegger's discourse in relation to my project is its inclusiveness in the sense that *logos* and *muthos* are one in their revelation of truth as truth, a point I will return to later in the discussion. Truth acquires a self-sufficient status for Heidegger, in the sense that the poetic saying offers it not as a qualified object but as itself. The poetic saying opens up to thinking and to Being by offering itself as itself – not as something that agrees with logic or with positivist reality. This seems vital to an analysis of truth as it presented or offered by Hughes, that is, not as an answer but as a 'naked powerline, 2000 volts' (Hughes 1972: 83).

4. Opening up to the limit – the importance of muthos *as* logos

In his book *The Inoperative Community*, Jean-Luc Nancy awards literature a similar role as does Heidegger. Influenced by Heidegger, Nancy presents many interesting perspectives on what one might term the dialectic

between *muthos* and *logos*, as well as on the relation between *muthos* as literature and *logos* as thinking. Heidegger does not overtly analyse *muthos*, except in a passage from the lecture series *Was Heisst Denken*, in which he declares that *mythos* and *logos* are fundamentally the same:

> *Mythos* and *logos* become separated and opposed only at the point where neither *mythos* nor *logos* can keep to its pristine existence. In Plato's work this separation has already taken place. Historians and philologists, by virtue of a prejudice modern rationalism adopted from Platonism, imagine that *mythos* was destroyed by *logos*. But nothing religious is ever destroyed by logic; it is destroyed only by the god's withdrawal (Heidegger 1993: 375-76).

When Heidegger talks about *logos* as logic, he is referring to the period following the separation of *muthos* and *logos*. Prior to that he refers to *mythos* as that which lays bare and lets appear, that is, a function which performs the same tasks as *logos* as gathering (cf. 1993: 375). This perception of *muthos* and *logos* is echoed in *The Inoperative Community*, where Nancy states that for the early Greeks '*muthos* and *logos* are the same. This sameness is the revelation, the hatching or blossoming of the world, of the thing, of man in speech' (Nancy 1991: 49). Thus, *muthos* is, if not the origin of *logos*, the essential aspect wherein the human being is able to access truth. The kind of speech that Nancy refers to here is not mimetic, echoing Heidegger's claim that the truth of *logos* does not primarily concern agreement. Nancy quotes Schelling and says that myth is tautegorical, that it says nothing other than itself and is produced in consciousness by the same process that, in nature, produces the forces that myth represents. What Nancy seems to say here is that myth transcends the binary oppositions that govern our understanding of the world, because it holds no reference to the reified world, but refers only to the given, that which is shown, that is, *logos*. As indicated in my introduction, this non-mimetic aspect of myth is also important in relation to the Hughesian metaphor, and is something that I will return to later. This perspective is, of course, similar to Heidegger's contention that Being is revealed or disclosed through *logos* in, or as, language. It appears that what Heidegger terms language, Nancy terms myth. This is a very interesting parallel, offering the conclusion that myth is the form of *logos* that reveals itself as Being, or *kosmos*, to the human consciousness. Thus, myth is also *kosmos* within *logos*, because as it has a mediating position between the two, which are really one, it can be seen to constitute the structure both of *logos*

as it reveals itself to the human consciousness and of the *kosmos* as it would invariably structure itself in accordance with *logos*.

While Nancy founds his analysis on a reading of Heidegger, his discussion does not simply echo the latter. Interestingly, Nancy employs what he terms 'community' as the basis for his analysis, claiming that myth in contemporary community does not exist, in the sense that it is continuously interrupted.[4] Here, Nancy bases his argument on Bataille's claim that contemporary society is pervaded by an 'absence of myth' (Bataille 1994: 48). Bataille's contention is that society, even though it is founded on a mediation between the human being and the natural world, has denied its foundation of ancient myth. Furthermore, it has deluded itself into believing that it is without myth and persuaded itself that it is no longer in need of ritual, since the human being has come to rule over nature. This 'absence of myth' also means an 'absence of the sacred', which Bataille equals with an absence of communication. A society which is unable to communicate ceases to be a society, resulting in an 'absence of community' (Bataille 1994: 81). Thus, Bataille establishes a chain of cause and consequence, beginning with the negation of myth leading to non-communication and ending with the dissolution of community. In a society based on the hegemony of rationalism, however, reality itself becomes a myth. This is how Bataille can contend that the 'absence of myth' is itself a myth: 'The fact that a universe without myth is the ruin of the universe – reduced to the nothingness of things – in the process of depriving us equates deprivation with the revelation of the universe' (Bataille 1994: 48). Western civilisation is living a lie, by which it denies its mythological basis and posits reality as an ontological given that can be located and conquered. For Bataille, the solution lies in a re-creation of ritual, something that cannot be achieved through poetry, as literature cannot escape the absolutism of the ritualisation of the absence of myth. Nancy, however, sees this differently. For Nancy, there is no such thing as a choice between presence and absence of myth: 'If we suppose that "myth" designates, beyond the myths themselves, even beyond myth, something that cannot simply disappear, the stakes would then consist in myth's passage to a limit and onto a limit where myth itself would be not so much suppressed as suspended or interrupted' (Nancy 1991: 47). Nancy, then, agrees with Heidegger that myth is not destroyed, that is, absent, but

[4] 'Community' here appears to constitute a specific form of communication which functions to fill the space previously inhabited by myth.

rather displaced, that is, interrupted or withdrawn. What interrupts myth is its lack of a communal function within a contemporary society determined by singularity. At the same time, however, community as such is not lost, but may be located on the limit of singularity. The generator for the process leading to the limit is a movement which Nancy denominates 'passion'. 'Passion' appears to signify a *muthos* enabling the human being to reach the limit of singularity as a space in which myth is suspended, that is, potentially reached. In other words, 'passion' designates an inherent aspect of the human being connecting it to truth as some specific form of communication.

The truth, or community, located at the limit of singularity, then, is not the kind of community in which a group is tied together through common beliefs, norms or the like. Myth founds 'the becoming-world of subjectivity' (Nancy 1991: 56), rather than community as such. As indicated above, 'community', as Nancy understands it, appears to designate a revelation or disclosure of singularity as a limit in the space established between singularities. Hence, Nancy's 'community' is more redolent of Kristeva's descriptions of a revolutionary language than of Bataille's recourse to communism. According to Nancy, the interruption of community irrevocably exposes singularity to its limit, that is, to other singularities. Thus, the interrupted community is one that is constantly in process, to use a Kristevan term, one that never forms a totality of any kind, but which exists in the invariable interruption, propagation and showing of singularities as Being. In this sense, Nancy's community as communication bears a resemblance to Kristeva's semiotic language, which functions to challenge the boundaries of the thetic subject thus generating a subject in process. Semiotic language, of course, refers to the engendering of meaning in the text, that is, elements that challenge the ordering structure and relatively straightforward communication of the symbolic, transgressing limits and distance. In this sense, it seems that the interruption of community is also an important factor as a constant generation of identity. The focus on singularities rather than totalities appears to indicate a revolt against a static, closed off identity, which might function to ensure a constant openness as a process enabling the human being to cope with the other as difference and variation rather than as a threat to its (limiting) unity. This is yet another important aspect in connection with Hughes' poetry, which tends to focus on the dangers inherent in establishing a fixed identity and emphasises the importance of process and openness in approaching truth.

In the exposure and offering of singular beings, Nancy holds, the human being takes part in myth, which is interrupted by literature.

Interestingly, Nancy argues that literature, in fact, could be seen as the myth of mythless society. In the same sense as myth, literature reveals the unrevealable, namely, that it is itself. In contrast to myth, though, literature's revelation does not reveal a completed reality, nor does it reveal some thing (1991: 63). Literature unfolds and exposes the singularity of the community, and is thus yet another aspect of the interruption of community. Seen in relation to Nancy's interpretation of Heidegger's Being as the singular aspect of beings rather than as communing in itself with itself, literature becomes a process disclosing Being. Rather than *mimesis*, the text represents the extreme edge of being and has as its being the common exposure of singular beings. Literature, although failing to reveal the totality of a community (as communication), reveals Being through the exposure and sharing of it as singularity, a reading which situates literature as *muthos* as *logos* in its aspect as a constitutive essence of the human being.

As far as beings are concerned, Nancy emphasises that being-in-common *is* nowhere – it does not subsist in a mythic space that could be revealed to us. Consequently, literature does not give it a voice; rather, it is being-in-common that *is* literary. Hence, as indicated above, literature is established as non-referential in the sense that it does not function as a vehicle referring to or providing a voice for some other thing. Rather, it constitutes a movement or a process that opens up and exposes that which is without actually establishing it as a space other than itself. This definition of literature is significant in relation to Schelling's definition of myth as tautegorical, because it reinforces the parallel between myth and literature as truth. Being-in-common as literature points to the sharing between singularities as a continuous process. Furthermore, literature as being-in-common warrants a kind of openness that seems to render it a parallel, if not equivalent, term to Heidegger's 'being-in-the-world'. In his 'Letter on Humanism', Heidegger explains this term by defining 'world' not as a realm of beings but rather as an openness to Being. The degree of openness to Being determines the human being's humanity, in the sense that it stands in this openness on the basis of its thrown essence. This stance does not situate the human being as a subject (that is, as opposite to an object), but as thrown into the open region that clears the 'between' within which a 'relation' of subject to 'object' can be (Heidegger 1993: 252), that is, a space as an element in which singularities are shown and offered. For Heidegger, 'being-in-the-world' is literary in the same sense as thinking is. It constitutes a space which seems to be similar to that in which thinking in its saying brings the unspoken word of Being to language.

'Being-in-the-world' is to think, and thinking gathers language into simple saying. In fact, Heidegger states that 'language is the language of Being, as clouds are the clouds of the sky' (Heidegger 1993: 265). Thus, language, and specifically poetry, is our way toward thinking, which is our only possibility to stand out as thrown in the withdrawal of Being (cf. Heidegger 1993: 382).

This thrownness into the withdrawal of Being is, to some extent, comparable to the process of identity discussed above. Poetry seems to equal, or even generate, the process preventing a ramified and unified identity and ensuring a continuous movement and opening towards Being. Literature, as it is presented here, is an ongoing and never ending movement or process, which unremittingly interrupts myth and thereby sustains the interrupted community. Literature is the dividing line where singular beings are exposed to one another (Nancy 1991: 65). This idea is reminiscent of Kristeva's parallel presentation of literature (poetry) and love as aesthetic and ethical practices. As indicated above, Kristeva argues that these practices push the subject to the very limit of being, putting it on trial, that is, in process. The difference is that Nancy does not limit the practice to the human being, but seems to adopt Heidegger's idea of being in a more general sense. Also similar to Kristevan theory, however, is Nancy's emphasis that what is shared on this extreme and difficult limit is not communion, nor any kind of completed identity. Rather, what is shared is sharing itself, as well as the nonidentity of the beings involved. This is exactly what Kristeva identifies as the object of aesthetic practices, that is, to dissolve any firm sense of identity through an opening up towards the other. What is important here is that Heidegger, Nancy and Kristeva focus on the movement and the continuous process that literature is and generates in beings. Literature is the indefinitely repeated and indefinitely suspended gesture of touching the limit, of indicating it and inscribing it, without totally abolishing it in the fiction of a common body or a community. Literature exposes the very edge upon which communication takes place, that is, the limit where one's identity is ruptured, where boundaries are blurred and where truth is exposed:

> It is each time the voice of one alone, and to the side, who speaks, who recites, who sometimes sings. He speaks of an origin and an end [...] he comes to the edge of the stage, to its outer edge, and he speaks at the softest limit of his voice [...T]his voice, or another, will always begin interrupting the myth again – sending us back to the limit (Nancy 1991: 67-68).

This can be tentatively demonstrated through the example of Hughes' poem 'Pibroch', which seems to express such a movement towards a liminal experience. The title of the poem refers to a piece of music for bagpipe, which consists of a bag frequently made of an entire goatskin, rendering it simultaneously an organically and culturally determined object. The implied presence of the goatskin furthermore generates associations to *pharmakos,* or the scapegoat, an important allegory evoking associations not only to the tension between *pharmakon* as both 'remedy' and 'poison', but also to other Hughes poems, where it frequently functions to suggest the fallacy of Western consciousness in putting all its faith in unerring rationality. The poem itself describes what appears to be the fundamentally meaningless existence of the sea, a stone, the wind and a tree, focusing on the static condition of the universe: 'Minute after minute, aeon after aeon/Nothing lets up or develops'. In the final stanza, however, the determiner 'this', repeated thrice in the last three verses, points to magical and divine elements, such as stars and angels, thus opening up towards a transcendent presence. The repetition of the determiner 'this' functions as a liminal denominator, simultaneously pointing towards itself as a boundary between a universe 'reduced to the nothingness of things' (Bataille 1994: 81) and the fullness of Being, and reaching beyond itself to the presence, and, potentially, the disclosure, of that which is hidden. In this sense the poem functions both as a manifestation of the kind of writing which is 'poison' in the sense that it works within the boundaries of 'meaningless voice[s]', as well as an expression of 'remedy' in that it points towards truth even if that is to be found in a space beyond the linguistic presence of 'this' and, consequently, of the poem as a written product.

Hughes' poem, then, may be seen to demonstrate how literature, and poetry in particular, forms a dividing line between poison and remedy, semiotic and symbolic. This liminal aspect is important to the extent that it functions to reveal Being. As indicated in the quotation cited above, literature discloses Being in the sense that this is identical with the singularity of Beings. This aspect of literature is similar to Kristeva's understanding of love as something that teaches us to move towards identity as an open system, referring to the other as a stimulus towards process. For Kristeva, love is the closest one gets to touching an other's being, representing an extreme experience of liminality which, potentially, can generate a subject in process and, thus, function to establish subjectivity as an open system. Thus, love becomes not only a subjective experience, but an integrated aspect of one's own subjectivity. Of course,

the kind of singularity suggested by Nancy and, indirectly, by Heidegger, does not point merely to an individual subjectivity, but to the more general being. Even so, Kristeva's theory might help us to comprehend the positive role of literature as an element opposing static nothingness.

For Nancy, nothingness would only exist as far as this singularity stops being revealed or exposed, in which case one would have immanence instead of space. This is how Nancy understands Heidegger, and, presumably, his sense of poetry as the House of Being. What is interesting here, however, is how all of the aforementioned terms can be regarded as metaphors or symbols for two terms – *muthos* and *logos*. As discussed above, Heidegger presents *logos* as Being, and says that language is, and can connect us to, *logos*. Nancy claims that *muthos*, or myth, communicates nature in a mediate as well as an immediate way. Nature is a common translation of the Greek term *phusis*, which Heidegger interprets as signifying an aspect of Being whereby beings become observable, and which, furthermore, is part of an original unity with *logos* as Being. In contemporary society, *phusis* as singularity is communicated as literature (or language), enabling us to take part in sharing. Nancy's sharing, or exposure, is close to Heidegger's *logos* as 'gathering'. In this sense, it might be possible to regard the discourse of literature as *muthos*, in the sense that this is the kind of speech that enables us to reach the limit of being and to share in Being. Of course, Nancy maintains that this kind of communication is myth interrupted, and that myth no longer exists, but *muthos* is not necessarily the same thing as myth (although it can be), in the sense that myth establishes community whereas *muthos* exposes and reveals truth as *logos*. Myth as a truth-telling element forming community is *muthos*, but this does not mean to say that it constitutes the totality of forms that *muthos* is capable of taking. Although literature, according to Nancy, fails to establish a community it represents a practice connecting the individual to something else, which is what happens through sharing, even though this establishes a being *in* common rather than a 'common being'.

5. Conclusion

In my view, even a superficial analysis of the language of Heidegger and Nancy confirms this supposition about its metaphoricity. Their language is purely metaphorical, through images such as 'the House of Being' and 'the interrupted community' which function to lay out what is. At the same time, it is not metaphorical, because it describes what *is*, and through

language what is described becomes what is, because the sign and the referent, so to speak, are so indeterminate. To some extent one might say that this literary event resembles Jonathan Culler's description of *catachresis* as a truly creative metaphor which names something that previously had no name, disclosing and identifying something that we have no other way of describing (Culler 1981: 206). At the same time, however, the kind of metaphor dealt with here does not necessarily refer to 'some thing'. Rather it seems to be an event or an act of opening up, establishing a connection and reaching toward a limit.

The German philosopher Hans Blumenberg has an interesting theory concerning metaphors that cannot be paraphrased or reduced to purely logical concepts, which he calls 'absolute metaphors'. Blumenberg poses the question whether there are metaphorical elements in philosophy and science that cannot be replaced by logical terms. In this context, metaphors, as a continuation of basic myths, constitute part of the foundation of philosophical language, 'transferences' that cannot be reversed into a logical sphere of thought and reasoning (Blumenberg 2002: 23). Here, metaphor does not actually describe anything that really is. A metaphor dealing with truth, for instance, does not describe truth in any way, but rather establishes a new category which is truth as we know it. Blumenberg describes it as something inside a glass. Reality exists on the outside of the glass, which means that it cannot be touched or felt, but one can still form one's own opinion of what it is like, which becomes truth for the subject located within the glass. The 'absolute metaphor', then, functions as a protective device against the absolutism of reality. The assumption here is that language cannot reveal truth in its totality, but through elements such as 'absolute metaphors' it instigates a process through which *logos* may become a constitutive aspect of the human being. Although Blumenberg's theory may seem unassertive as to the possibilities of attaining truth, it is interesting for its assumption that figurative language is the only acceptable means through which truth can be manifested and comprehended. Potentially, within this *muthos, logos* is manifested and becomes a part of *Dasein.*

Furthermore, *muthos* as laying out belongs to a metaphysical reality consigned to the one, that is, *logos,* that appears to elude the binaries of logocentrism and enter upon the field that Plato terms 'the third genus' (*Tim* 48a, 52a), that is, the logic of the ambiguous *khôra.* In his article 'Khôra', Derrida states that the *khôra* only names immanence – it appears to be 'neither this nor that, at times both this and that', alternating

between a logic of exclusion and participation which 'stems perhaps only from a provisional appearance and from the constraints of rhetoric, even from some incapacity for naming' (Derrida 1995: 89). According to both Heidegger and Hughes, however, poetry does not suffer from the constraints of rhetoric, rendering it a medium that incorporates the potential not only to name, but to be the name, the word, incarnate. Here, the space that Nancy insists upon as a guarantor for communication does not disappear, but rather is transformed into a distance not between binaries, but between various aspects of *logos* as Being.

As indicated in the introduction, the quest for truth in Hughes' poetry is primarily manifested through a metaphorical mode of expression dominated by an indeterminacy and lack of allegorical reference that seem to result from it being an expression only of itself as truth. Metaphors, read as continuations of fundamental myths, constitute part of the foundation of philosophical language in the sense that they can be regarded as 'transferences' that cannot be reversed into a logical sphere of thought and reasoning. With Hughes, metaphor and paradox are constituents of a poetic strategy I have termed myth as process, designating the writing subject as a gatherer who lays out poetry in an attempt to reach and reveal that which is hidden. That is, truth as something glimpsed in the singularities of being laid out by the writing subject in the complexity of the poetic text. Hughes' views on the role of poetry as reaching 'into that depth of imagination where understanding has its roots and stores its X-rays' (Hughes 1994: 226) seem more concrete and optimistic than Heidegger's, in the sense that he speaks of 'understanding' rather than 'gathering'. In both instances, however, poetry represents a truth-revealing process enabling the human being to re-establish contact with *logos* as manifested truth. To the extent that Hughes' poetry acquires its driving force through the very impenetrability of metaphor and the non-reconciliatory force of paradox, it seems largely parallel to Blumenberg's 'absolute metaphor'. It does not necessarily refer to some thing, but rather asks questions and establishes images that seem as impenetrable to the reader as they do to the poetic subject who does not consciously seek, but is sought out by a truth situated both within and beyond (his own) being. The indication here seems to be that truth arrives as a violence, willing the subject to speak in a language that is more like a song or a dance than the empirical language of 'inescapable facts'. In this context, it is for the reader to decide what lies beyond the 'song' and the 'dance', and whether it is at all possible to transpose and capture it in a prosaic function of language:

But it arrives
Invisible as a bullet
And the dead man flings up his arms
With a cry
Incomprehensible in every language

And from that moment
He never stops trying to dance, trying to sing
And maybe he dances and sings

Because you kissed him

If you miss him, he stays dead
Among the inescapable facts
(Hughes 1977: 198)

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Mean Streets: Death and Disfiguration in Hawks's *Scarface*

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Consider this paradox: in Howard Hawks' *Scarface, The Shame of the Nation*, violence is virtually all-encompassing, yet it is a film from an era before American movies really got violent. There are no graphic close-ups of bullet wounds or slow-motion dissection of agonized faces and bodies, only a series of abrupt, almost perfunctory liquidations seemingly devoid of the heat and passion that characterize the deaths of the spastic Lyle Gorch in *The Wild Bunch* or the anguished Mr. Orange, slowly bleeding to death, in *Reservoir Dogs*. Nonetheless, as Bernie Cook correctly points out, *Scarface* is the most violent of all the gangster films of the early 1930s cycle (1999: 545).[1] Hawks's camera desists from examining the anatomy of the punctured flesh and the extended convulsions of corporeality in transition. The film's approach, conforming to the period style of pre-*Bonnie and Clyde* depictions of violence, is understated, euphemistic, in its attention to the particulars of what Mark Ledbetter sees as "narrative scarring" (1996: x). It would not be illegitimate to describe the form of violence in *Scarface* as discreet, were it not for the fact that appraisals of the aesthetics of violence are primarily a question of kinds, and not degrees. In Hawks's film, as we shall see, violence orchestrates the deep structure of the narrative logic, yielding an hysterical form of plotting that hovers between the impulse toward self-effacement and the desire to advance an ethics of emasculation.

Scarface is a film in which violence completely takes over the narrative, becoming both its vehicle and its determination. As the story's backbone, Tony Camonte's rise to power and his subsequent and inevitable fall rely on violence as the basic common denominator. In the opening of the film, Tony assassinates Castillo, the leader of the mafia in charge of the city's South side district. The killing of Castillo propels Tony's superior Lavo to the position of chief of the South side mob. From

[1] See also Thomas Leitch's *Crime Films*, 25.

the beginning, however, it is clear that Camonte has higher ambitions, and gradually he takes control of the business as Lavo retreats to the background. Tony also initiates a romance with his boss's wife Poppy, which complicates his relationship to Lavo. Subsequent to Castillo's murder, Camonte sets out on a rampage to assume control over the city's bootlegging business. An escalating chain of violent events ensue as Camonte terrorizes and eliminates rivals, dissenters, and associates who attempt to take more than their share of the profit. Eventually he takes on the north side gangsters, soon becoming the most powerful criminal in the city. From this point on his aggression and hubris gradually defeat him, as he kills Lavo and then his loyal right hand Rinaldo, who has just married Cesca without Camonte's knowledge. In the end, the film attains narrative symmetry as Camonte's execution of Castillo in the beginning is reversed when Camonte himself is killed while trying to escape from the police.

The narrative of Camonte's trajectory is immersed in images of violence. Sheer force is what places him in power, and also what ultimately removes him from power. He sustains control of the city through the use of violence, his most important asset as well as his fatal flaw. Likewise, the narrative is organized around the multiple violent events that occur at frequent intervals. Camonte's accelerating violence is presented as a cavalcade of assassinations, in which enemies are executed on the streets, inside bars, in back alleys, in automobiles, in bowling alleys and even in hospitals. In one evocative image the passage of time is represented by leaves falling off the calendar to the sound of gunshots, a meta-textual device whose non-mimetic quality resembles the infamous disclaimer at the beginning of the film. All these violent segments are what drive the narrative forward. Although they are not temporally protracted like the violence in for instance *Bonnie and Clyde* and *The Wild Bunch*, their recurrence and frequency lend a certain omnipresence to the violence.

Scarface has a complicated and sinuous production history.[2] Loosely based on a 1930 novel by Armitage Trail (a pseudonym for Maurice Coons) and a screenplay by Ben Hecht, Hawks' film was shot in 1930 but was not released until 26 March 1932. Preceded by Mervyn LeRoy's *Little Caesar*

[2] According to Richard A. Blake, producer Howard Hughes was so reluctant to make any compromises based on the suggestions of the Hays Office that the film's release was postponed for two whole years. Blake speculates further that "[h]ad he held out another two years, when Hollywood got serious about its production code, *Scarface* might never have been released at all" (1991: 131).

(1930) and William A. Wellman's *The Public Enemy* (1931), *Scarface* was the last of the three major gangster movies of the early 1930s. As they provoked the establishment of the Production Code Administration in 1934 (Prince 2000: 4), these films resonate with an historical significance beyond themselves. Although the first known case of film censorship was reported as early as 1908, when *The James Boys of Missouri*--produced by The Essanay Film manufacturing Company--was charged with 'criminalizing' history (Hoberman 1998: 118), legal censorship of the movies was not sanctioned until 1915. In the case of *Mutual Film Corporation v. Industrial Commission of Ohio*, the Supreme Court denied the film medium First Amendment privileges on the grounds that it was purely a business venture. The cinema was thus acknowledged neither as a part of the mass media nor as an organ of public opinion (Lyons 1997: 7). This decision augmented both state and city censorship. It was in response to these threats that the motion picture industry proposed a system of self-regulation. Essentially, these systems were contracts which provided filmmakers with basic, informal rules that would determine the limits of film content. The first incarnation of the self-regulatory system was the "Thirteen Points" and twenty-six other subjects established by the National Association of the Motion Picture Industry (NAMPI) in 1916. In 1922 this system was modified into the "Don'ts and Be Careful," which was instituted by the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America (MPPDA), a trade organization led by Will H. Hays (formerly Postmaster General under Warren Harding' presidency). Finally, partly as a response to silent gangster films like Josef von Sternberg's *Underworld* (1927) and *The Docks of New York* (1928), the Hays Office formulated a revised MPAA Production Code in 1930 (Hoberman 1998: 118).[3] However, the industry was initially quite lenient in enforcing the regulations of the code, and from March 1930 to July 1934, as Thomas Doherty points out, "censorship was lax, and Hollywood made the most of it... More unbridled, salacious, subversive, and just plain bizarre than what came afterwards, they look like Hollywood cinema but the moral terrain is so off-kilter they seem imported from a parallel universe "(1999: 2). Due to increasing pressure from the Catholic Legion of Decency, in 1934 the industry eventually established the Production Code Administration Office, which was run by Joseph Breen and whose Seal of Approval governed film production in Hollywood until its disintegration in 1961. All of the film studios supported the Production Code,

[3] Although the Code was adopted in 1930, it did not come into effect until 1934.

which made it nearly impossible for filmmakers within the industry to try and release a film without the Seal of Approval.

Before the onslaught of the gangster trilogy, the Hays Office had been concerned mainly with issues of sex and nudity rather than with violence (Hoberman 1998: 118), a remaining priority both with the Production Code and the later rating systems. In a 2001 study of 125 censored Hollywood movies, Dawn B. Sova finds that only six were censored due to their violent content alone, whereas forty-nine were banned or cut because of their sexual subject (2001: 347-348).[4] *Scarface* belongs in the former category, which also includes Roland West's *The Alibi* (1929), James Whale's *Frankenstein* (1931), Brian de Palma's *Dressed to Kill* (1980), Oliver Stone's *Natural Born Killers* (1994), and Steven Spielberg's *Amistad* (1997). With regard to *Scarface*, The Hays Office attempted to curtail the production of the film both on account of the violence it portrayed, and because it insisted on a connection between public officials and criminal activities. In their evaluation of Ben Hecht's script, the Hays Office came to the following conclusion:

> Under no circumstances is this film going to be made. The American public and all conscientious State Boards of Censorship find mobsters and hoodlums repugnant. Gangsterism must not be mentioned in the cinema. If you should be foolhardy enough to make *Scarface*, this office will make certain it is never released (Lyons 1997: 13).[5]

Howard Hughes, the film's producer, nonetheless opted to make the film.[6] When upon its release New York State censors cut a large number of violent

[4] There are four different forms of film censorship: withholding a finished film from distribution and exhibition (the case of Peckinpah's *Straw Dogs* in the UK affords an example in this respect); overt censure, which implies the termination of a film project for political reasons; covert censure, abandoning a project due to a lack of funding; and post-censorship, the re-editing of a film prior to its theatrical release (Whitaker 1997: 1).

[5] The convention that divides the firing of a gun and its resulting impact into two separate shot segments illustrates the extent to which depictions of violence in Hollywood films prior to the 1960s were subject to extra-aesthetic concerns. In the event that censorship boards might delete the sequence, the convention protected narrative continuity by dividing the action into several shots. Thus, even though censors would remove part of a scene due to violence, there would still be sufficient material left to ensure that the film did not skip important plot information (Maltby 2001: 121).

[6] Howard Hughes was regarded as a threat to the established Hollywood studios. A self-made businessman and millionaire with movie-making ambitions, Hughes financed his own production company, Caddo, which thus became one of the very few – if not the only – independent American film company at the time.

scenes, Hughes filed a lawsuit against the censors and defeated them in court. However, *Scarface* was banned in Chicago and other cities despite the verdict. Hawks's film finally opened in New York on May 20, 1932, after several revisions had been made to accommodate the Hays Office. The most significant of these were the inserted indictment of gangsterism in the very beginning; a scene directed by Hawks's assistant Richard Rosson, in which politicians and officials convene to discuss how to fight crime in the city; and a change in the film's title in which the subtitle was added, which, according to Gerald Mast, was "merely a public-relations tactic" (1982: 73). The Hays Office had also wanted a different ending, one that depicted the apprehension and execution of Camonte, but the suggestion was abandoned before the film's release. Moreover, in Ben Hecht's script, according to Todd McCarthy, "the story was much harsher, more cynical about human motivations and behavior, more jaundiced about political realities, and more forthright than the finished film would be" (1997: 136). Although it became a box-office success, *Scarface* did not recoup its production costs quickly, which was mainly due to the fact that the film was still prohibited in some states even after its general opening. In Chicago, *Scarface* could not be seen until over a year after its release, and, as Carlos Clarens notes, the film was not widely distributed abroad (1997: 91). Some time after its initial theatrical run, Howard Hughes withdrew all legal prints of the film, making the movie difficult to view even in the United States until it was reissued by Universal Studios in 1979.

The altercation over *Scarface* and its condemnation by the Hays Office was an exception in the history of the censorship of violence and crime in the movies. Few films made between 1934 and 1968 (when the new rating system was first introduced) were denied a seal of approval, and legal censorship of violence in the movies declined similarly. It is notable that throughout the classical period the concern with violence appears to have been correlated more specifically with criminality, whereas from the 1970s the preoccupation shifted to violence and violent behavior in general (Lyons 1997: 14). Maltby, on the other hand, assumes that the censorship efforts of the early 1930s were targeted mostly at spectacle rather than narrative, since by convention the criminal was always punished in the end anyway (2001: 124). What makes the case of *Scarface* stand out is the fact that neither at the time nor later has violence been a particularly salient target for censorship struggles, be it from legal censorship boards or from the industry itself.[7] Seldom has a film been

[7] After the controversy surrounding the gangster movies of the early 1930s, the issue of screen violence was largely laid to rest until the late 1940s, when, as Hoberman observes,

singled out as objectionable due to its violence nature. The subject of violence has never incited as much protest in special pressure groups as have issues of censure in relation to the depiction of sexuality, ethnicity and religion on the screen. In this perspective, the treatment of Hawks' film by the Hays Office and by local regulatory councils appears unprecedented.

Despite the critical and cultural reputation that *Scarface* enjoys,[8] the film's most distinctive facet is the set of contradictions and ambivalences which animate the narrative. There is a gap between the statement in the preface and the intentions of the film itself; the images are suffused with a violence that, by being shown, conceals; the concern with contemporary social issues and didacticism indicated by the preface seems precariously at odds with the insular cartography of the gangster cosmos; and, most significantly, the ebullient bravado that is the trademark of the main protagonist betrays an hysterical underside which conceives masculinity as infantilism. All these internal contradictions expose a violence immanent to the process in which the film organizes itself as a textual event.

The unabashed disclaimer with which *Scarface* begins relates awkwardly to the subsequent narrative. Condemning both the activities of the gangsters and the passivity of the government, the interpolation anchors the film in an instructional promulgation that at least potentially trades in textual pleasure for didacticism. But the insert's ambiguity is evident in that, on the one hand, it functions as a self-conscious meta-frame which directly addresses the situation which is later enacted. On the other hand, because the segment itself is positioned within the parameters of the text, it is also a part of the film's total enunciatory design. Spectators

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Maxwell Shane's *City Across the River* (1949) was cut according to Production Code advice (1998: 120). This film was part of a small cycle of *juvenile-delinquency* films that flourished briefly around 1950, and which included titles such as Nicholas Ray's *They Live By Night* and *Knock on Any Door* (both 1949), Kurt Neumann's *Bad Boy* (1949) and Joseph H. Lewis' *Gun Crazy* (1950). Despite a few occasional hisses - spurned by the release *of The Blackboard Jungle* (Richard Brooks 1955), *Kiss Me Deadly* (Robert Aldrich 1955), *Rebel Without a Cause* (Nicholas Ray 1955), *Baby Face Nelson* (Don Siegel 1957), *Machine Gun Kelly* (Roger Corman 1958) *and The Bonnie Parker Story* (William Witney 1958) – film violence as a public and media topic would not reappear until the late 1960s with *Bonnie and Clyde.*

[8] Andrew Sarris characterizes the film as "the bloodiest and most brutal of the gangster films" (1972: 37). Thomas Doherty's verdict is that Hawks' film was "the most controversial and violent" of the 1930s cycle (1999: 148), and Cuban novelist and film critic Guillermo Cabrera Infante maintains that Hawks' opening sequence set the tone for the entire genre of gangster and crime films that came out of Hollywood in the 1930s (1996: 48).

perceive it intuitively as a documentary passage, or as a non-fictional fragment that precedes the fictional story itself. In principle, however, the disclaimer is inescapably caught within the same textual whole from which it attempts to distance itself, and this contradiction produces a complex interaction between different layers of narrative as well as between text, image and story. The segment reads:

> This picture is an indictment of gang rule in America and of the callous indifference of the government to this constantly increasing menace to our society and our liberty. Every incident in this picture is the reproduction of an actual occurrence, and the purpose of this picture is to demand of the government: What are you going to do about it? The Government is your government. What are *you* going to do about it?

The statement is one of the most direct addresses to the audience on the topic of violence in the history of American cinema, and the explicit link between fictional and historical incidents anticipates the modern re-enactment genre. Beginning with a definition of the film's content, the message ends with a provocative appeal to the viewer. Taken as a narrative framing of the diegetic action of the film, the opening titles serve to restrict the heterogeneity of its discourse.[9] What is striking about this short prolegomenon is the way in which it rhetorically integrates a moral dimension into the aesthetic system of the film. It appears as if the narration with one single brushstroke has clarified its ethical position; principle appropriates textuality rather than the other way around.

However, there is a sense in which the mission statement is duplicitous. By denouncing the violence in advance, the responsibility pertinent to showing it becomes less taxing. The disclaimer, as it were, acts as a form of inadvertent validation. Thomas Schatz, for instance, has argued that "the rhetorical power of Hollywood's narrative codes" in fact works against the didactic purpose of the opening statement (1981: 93). Schatz's assertion is not necessarily incorrect, but it requires some measure of modification. The narration of *Scarface* courts ambiguity not only in the juxtaposition of the disclaimer and the violence, but also---in a mereological sense--in the incongruent distribution of rhetorical value among each narrative instance and the text as a whole. It is certainly

[9] For an extended discussion of the preface's rhetorical relation to the narrative, see my "Straitjacketing the Image: Illocutionary Writing and the Obstruction of Cine-Semiosis in Hawks' *Scarface*."

possible to imply, as Schatz does, that *Scarface* tends to romanticize the figure of the gangster (1981: 93), but only in isolated segments of plot. As soon as we reach the story's conclusion, narrative mortification materializes as a relentless exposition and deglamorization of gangsterism. No less than the initial disclaimer is the scene where Camonte is killed an illustration of what Anne Nesbet sees as an authorial "framing" of textual violence. "Depictions of violence which are strangely or inadequately 'framed'," she writes, "tend to produce anxiety in an observing audience... [t]he urgency of critics' search for an authorial 'reaction shot' reflects uncertainty about how they are (or should be) reacting to the violence" (1992: vii). Although Nesbet refers to the work of Isaak Babel, the crux of her thesis - that the nature of the aesthetic point of view which underpins fictional violence is vital for our comprehension of the moral import of the depiction - easily appertains to film fiction as well (notice also her metaphorical reliance upon a film term to describe the process of authorial framing).

The policing of filmic perspectives as regards questions of morality and law has of course always been a paramount concern in Hollywood, to which the stipulations recorded in the 1930 Production Code testify. Articles 1 and 3 under "Principles of Plot" declare respectively that "No plot or theme should definitely side *with evil and against good*," and "No plot should be constructed as to leave the question of right or *wrong in doubt or fogged*" (in Mintz and Roberts 1993: 146, emphases in original). Thus, in the case of *Scarface*, it could be maintained that the MPAA distrusted the intrinsic morality of the film's story, since the producers were compelled to equip the narrative with the already much discussed preamble. Confrontational subjects like violence are acceptable in proportion to how convincingly the mechanism of authorial framing articulates a morally based censure of these subjects. However, extra-fictional disapproval is frequently insufficient as a means of audience persuasion. A case in point is Oliver Stone's largely unsuccessful attempt publicly to define his *Natural Born Killers* as an anti-violence text in the face of what many took to be the film's own evidence to the contrary.

The notion that particular moralities are embedded in the deep structure of crucial components of aesthetic form, like narrative, represents an intricate challenge to theories of film fiction, but it is one that has been confronted – perhaps obliquely – by certain critics. On a general scale, Jean-Pierre Oudart has diagnosed Classical Hollywood Cinema's preference for firm narrative resolution as a symptom of a cultural desideratum to reconfirm the hegemony of the dominant ideology (1971:

5). By re-establishing order, Hollywood films do not only achieve a kind of compositional symmetry in the Aristotelian sense but also an eradication of those subversive elements upon which the narrative movement depends in the first place. If this is a legitimate premise, one may allege that the canonic story format propounded and refined by Classical Hollywood films provides a structure which is inherently conservative and, moreover, oppressively homogenous. In a discussion of the economy of violence in the exploitation genre, D.N. Rodowick echoes to some extent Oudart's proposition in his identification of three global conventions which circumscribe the logic of violence in mainstream cinema. First, the violence of authority, never excessive but always modulated according to the degree of transgression, is invariably justified. Second, the cause of the transgression is assigned to an external agent, an anarchic other who fails to comprehend or conform to the moral rationality which defines the culture authorized to deploy "legal" violence (for Rodowick this is synonymous with bourgeois society). Third, the projection of unsolicited violence onto the other fractures the text so that "criminal violence is consumed by legal violence in a closed circuit established by the undermining and restoration of stable ideological positions" (1984: 322). For the audience, this narrative structure ensures an ostensibly legitimate and pleasurable experience of a film's violence, one that reinforces dominant beliefs and safeguards the viewers from becoming implicated in the onscreen action. Rodowick posits a design which necessitates some system of appropriate authorial framing, and it seems to be the occasional lapse of such a system that makes narratives such as Stanley Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange* (1971), Bret Easton Ellis' *American Psycho* (1991), and Rémy Belvaux, Amdré Bonzel and Benoît Poelvoorde's *Man Bites Dog* (1992) so disconcerting. When the Production Code presided over the dissemination of moving images, film violence mostly consolidated existing values.

In terms of characterization, a notable aspect of *Scarface* is the absence of the traditional hero. Although the establishment conventionally defeats the transgressor in the end, the film fails to develop its nominal heroes psychologically or even narratively. The viewers are never encouraged to engage with any of the representatives of the law because their role in the story is too insignificant. Their position in the story is not sustained sufficiently to invite any emotional investment. Hence, the viewers are left with Rodowick's anarchic other at the center of the narrative, a characterizational effect not unlike those in films such as *The Killing*, *The Wild Bunch*, and *Reservoir Dogs*. In a larger historical perspective *Scarface*

prevails as an early instance of the later tendency to foreground, and give narrative prominence to the figure of the criminal. However, Hawks's film never indulges in the fetishization of the criminal that we find in these later films. In *Reservoir Dogs* particularly, the viewers no longer merely sympathize with morally deviant protagonists, they become celebrants of their actions and behavior, amused by their dialogue and jokes, and are entertained rather than sickened by the violence.

The romanticization of violent perpetrators is a phenomenon that appears to emerge with the rise of the 1930s gangster films, at whose core, Thomas R. Atkins holds, "the roots of modern screen violence" may be located (1976: 7). It is perhaps inescapable that several critics have interpreted the fascination with crime and violence in the movies of this period as a response to the immoderation of the 1920s and to the crisis of the Depression years. Richard Maltby contributes one such symptomatic reading of the gangster flicks:

> [T]he brief cycle of gangster movies made during the 1930-31 production season was part of a broader representational strategy within Hollywood during the early Depression, by which overtly retrospective accounts of the excesses of the previous decade were staged as melodramatic reenactments of the rise and fall of moral chaos. Through such a strategy, Hollywood participated in a more general cultural attempt to account for the crisis as an alleged permissiveness of the Jazz Age (2001: 119).

According to William Faure, the 1930s became the decade for cinematic examinations of the nature and causes of social violence, examinations that cemented the impression that mass hysteria was a significant force behind the preoccupation with violence and criminals (23).[10] The movies of the early 1930s construe an ambiguous image of the gangster. Semiotically suspended, this image vacillates between romantic hero and cultural scapegoat. As Maltby contends, the gangster became "a significant part of

[10] According to Maltby, in the classical era the issue of violence was subsumed under the more general category of crime, a fact the Payne Fund Studies also confirm. It was only in the 1960s that depictions of violence came to be viewed as a distinct case (2001: 120). However, as most of the criminal activity seen in the gangster films involves violence, there is no reason to subjugate the prominence of violence to a matter of crime alone; nor is it inconceivable that the priority given to crime over violence is actually interrelated with the seeming "invisibility" of violence from an aesthetic point of view. The hypothesis, then, would be that it is not until violence becomes stylistically "excessive," as in Penn and Peckinpah, that it is considered a category of its own.

the sin that was being expiated after the Crash" (2001: 127). But this expiation insinuates an unauthorized undertow which covertly venerated the criminal. Gerald Mast has suggested that the world of *Scarface*, its didacticism notwithstanding, fails to interrogate the sociological structure that may be found to promote gangsterism. *Scarface* differs in this respect from LeRoy's *Little Caesar* and Wellman's *The Public Enemy*, which explore the social influences of unemployment and poverty in order to explain the rise of organized urban crime. In Mast's opinion, the point of Hawks' film is the realization that "gangsters and their brutal world exist because they are in fact thoroughly accepted by the very moral, political, and cultural life of modern America, which deplores them only in theory" (1982: 75). If Mast is correct, the more undisguised celebration of the gangster in *Bonnie and Clyde* may not be so much a direct product of the countercultural rhetoric of the late 1960s as yet another manifestation of a more fundamental and historically far-reaching adoration of a particular criminal archetype.

More than a reflection of the authentic gangster who inhabited the streets of urban America in the 1930s, movie characters like Paul Muni's Camonte may be seen as the celluloid pedigree of the figure of the modern criminal, who, as Joel Black reminds us, is principally an invention of the popular media (1991: 31). The main channel of distribution for the particular genre that Michel Foucault has dubbed "the song of murder" was the broadsheet (1975: 207-208). Genealogically, the murder song can be traced further through the confessions made by criminals at Newgate (subsequently collected in *The Newgate Calendar* and *The Tynburn Chronicle*),[11] the chronicles of the famous trials like François Gayot de Pitaval's *Causes célèbres et intéressantes*, and novels like John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera* (1728) and Henry Fielding's *Jonathan Wild, The Great* (1743) (Black 1991: 32). Throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, the criminal act of murder became an increasingly common and refined topic of domestic conversation. An aesthetic valuation of murder, and the conception of the murderer as a kind of artist, occurs in Diderot's *Le Neveu de Rameau* (written around 1761, but unpublished, though translated by Goethe as *Rameaus Neffe* in 1805), in Friedrich Schiller's essay "Reflections on the Use of the Vulgar and the Lowly in Works of Art" (1827), and finally, in De Quincey's "On Murder Considered as One

[11] See Keith Hollingsworth, *The Newgate Novel, 1830-1847: Bulwer, Ainsworth, Dickens, and Thackeray.*

of the Fine Arts" (1827).[12] As Black is anxious to point out, the criminals are never seen as artists per se; it is the fictional narrators who aesthetically reconstitute them as artists of murder (1991: 38).

Scarface features a classically deluded hero who is consumed and destroyed by his own hubris and lack of insight and self-control. Hecht's original draft delineates even more insistently these aspects of Camonte's character, who lives to see some of the concluding gunfire, but the Hays office objected to this suggestion as they saw it as a glorification of the criminal (McCarthy 1997: 139). Muni's performance is instrumental in exteriorizing and calibrating the excessiveness of the artistic murderer-as-gangster. Robin Wood finds that Camonte is defined by an "essential innocence," in that the primitivism of his behavior and mentality is that of a child (1981: 59). Grouping the film with Hawks' comedies (*Bringing up Baby* (1938), *His Girl Friday* (1940) and *Monkey Business* (1952)), Wood claims that the combination of farce and horror is indicative of the principal theme which structures *Scarface*: the psychology of total irresponsibility (1981: 67). Other critics have also emphasized the co-existence of such traits in Camonte's persona. Leland A. Poague, for instance, writes that the character's "exercise of power is simultaneously playful and brutal" (1982: 97), though Schatz proposes that "[his] primitive brutality, simple-minded naiveté, and sexual confusion made him a figure with little charisma and with virtually no redeeming qualities" (1981: 91). In the context of Hawks' oeuvre this portrayal of giddy irresponsibility becomes especially revealing. While the filmmaker in his comedies cultivates a certain laxity--the exhilaration accompanying the free play of solipsistic impulses--the heroes of his adventure films share a strong sense of communal accountability. The prototypical Hawksian protagonist represents values such as loyalty, courage and endurance. In *Scarface*, however, it is a strangely careless sensibility that informs the characterization of the main protagonist. Even the nihilism of Pike Bishop and his partners in *The Wild Bunch* falls short of the absolute lack of social commitment of a Tony Camonte. Nonetheless, one of the peculiar effects of Hawks' film, Wood writes, is that the viewers are still able to

[12] The previously mentioned writer Mishima Yukio and filmmaker Donald Cammell are examples of artists who both in their art and in their life have carried the romanticization of murder to its extreme conclusion. That there is still a continued interest in the tradition of the song of murder in contemporary popular culture is evident in the work of recording artists like Nick Cave, The Auteurs and Kristin Hersh. See Nick Cave's *Murder Ballads*, The Auteurs' *After Murder Park*, and Kristin Hersh's *Murder, Misery and Then Goodnight*.

commiserate with Camonte despite the unspeakable cruelty of his actions. Comparing the film to Jean-Luc Godard's *Les Carabiniers*, Wood proposes the following hypothesis: "[t]hough utterly different in style and method, both [films] have leading characters who consistently perform monstrous violent actions which the films never condone, yet who retain the audience's sympathy to the end, and for similar reasons" (1981: 58). The reasons alluded to involve the way in which the film presents its protagonist as if he were a young and naive child, as "an innocent immune from moral judgment" (1981: 58). But this narrative strategy does not mitigate the violence of Camonte: "[f]ar from weakening the statement of horror and despair, this intensifies it" (Wood 1981: 58).

Irrespective of the many putative references to historical events in *Scarface*,[13] the film's violence is essentially amimetic; the references neither imitate nor represent any extra-fictional reality, but address instead the transtextual tradition from which they emerge. "Despite this claim to social commitment," Eva Bueno, José Oviedo and Michael Varona write in an essay on the film, "*Scarface* posits its own 'reality', one which limits itself to gangsters and those who would censure, control or profit by their activities" (1989: 113). In turn, the generic and narrative codes in *Scarface* provide a quotational repository for many later films. Nicholas Ray's *Party Girl* (1958), Billy Wilder's *Some Like it Hot* (1959), Denys de La Patellière's *Du Rififi à Paname* (1966), Brian De Palma's remake *Scarface* (1983), as well as his *The Untouchables* (1987), and Joel Coen's *Miller's Crossing* (1990) are only some among a slew of texts that in various ways reference Hawks' film. The perhaps most mesmeric intercinematic quotation of *Scarface* takes place in anthropologist Eliane de Latour's *Bronx-Barbès* (2000), in which the criminal trajectory and self-image of a young West African hoodlum constantly are focalized through the characterizational tropes established by Hawks's and DePalma's texts. Although the transtextualism of *Scarface* is a long way from the thoroughgoing pastiche of a Tarantino, Hawks's film is still imbued with a host of generic and individual intertexts. Bueno, Oviedo and Varona apprehend the relationship between these and the film thus:

[13] As much a lurid promise as a warning, the disclaimer's statement that "Every incident in this picture is the reproduction of an actual occurrence" refers among other things to incidents like the St. Valentine's Day Massacre in 1929, when Al Capone and his cohorts murdered seven men from Bugs Moran's gang in Chicago, and the Siege of West 90th Street in New York in 1931, in which young criminal Francis "Two-Gun" Crowley was apprehended by the NYPD after a two-hour shootout (Hagemann 1984: 40-41).

> The opening sequence of the film establishes a set of semiotic texts which will continue to generate meaning throughout the movie in various innovative articulations. These semiotic texts, replete with their own internal grammars and contradictions are woven into the deep structure of the film through the use of specific cinematographic techniques (1989: 114).

Previous gangster and crime films from D.W. Griffith's short silent *The Musketeers of Pig Alley* (1912) to Josef von Sternberg's *Underworld* (1927, written by Ben Hecht) and *The Dragnet* (1928) had already provided a narrative template for the genre. Hawks's film appropriates these generic stock features rather profusely, which is perhaps what stirs a critic like Stephen Louis Karpf to speak of the "derivative" quality of the narrative (1973: 87). More particular to *Scarface* is a set of infective motifs culled from a variety of cultural and textual sources. One of the most immediately resonant is the sustained connection to *The Great Gatsby* (1925), whose thematic ideas underlie the development of both the story and the character of Camonte. There is a scene in *Scarface* in which Camonte tries to impress Poppy with his collection of silk shirts, a moment which, as Doherty has pointed out, directly acknowledges its subtext (1999: 148).[14] What appears to be Camonte's credo-- "Do it first, do it yourself, and keep on doin' it"--is an evident though distorted reformulation of the ethos of the self-made man so abundantly associated with Fitzgerald's novel, and the suave licentiousness of the gangster's world is highly reminiscent of the decadence of the former text. In *Scarface*, Doherty writes, there is a sense in which "the fresh green breast of the New World has rotted on the vine, the cultural metaphor of 1925 having become the economic report of 1932" (1999:148). Hawks's deeply ironic gesture, eloquently rendered in the billboard sign slogan "The World is Yours," seems to be as much a repudiation of the politics of the self-made man as a de-romanticization of the gangster figure specifically.

The scene in which the allusion to *The Great Gatsby* occurs is also revelatory of a major subtext that threads through Hawks's film. Caressing his silk shirts, Camonte performs a gesture which divulges the tension at the core of the film's codification of masculinity. As it turns out, Scarface is not only a childlike gangster, but an effeminate one as well. His vanity only matched by his brutality, Camonte is time and again portrayed as

[14] In an article which predates Doherty's text, Hagemann makes the same observation (1984: 33).

being obsessed with clothing and with his appearance (we first see him inside a barbershop). What is more, Camonte is highly unpredictable and he is given to exaggerated, uncontrollable bursts of emotion, traits which are conventionally associated with the feminine. Camonte's melodramatic tinge is somewhat aberrant within the context of a genre which, like the western, values masculine restraint. When juxtaposed with more paradigmatically phlegmatic gangsters like Vito Corleone in *The Godfather* or Tom Reagan in *Miller's Crossing*, Scarface's hysterical features emerge even more transparently. Camonte's persona, ambiguously situated between a vitalistic violence and an emasculated hysteria,[15] appears to illustrate the decentering of masculine subjectivity that David E. Ruth in his book on the invention of the gangster claims occurred with modernity. Implying a correlation between violence and particular forms of social change, Ruth writes: "[m]en celebrated aggression at the same time that the ongoing organization of society rendered aggression increasingly counterproductive" (1996: 92). The cycle of gangster movies that appeared in the early 1930s may be seen as a response to the transformations of the notion of masculinity which took place at the time. Muni's complexly engineered gangster could feasibly be read as a symptom of this transformation.

Some of the violence in *Scarface* is signaled not only by the cross symbolism but also by an accompanying aural cue, which is first heard in the film's initial sequence. In an unbroken, uncharacteristically elaborate tracking shot that climaxes with the murder of Castillo, we first hear Camonte's signature whistling, a recurring sound trope that surfaces shortly before he is about to kill someone. Hecht's script indicates that the melody Scarface whistles is a version of the popular 1930s song "Come Back to Sorrento," written by Ernesto de Curtis in 1904 (Hagemann 1984: 40), but as Carlos Clarens has suggested, the theme used in the film is that of the sextet from Gaetano Donizetti's opera *Lucia di Lammermoor* (1997: 93).[16] The musical excerpt was by no means chosen at random. Donizetti's opera, which is based on Sir Walter Scott's *The Bride of Lammermoor* (1819), revolves around the illicit love affair between Lucia and her power-mad brother Enrico's adversary Edgardo. There is much to

[15] In the present context I have in mind the quotidian rather than the academic sense of the term.

[16] Donizetti composed this work in 1835, and it was first performed in Naples in September the same year.

indicate that Cesca's relationship with her brother is substantially modeled on that of Lucia (Lucy Ashton) and Enrico (Lord Henry Ashton) in Scott's narrative. The text of Camonte's leitmotif, furthermore, translates as "What restrains me in such a moment?," a pithy rhetorical question whose self-reflexivity extends beyond the character of Camonte to implicate the film--and its perspective on violence--as a whole. In a conspicuous sense the text of the melody seems to mock the address to the audience in the beginning of the film, as if to defy the disclaimer's concerned tone with a rejoinder that is equally cynical and sinister. The phrase's temporal designation, "in such a moment," may be taken to denote not only the narrative time of violence but also the historical time of the film's production, thus restating the question in terms of who restrains the filmmaker in showing the audience images of violence. Finally, the aural trope circuitously supports yet another chain of transtextual signification. As Hawks himself discloses in an interview with Peter Bogdanovich, the conception of the relationship between Camonte and Cesca in plainly incestuous terms was a conscious decision on part of the scriptwriters,[17] as was the use of the Borgia family in late 15th century Italy as a model for that relationship (1996: 52). Hecht even refers to Cesca as a "Borgian wench" in his script (Hagemann 1984: 40).[18] Incidentally, prior to *Lammermoor* Donizetti had composed the opera *Lucrezia Borgia* (1833), and in Camonte's effortless whistling the connotations to the Borgia family thus meld with those to Scott's novel.

In a manner not entirely different from Tarantino's cannibalizing of 1970s soul music in *Reservoir Dogs*, *Scarface* achieves, alongside its narratively prominent quotation of high art, a seamless integration of a melange of references to popular music. These include Louis Armstrong and Kid Ory's "St. Louis Blues," which is heard on the soundtrack in the "Paradise" sequence, Sophie Tucker's "Some of These Days," (written by Shelton Brooks, 1910) to which Cesca dances in front of Rinaldo in the same sequence, and Cesca's performance of "Casey Jones" in the scene leading up to Rinaldo's murder. The last two anthems in particular portend the later destruction of Cesca and Rinaldo's relationship by

[17] Other scholars have also commented upon the incest motif. See for instance Clark Branson 71.

[18] Lucrezia Borgia (1480-1519) is reputed to have had an incestuous relation with her elder brother Cesare and her father Pope Alexander VI. The story of her life was the inspiration for Victor Hugo's prose play *Lucrece Borgia*, written in 1833, the same year as Donizetti completed his *Lammermoor* opera.

Camonte's consuming jealousy. Brooks's lyrics intone the imminent grief which befalls the speaker when s/he is left behind by a lover, and "Casey Jones" chronicles the tale of the eponymous train engineer who is killed in a wreck between Memphis and Canton in 1900.[19] More than mere ornamentation, these musical references both foreshadow plot events and help expand the intertexual range of the film.

All of these allusive patterns in *Scarface* participate in a process of textual self-consciousness, one that the extra-artistic amendments such as the opening disclaimer unwittingly enhance. By underscoring the film's relation to "reality," the insert's irrevocable self-consciousness paradoxically annuls it. As Iampolski has shown, acts of quotation--which in my view become signs of self-consciousness whether they are intended or not--work to promote semiosis at the expense of mimesis (1998: 30). Quotationality bolsters a text's amimetic aspects. In Hawks's movie there is an additional sequence in which transtextual citation and narrative self-consciousness converge in the same semiotic space. Some time after the Valentine's Day massacre, Camonte and his companions attend a theatre performance of Somerset Maugham's *Rain*, a morality tale first published in the collection *The Trembling of a Leaf* (1921).[20] Camonte has to leave in the intermission because his men have located the whereabouts of Gaffney, the leader of the gang that were murdered on Valentine's Day. However, Camonte orders one of his men to stay behind and watch the rest of the play so that he will learn which of her two suitors Sadie eventually chooses. The scene in which Gaffney is shot in a bowling alley precedes the scene at the "Paradise" restaurant. Asking for a light, Poppy chooses Camonte's match over Lovo's lighter, a move which, prefigured by the Maugham quotation, indicates that she has now left her former lover for Camonte.

In terms of narrative organization, violent action in *Scarface* is protracted globally but compressed locally. Brutal events take place at short and even intervals, but their duration is brief. Peter Brunette's description of the violent grammar of the Three Stooges films may apply

[19] There are several versions of this song, apparently conceived by Wallace Saunders and first published in 1902, and the one used in *Scarface* may be found in H.M. Belden & A.P. Hudson's *The Frank C. Brown Collection of North Carolina Folklore.*

[20] Coincidentally, Maugham's text was adapted for the screen and released only a few months after *Scarface*'s premiere under the direction of Lewis Milestone. Another version of the story had been made into the film *Sadie Thompson* (1928), by Raoul Walsh--a key director of gangster films, whose *White Heat* (1949) is much indebted to *Scarface.*

equally to that in *Scarface*: "this narrative of violence... acts as a kind of punctuation, a system of commas, periods, and paragraph breaks, for the syntax of the ostensibly plotted, 'larger' narrative" (1991: 176). For Donald C. Willis, this punctuation system asserts itself so vigorously that it in fact dissolves the film's proper narrative (1975: 132). In contrast, violence in another seminal film like *The Wild Bunch* is expansive within the sequence, but occurs less frequently and systematically between different scenes and parts of the film. The anatomy of the violent movement is dissected into detailed fragments, shown from different positions in space and prolonged in time beyond the actual story duration. Similarly, the images of violence establish their own temporality in the concluding shots of *Bonnie and Clyde*, which is non-concomitant with that of the represented event. The narration of *Scarface*, conversely, does not linger on its violent images. If Penn and Peckinpah conceive of violence as scenes, Hawks presents it as summary. Furthermore, the graphic imagery in *Scarface* is so cautiously conceptual that it hardly qualifies as carnage at all. Even a film like Kubrick's *The Killing*, which is fairly sanitary in this respect, suggests a certain level of explicitness in the depiction of violence which is absent from Hawks' film. On the other hand, violence in *Scarface* is highly prolific. In the course of the narration there are twenty-eight sequences which feature violent action, and these produce a structuring taxonomy which corresponds to the progression of narratively salient plot phases. Although *Scarface*'s violence is rarely developed into the kinds of spectacle found in *The Wild Bunch*, it nonetheless performs a primary aesthetic function in that it shapes and configures the narrative of the film. Violence in Hawks' film is not a consequence of unresolvable conflicts, a product of the action, but rather, the narrative action becomes a result of the violence.

The classical and hence extrinsic norms for visualizing violence that inform Hawks' narrative rely to a significant extent on abstraction, on a certain de-materialization of the body--in short, on contour rather than texture. As Nick Browne states, before the 1960s American movie violence was generally codified in "certain dramaturgical conventions... functioning most notably by suggestion (narrative indirection or simple symbolism), diminishment, or usually the elimination of the details of the actual wounding" (1999: 548). In the war films of the 1941-1945 period, James William Gibson describes what he terms "a highly abstract approach" to violence: "wounds are relatively painless and bloodless. No one screams in agonizing pain. Even death is discreet, signified by a small red dot on the chest" (1994: 22). Because the violence in *Scarface*--and by

extension that of the classical cinema as a whole--works by implication, it becomes in a sense even more threatening than the later, graphic depictions. Since an abstract approach omits the impact of violent force upon the body, both the nature and consequences of violence become an enigma, something that entices due to its inarticulate elusiveness. The effort toward ever more explicit portrayals of disfiguration can be conceptualized as an increasing desire to rid classical violence of its unbearable invisibility. When filmmakers like Peckinpah, Scorsese and Tarantino show us images of graphic bodily laceration, their spectacles function as an epistemological delimitation. The violence shown inscribes its own limits in the act itself, as if the images were saying: violence may be this, but at least it is nothing more. Classical cinema's approach to violence--because it involves abstraction and indirection--cannot guarantee such a delimitation, and this renders the impact of violence potentially infinite for the viewer.

The murder scene with which the narrative begins makes palpable the aesthetics of abstraction that defines the narration of violence in *Scarface.* Shot so that the camera stays behind in the adjacent room through which Camonte first enters, the murder is only shown to us in silhouette, as a configuration of shadows on a white canvas illuminated by the light. The violence thus achieves the texture of a pantomime, to borrow Infante's phrase (1996: 48). Here is how Gerald Mast elucidates the scene:

> we see the murder clearly and are capable of recognizing its brutality; but we do not experience that brutality fully, distanced by the murder's shadowy indirectness, so that we do not come to loath or detest the man who performs it. It is a shadow, a two-dimensional shape, not a man, who is the brutal murderer. Nor do we feel deeply for the shadow's victim, since the victim's moral and emotional life is as vague and blurry as the shadowy killer. (1982: 81)

We identify Camonte as the killer on account of his trademark whistling, but the sequence does not reveal his face. The killing initiates the narrative, and becomes an emblem of the ways in which violence is presented throughout the film; it takes place in off-screen space, or in spaces where all substance and detail are removed from the image. The lack of bodily definition in the moment of murder formalizes the violence and heightens its conceptual rather than its material suggestiveness. As I have already suggested, this stylistic technique is paradoxical, as it presents a visualization of a violent act that is not shown.

Conceptually, the violence in *Scarface* involves acts of intended erasure on multiple levels. There is the prudent erasure of gunshot wounds; the incessant wiping out of narrative characters; the expository titles in the beginning which, rhetorically speaking, in effect ban the ensuing imagery; and the political initiatives to prevent the film from being made in the first place. These acts of deletion find a stylistic correlative in the film's pervasive use of the X motif, a literalization of the multi-layered erasures the means of which is the mutilation of the textual body. Even the film's title gestures toward an awareness of an aesthetics of disfiguration in its adumbration of a Hawthornian badge of disgrace. The cross-shaped scar on the face of the main protagonist is an inscription of a violence, a de-facing, at the same time as it is also the symbolic locus to which all of the narrative's other X's refer back. Each individual manifestation of the emblem on the various spaces of the film, each instance of violation, enters into a metonymic relation with its conceptual source, the master scar on Camonte's face. A remarkable contradiction, the scar as a sign simultaneously performs the acts of imprinting and crossing out.

The form of *Scarface* is not prototypically Hawksian. As McCarthy concedes, such "stylistic flourishes" would not often be seen later in the director's long career (1997: 155). Whether he has been celebrated as one of the greatest American film artists (as he was by the *Cahiers du Cinéma* critics in the mid-1950s), or dismissed as a mere "entertainer" (which seems to have been the opinion of Raymond Durgnat's re-evaluation of the director (1977: 18)), two aspects of Hawks' practice are continuously repeated: his enormous versatility with respect to genre and subject matter, and the absence of an idiosyncratic film signature. Jean-Pierre Coursodon, however, points out that Hawks really worked within "a fairly narrow range of expression," always returning to the same plot and the same characters (1983: 160). He explains the director's unevenness as a consequence of the impossibly high standard he set for himself in his few true masterpieces, such as *Scarface*, *Only Angels Have Wings* (1939), *His Girl Friday* (1940), *To Have and Have Not* (1944), *The Big Sleep* (1946) *Red River* (1948) and *Rio Bravo* (1959). The originality of Coursodon's thesis derives from his readiness to maintain that Hawks's forte was his "stylistic richness" rather than his thematic fluctuations. Hawks' style, Coursodon argues, manifests itself as "an extraordinary density, a permanent tension generated by verbal and visual economy and the functional necessity of every shot and every cut" (1983: 164). Even Durgnat, who in the aforementioned article does his best to de-canonize

Hawks, admits that the director's style possesses a "pantherine grace" (1977: 16). In a more recent estimation, Larry Gross reinforces this view when he postulates that Hawks's style "is not a discernible, material phenomenon" but a "distinctive unity of a world that synthesises disparate rhetorical, verbal, visual and dramaturgical capacities" (1997: 13).

The film is also Hawks' most expressionistic--Jonathan Mumby labels the visual style of the film "documentary expressionism" (1999: 56)--evidence of which can be found in the movie's "violent chiaroscuro, tight grouping within the frame, and fluid, staling camera movement" (Clarens 1997: 93). It is a testament to the filmmaker's dexterity that the cross-shaped token so richly employed functions both as a symbol and as a stylistic trait within the diegetic world of the film. While on occasion Hawks uses the iconological figure quite self-assertively--as in the St. Valentine' Day massacre scene--at other times its incorporation is subtle and barely noticeable. There is the X on the wall in the police office early in the film, on Cesca's face in the balcony segment, on the curtains in the hospital sequence, and on Cesca's back as she dances in the Paradise restaurant. Poague writes that the cross metaphor--furnishing the story with "a point of moral reference on what might otherwise be seen as a remarkably immoral movie" (1982: 96)--also reflects the intertwining plot structure in which two paths of action, Camonte's rise to power and his incestuous relation to Cesca, together form an X.[21] The sign also elicits a sense of the impermissible, of the censured--connotations cross-fertilized with its capacity for signifying a lack of substance, identity, or information. A semiotic blank, the sign ultimately evokes the unfathomable void of death, but, even more significantly, it is also a disfiguration of the photographic image itself. This is also a kind of violence.

In the introduction to this article I suggest that the plotting in *Scarface* is hysterical, and in the closing section I intend for a moment to return to this idea. The murderous yet almost childlike psychopathology of the main protagonist, the narrative's ambivalence toward its own depiction of violence, and the film's fixation with contradictory acts of erasure and disfiguration--these elements all point to, and are suggestive of, a meaning

[21] The range of associations that the sign of the X carries could doubtlessly be extended. I have chosen to neglect the obvious religious resonance of the symbol, which is something that Robin Wood discusses in his book on Hawks. Hagemann, moreover, has suggested that the appearance of the symbol in the first shot resembles a Tau-cross, which in art is the insignia of St. Anthony the Great (1984: 31).

which can only be particularized on a larger interpretive level. Coursodon has proposed that what fuels Hawks' cinema is a "neurotic denial of death" (1983: 168), and it is this obsession that seems to provide the thematic corollary for *Scarface*'s formal mode. Death, Coursodon writes, "is the unacceptable, that which must not be shown" (1983: 168). Serge Daney, that seminal *Cahiers du cinema* editor and critic, detected this aspect of Hawks' poetics early. In a review of *Rio Bravo* (1959), he states that "[L]e rapport à la mort – passage par excellence – est toujours pensé ainsi: *un* mort, ce n'est jamais *la* mort et la mort, ce n'est jamais qu'être absent, plus précisément: être *hors-champ*" (1971 : 23, emphases in original). Hawks' relegation of death to zones off-screen space, to the out-of-frame, is an act of evasion that may account for the hysterical impulse that informs both the film's plot and characterization. Relying on a Lacanian reading of film violence, Guy C. Rittger finds that the totality of classical Hollywood cinema in fact is founded on a similar act of repression: "the libidinal economy of cinematic action film, prior to 1967, can be characterized as 'neurotic,' organized around potentially traumatic glimpses of a Real which remains precariously veiled" (1995: 357). The "Real" that Rittger has in mind here is the fact of mortality. If *Scarface* is a "death-dance," as Raymond Durgnat has stated (1977: 18), its choreography is tentative, its rhythm timorous. It is as if the filmmaker over-compensates for the repression of death on a conceptual level by reducing it to a spectacle on a literal level. In this regard, violence becomes the only possible method of dying because the event of violence itself is so horrible that it tends to re-direct our attention away from death. By repressing death, violence thus becomes a lugubrious means of coping with it.

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ULF DANTANUS

The theorisation of 'Oireland' continues apace. In literary and cultural criticism over the past 25 years or so, 'the ould country' has been re-read, re-thought, re-imagined, re-invented, post-colonialised, deconstructed and post-modernised many times over. In these critical exercises, the concept of modernity is often explicitly or implicitly deployed as both litmus paper and analytical coagulant. As always, Yeats managed to distil the national dilemma in a memorable phrase or sentence: "We Irish, born into that ancient sect / But thrown upon this filthy modern tide. ..." Yeats may refer to himself as "Irish," but his own complex and hyphenated Anglo-Irish identity was for ever in competition with the Irish-Irish sect, and the progress and fate of this confrontation is intimately interwoven with the history of early modernity at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries. The vexed question of an Irish identity and the conflict between tradition and modernity dominated much of Irish criticism during the 20th century.

The overall historical perspective adopted by this book includes both early and late modernity, but the focus is on developments in the Irish Republic in the second half of the last century. The publisher's blurb on the back cover refers to "a major paradigm shift," where "we have travelled from being a rural-based, religious, traditional, insular country, to a secular, highly prosperous economic hi-tech centre." Inside, Tom Inglis, in a first-rate article dealing with the role of the Catholic Church, makes the same point: "[Ireland] underwent rapid social change during the last half of the twentieth century, changing from a predominantly pre-modern rural society in 1951, to a predominantly modern, urban, industrial society by the end of the century." If these rubrics inadvertently manage only to suggest the separate ideas of departure and destination, and a journey from

one extreme to the other, the introduction and the articles in this book soon make clear that the real drama of this story resides somewhere in between. It is to the great credit of this collection of articles that it finds its voice in the ambiguous in-betweeness of various intermediate positions in betwixt these extremes. Ireland seems to have travelled more quickly and a longer distance through modernity than many other western countries, which makes the exploration of this experience an urgent and exciting project.

These articles originated as papers read at a conference held the University of Aarhus in 2001 under the aegis of The European Federation of Associations and Centres of Irish Studies. It may be that the original conference had a fair number of 'political' contributions, but in this collection there is much less of Irish politics and culture than there is of literature. The majority of the contributors give literature as their specialisms, and their articles cover a wide variety of disparate subjects and writers from the modern period of Irish literature. This places the onus on the introduction to undertake the task of moulding a framework that can hold the separate parts together. By and large, it is quite successful in doing this. The reader is introduced to the major issues in Irish modernity at the turn of the century from a mainly sociological point of view, and the editors set the terms of reference for the undertaking. They "have asked the contributors to keep the main theme of the book in mind in their analyses and discussions," but the degree to which this has been done varies considerably. To some extent, this is inevitable, and need not detract from the book's overall ambition. The chapter headings ("I: Taking Stock, II: Religion, Morality and the Modern State, III: Re-imagining Nation and History, and IV: Exploring Selves") reveal the major concerns of the project, even though some articles seem to stray further from its central aim than others. There is some tension between the socio-political-economic preoccupations of the introduction and the early parts on the one hand, and the literary essays on the other, but, in general, the whole book very competently reflects the cut and thrust of current debate in Irish studies.

The introduction surveys the scene from a largely sociological perspective. At times the editors rely rather heavily on specialist sources theorising the concept of modernity in general, but, at the same time, the immediate critical context of Irish studies is always kept within easy reach. The European perspective is emphasised, and the editors claim that the fact that the conference was held in Denmark and that many of the

contributors were not Irish "added a dimension of objectivity and distance to the essays which enhances their relevance." The point about "objectivity" may be a moot one, but if it serves to highlight the question of critical authority in Irish studies, it is well worth making. At times, international conferences in Irish studies have in the past seemed to privilege an Irish or Irish-American outlook.

Europe may be a vital testing ground for Irish modernity. But whereas, in modern times, most Irish people have known what Britain and America stood for, Europe was always a strangely face-less entity, devoid of emotion and never giving rise to the strong responses generated by the other two. That fact that Europe was not Britain may have stood it in good stead in Irish eyes, but the close historical relationship between Europe and Ireland in pre-modern times had been largely forgotten. In Brian Friel's *Translations*, set in 1833, Hugh's glorious put-down of the forces of the British Empire (in the person of Yolland), "[w]e tend to overlook your island," may reflect an earlier stage in the historical relationship between Europe and Ireland, but it held little real relevance for most Irish people during first three quarters of the 20th century. In the mid- to late seventies the EU first became the milch cow that bought Irish farmers their new Mercedes cars, and later, through Erasmus and Socrates (two good European names), mobility in Europe became a reality for Irish students. Gradually, Irish thought processes began to bypass Britain, and today Europe is closer to Ireland than ever before. This, however, does not mean that the Irish know what Europe is. The historian J. J. Lee takes a remark made by the Irish Tánaiste (Deputy Prime Minister) Mary Harney (that Ireland was "spiritually closer to Boston than Berlin") as point of departure for an interesting exploration of Irish images of Europe. He finds them vague and confused, and argues that "[i]t is high time that the study of Irish images of the rest of the world began to be subjected to systematic scholarly analysis. 'Europe' is the most daunting challenge of all in that respect, particularly as so many Irish images are inescapably intertwined with Irish images of England." England/Britain cannot be eradicated from the national Irish folk memory, but through a better understanding of Europe may come a more positive and less haunted understanding of England/Britain.

Dermot Bolger's novel *The Journey Home* has become a central text in contemporary Irish literature, and, whatever its purely literary merits, it has succeeded in repelling or attracting Irish readers according to where they stand in the revisionist debate. In Bolger's Irish eyes, Europe is now

threatening to become the new bogeyman of modernity, as bad an influence as England/Britain used to be. Michael Böss tries diplomatically to mediate between two contrasting Irish responses to Bolger by arguing that his early novels require a more impartial reaction, one that sees them as representing "a critical engagement with modernity through a literary appropriation of alternative fragments of an imagined past." This is a good example of the kind of input that a more European and less confrontational approach might have in Irish studies criticism. Europe also looms large in Elke D'hoker's treatment of intertextuality in John Banville's work, "The German Connection: John Banville versus R.M. Rilke," and (less largely) in an article by Elisabeth Delattre on Derek Mahon, "'From the cold interiors of northern Europe': The Poetry of Derek Mahon – Content, Intertext." In a sense, it is also Europe which has the last word in this book, in the form of an intriguing article by Eugene O'Brien on "Derrida, Heaney, Yeats and the Hauntological Re-definition of Irishness." O'Brien uses Derridean terminology to measure the level of Irishness in the two most important Irish poets in the 20th century. The national identity/identities of Yeats and Heaney, he argues, could be seen as more complex, more hybrid, more displaced, more pluralist, inclusive and diversified (more European?) than is sometimes suggested in the binarity of an essentialistic British-Irish context. Contemporary poetry is also covered by an article on Richard Murphy's historical poem *The Battle of Aughrim* (by Bernard Escarbelt), and Eiléan Ni Chulleanáin's relationship with her readers on the issue of "disclosure" is examined by Lucy Collins.

If there is a problem with Europe here, it might be to do with James Joyce, and his almost total absence from this book (he is mentioned once or twice). In *Engaging Modernity* Yeats is the man, but whatever Derrida's ghostly theories may unearth, he is, in the generality of things, perceived as a poet firmly rooted in the rural west of Ireland. Joyce, on the other hand, is associated with the city of Dublin and with continental Europe, and it would have been interesting to see both his Irishness and his European credentials tested as part of this book's engagement with modernity.

Early modernity is (again) represented by Yeats in Derek Hand's "'After the Big House': W.B. Yeats's *Purgatory*: All things Must Pass," an essay which is very much in the same conciliatory mould as many of the others. To Hand, *Purgatory* illustrates Yeats's post-nationalist phase, when he had become disillusioned first with Irish nationalism and then with his own alternative sense of identity in the Anglo-Irish tradition. Yeats was now ready for a less narrow definition of nationhood.

The work of the late Victorian novelist and poet Emily Lawless is a contested space in Irish lit crit. Yeats published some unkind words about her, but he also listed two of her novels among the best Irish books. When Ann Owens Weekes published *Irish Women Writers: An Uncharted Tradition* in 1990, Lawless's work was excluded "because of its sentimentality and sensationalism." From such critical contradictions and controversies Heidi Hansson composes "Writing the Interspace; Emily Lawless's Geographical Imagination," an essay which charts Lawless's fictional response to the Land War at the end of the 19th century. Hansson successfully denationalises the idea of the land and sees the intense relationship between the individual and the landscape in Lawless's novels as an exemplary and idealistic alternative to national boundaries and property rights. It is a solid, engaging and accomplished piece of writing. It is, therefore, a little disappointing to find that the argument is partly couched in more limiting and restrictive terms. Lawless, Hansson argues "conveys a particularly feminine, if not explicitly feminist, sense of nature." This is immediately contradicted in the claim that Lawless "demonstrates how an indecipherable landscape can function to shape an identity beyond class, gender and race distinctions." The fact is also that Heaney's work, as Eugene O'Brien suggested in his contribution (see above), has gone through a process of dissemination and internationalisation in terms of its attitudes to identity and the land, and Heaney has become, in Fintan O'Toole's expression, 'a poet beyond borders,' where the issue of the land has entered a postnationalist and more universal stage.

The issue of religion and secularisation plays a major role in any discussion about Irish modernity. Building on Pierre Bourdieu's sociological theories about social and religious fields and capital, Tom Inglis gives an account of the relationship between the Irish and their Catholic Church, historically and today. It should be read by anyone interested in the subject for its concise completeness and graphic clarity ("Catholics moved from seeing themselves as sinners to questioning the sin"). Catherine Maignant examines the effect of secularisation on individual belief systems and the potential end of the Irish Church. Spirituality, she concludes, will survive in other shapes and forms (pantheism, veneration of Mother Earth, neo-pagan beliefs and practices, or in André Malraux's mystical ideas about a "*réenchantement du monde*"), and it may, in any case, be too early to write off the Catholic Church. The impression of change and flux in the field of religion in contemporary Ireland is counterbalanced by Eamon Maher's "cursory glance" at the way

Catholicism is portrayed in John McGahern's work. Maher finds McGahern's treatment "balanced and fair," and the article may serve as a reminder of the role that the church traditionally played in Ireland, but the argument feels a little slight compared with the verve and vigour of some of the other articles.

Clare Wallace's essay on "Versions and Reversions: the New Old Story and Contemporary Irish Drama" is a little short to do full justice to the scope and variety of Irish drama today but does manage to give a taste of some current concerns. Not surprisingly, "[t]he theatrical phenomenon that is Martin McDonagh" gets an essay to himself (by Michal Lachman). It deals, notionally, with the theme of "Happy and in Exile?" in his 'Leenane Trilogy,' but is more of an effort to come to terms with the nature of McDonagh's theatre and his place in the tradition of contemporary Irish drama. The novelty and distinctiveness of McDonagh's theatre is undeniable, and it will be interesting to see what happens if/when the novelty wears off. Synge and Quentin Tarantino are often mentioned when discussing McDonagh's work. Synge is now one of the classic Irish dramatists. Tarantino's place in film history at the moment is a little more uncertain.

At times the copy editing in *Engaging Modernity* seems a little uneven ("national or even continental boarders [sic]," page 199), and the book has no index, which is a major shortcoming in an academic work. Some articles feel a little peripheral to the main concerns of the book, but are, in themselves, good examples of current interests in Irish studies and deal with important contemporary writers. Although they are not openly referred to in *Engaging Modernity*, the memory of Daniel Corkery's three classic criteria of Irishness, nationalism, land and religion, which he posited in 1931 as a contrast to the English national being, still haunt any discussion about Irish history and culture. Ireland has moved on since then, and these concepts have taken on new and different meanings under pressure from modernity and from modernism/postmodernism. For anyone interested in the progress of the Irish journey through modernity, this book will make an excellent guide.

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CONTRIBUTORS

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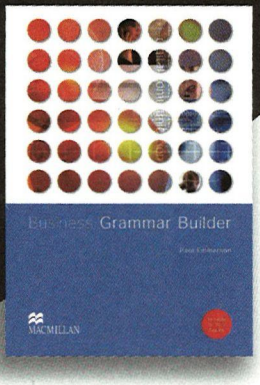

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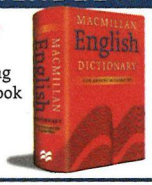

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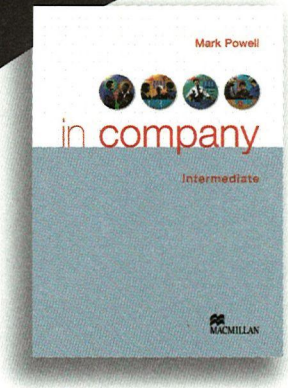

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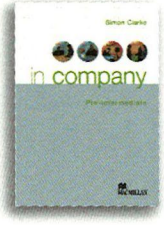

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