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Ælfric's Abjection of the Virgin Mary

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Ælfric composed not one, but two, homilies on the occasion of the Virgin Mary's Nativity. The first, *De sancta Maria*, appears in the second series of *Catholic Homilies* (Godden 1979), while he wrote his second, *Nativitas sanctae Mariae virginis* (Assmann 1889), ten years later, as an addition to the first series of *Catholic Homilies*. While one might reasonably expect a homily for this feast day to include information on the early life of Mary as well as a discussion of the day's prescribed gospel text, in both cases, Ælfric's approach to Mary's girlhood extends beyond even the most extreme caution. His writing suggests an unwillingness to consider the multifaceted aspects of her saintliness that emerge from this apocryphal story because of concern for the heretical implications that presenting this type of sanctity might cause. The texts that he writes to honour her Nativity therefore have only the most tenuous connection to her girlhood. However, instead of simply presenting the ideas with which he is comfortable, he interweaves rationalisations of his cautious approach into the actual texts themselves. From the information that Ælfric provides in his rationalisations, combined with the manner in which he mediates Mary's youth, we can view his writing choices as being profoundly influenced by what Julia Kristeva terms the abject.

Kristeva describes abjection as a revolt against something that is close to us, but cannot be assimilated into us, and causes worry because of the strange relational position that it therefore occupies with us (1982: 1). The thing that is abjected is not an object, but rather a border. However, as Kristeva says, "we may call it a border; abjection is above all ambiguity. Because, while releasing a hold, it does not radically cut off the subject from what threatens it" (1982: 9). The abject also accompanies all religious traditions where it "persists as exclusion or taboo (dietary or other) in monotheistic religions" (Kristeva 1982: 17). From a more strictly psychoanalytical point of view, there are three main categories of abjects: food, waste, and signs of sexual difference (Grosz 1990: 89). With each of these categories, there is a "need to purify the abject," (Kristeva

1982: 17) but with the category of sexual difference, this need has rather drastic consequences. Not only is the archaic mother and her powers of generation feared (Kristeva 1982: 77) but the Mother herself (as well as death) must be abjected as a necessary stage in order for the speaking subject to enter into the Symbolic order of signification. When discussing forms of discourse, we can follow Grosz in saying that "abjection is the underside of the symbolic. It is what the symbolic must reject, cover over and contain" (1990: 89).

As a specific object of abjection, the paradoxical subjectivity that is at the heart of the Virgin Mary's sanctity causes major unrest. As a virgin who, despite her humanity, is elevated 'above all other women' because of her miraculous maternity, she is utterly unique, and it is precisely this extraordinary status that makes her an appropriate object of veneration for ordinary women (and men). The fact that she therefore participates in both the human and the divine (just as her Son does) is, after all, one of the reasons why the faithful sought her intercession with God. Without even contemplating the increased 'biographical' information that apocryphal traditions afford her, her status simply as a woman therefore cannot ultimately be assimilated into orthodox Christian ideologies concerning how regular, non-saintly men and women ought to be.[1] Although these ideologies obviously do not associate her with any of the antifeminist qualities that the Church Fathers so often ascribed to

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[1] The terms orthodox and apocryphal have evolved a great deal as applied to Christian practice and belief. While orthodox has a more consistent meaning of being that which is in accordance with an accepted or authoritatively established belief system, apocryphal first referred to writings that did not belong to Jewish and early Christian canonical literature. With regard to the Virgin Mary, we can thus define all extra-biblical details about her life as apocryphal. However, as the legends about her began to spread and take root in various literary traditions, they necessarily became an accepted part of the belief systems from which these traditions emerged. In places where these legends encountered no resistance, we can thus say that they gained an orthodoxy that they did not have initially. Details concerning the Virgin Mary that were originally apocryphal, for example, the idea of her perpetual virginity, can also be accepted by traditions that, in rejecting the veracity of the majority of her extra-biblical narratives, belong to a more orthodox point of view. It is therefore important to remember that these two terms do not necessarily have to be applied in a mutually exclusive manner. For the sake of clarity, however, in this article, the term orthodox refers to that which is accepted as the truth by the Church Fathers and later men of the Church such as Bede, and the term apocryphal refers to that which causes great ideological concern to these authorities. A narrative's biblical or extra-biblical origin is thus only one aspect, and not the defining principle, of its designation as orthodox or apocryphal.

women,[2] her sex nevertheless prevents them from representing her according to the same parameters as saintly men. Such a position of intra-categorical limbo, for a historical woman, is not innate, even for a minority of extraordinary women; it is only within a narrative that presents itself as biographical reportage that this type of woman can exist.

Mary, therefore, never crosses over into the realm of masculine privilege, but rather only exists as an alien presence in close proximity to it. At the same time, the orthodox tradition abjects, not rejects her, because her position, disturbing as it is, provides a necessary border between the feminine and the masculine. In this way, she protects masculine privilege from the taint of feminine Otherness, but the fact that she ultimately embodies neither of these positions makes her a troubling gatekeeper to say the least. From this point of view, apocryphal traditions and texts that describe Mary beyond the limits of her biblical origins are, in turn, potentially disruptive to the biblical Word as the definitive site of the monolithic, masculine universality. Thus, while Ælfric is extremely concerned with excluding apocryphal details of the Virgin Mary from his own 'proper' Nativity narratives, we find that he never excises their presence from his texts entirely.

It must first be stated that Ælfric assigns Mary a very high place indeed within the Heavenly Family, as he praises her and her powers of intercession with Christ at every opportunity, which we see more fully demonstrated in his second Nativity homily. In both of his Nativity homilies, however, Ælfric explains that the main reason behind his avoidance of apocryphal materials on the Nativity of Mary is his fear of error, or heresy. In the first homily, he simply states his concern about saying too much, "þy læs ðe we on ænigum gedwylde befeallon" (l. 6) (lest we fall into any error), while he is more explicit in the second: "Ac we nellað secgan be þære gesetnysse / of ðam gedwylde, þe gedwolmen setton / be hyre acennednysse..." (ll. 5-7a) (But we do not wish to recite the narrative of the heresy which heretics composed about her birth...). Clearly, Ælfric equates Mary's position as a type of frontier between the feminine and the masculine as a dangerous place that must be avoided. Not even crossing over, but simply approaching, this frontier leads him to an uncomfortable proximity to the heretical errors that would surely result

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[2] For example, women were said to possess apparently inherently lustful, deceitful, envious, garrulous, and deficient natures.

if aspects of the feminine were allowed to mingle with, and thereby infect, the ostensible centrality of the masculine.

In a discussion on heresy in the later medieval period, Swanson notes that, because Western Christianity developed and transformed greatly between 1100 and 1500, "heresy was almost a necessary concomitant" (1994: 280). Although he does not deal specifically with the Anglo-Saxon period, Swanson also states that "given the fragmentation within medieval Christianity, and the tensions and weaknesses of its doctrinal and ideological development, the frequent uncertainty about the boundaries between the orthodox and the unorthodox is unsurprising" (1994: 282). Given the fact that Ælfric was writing in the midst of the changes brought about by the Benedictine Reform, and was also a proponent of the Reform itself, his fear of 'error' is not surprising. Indeed, it is particularly relevant to his views on the Virgin Mary, as one of his chief reasons for writing his homilies is to disseminate what he believes to be proper Christian doctrine to those who are less learned than himself.[3]

However, as much as it might seem reasonable for Ælfric's concerns simply to be a product of his times, the circumstances that surround their origins are much more complex. On the one hand, critics such as Milton Gatch (1977: 102-3), Stanley Greenfield and Daniel Calder (1986: 71), and Malcolm Godden (1978: 102) describe Ælfric's work as specifically reacting to the unorthodoxies of what they believe to be the earlier anonymous Old English homilies that do not share his concerns about Mary. On the other hand, however, there are major discrepancies with such points of view. First, Clayton points out that it is not possible to date the anonymous homilies to the pre-Reform period (1990: 261-3). Second, she points to source studies as the key to deciphering the origins of Ælfric's attitudes towards Mary, suggesting that "Ælfric's acceptance or rejection of these texts seems... to have been guided more by his knowledge or ignorance of authorities which called a text into question than by individual discrimination" (1990: 262). O'Leary offers a similar argument when she points out that Ælfric did not condemn all apocryphal materials (1999: 15). On the contrary, O'Leary shows that Ælfric was familiar with and occasionally used the apocryphal *Acts of the Apostles* as sources in his writings (1999: 16). She comments further that "Ælfric regarded apocryphal compositions about the closest followers of Jesus in a positive light and, for the most part, was by no means reluctant to utilise

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[3] We can also describe heresy as an abject, as it is necessary in order to define orthodoxy, but simultaneously repelled by orthodoxy as erroneous.

them," and that Ælfric's hesitations about Mary "should not be taken as a blanket-criticism of apocryphal material" (1999: 18 and 19). It seems, therefore, that the rationale that informs Ælfric's creation of Mary in his Nativity homilies originates from previous authors' definitions of what is acceptable and unacceptable source material.

It is also interesting to note that Ælfric's ideas about acceptable source materials and proper Christian conduct were not, however, always followed by others, especially in the compilation of collections of his works. Contrary to his wishes, we find the unauthorised insertion of homilies in manuscripts that contain Ælfric's work where he recommends three 'silent days' on Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Sunday: days on which Ælfric maintained that Church custom prevented preaching (Hill 1985: 118). Evidence, for example, exists from MS Bodley 340 that the compiler ignored Ælfric's desires and included anonymous homilies for the three silent days (Hill 1985: 120). Nor was this an isolated incident, given the fact that "at the end of the eleventh-century, marginal notes made in Worcester registered vigorous protests against Ælfric's First Series pronouncement that church custom forbade the preaching of homilies on the three 'silent days'" (Ibid). In light of Clayton and Hill's observations, we can therefore suggest that Ælfric's abjecting approach to the Virgin Mary is most likely more demonstrative of his own idiosyncratic, individual style of composition and use of source materials than of any compositional trends across Old English homilies as a genre during the time in which he wrote.

Despite his fears, however, Ælfric still incorporates apocryphal material concerning Mary into his homilies. Keeping in mind that the Bible includes no information whatsoever concerning Mary before the Annunciation, it is surprising that Ælfric says as much about her as he does in his first homily:

> Hwæt wylle we secgan ymbe Marian gebyrtide. buton þæt
> heo wæs gestryned þurh fæder. and ðurh moder. swa swa oðre
> men. and wæs on ðam dæge acenned þe we cweðað Sexta Idus
> Septembris; Hire fæder hatte Ioachim. and hire moder Anna.
> eawfæste men on ðære ealdan æ.   (ll. 1-5)

> (What shall we say about Mary's birthday, except that she was
> conceived by father and mother as other people, and was born on the
> day we call the eighth of September. Her father was called Joachim
> and her mother Anna, pious people according to the old law.)

In telling us that Mary was born like other people, Ælfric may be refuting, not only the Christologically apocryphal story of her birth, where God intervened with her aging parents to tell them that Anna would indeed become pregnant, but also the extrapolations from this story where some people therefore claimed that Anna (like Mary) was also subjected to a miraculously virginal conception and birth. However, the fact that Ælfric also recounts the date of Mary's birth, as well as her parents' names, and the fact that they were pious people, suggests that he himself is using heterodox information in his attempt to supply the minimal amount of information for this feast day. That he then quickly concludes this homily rather abruptly, claiming that he does not even want to risk a discussion of the day's gospel because it is too difficult to explain, demonstrates the great extent to which he can neither entirely include nor expunge Mary from his narrative. He abjects Mary's girlhood similarly in his second Nativity homily. Although he includes the details of Mary's parentage, he also states that he does not want to relate the stories of her birth or death, which "halgan boceras forbudon to secgenne" (l. 9) (holy scholars forbade [us] to relate). First simply dangerous, and then explicitly forbidden, this aspect of Mary is a problem of which he seemingly cannot rid himself.

Despite his difficulties with incorporating apocryphal material on Mary which should, logically, contribute to a Nativity homily in her honour, Ælfric does not banish it entirely. In fact, there is one apocryphal detail concerning her that he is happy to use over and over: her supposed girlhood vow of virginity.[4] Instead of engaging, therefore, with the possibility of emphasising multiple aspects of her saintly youth, his abjection of this leads him to use her virginity as an exegetical tool. Ælfric's highly selective employment of this particular apocryphal detail in his work thus characterises her paradoxical subjectivity according to a socio-sexual trait that the Church expected of all unmarried women, be they saints or laywomen. Such an emphasis on a trait that she shares with many other women, instead of one that, however extraordinary it may be,

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[4] In maintaining that the Virgin Mary vowed to remain a virgin when she was still only a girl, Ælfric expresses a view which, in light of the fact that it is extra-biblical, is technically heterodox. Also, although the idea of Mary's continual virginity even after Christ's birth was first developed by Church Fathers such as Ambrose, Jerome, and Augustine, it first gained popular prominence in the thirteenth century, and was made official Church dogma only in the twentieth century. In maintaining that Mary made a vow always to remain a virgin, Ælfric was therefore clearly ahead of his time.

emphasises the speculative difference of her youth from that of other young women, provides him with the ideological safety that he requires.

We can see how Ælfric creates Mary not as an individual figure, but as a static tool, in the second section of his second Nativity homily, which is entitled *De sancta virginitate*.[5] As an in-depth comparison of Ælfric's text with Augustine's source text has already been carried out (Clayton 1986), it can suffice to add here that Ælfric's creation of Mary in this manner allows him to expound greatly upon the theme of virginity as it metaphorically relates to Christian faith and the Christian Church. Given the fact that speech is a factor of great importance in creating female sanctity in general, it is interesting to focus on how the speech that Ælfric ascribes to her participates in his exegesis. Unsurprisingly, perhaps, there is only one example. When discussing Mary's surprise at the angel's announcement that she will conceive Christ and her reply to the angel of "Hu mæg ðis gewurðan, þonne ic weres ne bruce?" (l. 195) (How may this be, as I know not man?), Ælfric comments:

God mihte hi hatan,   þæt heo heolde hyre mægþhad
to swilcere acennednysse,   ac wæs swa þeah
hyre willa mærlicor,   þæt heo wolde hyre sylf
hyre mægðhad behatan   þam heofonlican gode,
ærðan þe heo wiste,   hwæne heo acennan sceolde,
and wæs gode gehalgod   be hyre agenum cyre,
na swylce geneadod   mid nanre hæse,
eallum mædenum to bysne,   þe on mode geceosað,
þæt hi for Cristes lufon   on clænnysse þurhwunion.
(ll. 198-206)

(God could have commanded her that she should preserve her virginity for such a birth, but her desire, however, was more glorious, in that she herself wished to vow her virginity to the heavenly God, before she knew to whom she would have to give birth, and she was consecrated to God by her own choice, not compelled thus by any command, as an example to all virgins who choose in their minds that they will persevere in purity for love of Christ.)

Here we can see how Ælfric uses Mary's biblically sanctioned Annunciation speech for this exegesis of a portrayed girlhood decision which is in itself apocryphal. In this passage he presumes to fashion both

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[5] Ælfric's source for this is Augustine's own *De sancta virginitate*, which can be found in Migne 1844-80.

her mind, as well as God's, as he speaks for both of them, inserting his own rationale in order to explain the circumstances that surround her supposed vow of virginity.[6] This type of contextual, positional abjection of Mary's Nativity therefore gives him total control to position her (and God!) as he wishes.

It seems, therefore, that abjection is the only means by which Ælfric can approach the Virgin Mary's girlhood, given his extremely conservative views on the appropriateness of presenting this aspect of her to the public. However, even this may be granting her too significant a role in Ælfric's process of homiletic composition. It has already been stated that much of what Ælfric accepted or rejected was based on the opinions of the Church men with whose works he was already familiar. His difficulties in mediating Mary's saintly girlhood may therefore have more to do with a desire that he himself remain within the well-defined, fixed ideological circumstances that the previous works create. Ælfric's concern with developing too many different aspects of Mary's character can thus be said to be only of secondary importance to him, as the primary importance revolves around staving off the threat that such potentially unsettling differences pose to his own positionality within the patristic economy of meaning.

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[6] This passage is a direct translation from *De sancta virginitate* (Clayton 1986: 304). So while the ideas expressed in it are not technically his own original work, the fact that he recreates them through translation into Old English still grants him authorship of and responsibility for them, especially as he is often quite free in his adaptation of Augustine's source text.

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Quite As a Degree Modifier of Verbs

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1. Introduction

Research on the interpretations of *quite* (e.g. Bolinger 1972; Paradis 1997; Klein 1998) shows that it is a contextually flexible item which selects for gradability. This paper takes a closer look at this item in order to account for its readings as a degree modifier of verbs[1] in written British English[2]. The theoretical framework of the study is broadly within cognitive linguistics (Langacker 1987), and as a starting point, Paradis's (1997, 2001) model of degree modifiers is used. She shows that there must be a relationship of harmony between the bounded/unbounded mode of construal of *quite* and the adjective it applies to. Following Paradis (1997, 2001), I propose that a similar relationship of harmony exists between the bounded/unbounded mode of construal of *quite* and the verb it applies to. To exemplify, if the mode of construal of the collocating verb is clearly bounded, then *quite* functions as a bounded 'maximizer' in expressing the exact correspondence with what is expressed by the verb, as in *I quite understand*[3], but if the mode of construal of the collocating verb is unbounded, then *quite* functions as an unbounded 'booster'[4], as in *I quite*

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[1] Here and throughout this paper, I use the term 'verb' to refer to the main verb in a verb phrase that *quite* takes scope over as a degree modifier.

[2] The data are based on a random sample of 500 occurrences of the degree modifiers *fairly*, *rather* and *quite* in the written part of the British National Corpus (BNC). See http://www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk/index.html [4 May 2005] for facts about this corpus. For the time being I have only included written data but it is my intention to extend the study to spoken data as well.

[3] All examples are mine unless otherwise stated.

[4] The term 'maximizer' is a notional term which can be encoded, for instance, by the items *completely* and *quite*. A maximizer has the role of expressing a maximum degree, i.e. reinforcing totality. By contrast, the notional term 'booster', which can be encoded, for example, by the items *very much* and *quite*, has the role of expressing a relative, reinforcing degree (cf. Table 1).

fancy this. The hypothesis is that the configurational reading of the verb that combines with *quite* on a particular occurrence of use selects and constrains the reading of *quite*. The hypothesis is tested against data based on 31 random occurrences of *quite* as a modifier of verbs[5] in the written part of the BNC (British National Corpus). From these, a number of representative examples are chosen in order to illustrate the use of *quite* as a degree modifier of verbs. The corpus data are used for illustrative purposes only.

2. Identifying and explaining the readings of quite as a degree modifier of verbs

The purpose of this section is twofold: (i) to identify the interpretations of *quite* as a degree modifier of verbs, and (ii) to explain these in terms of their conceptualization, which reflects the presence or absence of boundaries. However, before dealing with these two purposes, I take a brief look at the structure of the present study.

2.1 Presentation of the study

I will start by giving the established readings of *quite* according to the *Cobuild* (1987) dictionary definitions. This is done in section 2.2, which will also shed light on some semantic aspects of *quite*. In section 2.3 I present the conceptual basis of the readings of *quite* within the framework of cognitive linguistics (Langacker 1987). For a model of degree modifiers, Paradis (1997, 2001) is used. Subsection 2.3.1 takes up the general theoretical background of the study, whereas subsections 2.3.2 and 2.3.3 go into details about what is required in terms of configurational meaning from those adjectives and verbs which accept *quite*: subsection 2.3.2 deals with the modes of construal of degree modifiers and their adjectives, whereas subsection 2.3.3 discusses how boundedness is conceptualized in those verbs that combine with *quite*. The actual use of *quite* as a degree modifier of verbs in the BNC data will be examined in section 3, and section 4, finally, concludes the study.

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[5] All the occurrences of *quite* as a degree modifier of verbs in the data amount to 95 cases. Of these, 31 cases occur in affirmative contexts and 64 in negative contexts. For reasons stated in section 2.2, only affirmative contexts are included in the present study.

2.2 *Quite* and meaning

As a starting-point, I have drawn the established readings of *quite* from *Cobuild* (1987). The entries and illustrations are given below. I have indicated the synonyms of *quite* by means of square brackets in each entry.

a) *Quite* [rather; relatively] means to a fairly great extent or to greater extent than average, e.g. He was *quite* young... He calls *quite* often... I *quite* enjoy looking round the museums.

b) *Quite* [–] is used to emphasize the complete degree or extent to which something is true or is the case, e.g. I stood *quite* still... You're *quite* right... I *quite* understand...Oh I *quite* agree.

c) *Quite* [entirely] is used with a negative to say that something is almost the case or is very close to the state or situation stated; it is also used to reduce the force of the negative, for example for reasons of politeness or lack of certainty, e.g. It doesn't look *quite* big enough... It somehow didn't *quite* fit together... I'm not *quite* sure.

d) *Quite* [exactly, just] is used with a negative to express doubt and hesitancy about information, the nature of something, or how to act, e.g. I don't know *quite* how to deal with that one... Dr Benson went out to Canada, I don't know *quite* where... No one knew *quite* where to start.

e) *Quite a* or *quite some* [phenomenal] is used to say that a thing or person is of a very unusual, exceptional, or exciting nature, e.g. It was *quite* a sight... My heavens, you have *quite* a memory. I'd forgotten that song.

f) You say *quite* or *quite so* [–] to express your agreement with what someone has just said, e.g. 'It does a lot for police-public relations.' – '*Quite.*'

As mentioned in *Cobuild* (1987), *quite* expresses two different degrees, i.e. that of a moderate degree, synonymous with *rather* (entry a) and that of a maximum degree (entries b and c). It is reasonable to assume that entries (b) and (c) refer roughly to the same maximizing degree, even though a synonym is missing in entry (b). One way to test this is to replace *quite* in these entries with one suitable member of its cognitive synonyms, e.g. the

maximizer *completely*[6], as exemplified by *I stood completely still* (entry b) and *I'm not completely sure* (entry c).

The above binary division of the readings of *quite* roughly corresponds to the one given in Quirk et al. (1985: 589-599). They include *quite* as an intensifier[7] both in the group of 'amplifiers', i.e. they scale upwards from an assumed norm, and in the group of 'downtoners', i.e. they scale downwards from an assumed norm. Within the group of amplifiers, *quite* functions as a 'maximizer' denoting the upper extreme of the scale, as in *I quite forgot about her birthday* (Quirk et al. 1985: 590-591). Within the group of downtoners, *quite* functions as a 'compromiser' and as a 'diminisher'. Compromisers have "only a slight lowering effect" and they tend "to call in question the appropriateness of the verb concerned", as in *I quite enjoyed the party, but I've been to better ones*. Diminishers scale downwards and roughly mean "to a small extent" (Quirk et al. 1985: 597-598).

As is evident from *Cobuild* (1987), entries (c) and (d) differ from the other entries in terms of negation: in entries (c) and (d) *quite* is in the scope of a negative element, which is not the case with the other entries. When *quite* is preceded by such an element, I interpret it as having either (i) an approximating role, or (ii) a maximizing role. The approximating role of *quite* is illustrated, for instance, by the Cobuild-example *It somehow didn't quite fit together* (entry c). Here *quite* approximates a required limit and indicates that something falls short of that limit. There is, however, a suggestion that the thing in question is not far from reaching the limit; there is thus an implication of 'almost' present, as *Cobuild* (1987) notes. *Quite* hence softens the force of the negative, as *Cobuild* (1987) points out. When *quite* has this approximating reading, it is often placed immediately after the negating particle *not*, as in *It ...didn't quite fit...* (entry c). By contrast, in the maximizing reading of *quite* (entry d), there seems to be no such tendency as regards the placement of the negating particle and *quite*. As *Cobuild* (1987) notes, *quite* is in these examples

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[6] *Completely* and *quite* in its maximizer reading represent a type and a degree of synonymy that Cruse (1986: 265—291) terms as 'cognitive synonymy'. This means that they are not completely interchangeable but they can express minor differences of meaning. These differences, however, do not affect the truth value of the proposition (Paradis 1997: 66—71).

[7] An 'intensifying subjunct' is related to the semantic category of DEGREE and it "indicates a point on an abstractly conceived intensity scale; and the point indicated may be relatively low or relatively high." (Quirk et al. 1985: 589).

synonymous with *exactly* and *just*, and it thus has the role of a focus item stressing precision.

Quite has some of the characteristics of a focusing item also in entry (e), where it seems to reveal how the entity in question has reached the limit of 'qualification' in terms of what is required from a prototypical example of such an entity. In the Cobuild-example *My heavens, you have quite a memory. I'd forgotten that song* (entry e), *quite* appears to emphasize the high degree of centrality that can be linked to the nominal *memory* in this context. At the same time it also seems to enhance the positive evaluation that is implied. *Quite* can, however, also intensify emotionally strong nominals that are negatively loaded, as in *It was quite a shock*.

Finally, entry (f) in *Cobuild* (1987) exemplifies the role of *quite* as a response item which is used in isolation without a head and which expresses agreement with the previous speaker.

The above survey of the established readings of *quite* illustrates how many of its readings are linked to completeness and perfectivity. Diachronically, there has been a relation between *quite* and completeness, even though there has also been a parallel weakening of its grading force, which has resulted in the two present-day readings of *quite*, i.e. the reading of a maximum degree and the reading of a moderate degree (*OED* s.v. *quite*). From the list of entries from *Cobuild* we can see that when *quite* combines with verbs (illustrations in entries a–d), the interpretations, regardless of the fact whether the context is negative or affirmative, result in these roughly two different values of degree. However, in order to capture the constraints that govern the semantic harmony between *quite* and its verb, it is useful to focus on affirmative contexts only (cf. entries a–b in *Cobuild*). The reason for this is that when *quite* occurs in the scope of a negative element, it tends to be less selective in its choice of verbs. Bolinger (1972: 227) demonstrates this, for instance, with the verb *swallow*: the completive feature of *swallow* can be denied (i.e. *I didn't quite swallow it*) but it cannot be intensified affirmatively (i.e. **I quite swallowed it*). I found similar cases in my corpus and they are illustrated by examples (1) and (2):

(1)   It *didn't quite work*. BDFSM 1518

(2)   It *cannot quite manage*. BDH8R 3967

The examples (1) and (2) show how it is acceptable to use *quite* with the verbs *work* and *manage* in negative contexts but in the corresponding affirmative contexts, i.e. ?*It quite worked* and ?*It quite manages*, this seems not to be the case.

2.3 The conceptual basis of the readings of *quite*

The purpose of this section is to outline the conceptual basis of the readings of *quite* within the cognitive linguistic framework (Langacker 1987). For the model of degree modifiers, Paradis (1997, 2001) is used. I will first provide the general theoretical background of the study (subsection 2.3.1) before going on to identify what is required in terms of configurational meaning from those adjectives and verbs that combine with *quite* (subsections 2.3.2 and 2.3.3, respectively).

2.3.1 Theoretical background

Cognitive linguists consider language to be an essential part of human cognition. From this follows that there are clear correspondences between conceptual structures and linguistic structures, and that linguistic knowledge is processed like any other knowledge by means of cognitive abilities. I argue that linguistic items map onto concepts in a cognitive network. This network consists of domains, which roughly correspond to all kinds of complex cognitive structure that we store in memory. There are two types of domains, i.e. the content domain and the schematic domain (Paradis 1997: 48–49). Content domains represent meaning proper (i.e. linguistic meaning and encyclopaedic meaning), whereas schematic domains provide the representations for various configurative templates. Both these domains are conceptual in character and reflect the way we perceive the world. Apart from the conceptual domains, there is an operating system which consists of different types of construals which are imposed on the domains by speakers and addressees in actual language use. Construals represent ways of structuring conceptual domains in terms of highlighting those conceptual areas that are relevant for the meaning that is intended in each particular context. They reflect four general cognitive processes, namely (i) the choice of *Gestalt*, (ii) the focusing of attention, *salience*, (iii) the ability of making judgements, *comparisons*, and (iv) the selection of speaker *perspective* (Croft & Wood 2000: 55–56). It should be noted that the construals are kept apart only by definition; in

actual use they are highly interrelated and dynamic, thus enabling contextual flexibility.

When linguistic items activate conceptual patterns, they give rise to lexical meanings. What domains are evoked and which types of construals are imposed on the domains, determines whether there is semantic contrast or not. Open word class items foreground concepts from the content domain, whereas function word items, like degree modifiers (e.g. *quite*), foreground concepts from the schematic domain, such as boundaries and scales.

2.3.2 The modes of construal of degree modifiers and their adjectives

The present section deals with the configurational meaning of degree modifiers and their adjectives, i.e. the modes of construal that they map onto. Previous research on degree modifiers of adjectives (Paradis 1997, 2001) has shown that it is possible to predict from the modes of construal of the combining items the harmony of a match. If the degree modifier and the gradable adjective map onto the same type of construal, the result is a successful match, as in the combination *quite/very long*, but if they map on to different types of construals, the result is disharmonious, as in **completely long*. Langacker (1988: 102) calls this mechanism 'valence': "a valence relation between two predications is possible just in case these predications overlap, in the sense that some substructure within one corresponds to a substructure within the other and is construed as identical to it". Paradis (1997, 2001) shows that the relevant construal operation in the degree modifier-adjective combinations is the assignment of boundaries, i.e. the dichotomy of boundedness and unboundedness. She divides degree modifiers[8] into two main types schematically: those that map on to the mode of construal of totality (i.e. non-scalarity) in terms of grading and those that map on to the mode of construal of scalarity in terms of grading (Paradis 1997: 28; 64–66). Her classification is presented in Table 1.

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[8] Her definition of a 'degree modifier' encompasses all forms and functions of degree words that modify a head (Paradis 1997: 15).

Totality modifiers		
reinforcers	Maximizers	*quite, absolutely, completely, perfectly, totally, entirely, utterly*
attenuators	Approximators	*almost*

Scalar modifiers		
reinforcers	Boosters	*very, terribly, extremely, most, awfully, jolly, highly, frightfully*
attenuators	Moderators	*quite, rather, pretty, fairly*
	Diminishers	*a (little) bit, slightly, a little, somewhat*

Table 1. Degree modifiers divided according to their degree force, i.e. reinforcing or attenuating, and according to their type of grading, i.e. totality or scalar (Paradis 1997: 28).

Totality modifiers, such as the maximizers *quite* and *completely*, relate to a definite and precise property of the adjective: the meaning of the adjective either applies in a certain situation or it does not. For instance, there is usually no arguing about what *quite/completely identical* means. On the basis of the 'either-or' conception, totality modifiers are considered to be bounded in terms of their mode of gradability. By contrast, scalar modifiers, such as the booster *very* and the moderator *quite*, are unbounded as to their mode of gradability, since they do not indicate a fixed value of the adjective they apply to but specify a range on an open-ended scale of the quality involved. They are thus associated with the 'more-or-less' conception. Both among totality modifiers and scalar modifiers there are those that reinforce and those that attenuate some value of the collocating adjective. The groups of totality modifiers and scalar modifiers can thus be said to form an imaginary continuum, respectively, which extends from the minimum degree force-item (e.g. diminisher in the scalar modifier group) to the maximum degree force-item (e.g. booster in the scalar modifier group). The members of each of

these paradigms denote more or less the same degree[9]. As Table 1 shows, *quite* occurs as a degree modifier of adjectives both in the maximizer paradigm and in the moderator paradigm. When we determine the correct degree reading of *quite*, it is necessary to pay attention to contextual clues, which will often, but not always, disambiguate the two readings[10].

Like degree modifiers, gradable adjectives can be conceptualized in terms of their mode of configuration. Paradis (1997: 63) divides them into three groups, which are based on two criteria of gradability, i.e. (i) the type of degree modifier the adjective may combine with, and (ii) the type of oppositeness involved in the conceptualization of the adjective. Based on these criteria, gradable adjectives fall into three groups which are presented in Table 2.

Defining features	Scalar adjectives	Extreme adjectives	Limit adjectives
Degree modifiers	scalar	totality	totality
Oppositeness	antonymy	antonymy	complementarity

Table 2. Criteria for the division of adjectives into scalar adjectives, extreme adjectives and limit adjectives (Paradis 2001: 53).

Scalar adjectives (e.g. *good*, *long* and *interesting*) form the most typical group of gradable adjectives since they fulfil all the criteria which are traditionally used for gradability (Paradis 1997: 64). Furthermore, they manifest all the features that Cruse (1986: 204) defines as typical features of antonyms. Apart from being fully gradable, i.e. being able to occur in the comparative and the superlative, the members of an antonymic pair denote some variable property, such as length, speed or merit. When intensified, the members of a pair move in opposite directions along the scale which represents degrees of the relevant variable property. For this reason, examples like *very heavy* and *very light* are more widely separated on the scale of weight than *fairly heavy* and *fairly light*. Another feature of

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[9] In this respect they are 'cognitive synonyms' (Cruse 1986: 265—291); see footnote 6.

[10] Out of context it is impossible to say what *quite* means. Even with contextual clues it may sometimes be difficult to interpret the correct reading of *quite*. In such cases the intonational patterns of the speaker may be helpful.

antonymic pairs is that the members of a pair do not strictly bisect a domain but there is a region on the scale relating to a range of values of the variable property which does not apply properly to either term of the pair. A statement like 'It is neither long nor short' refers to such a region and is, therefore, not paradoxical. Antonyms and scalar adjectives can thus be conceptualized in terms of 'more-or-less', i.e. in terms of an unbounded range on a scale. In consequence, they combine with scalar degree modifiers, as exemplified by *quite/very/fairly long*.

Extreme adjectives (e.g. *excellent, huge* and *brilliant*) are like scalar adjectives in that they are antonymic and conceptualized in terms of a scale. On this scale, however, they do not denote a range like scalar adjectives do, but an ultimate point. In this respect, they can be described as implicit superlatives in that they express a superlative degree of a particular feature. On the basis of this characteristic, then, extreme adjectives are considered to be gradable bounded adjectives. They thus combine with totality modifiers, as exemplified by *absolutely excellent* or *totally brilliant*.

Finally, limit adjectives (e.g. *dead, true* and *identical*) are only marginally gradable as they fulfil only one criterion of the criteria traditionally used for gradability, i.e. they accept degree modifiers (Paradis 1997: 64). Most limit adjectives have what Warren (1992: 19) calls 'fixed reference' language users tend to agree both on the meaning of the adjective and on its application. A *dead body* is usually a *dead body* for all language users. This characteristic reflects the complementary nature of limit adjectives: they are conceptualized in terms of 'either-or'. They can thus be described as being associated with a definite boundary and, in consequence, they combine with totality modifiers, as exemplified by *completely dead* or *almost identical*.

Most gradable adjectives have a biased reading of gradability. For instance, the biased reading of *clear* out of context is as a limit adjective, since its meaning can be paraphrased as 'not unclear'. It is the content domain that governs the bias for, in this case, the bounded 'either-or' construal. Sometimes, however, the adjective *clear* can be coerced into an unbounded mode of construal, as in *By now I have a (fairly) clear idea about the recipe Benjamin used*. In this example the moderator *fairly* restricts the unbounded interpretation of the adjective *clear*. Paradis (1997: 59) terms such a process 'contextual modulation' and points out that it takes place within monosemy, i.e. it does not usually alter the established or biased meaning of the adjective.

The way the gradable adjective is conceptualized in terms of its mode of construal determines its choice of a degree modifier: adjectives with unbounded modes of construal (i.e. scalar adjectives) tend to select degree modifiers with unbounded modes of construal (i.e. scalar modifiers); whereas adjectives with bounded modes of construal (i.e. extreme adjectives with a scalar conceptualization and limit adjectives with a non-scalar conceptualization) usually choose degree modifiers with bounded modes of construal (i.e. totality modifiers). Once a particular degree modifier is chosen, the actual use of this degree modifier restricts the interpretation of the adjective and thereby makes the interpretation of the adjective unambiguous (Paradis 1997: 162). Figure 1, which is adopted from Paradis (2001: 54), demonstrates the patterns that degree modifiers and adjectives form in terms of gradability, oppositeness and boundedness.

SCHEMATICITY IN ADJECTIVES

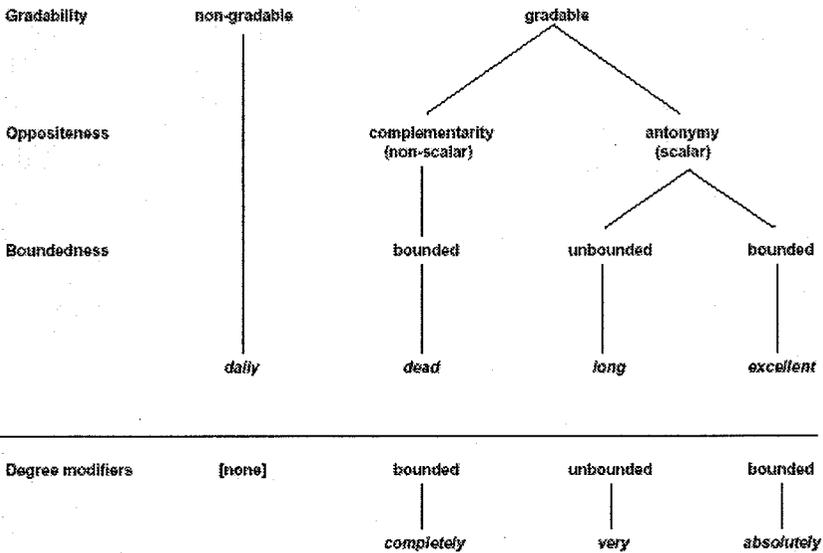|				
Gradability	non-gradable		gradable	
Oppositeness		complementarity (non-scalar)	antonymy (scalar)	
Boundedness		bounded	unbounded	bounded
	daily	dead	long	excellent
Degree modifiers	[none]	bounded	unbounded	bounded
		completely	very	absolutely

Figure 1. The non-gradable and gradable dichotomy and the three basic types of boundedness (Paradis 2001: 54).

Figure 1 suggests that the degree modifier *quite* can combine with any type of gradable adjectives. It co-occurs with unbounded adjectives when it is used as a moderator (e.g. *quite long*), whereas it combines with two

types of bounded adjectives when it is used as a maximizer: either with extreme adjectives with a scalar conceptualization, e.g. *quite excellent*, or with limit adjectives with a non-scalar conceptualization, e.g. *quite dead*.

2.3.3 How is boundedness conceptualized in those verbs that combine with quite?
This section focuses on the relationship between *quite* and the verbs it combines with in terms of their conceptualization.As the preceding survey of degree modifiers of adjectives based on Paradis (1997, 2001) shows, the relevant construal operation in degree modifier-adjective combinations is the assignment of boundaries, i.e. the dichotomy of boundedness and unboundedness, which in adjectives is linked to scalarity/non-scalarity and gradability in general. Gradability, however, is not only a feature of adjectives but it can also be found in nouns and verbs (see e.g. Bolinger 1972). What is shared by all gradable phenomena is that they have a feature which varies in intensity and which can be reinforced. The mode of gradability in nouns, i.e. the dichotomy of unboundedness and boundedness, is traditionally associated with countability (mass nouns/countable nouns), whereas in verbs it is usually related to aspectuality[11], encompassing the type of situation expressed by the verb (the *aktionsart*) as state/activity verbs or events (continuous/non-continuous, or telic/ non-telic)[12]. State and activity verbs tend to function as unbounded entities (comparable to mass nouns), whereas event verbs usually function as bounded entities (and hence like count nouns). As Brinton (1998: 37) exemplifies, event verbs typically give rise to count nouns (e.g. *arrive* > {*an*, *much} *arrival*; *perform* > {*one*, *a great deal of} *performance*), while state and activity verbs characteristically yield mass nouns (e.g. *live* > {*a quantity of*, *one} *living*, *run* > {*much*, *a**} *running*). It should be noted again, however, that such generalizations can be overridden by the way a particular situation is conceptualized. For example, some state and activity verbs can give rise to both count and mass uses of nouns, depending on how the situation is construed. To

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[11] I adopt Brinton's (1998: 38) definition of aspectuality which encompasses both aspect and *aktionsart*. By 'aspect' is meant "the view taken of a situation, either as a whole/complete (perfective) or incomplete/ongoing (imperfective)". By '*aktionsart*' is meant "the inherent temporal nature of a situation, whether static or dynamic, punctual or durative, and telic (having a necessary endpoint) or atelic".

[12] The term 'situation' is used in this paper to refer to "a conceptual relationship which involves a relation and participants and contains a temporal dimension" (Dirven & Radden 1999: 549).

illustrate, the verb *run* can yield both a mass noun, e.g. *much running*, and a count noun, e.g. *a run*, with a clear difference in meaning: the mass noun *running* in, for example, *Too much running will do you no good*, is conceptualized as an unbounded, internally homogeneous situation, a segment of which seems to represent the whole situation. By contrast, the count noun *a run*, in, for instance, *After a five-mile run, Benjamin was exhausted*, is conceptualized as being heterogeneous and as having well-defined boundaries, i.e. a beginning and an end.

One traditional way of dealing with verbal aspect is Vendler (1967), which proposes four situation types. They are summarized in Brinton (1998: 38), on which Table 3 is based, with one omission.

Class	Aspectuality	Examples
1	states (static, durative, nontelic)	*e.g. live, know, hate*
2	activities (dynamic, durative, nontelic)	*e.g. swim, play*
3	accomplishments (dynamic, durative, telic)	*e.g. grow up, run a race*
4	achievements (dynamic, punctual, telic)	*e.g. arrive, die, win a race*

Table 3. The Vendler-classification of situation types

When dealing with these, one should note that the whole verb phrase enters into the expression of *aktionsart*. For instance, the verb *run* in *Benjamin ran* is an activity verb, whereas in *Benjamin ran home* it is an accomplishment verb. In consequence, many verbs belong to more than one class by virtue of having several related uses. On the basis of dynamicity, one can distinguish three classes: activities, accomplishments and achievements. When defining these classes, I make use of *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy* (henceworth *CDP*; s.v. *action verb*), if not stated otherwise.

An *activity verb* (e.g. *drive, laugh*, or *meditate*) describes something that goes on for a time but has no inherent endpoint. It is possible to stop doing such a thing but it is not possible to complete it. It is, however, possible to have done it as soon as one has begun doing it. An *accomplishment verb* (e.g.

paint a fence, solve a problem, or *climb a mountain*) describes something that goes on for a time toward an inherent endpoint. Since it takes a certain time to do such a thing, one cannot be said to have done it until it has been completed. Accomplishments are thus bounded by their inception and completion points (Croft 2000: 13). Frawley (1992: 183–184; 192) calls accomplishments 'resultatives' and shows that they are ambiguous with *almost*. For example, in *Benjamin almost painted a fence* the interpretation depends on what *almost* has in its scope, i.e. either the inchoative process itself – the event did not occur at all –, or the end-point – the event is claimed to have occurred but was not quite completed. An *achievement verb* (e.g. *reach a goal, drop an egg, hear an explosion*), in comparison, describes (i) the culmination of an activity (e.g. *finish a job*), (ii) the effecting of a change (e.g. *fire an employee*), or (iii) undergoing a change (e.g. *forget a name*). Such an activity does not go on for a period of time but it may be the culmination of something that does. Croft (2000: 11) observes that in an achievement only the first point of the result state is profiled, i.e. the point which represents the transition from the rest state to the result state. The focus is thus on the fact that a boundary has been passed; it is not on the new state. This does not, however, block the semantic interpretation of the result state having been reached.

Dirven & Radden (1999) survey situation types within a cognitive linguistic framework and they employ the following three criteria when distinguishing between them: (i) the property of *changeability*, as defined in terms of involving a change or not; (ii) the property of *duration*, as defined in terms of the length of time which an event takes, and (iii) the property of *boundedness*, as defined in terms of limitation in time by means of a beginning and an end. Dirven & Radden (1999: 550) argue that changeability is the most important property of situations because "[a] change in a situation attracts our attention more than anything else". They classify events as changeable situations and states as non-changeable situations. Dirven & Radden (1999: 552) illustrate, among other things, that the two main situation types differ in terms of their temporal structure: events allow one to ask by means of a *when*-question for the moment in time at which something happened (e.g. *When did she smash the winning ball?*) whereas states do not (e.g. **When does she love tennis?*).

Previous research (e.g. Hay, Kennedy & Levin 1999; Tsujimura 2001) has shown that the traditional ways of dealing with verbal aspect (e.g. Vendler 1967) do not account for the behaviour of various degree verbs. From the point of view of the present paper, what seems to be problematic

is the mismatch in terms of conceptualization between *quite* and the degree verb it combines with. To illustrate, *quite* expresses a maximum degree, i.e. is conceptualized as bounded, when combining with some state verbs, which are usually conceptualized as unbounded, as they tend to last indefinitely. The examples *I quite agree/understand*, i.e. 'I completely agree/understand' (cf. entry (b) in *Cobuild*; see section 2.2) illustrate such problematic cases. In order to approach the problem and to survey in general how boundedness is conceptualized in those verbs that combine with *quite* I have used Kennedy & McNally (1999) as a starting-point, which considers the relation between event structure and the scalar structure of gradable properties associated with the situation. Kennedy & McNally (1999: 174) demonstrate that deverbal adjectives with totally closed scales correspond to 'incremental theme'[13] verbs. They argue that there is

> a homomorphic relationship between the events they denote and (some measurable property of) their incremental theme arguments ... [I]t is precisely this homomorphism that is responsible for the scalar properties of the derived adjectives, because it provides a template for building a closed scale, specifically a scale with a lower endpoint that corresponds to the minimal (sub)event involving (a minimal part of) the incremental theme or the relevant measurable property, and an upper endpoint that corresponds to the maximal event involving (all of) the incremental theme/property. (Kennedy & McNally 1999: 174)

To illustrate the close correspondence between deverbal adjectives with totally closed scales and incremental theme verbs, Kennedy & McNally (1999: 175) provide examples such as *a partially eaten meal* and *a fully understood problem*. In *a partially eaten meal*, the meal is the incremental theme in the situation described. There is a mapping between the progress of the event of eating and a property of the meal, i.e. the quantity/volume of the food that it includes/holds. In consequence, the degree to which the meal can be said to be eaten corresponds to the degree to which it has progressed through an event of eating. Since it is possible to define a beginning point and an endpoint for this event (i.e. when the meal is untouched and completely eaten, respectively), it is also possible to

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[13] Dowty (1991) describes the entity undergoing the incremental change the incremental theme. For instance, in *mow the lawn*, the lawn is the incremental theme since it is possible to determine the progress of the entire event by looking at the state of the lawn.

identify a lower bound and an upper bound for the scale of "eatenness" of the meal. A totally closed scale is illustrated in Figure 2:
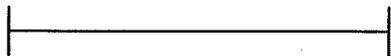

Figure 2. A totally closed scale, as illustrated, for instance, by *a partially eaten meal* and *a fully/well understood problem* (examples by Kennedy & McNally 1999: 175).

In comparison, the participle *understood* (e.g. *a fully understood problem*) does not, at first sight, seem to correspond to a prototypical incremental theme verb, as Kennedy & McNally (1999: 179) point out. However, if we consider how it is possible to measure the progress in our understanding in terms of the quantity of the facts/issues that we understand, then the relation to an incremental theme verb seems perhaps to be clearer. Other examples of totally closed scale-participles that I can think of are, for example, *a fully known fact* and *fully agreed standards*. The fact that these participial adjectives are combined with a proportional modifier like *fully* indicates that the adjectives are associated with totally closed scales. Such adjectives also tend to accept the modifier *well* (Kennedy & McNally 1999: 173).

A participial adjective like *needed*, by contrast, does not refer to a totally closed scale since it does not accept *fully*, as exemplified by *?a fully needed rest* (Kennedy & McNally 1999: 174). It does, however, accept the modifier *much*, as in *a much needed rest*, which in Kennedy & McNally (1999: 173-176) is linked to a scale that is only partially closed, i.e. it is closed only on the bottom end. Such a scale is illustrated in Figure 3:
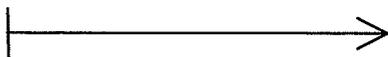

Figure 3. A partially closed scale, as exemplified by *a much needed/wanted rest* (examples by Kennedy & McNally 1999: 174-176).

The lower endpoint corresponds to a minimal (sub)event or state which must be reached before the adjectival property can be applied to its argument (Kennedy & McNally 1999: 176). For example, an entity cannot qualify as needed until it shows some minimal need relation to someone/something. According to Kennedy & McNally (ibid.), such a structure on the adjectival scale mirrors the origins of participial adjectives like *needed/wanted*: they are often derived from atelic verbs which describe situations where there is no maximal event or state. In the same way, there is no natural upper endpoint on the adjectival scale.

When we look at the scale types, i.e. a totally closed scale and a partially closed scale, and the degree force they seem to evoke[14], we can discern two analogies: (i) an analogy between a totally closed scale and an expression of a maximum degree, which is reflected by the closed upper boundary of the scale; and (ii) an analogy between a partially closed scale and an expression of a relative reinforcing degree, which is reflected by the open upper boundary of the scale. When we apply the analogies to the type of grading denoted by degree modifiers of verbs, we can see that the closed upper endpoint of a totally closed scale corresponds to the notion of a 'maximizer' which can be encoded by, for instance, *completely* or *quite*, as in 'I quite/completely agree/understand'. In these examples the momentary events of agreeing and understanding can be conceptualized as involving a transition from the states of not agreeing/not understanding to the states of agreeing/understanding. The transition can be conceptualized as a definite boundary the passing of which is foregrounded and on which *quite/completely* focus as maximizers. Since there is an event, i.e. a changeable situation, involved, it is possible to ask for the moment in time at which something happened, e.g. *At what point did he completely understand/agree?* (cf. Dirven & Radden 1999). This moment in time can be conceptualized as a definite point.

As for the partially closed scale, it appears to correspond to the notion of a 'booster' which can be encoded by, for instance, *very much*, and which has the role of expressing a relative reinforcing degree. As discussed earlier, Kennedy & McNally (1999: 174–176) connect the participial adjectives *needed/wanted* with a partially closed scale but the corresponding verbs *need* and *want* do not seem to harmonize with *quite*, as exemplified by *?Benjamin quite needs/wants to do this*. However, *quite* does seem to accept

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[14] Based only on the existence of an upper boundary or not. I have disregarded the lower boundaries altogether as they lie outside of the focus of *quite*.

some other verbs that express desire[15] the way *need* and *want* do, i.e. the verbs *fancy*, *hope* and *wish* (e.g. *I quite fancy him*; *I quite hope that you will attend the meeting*; *I quite wish you would attend the meeting*). Like *need* and *want*, these verbs can be associated with a partially closed scale (e.g. *I fancy him very much*; *I hope very much that you will attend the meeting*; *I wish very much that you would attend the meeting*). Apart from classifying *fancy* as a 'verb of desire', Levin (1993: 191) also classifies it as an 'admire'-verb, including in the same category such verbs as *appreciate*, *envy*, *enjoy*, and *like*. All these verbs accept both *quite* and *very much*, which illustrates that they harmonize with the unbounded modes of construal of these degree modifiers (cf. *?I completely like him* etc.). What seems to be foregrounded in such situations is the lack of a change which can be conceptualized as the lack of a definite boundary on a scale. Such unboundedness is often associated with relativity. One can ask, for instance, '*How much* do you like him?' and get answers like 'I like him *a bit*' or 'I like him *very much*', which specify a range, respectively, on the imaginary scale of 'liking'. One could also be given the answer 'I *don't like* him, but I *don't dislike* him, either'. An answer like this reveals that there seems to be a region on the scale that lies between those covered by the opposite verbs *like* and *dislike*. In this respect, then, unbounded verbs like the ones above, seem to behave like unbounded adjectives (see section 2.3.2).

The above survey seems to suggest that boundedness in those verbs that combine with *quite* can be conceptualized as the foregrounding of the property of changeability. If the situation involves the foregrounding of a change, i.e. the mode of construal of the verb is clearly bounded, then *quite* functions as a bounded maximizer, as in *I quite agree/understand*. If there is no foregrounding of a change involved in the situation, i.e. the mode of construal of the verb is unbounded, then *quite* functions as an unbounded booster, as in *I quite like/fancy this*, i.e. 'I like/fancy this *very much*'. Such observations allow me to formulate the hypothesis that it is the configurational reading of the verb in terms of boundedness/unboundedness on a particular occurrence of use that selects and constrains the reading of *quite*. The actual use of *quite* then confirms the interpretation of the verb and thereby makes the interpretation of the verb unambiguous. To illustrate, in *I quite like this*, the verb *like* selects the use of *quite* as a

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[15] Levin (1993: 194–195) classifies the verbs *need*, *want*, *fancy*, *hope* and *wish*, among other things, as 'verbs of desire'.

booster on the basis of its own unbounded conceptualization, and *quite* then confirms this interpretation. Because of the conceptualization of the verb *like*, the use of *quite* cannot be interpreted in any other way, i.e. '*I completely* like him'. The next section takes a look at the actual use of *quite* as a degree modifier of verbs in written British English.

3. Quite *as a degree modifier of verbs in the BNC data*

The purpose of this section is to examine the actual use of *quite* as a degree modifier of verbs in the BNC data. As noted earlier, *quite* is used as a maximizer when it takes scope over a verb which maps onto a bounded mode of construal, and it is used as a booster when it takes scope over a verb which maps onto an unbounded mode of construal.

3.1 Maximizer

I will start by presenting cases where *quite* combines with various mental verbs and in these gives rise to a maximizer reading, i.e. it can be replaced by a suitable member of the maximizer paradigm (see Table 1). Consider examples (3)-(7):

(3) I *quite understand.* BDJ40 0086

(4) Mr. Walker: I can *quite understand* the Hon. Gentleman's neurosis. BDG3H 0066

(5) 'I *quite agree.*' BDJXS 2055

(6) One *quite sees* that she could not. BDH7P 0946

(7) 'I *quite forgot* that you don't like it.' BDHGD 3441

I have interpreted examples (3)–(7) as cases of mental verbs with an achievement sense which all involve momentary events. What is foregrounded is the passing from one state to another which can be conceptualized as a boundary. In examples (3) – (7) there is thus a valence relation between the bounded mode of construal of the verb and the bounded mode of construal of *quite*. Apart from combining with *quite*, the above verbs also accept another totality modifier, i.e. the approximator *almost* (e.g. *I almost understand/agree/forgot*) from the paradigm of

attenuators (see Table 1). This shows that boundedness is foregrounded in examples (3) – (7).

Other cases of *quite* as a maximizer of verbs are illustrated in examples (8) – (11). Again it is possible to replace *quite* with some suitable member of the maximizer paradigm.

(8) But curiously enough the regret she felt, not for anything she had done but for what she hadn't, *quite put an end to* the old wearisome illusion of prosecution and trial. BDHOR 2623

(9) However, she maintained the moral impetus of her early years, although she had *quite cast off* its derivations and turned her back upon its fraudulent source; the narrow fervours and disapprovals were there, but their objects had subtly altered over the years. BDEFP 004

(10) Now that Bernard left industrial action to others, the heart had *quite gone out* of the staff's work-to-rule and normal relations were resumed. BDHGJ 2465

(11) Cathie had recovered completely from her near-abortion, and to Douglas she seemed not only to be glowing with health, but with something else as well, a kind of radiance that had *quite transformed* her. BDJOS 3030

What is common for examples (8) – (11) is the foregrounding of boundedness which is achieved by construing the situations as non-durational events which can be captured by a *when*-question, e.g. example (10): *When had the heart gone out of the staff's work-to-rule? When Bernard had left industrial action to others.* As for example (9), however, it is also possible to construe it as a durational event, i.e. *How long did it take for her to cast off its derivations?*, but in that case the event would still be construed with boundaries, i.e. as an event composed of various bounded subevents as the person in question deals with each derivation at a time.

Relating to the property of boundedness, it was mentioned in section 2.2. that the use of *quite* is often linked to perfectivity. This is also the case with the examples above in some of which a sense of perfectivity is created by means of a perfective particle, e.g. *off* in example (9) and *out* in example (10). The same effect can also be achieved in a situation which involves a non-human being as it often implies an unintending agent, and consequently, less focus on a doing than on a result (Bolinger 1972: 226).

The nominals *regret* in example (8), *heart* in example (10) and *radiance* in example (11) illustrate such cases.

The data show, then, that *quite* is used as a maximizer when it combines with a verb that maps onto a bounded mode of construal. Let us now turn to cases where *quite* is used as a booster.

3.2 Booster

Examples (12) – (14) illustrate how the notional term 'booster' is encoded by *quite*, which has the role of expressing a relative reinforcing degree. It can be replaced by a suitable member of the booster paradigm, e.g. *very much*. Consider:

(12) Richard was a nice man, and ordinarily she would have *quite looked forward to* an evening with him. BDHA7 2517

(13) Louise isn't interested in money as such, but she *quite likes* things. BDG0Y

(14) I *quite enjoy* shopping. BDEBR 0942

The examples (12)–(14) are similar to examples (3)–(7) in that they all consist of mental verbs. In examples (12)–(14), however, there is no change foregrounded as the situations involve lasting states which can be conceptualized as unbounded. In consequence, *when*-questions do not generally apply to such cases, e.g. **When does Louise like things?* (example 13). Examples (12)–(14) show, then, how the unbounded modes of construal of *quite* and the verb it applies to harmonize.

In short, the BNC-data suggest that *quite* as a degree modifier co-occurs with verbs that map onto bounded or unbounded modes of construal. There are two types of gradable verbs: those which are associated with a boundary and those which are not. If the mode of construal of the collocating verb is clearly bounded, then *quite* functions as a bounded maximizer, as in *I quite agree/understand*, but if the mode of construal of the collocating verb is unbounded, then *quite* functions as an unbounded booster, as in *I quite like/fancy this*, i.e. 'I like/fancy this *very much*'. Findings in the data support the hypothesis that the configurational reading of the verb that combines with *quite* on a particular occurrence of use selects and constrains the reading of *quite*. It

should be noted, however, that the findings are based on positive evidence of which there is never enough.

4. Conclusion

The present study investigates *quite* as a degree modifier of verbs in written British English on the basis of the BNC. It explores the constraints that govern the semantic harmony between *quite* and the verbs it applies to. The study is conducted in the framework of cognitive linguistics (Langacker 1987), and for a model of degree modifiers, Paradis (1997, 2001) is used. The data are based on 31 random occurrences of *quite* as a degree modifier of verbs in affirmative contexts. The hypothesis is that the configurational reading of the verb that combines with *quite* on a particular occurrence of use selects and constrains the reading of *quite*. If the mode of construal of the collocating verb is clearly bounded, then *quite* functions as a bounded maximizer, as in *I quite understand*, but if the mode of construal of the collocating verb is unbounded, then *quite* functions as an unbounded booster, as in *I quite fancy this*. The data support the hypothesis in so far as they are based on positive evidence.

5. Acknowledgements

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A Model of Idiomaticity[1]

BEATRICE WARREN

1. Defining idiomaticity

As an introduction, I will offer the following two definitions of idiomaticity:

(i) nativelike selection of expression (inspired by Pawley and Syder (1983))
(ii) that which one has to know over and above rules and words (inspired by Fillmore et al (1988))

The latter definition breaks with the traditional view that knowing a language involves two types of knowledge: rules and lexical items - period. Although it is common knowledge that there is more to knowledge of a language than dictionary items and syntax, Fillmore's suggestion nevertheless represents a breakthrough in linguistic theory. Surprisingly, the fact is that it is only in the last few decades that we have we seen this insight empirically demonstrated and theoretically accounted for.

In this connection it should perhaps be pointed out that we must distinguish between the study of idiomaticity and the study of idioms. Idioms in the sense "opaque invariant word combinations" have been studied by theoretical linguists quite extensively, but these bona fide idioms do not contribute to the idiomaticity of a text in any important way. Presence of such idioms in a text does not necessarily make it idiomatic; nor does their absence make it unidiomatic.

Now, if knowing dictionary items and syntax does not ensure nativelike selection of expression (i.e. idiomaticity), this raises the

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question: why not? The answer that a number of linguists have given is: human memory capacity. Bolinger (1976:2) was probably one of the first to point out the influence of memory in shaping natural languages, which was something he considered the then dominant transformational-generative theory had overlooked. Since then a number of linguists have made similar claims, probably independent of each other. Pawley and Syder (1983) point out that certain situations and phenomena recur within a community. It is natural that standard ways of describing such recurrent "pieces of reality" develop. A native speaker of a language will–as a matter of course–have learnt these standard ways of expression which can consist of more than one word or certain clausal constructions.Sinclair (1991) contrasts the open choice principle with the idiom principle. The open choice principle says that syntax is there to specify the slots into which memorised items—normally single words—can be inserted. The idiom principle says that a language user has available to him a large number of memorised semi-preconstructed phrases that constitute single choices, even though they might appear to be analysable into segments. Mel'cuk (1996) suggests that the memorised expressions outnumber single words. Jackendoff (1997:156) likewise points out that there are a vast number of memorised expressions. Thus, he concludes, memorised expressions can hardly be a marginal part of our language. Hopper (1998:166), like Bolinger, objects to the generative approach that stresses the uniqueness of each utterance treating it as if it were completely novel, and suggests that everyday language to a very considerable extent is built up of combinations of prefabricated parts. Langacker (1998:25) makes a distinction between stored low-level patterns, many of which incorporate particular lexical items, and high-level schemas, which are general and productive patterns, but suggests that the low-level structures "do much, if not most of the work in speaking and understanding".

So, summing up: the answer to the question: "Why should we need to know more than words and rules of how to combine them?" is: "Because we naturally memorise what is repeated." Moreover, it is often pointed out that it is also a question of economy of effort. Retrieving more or less readymade combinations of words requires less mental effort than composing an utterance word for word (see, e.g., Wray 2002:92). As will become apparent, I do not think that frequency and economy is the whole truth.

In concluding this introduction, let us return to the characterisation of idiomaticity inspired by Pawley and Syder. That is, idiomaticity consists in knowing what situations and phenomena require standard expressions–

although alternatives are normally conceivable–and in knowing what these would be. This is a general characterisation of idiomaticity. In the following a more precise characterisation will be attempted in which the point of departure is the non-native learner's difficulties in acquiring idiomatic language.

2. The model

A more precise characterisation of idiomaticity could be the following. Idiomaticity involves:

(i)   preferences for discourse structure

The very manner in which information is presented in a text may be language specific. I support this claim in particular on the results of the following three studies: Mauranen (1996), Strömqvist (2003) and Wiktorsson (2003), but no doubt there are others I could adduce.

Mauranen compared Finnish and Anglo-American writers' discourse patterns in academic writing and found–as had been previously established– that: "Finnish writers tend to use less metadiscourse than Anglo-American writers, and to employ final-focus, or inductive, argumentative strategies as opposed to initial-focus, or deductive strategies, which are preferred by Anglo-Americans"(1996:143). Strömqvist with co-workers investigated how motion events were described in narrative discourse. The study involved 17 different languages. It was found that "speakers of Romance and Semitic languages detail relatively little information about direction when they relate the motion event, whereas speakers of Germanic languages detail relatively much information. And speakers of Romance and Semitic show a preference for detailing information about the Source, speakers of Germanic about the Path, and speakers of Slavonic about Goal". Wiktorsson found that essays written by Swedish university students of English were characterised by writer visibility to a greater extent than comparative essays written by native speakers of English.

Probably because of its elusive character, the importance of this aspect of idiomaticity is emphasised comparatively rarely in teaching students to write a foreign language. Features of this kind are after all

tendencies which we are dependent on expert discourse analysts to be confident that they actually exist.

Idiomaticity further involves:

(ii) knowledge of language-specific propostional expressions including so-called formal idioms and lexicalised sentence stems

I include in this category proverbs, allusions and clichés etc., which are often included in studies of idioms (see, e.g., Alexander (1978), Makkai (1972:128-129), but also lexicalised sentence stems and formal idioms. Lexicalised sentence stems are defined by Pawley and Syder (1983:192-193) as units of clause length which are more or less constrained syntactically and lexically and which are "not true idioms but rather regular form-meaning pairings". Formal idioms were first described by Fillmore et al (1988). They are constructions with idiosyncratic meanings that do not derive from lexical items but which are inherent in the syntactic frame of the idiom. An often quoted example is *Him be a doctor*, the frame of which is non-nominative NP + non-finite VP + complement and which expresses incredulity. This particular construction does not specify any particular lexical item. Most of the formal idioms, however, are at least partially lexically specific as demonstrated by the following examples discussed in the literature:

verb *one's way* PP: *John joked his way into the meeting* (Goldberg 1995)

verb [Time-NP] *away*: *John drank the afternoon away* (Jackendoff 1997)

What is X *doing* Y: *What is this scratch doing on the table?* (Kay and Fillmore 1999)

do a [proper -NP]: *you could do an Arnold Schwarzenegger, just break the lock!* (Pentillä (ms))

it+be high time complement.: *it is high time she did something about it* (Lavelle and Minugh 1998)

The feature that these examples have in common is that the meanings they express are at least partially inherent in the construction. Note also that these meanings tend to be evaluative in character, expressing in particular reprobation *(it is high time that...; what is* X *doing* Y). They have attracted

linguists' interest not only because of their constructional meanings but also because they often manifest not only syntactic and semantic but also phonological and pragmatic constraints.

From the non-native learner's point of view, idiomatic expressions in this category are possibly comparatively unproblematic. Since they are so idiosyncratic, they are either learned or refrained from. The real stumbling blocks for the non-native speaker are expressions which are condoned by the grammar and standard meanings of words but which nevertheless are not used by native speakers. If there *is* a problem with expressions of this kind, predictably it will occur when a learner attempts to translate verbatim a formal idiom into the target language. A Swedish learner might, for instance, render *Vad var det nu du hette?* with *What was it now that you were called?* instead of *What's your name again?*.

Formal idioms tend to be clausal constructions. This is true also of the following group of idiomatic expressions I have singled out as forming a particular group:

(iii)   expressions in social interaction.

Examples include *excuse me, can I help you, many happy returns of the day, (I am) sorry, (I beg your) pardon* and many more. These are phrases that are performative in that they are not used *about* particular situations but *in* particular situations. They differ from the expressions in group (ii) not only functionally, but also in that as a rule they are lexically specified (i.e. they are less schematic).

At least the most frequent ones are listable and probably explicitly taught and therefore comparatively well known to the foreign learner. Note that some of these are one-item phrases (although originally probably clausal): *cheers* (when toasting), *speaking* (telephonese). I make this point because it is sometimes claimed that idioms are necessarily combinations of words. Such a view–although not strictly correct from a synchronic point of view–is understandable since knowledge of the combinatory potentials of words to form phrases represents an essential feature of idiomaticity. Hence the fourth feature is:

(iv) combinatory potentials of words

It is well known that knowing a word involves knowing what other words it can combine with to form syntactic units. Verbs, for instance, seek above all nouns as partners, as do adjectives, whereas nouns, apart from verbs and adjectives, often combine with other nouns. I will here concentrate on verb-noun combinations, with particular focus on verb-object noun combinations for reasons that will eventually become evident.

As is also well known, the early transformational-generative linguists fully realised that not any lexical item can fit in the slots that syntax makes available. Verbs had to be supplied with not only *subcategorizing features* but also with *selectional restrictions*. Selectional restrictions specify that the object noun in the case of *read*, for instance, would have to be a piece of writing. Nowadays there is also general agreement that verbs have *argument structures*. A verb such as *run* would have an Agent as a subject argument, a verb such as *sink* would have a Theme as a subject, etc.

Specifying thematic roles and selectional restrictions of verbs involves specifying what I refer to as *generalised meanings*, a notion which will be developed presently. It is not possible to know the meaning of, say, *drink* without knowing that there has to be some agent performing the action of drinking and there has to be something that is drunk and that has to be liquid. So supplying words with features like this prevents combinations such as *colourless green ideas sleep furiously*, and serves to predict what combinations are *possible*, at least in the best case. But it does not account for features of idiomaticity, which involves knowing which particular combinations are *conventional* in a language community although other combinations are conceivable. As has already been pointed out, failing to realise that accounting for what is possible is not "the whole story" has been a sin of omission among theoretical linguists, which only now is beginning to be rectified.

The notion of generalised meanings is inspired by usage-based models of language acquisition, in particular Tomasello's (see, e.g., Tomasello, (2000)). Tomasello maintains that in their early language development children reproduce not adult words but adult utterances. They begin by repeating specific combinations of language. It is only when they have heard the same word in different contexts that they are able to construct some general meaning by abstracting semantic commonalities of these different uses. It is now that they can begin to

produce combinations they have never heard before. In other words, the first step is repeating combinations. Producing unheard combinations is a later development and is evidence that the child has been able to analyse utterances into semantic units and abstract semantic commonalities. This abstracted, i.e. decontextualised and general meaning, is what I refer to as generalised meaning.

The construction of generalised meanings can be illustrated as in Figure 1. The arrows in this figure are intended to symbolise the bottom-up kind of approach involved in constructing a generalised meaning in the case of native learners.
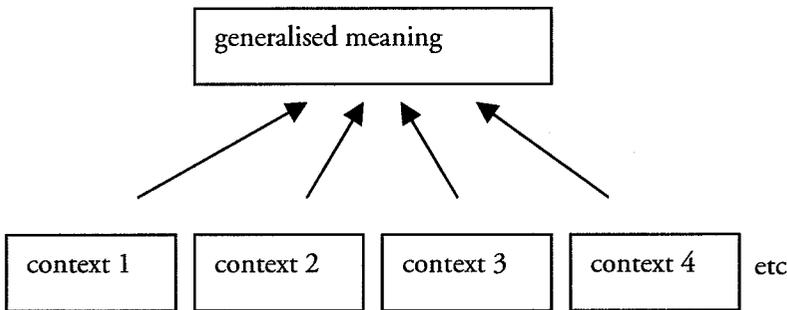

Figure 1. The native learner's construction of generalised meanings

A generalised meaning of a verb will allow any kind of word combination as long as the selectional restrictions and thematic roles specified by this meaning are met. In the case of transitive *drop*, for instance, this would condone *drop a pen, a glass, a key* or *a piece of amber*, i.e. some novel combination which one nevertheless will recognise as correct, but it would not condone, say, **drop love* or **drop sunshine*. However, having constructed a generalised meaning does not mean that the language user erases from memory all uses which gave rise to this meaning. Some uses form combinations which will be memorised not only because they are frequent but–I suggest–because they are associated with a certain salient type of situation or phenomenon, i.e. they are often form-meaning pairings and should in my view have the status of lexical items. At any rate, they are generally recognised as more or less fixed phrases which represent language-specific uses. In the case of transitive *drop* they would

include combinations such as *drop bombs, drop someone/something at a place, drop one's voice, drop charges, name drop* and *drop a hint*, etc.

However, whereas the native learner will construct some generalised meaning of a word by means of abstracting semantic commonalities of different uses of this word (type frequencies), the non-native learner is likely to construct a generalised meaning by equating it with the generalised meaning of a first language word, i.e. by transfer. That is, the non-native learner's strategy naturally tends to be a top-down approach. Provided that the generalised meanings of first and target language word are indeed equivalent, this will enable the non-native learner to form all the combinations that the generalised meaning condones, but the language-specific uses may be more problematic. (This is illustrated in Figure 2.) For instance, a Swedish learner of transitive *drop* will have to learn, apart from its generalised meaning, also English specialised uses such as the phrases exemplified above (*drop a bomb, drop a charge, drop a hint*, etc.) and also the manner in which *Swedish* specialised uses are rendered in English (see Table 1).
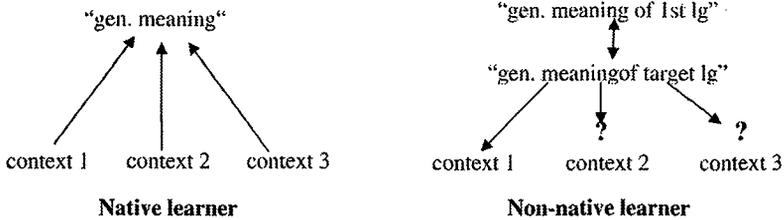
Figure 2. Schematic and simplified representation of the difference between native and non-native learners' acquisition of generalised meanings.

The point I wish to demonstrate is that learning the vocabulary of a foreign language involves considerably more than generalised meanings of single words. Yet generalised meanings are what we teach the learner of a foreign language and are what we test in vocabulary tests. And generalised meanings are what lexicologists focus on, although they have been aware that describing the combinatory potentials of, for instance, verbs in terms of thematic roles and selectional restrictions underrepresents the native speaker's collocational knowledge.

Generalised meaning of English *drop*[2]	Generalised meaning of Swedish *tappa*
drop a pen, a glass, a key etc.	*tappa en penna, ett glas, en nyckel etc.*
Language specific uses of *drop*	**Swedish equivalents (verbatim translations in parentheses)**
drop a bomb	*fälla en bomb (fell a bomb)*
drop charges	*lägga ner åtal (put down charges)*
drop a hint	*ge en vink (give a hint)*
drop one's voice	*sänka rösten (sink one's voice)*
English equivalents	**Language specific uses of *tappa***
lose one's patience	*tappa tålamodet (drop one's patience)*
be in a bad mood	*tappa humöret (drop one's good mood)*
lose one's grip/lose control	*tappa greppet (drop one's grip)*
not feel like doing something	*tappa lusten (drop one's inclination)*

Table 1. Some examples of *drop/tappa*+object combinations

The descriptions that lexicologists have offered have traditionally involved a threefold division, i.e. open combinations, idioms and collocations as demonstrated in Figure 3.

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[2] Arguably transitive *drop* has two generalised meanings:(i) "accidentally let something fall" and (ii) "cause something to fall". The generalised meaning of *tappa* corresponds only to sense (i).
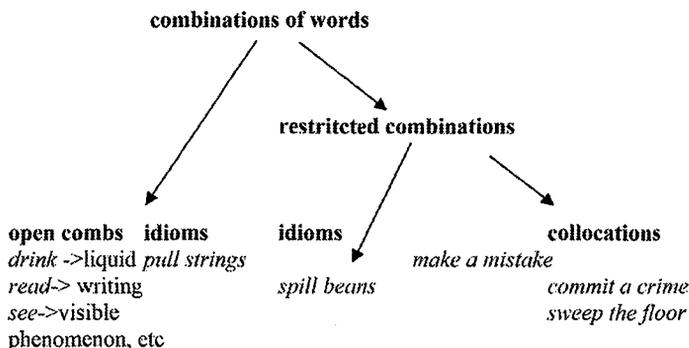
Figure 3. Traditional classification of word combinations

Open combinations are considered productive and compositional and to form the norm. Idioms constitute obvious exceptions since they are neither productive nor compositional. Collocations are often described simply as habitual combinations of words and tend to receive little attention[3]. My version of the native speaker's knowledge of the combinatory potential of words is different. As is illustrated in Figure 4, I suggest the following classification of restrictions: on the one hand, there are words that require a certain semantic profile of their collocate (i.e. grammatical objects in the case of verb-object combinations) and on the other hand, words that require a certain lexical item as their collocate. The first kind of restriction can be exemplified by *look forward to*+ positive situation or *commit*+immoral act. These restrictions represent tendencies, i.e. they may be waived. The latter kind of restriction represent fixed phrases which are stored and which are normally form-meaning pairs. The

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[3] This is not to deny that there have been attempts to raise the linguistic status of collocations. To my knowledge the first to do so was Lyons, who points out that "it must be remembered that many such phrases (i.e. high frequency phrases, *my addition*) are synchronically speaking, no longer to be considered as units of collocations at all, but as simple grammatical units." (1966:296-297).

Cruse defines collocations as "sequences of lexical items which habitually co-occur" in 1991(p 40). In 2000 (pp 296-297) he does acknowledge that there are arbitrarily restricted collocations which merit inclusion in the dictionary, but leaves it at that.

Allerton (1989: 36), realizing that there are syntactically and lexically unmotivated "locutional co-occurrence restrictions", which a language-user needs to master, suggests that these justify the introduction of "idiomatics" as a special branch of lexicology.

fixed phrases are in turn divided into transparent combinations, which in traditional terminology would be referred to as collocations, and opaque combinations, i.e. in traditional terminology idioms.

Let us first consider the first type of restriction. These types of constraints have been revealed by studies of concordances from large corpora and are sometimes referred to as semantic prosodies. (They have been described by, above all, Stubbs (1995)). Consider as an example *Peter is looking forward to the meeting*. The noun *meeting* is evaluatively neutral, but as a complement of *look forward to* a positive feature is coerced. As just pointed out, these

combinations

open
*drink->*liquid
read-> writing
*see->*visible
phenomenon

restricted

certain meanings
*commit->*immoral act
*face->*negative
situation

certain items are required

transparent
brush teeth
sweep floor
polish shoes

opaque
pull somebody's leg
spill beans
pull strings
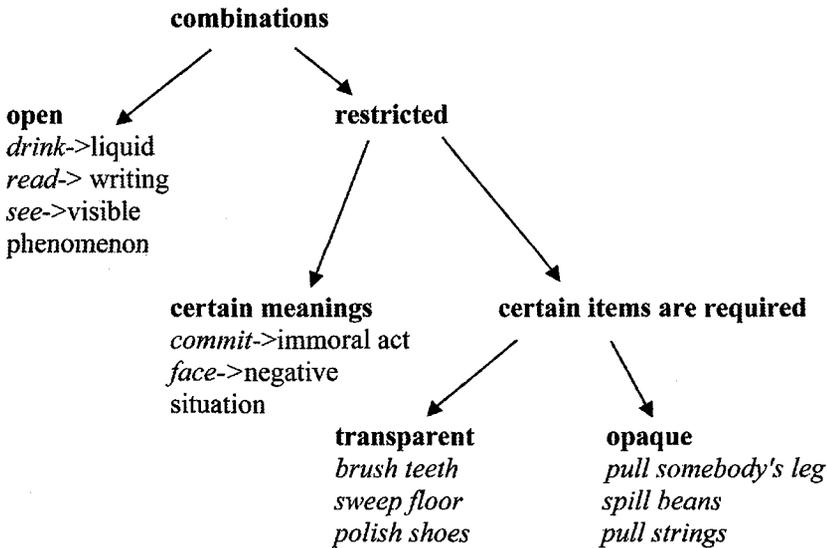
Figure 4. Alternative classification of word combinations

constraints can be cancelled. It is, for instance, possible to modify *look forward to* with the adverbial *with mixed feelings* yielding *Peter is looking forward to the meeting with mixed feelings*, which brings about a change of the interpretation of *meeting*. Some verbs seem to require a more specific semantic character of their objects. *Commit* in the sense of 'do', 'perform' requires that the act carried out is immoral: *commit a sin, a crime, adultery,* etc. The prepositional verb *deal with* in the sense 'be about' requires that the subject represents a 'communicative product' (book, article, talk) and

that the object should be a theme but not just any theme. *The letter dealt with his arrival* would not be normal unless the arrival in question involved some complications. We expect the theme which is the object of *deal with* to be something the relating of which is not quite straightforward.

These required meanings are types of selectional restrictions but differ from what is normally understood by this term in that they are not mandatory and more specific. It is possible—at least for a foreign learner—to feel satisfied that (s)he knows what, say, *commit* and *deal with* mean without fully grasping these kinds of combinatory constraints. A Swedish learner of English, for instance, may very well equate the meaning of *commit* with *begå*. The two words are good translation equivalents. In parallel with *commit, begå* combines naturally with the Swedish words for crime, adultery, murder, sin etc. Yet there appear to be differences in their combinatory potentials: In Swedish *misstag* ("mistake"*)* is a common grammatical object of *begå*, but in English the combination *commit mistakes* seems less natural. Possibly the difference between *commit* and *begå* is that *commit* requires a certain meaning ("immoral act") of its object, whereas *begå* is less restrictive requiring simply a negative feature of meaning of the object. To develop sensitivity to tendencies of this kind requires a great deal of exposure to a language.

Let me finally point out that the existence of these lexical item+certain meaning combinations may be a reflection of the pattern-creating mental activities which attempt to abstract commonalities among stored expressions and which in the end may affect generalised meanings.

As is illustrated in Figure 4, fixed phrases are divided into transparent (traditionally termed collocations) and opaque combinations (traditionally bona fide idioms), but I would like to emphasise the similarities of these two types of combinations rather than their differences. In my view what collocations and idioms have in common is more important than their differences. Just as *pull strings* is a form-meaning pair representing a particular type of action, which is made evident by the fact that **move strings* or **pull threads* would not work, so is *brush teeth*. It represents a particular type of action involving a certain type of brush on which tooth paste is spread and which is applied to all the teeth in somebody's mouth. So, in spite of the fact that both *brush* and *teeth* can be said to have their conventional meanings, the meaning of the combination is not compositional (cf. Fillmore's frame semantics (1985)). The form-meaning status of the phrase is further made evident in that *polish teeth* or *brush*

dentals would either not mean the same or be unidiomatic. If we can agree that idiomaticity represents "nativelike choices of expression", then *get up in the morning, brush teeth, polish shoes, clear the table, dial a number, get the wrong number*, etc., etc. are as idiomatic as the generally recognised idioms[4]. From a communicative point of view, they are likely to be more important to master than the *bona fide* idioms since they most probably outnumber these both as to their total number and individual frequencies.

The approach forming the basis of the division displayed in Figure 4 departs from the traditional account mainly as far as the status of collocations are concerned. As already pointed out, collocations are traditionally characterised as combinations of words that appear together with greater than random probability. I repeat that frequently they are more than that. They often serve to pick out salient types of situations and phenomena. This in turn amounts to the claim that there are considerably more lexical units in a language than lexicologists and lexicographers account for. One important reason for the undetected lexical status of many collocations is probably their transparency and the fact that they tend to be syntactically unconstrained, in particular verb-object collocations. Transparency is often mistakenly equated with compositionality. True, if some combination is compositional, it is necessarily transparent, but it does not follow that a transparent combination is necessarily compositional.

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[4] This approach to idiomaticity departs from the common view that the more inflexible and the more opaque a phrase is, the more idiomatic it is. Cowie (1984:x-xiii) and Howarth (1996: 1-47), for instance, suggest a fourfold classification of phrases ranging from least to most idiomatic exemplified in Howarth (p33) by the following combinations:

free collocation	*blow a trumpet*
restricted collocation	*blow a fuse*
figurative idiom	*blow your own trumpet*
pure idiom	*blow the gaff*

This type of classification is based on the (in my view) mistaken desire "to eliminate from the description (of phrases, *my addition*) those combinations whose occurrence can be accounted for by normal grammatical and syntactic processes" (quoted from Howarth, p47). Syntactic regularity and literal uses of words do not ensure non-idiomaticity. According to the definition of idiomaticity adopted here, the examples above are all idiomatic, also *blow a trumpet*, which implies "play the trumpet" (cf. *blow into a trumpet*).

In view of the multitude of conventionalised phrases a learner of a foreign language has to acquire, it is not surprising that nativelike mastery is difficult to attain. Yet, there are learners who come pretty close to such mastery. In Wiktorsson's study (2003) in which the frequencies of prefabs (i.e. conventionalised multiword combinations) in essays by Swedish university students of English and by native speakers were compared, it was found that there were no differences as to quantity. However, a comparison between essays by less advanced Swedish learners of English (i.e. upper secondary students) and university students showed that the more advanced students were, the more prefabs their essays contained. This suggests, as expected, that the better students are at English, the more prefabs they will know. What may at first blush appear surprising is the fact that upper secondary as well as university students know so many fixed phases in spite of the fact that they receive little explicit instruction concerning conventionalised combinations of the type *brush teeth, clear the table, sun rises*. These seem to be picked up subconsciously and fairly effortlessly, probably because the meanings are normally there already[5] and the forms are transparent, which means that there are no new meanings and no new words to learn. What is new are mnemonically motivated combinations of words. It seems then that explicit instructions are not necessary for the acquisition of transparent multiword units. Exposure to the target language, however, is a *sine qua non*.

I hasten to add, however, that not all conventionalised phrases are equally easily learned. It can be hypothesised that phrases containing non-salient and apparently unmotivated items such as prepositions and particles require some effort to be memorised correctly. The same kind of difficulty applies to the delexical verb (*do, get, give, have, make, put* and *take*) in delexical verb+noun constructions, as pointed out by Allerton (1984:33) and Altenberg and Granger (2001). Also stylistically sophisticated phrases representing abstract events such as *lay down rules, exert pressure, assume importance* can be assumed to be less easily learned.

This then concludes my classification of idiomaticity features. The reader will hardly have failed to notice a hierarchical organisation going from discourse to phrase level:

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[5] That learners are aware at some level of the need to find the correct combinations of words for a particular meaning is supported by the fact that users of the *English-Danish Cobuild* dictionary report that they use this dictionary not only for English into Danish translations but for finding the right English collocation (see Zettersten 2002).

> discourse level (i.e. organisation of contents)
> clause level: (i.e. (i) propositional (ii) performative)
> phrase level (i.e. word combinations)

However, it should be admitted that the model leaks. For instance, some of the formal idioms are arguably phrase level constructions, i.e. those in which the subject is not specified and, conversely, intransitive verb+subject combinations are arguably clause-level constructions. Also, there is no hard and fast division between lexical item+certain meaning combinations and lexical item+ lexical item(s) combinations (see again Figure 4) as demonstrated by the expressions referred to as *prefabs with restricted variability* discussed by Erman and Warren (2000:41) exemplified here by *tappa/förlora/*bli av med tålamodet* and *to a great/large/*big extent.* The reason behind the hierarchical organization of the model is a matter of presentational clarity rather than a claim as to how the language user mentally organises features of idiomaticity.

3. Some theoretical repercussions

It should come as no surprise to the reader that an important source of inspiration for the account of idiomaticity in this study has been Construction Grammar. For instance, idiomatic expressions on phrase and clause level fit Goldberg's definition of constructions, which is:

> C is a construction iff $_{def}$ C is a form-meaning pair $<F_i, S_i>$ such that some aspect of F_i or some aspect of S_i is not strictly predictable from C's component parts or from previously established constructions. (Goldberg 1995:4)

Given that the kind of phrasal multiword combinations exemplified above are indeed form-meaning pairs, this will have considerable consequences for lexicology and lexicography. Lexicographers would have to include many more items in dictionaries[6]. Lexicologists can no longer be satisfied with sense relations such as synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy and meronymy. A realistic account of associative links between words in the

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[6] To a certain extent, this requirement is in practice already met in dictionaries based on large corpora concordances. Again, seee Zettersten (2002).

mental lexicon would have to include associations of the kind *tooth: tooth brush, tooth paste* and *brush teeth; bed: go to bed, be in bed, be ill in bed, bedtime, go to bed with someone.* Above all, they would have to account for multiword lexical items, which is not the same as accounting for single words, since there are important differences between these two types of lexical items. One obvious difference is that single words have no syntactic structure in contrast to multiword combinations which can normally be manipulated (although not always in a uniform manner, which is a further complication). Another difference is that single words are often unmotivated, whereas multiword combinations, excepting bona fide idioms, are motivated. Connected to this is a third difference: whereas it is sometimes possible to replace a standard expression with an alternative descriptive expression, single words are not replaceable in this manner. Such non-standard alternatives appear to be possible to a greater extent in the case of verbal than in nominal multiword expressions. In fact, one reason for the focus on verbal multiword combinations in this survey is that their lexical status is less clearcut than the lexical status of nominal multiword combinations. *Tooth paste* and *shoe polish*, for instance, are normally accepted as lexical units without question, whereas the lexical status of *brush teeth* and *polish shoes* would probably not be as readily recognised. We may tentatively connect this with the fact that nominal multiword expressions tend to denote entities which more clearly represent units than verbal multiword expressions which typically denote transient events extended in time in such a way that it is not possible to perceive beginnings and ends simultaneously.

Such non-standard alternatives may be more or less acceptable to the native ear. Consider, for instance:

(1) Please, remove the dirty dishes from the table.
    for: *please, clear the table*

(2) I will adhere to my promise.
    for: *I will keep my promise*

(3) We related the truth.
    for: *we told the truth.*

(4) He covered his body with a shirt and a pair of trousers.
    for: *he put on a shirt and a pair of trousers.*

The fact that the descriptive nature of multiword lexical units does not preclude alternative ad hoc descriptive expressions justifies the view that multiword lexical units is a matter of idiomaticity as well as vocabulary. (Cf. Allerton's suggestion that "idiomatics" should be introduced as a special branch of lexicology.)

4. Summing up

It has been suggested above that idiomaticity should be characterised as nativelike selection of expressions. This in turn implies that accounting for "all and only the possible structures in a language" is not an adequate aim in linguistic theory. Being overproductive, it misses the target.

It has also been suggested that features of idiomaticity can be found on different levels, ranging from discourse to phrase levels. Discoursal idiomatic features are thought to be the most elusive. Below this level, features of idiomaticity are divided into clausal and phrasal constructions. Clausal structures, in turn, are subcategorised into two functional classes: propositional and performative. Apart from being functionally different, there are some linguistic differences between these. Peformatives tend to be less schematic, although sometimes they are abbreviated obscuring their clausal origin. The native as well as the non-native learner are often explicitly taught performatives since it is important to know what to say in common interactive situations such as leave-taking and greeting, apologising, thanking or congratulating someone.

Of particular importance are the combinatory constraints of single words. There are different types of such constraints. There are those involved in forming decontextualised and general meanings, i.e. so-called selectional restrictions and and–in the case of verbs–thematic roles. According to usage-based models of language acquisition, such generalised meanings are formed by abstracting semantic commonalities from different uses. A generalised meaning will enable the language-user to use the word creatively (=in unheard contexts) and yet be confident that it is used correctly.

It was, however, posited that some combinations will resist decontextualisation and be stored verbatim forming more or less strictly

form-meaning pairs. These will normally be language-specific expressions which the non-native learner will have to learn in addition to generalised meanings. It was tentatively suggested that, since these phrases are normally mnemonically motivated combinations of words representing meanings occurring also in first language, explicit instructions may not be necessary for their acquisition provided there is exposure to the target language.

The lexical status of such multiword combinations is often not recognised. However, many linguists have in the last few decades recognised the large quantity of such expressions and concordances of large corpora confirm their numerousness.

Apart from selectional restrictions of the traditional kind and thematic roles, combinatory restrictions of words can also be in terms of so-called semantic prosodies. That is to say, a particular word typically combines with words of a particular type of–normally evaluative–meaning which is not warranted by generalised meanings. It is posited that for such constraints to be acquired exposure to the target language is particularly important.

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Interpersonal Complications and Intertextual Relations:
A Thousand Acres and *King Lear*

ANNA LINDHÉ

The last decades of the 20th century saw plenty of postmodern self-reflective rewritings of canonical works. Writers have always derived inspiration from previous narratives; but in his study *Rewriting: Postmodern Narrative and Cultural Critique in the Age of Cloning* (2001), Christian Moraru argues that contemporary rewritings express a more potent need to revise, undermine, and radically criticize the representation of foundational stories of western culture. Moraru distinguishes between two rewriting practices: rewriting as support, i.e. 'underwriting' and rewriting as disruption, i.e. 'counterwriting':

> According to [the neoclassical philosophy] *rewriting is underwriting*, support and reduplication of the already-written. [By contrast, the postmodern rewriting practices] set up a *counterwriting* distance, a "rupture" between themselves and what they redo – the literary past – as well as between themselves and various hegemonic forces active at the moment and in the milieu of "redoing". (Moraru 2001: 9)

Women writers' 'counterwriting' of Shakespeare has increased considerably in recent years. Allowing scope for investigations into race and ethnicity, *The Tempest* has been a particular target for post-colonial rewritings, whereas *King Lear* has come in for a good deal of attention from feminist writers.

Jane Smiley's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, *A Thousand Acres* (1991), is an open response to *King Lear*. According to the writer herself, '[t]he obvious internal system of *A Thousand Acres* is *King Lear*' (Smiley 2001: 160). In David Cowart's terminology, *King Lear* figures as a 'host-text' for *A Thousand Acres,* providing the 'guest-text' with plot, characters, and form (Cowart 1993: 4). Cowart describes such an intertextual relation as symbiotic. By attaching itself to *King Lear*, *A Thousand Acres* contributes

to the survival of *King Lear*. *King Lear*, on its part, figures as 'host' for *A Thousand Acres*, providing the 'guest' with plot, characters, and structure.

The *King Lear*-plot is, however, transposed to the American Midwest in the late 1970s, and the narrative 'perspective' is changed to a woman's. The appropriation and re-positioning of plot, characters, and themes into a 20th century setting incorporates a (counterwriting) distance between past and present which invites a critique of both. Smiley thus engages in what Cowart calls 'an epistemic dialogue with the past', one which 'forces readers into a recognition of the historical or diachronic difference between the voice of one literary age and that of another' (Cowart 1993: 1).

Importantly, Smiley's critique is aimed against the conventional reading of *King Lear:* 'I had an intention in *A Thousand Acres* that grew out of something less rational, a response to the play. I wanted to communicate the ways in which I found the conventional reading of *King Lear* frustrating and wrong' (Smiley 1999: 160). Up until recently, the predominant critical reading of Goneril and Regan could be summarized in Harold Bloom's acceptance of the two as 'unnatural hags' and 'monsters of the deep' (Bloom 1994: 64). It is true that previous critical attempts have been made to challenge these images, notably by Stephen Reid in 1970, [1] but it is only in recent years that a change seems to have occurred, possibly in the wake of *A Thousand Acres*. [2]

Jane Smiley approaches *King Lear* from a feminist perspective creating a space from which Ginny/Goneril speaks, counteracting the patriarchal images of Shakespeare's women and granting silenced female character a voice. In contexts concerning opposition or resistance to male normativity, voice has come to denote 'power of expression' (Gilligan

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[1] See Stephen Reid. 'In Defence of Goneril and Regan'. *The American Imago* 27, no. 3 (1970): 226-244.

[2] See, for example, Cristina León Alfar. 'King Lear's "Immoral" Daughters and the Politics of Kingship'. *Exemplaria* 8, no. 2 (1996): 375-400. In this article she rejects the notion of Goneril and Regan as innately evil arguing that their actions are 'symptomatic of the patrilineal structure of power relations in which they live and to which they must accommodate themselves', 375. See also Cristina León Alfar. 'Looking for Goneril and Regan' in *Privacy, Domesticity, and Women in Early Modern England* ed. Corinne S. Abate. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003, and Cristina León Alfar. *Fantasies of Female Evil The Dynamics of Gender and Power in Shakespearean Tragedy*. Newark and London: University of Delaware Press, 2003. In *Making Trifles of Terrors: Redistributing Complicities in Shakespeare*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997, Harry Berger Jr. suggests that Lear might be seen as provoking Goneril's behaviour.

1993: xvi). For Nancy A. Walker, *A Thousand Acres* counts as a 'disobedient' narrative in that it 'expose[s] and question[s] patriarchal patterns that Shakespeare and his contemporaries took for granted' by giving 'narrative authority to the female characters' (Walker 1995: 7-8). But, as I will try to illustrate below, female voice or 'narrative authority' cannot alone effect changes to narrow images of Goneril and Regan.

This essay attempts to show how these images can be altered by the positioning of Ginny and Rose in a complicated pattern of interpersonal relations, one which is disturbed by the disruptions that come with the transfer of power and property from one generation to another. Intrigued by this pattern in *King Lear*, *A Thousand Acres* thus examines how this disturbance affects social and interpersonal relationships.

The interaction between the two texts renders possible an oscillation between different worlds, between past and present, between different conditions of and possible means of existence, which has important consequences for the reader's understanding of both texts. Importantly, the meeting of and the oscillation between the two texts rule out any simple 'takeover' on the part of the contemporary novel. For a different picture of Goneril to emerge, *A Thousand Acres* would require the continuous presence of *King Lear* and is therefore not an attempt to preferential truth. One text is not relinquished at the expense of the other, quite the reverse; the reader is able to contain two texts within his/her vision or mental picture.

King Lear is a play that deals with patriarchal rule and the relationship between father and daughters, and these factors are often considered to be the main reasons why this play holds special fascination for women authors (Sanders 2001: 5). Even so, *King Lear* harbours something that attracts and intrigues many female writers apart from the father-daughter relation. More than any other Shakespeare play, it offers a broad range of interpersonal relationships between parent and child but also between king and subject, between husband and wife, and between siblings of both sexes. The distribution and wielding of power generates tragic consequences for the family; it leads to clashes between generations, discord between fathers and daughters and fathers and sons, rivalry between siblings friction between husband and wife, and enmity between king and subject. Presumed values of loyalty, obedience, and duty are upset, questioned, and brought under careful scrutiny, not only in the kingdom but in the family as well. *King Lear* is a play about 'power, property and inheritance', as Jonathan Dollimore points out (Dollimore

2004: 197) – or, perhaps even more, a play about the *dislocation* of power, property, and inheritance, and the ensuing effects and disturbances.

Set in Iowa in the Midwest in the late 1970s, *A Thousand Acres* tells the story of a father, Larry (Lear), and the effects of his sharing his farm with his three daughters, Ginny (Goneril), Rose (Regan), and Caroline (Cordelia), and their respective husbands, Ty (Albany), Pete (Cornwall), and Frank (France), as seen through the eyes of Ginny (Goneril). The youngest daughter, Caroline, hesitates as to the advantages of transferring the farm, which results in her father's excluding her from the project. The transfer of property and Caroline's reluctance to accept Larry's decision trigger and fuel enmity between daughters and fathers, between spouses, as well as between siblings; but they also have an effect on the Gloucester-subplot that finds its way into *A Thousand Acres* through Harold Clark and his two sons, Jess (Edmund) and Loren (Edgar), who live on a neighbouring farm. The dispute over the Cook farm awakens repressed memories, and the unremitting phrase 'there's more to that than meets the eye' acquires poignancy as we find out that Ginny and Rose were incestuously assaulted by their father (Smiley 1991: 134).

A Thousand Acres alerts the reader to how the transfer of property and power penetrates and encroaches upon the firmest family relationships and the most solid loyalties. The transfer of property upsets marriages, as well as exposing the tacit and already existing rivalry between siblings. The growth of sibling rivalry and the complex relation between spouses in *A Thousand Acres* heighten the reader's awareness of Goneril's position in a complicated structure of relations, one in which she is not only a daughter, but also a sister, and a wife. Accordingly, this essay will begin by taking a closer look at the reader's role as a significant factor in the dynamics between the texts.

When James Schiff points out that Goneril's and Regan's voices are heard and that the rewriting provides 'a motivation for and an understanding of the two older daughters' (Schiff: 1998: 370), he fails, like so many other critics apart notably from Marina Leslie[3], to raise questions about the reader's part in the understanding of the two elder daughters. Peter Conrad points out that Jane Smiley takes Goneril's and Regan's 'side' by making Ginny 'her narrator' (Conrad 1995: 133). More

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[3] See Marina Leslie. 'Incest, Incorporation and *King Lear* in Jane Smiley's *A Thousand Acres*'. *College English* 60, no. 1 (1998): 31-50.

importantly, does Smiley's position also result in the reader's sympathetic response to Goneril?

Sympathy for Goneril (and Regan) is difficult to establish without presuming that the reader of *A Thousand Acres* revisits *King Lear* in some way, however brief, after finishing Smiley's novel. As long as the he/she stays within the fictional world of *A Thousand Acres*, the reader, as James A. Schiff points out, 'understand[s] why Ginny/Goneril has just cause for speaking of her father in such a manner, and we are likely to cheer her on' (Schiff 1998: 375). It is the movement from *A Thousand Acres* to *King Lear* that is instrumental in the production of sympathy for Goneril. Reformulating *King Lear,* so as to give what Walker terms 'narrative authority' to the female characters, calls for some further clarification (Walker 1995: 7).

The change from a traditionally masculine perspective to a feminine one in *A Thousand Acres* makes it possible for women to acquire more prominent positions. The reader receives Goneril's version; her inner life and feelings are put on display as Smiley provides her with a voice and a history. This alteration cannot suddenly make Goneril 'more sinned against than sinning' or Lear a 'monster of the deep'. Granting narrative authority to the female characters does not mean that we suddenly just side with Goneril and Regan, or that Goneril becomes the epitome of goodness. Smiley makes it quite difficult for the reader to identify Ginny as the counterpart to Goneril as they are very different characters: one is the daughter of a king, married to a duke, about to inherit a third of the kingdom, and as such in a very powerful position; the other is a farmer's daughter.

Smiley also renders it difficult for the reader to sympathize with Ginny for several reasons. *A Thousand Acres* is written from a first-person perspective, which makes the speaking voice much more subject to critique and suspicion than a third-person mode of narration would be. It is true that as a first-person narrator, Ginny inhabits a very powerful position; the story and the other characters are filtered through her perspective. At the same time, however, the first-person voice only claims 'the validity of one person's right to interpret her experiences', as Susan Sniader Lanser points out (Lanser 1992: 19). A first-person narrator runs a greater risk of being questioned about his/her intentions. It might be difficult to establish authority, as the novel actually avoids the masculine position of authority which is, as Lanser points out, traditionally associated with an omniscient narrator (Lanser 1992: 19).

In addition, in contrast to Marina Leslie's opinion, we do not receive a very 'likeable' or agreeable picture of Ginny throughout (Leslie 1998: 35). Her adulterous affair with Jess and the meticulous preparations to poison Rose come across as rather disturbing. Neither of these two events happens in the spur of the moment: 'I believed that I was going to sleep with Jess Clark with as full a certainty' (Smiley 1991: 155). Moreover, without considerations for her sisters' children – they would not only be fatherless but also motherless – and with particular crude exactitude, Ginny executes her plan: 'The perfection of my plan was the way Rose's own appetite would select her death' (Smiley 1991: 339). These are factors that probably make it harder for the reader to develop a benevolent attitude to her. Furthermore, her self-contempt - reminiscent of Goneril's words about her 'hateful life' - and her general contempt for her present life contribute to making the picture of Ginny at least in part unfavourable.

I would submit that if the reader develops a more benign attitude to Goneril after reading *A Thousand Acres*, this is because we witness Ginny in dynamic interaction with other characters. We are allowed to see Ginny in contexts involving other characters, perceive her in different situations, and envisage her in a variety of roles - not only as a daughter, but also as a sister, and a wife. We witness what occurs when different roles converge and clash, as happens, for instance to Cordelia in *King Lear*, in act one scene one in which her role as a daughter is set off against her new role as a future wife. Shakespeare creates sympathy for Lear by placing him in a context made up of other characters in order for us to form another perspective of him, untainted by his treatment of Cordelia and Kent, within the framework of the play. As returning readers of *King Lear*, we import our heightened awareness of interpersonal relationships into Shakespeare's context.

Returning to *King Lear*, then, is not so much a matter of taking Goneril's side; rather, it is a matter of understanding how the relocation of power in the form of a property transfer disturbs relations between people, creates suspicion between siblings and misunderstandings in marriages, and uncovers the flaws within families. On returning to *King Lear*, the reader will thus locate Goneril in a larger structure of interpersonal and social relations, having been invited to understand how characters might behave when they are unloved and unseen by their fathers, or disappointed, misunderstood, and let down by their siblings and husbands. Many critics, feminists included, have postulated that Goneril and Regan are uncomplicated with no depth to their character; but

relations between people are nearly always complex in Shakespeare. V.G. Kiernan has rightly pointed out that: '[Shakespeare] was concerned with men in combination, interacting, entering into one another's lives, becoming part of one another' (Kiernan 1964: 48). To understand Goneril and to sympathize with her, we have to place her in a framework of interpersonal and social relations, and a previous reading of *A Thousand Acres* helps us do that. Returning to *King Lear*, does not mean that we perceive Lear as evil and Goneril as good. It is precisely the movement between the texts that reduces the reader's need or desire to perceive acts and behaviour as morally reprehensible.

The transfer of power and property is central in both *King Lear* and *A Thousand Acres*. As any reader of *King Lear* knows, the division of the kingdom will come to dominate the original purpose of the ceremony: to select a future husband for Cordelia. In *A Thousand Acres,* the transfer of the farm comes to overshadow the welcome-home party for Harold Clark's son Jess. Without previous notice and without any intention, it seems, of diminishing his power, Larry announces his plan to form a corporation between his three daughters and their respective husbands. Both taken by surprise, Ginny and Rose express their admission. Ginny thinks '[i]t's a good idea', whereas Rose thinks 'It's a great idea' (Smiley 1991:19). Similarly to Cordelia, Caroline refuses to play the role of the complying daughter. In full career as a lawyer, Larry's youngest daughter has established a life for herself and her fiancé outside the perimeters of the farm. Her answer 'I don't know' when confronted with Larry's plan does not have the same turbulent effect on Larry as the equally enigmatic 'Nothing' has on Lear, however. Larry's response is terser but none the less powerful. With the assertion, 'you don't want it my girl, you're out', Larry leaves the party (Smiley 1991: 21). The transfer of the kingdom/farm in *King Lear* and *A Thousand Acres* triggers a struggle between the generations and stages the inherent differences between them.

A Thousand Acres' reiteration of the division of the kingdom focuses on the tension between people and on how the characters react to the transfer. It turns the reader's attention to what happens in-between the silences, in-between characters. In *King Lear* it is very obvious which of his daughters Lear prefers. Cordelia is her father's joy and the one who will be granted 'a third more opulent than [her] sisters' if she speaks her love for her father (1.1.86). In *A Thousand Acres*, only Larry's gaze indicates whom he favours: 'He glanced at me, then at Caroline, and looking at her all the while, he said: "We're going to form this corporation"' (Smiley 1991: 18-19).

The transfer-scene demonstrates the different loyalties of the characters and their reactions to the transfer via the way they gaze at one another. Caroline, for example, 'swept the darkening horizon with her gaze' (Smiley 1991: 21). Not only does she not approve of the transfer; being away from the farm for a long period of time has led to a different conception of family loyalty. She does not harbour a divided duty between herself and her father. There is thus no dynamic tension between her and the other characters. Ginny desperately tries to make contact with her by fixing her eyes at Caroline: 'In the sudden light of the porch, there was no way to signal her to shut up, just shut up' (Smiley 1991: 21).

When Larry announces his decision to transfer his farm, Harold is spotted by Ginny at a distance standing in the 'dark doorway, grinning' (Smiley 1991:19). Harold seems to think that the transfer of Larry's property is a bad idea for Larry, but a good idea for himself. Harold and Larry are old rivals for land and property to increase their wealth and power: 'Harold Clark and my father used to argue at our kitchen table about who should get the Ericson land when they finally lost their mortgage' (Smiley 1991: 4). The transfer-scene thus also demonstrates how the tension between the small world and the large world is generated. Larry asserts that the reason for the transfer is age and a wish to prevent high inheritance taxes: 'if I died tomorrow, you'd have to pay [...] inheritance taxes' (Smiley 1991: 19).

Larry's real reason, however, seems to be his desire to top Harold Clark. The competitive configurations of the outside world are seen to enter the private sphere of the family as Harold and Larry vie for the same space. The competition between the two thus reaches its peak at the party when Harold demonstrates his 'twin exhibits' (Smiley 1991: 18), as Ginny calls them, namely his son Jess and the new tractor: Daddy said, "Hell, I'm too old for this. You wouldn't catch me buying a new tractor at my age. [---] People always act like they're going to live forever when the price of land is up" – here he threw a glance at Harold' (Smiley 1991: 19). Larry's gaze or 'glance', this time at Harold, reveals his concerns. A quick look at Harold indicates that the ball is now in Harold's court, just as his momentary look at Caroline suggests that he needs her approval of the transfer. Motives are never unambiguous in either *A Thousand Acres* or *King Lear*. Nevertheless, Harold's investment encroaches upon Larry's mind and compels him to make the rash decision to surpass Harold by transferring his property to his three daughters, leading to tragic consequences for his family, as his conflict

with Harold is made to impinge on the domestic sphere, leading to marital breaches and sibling rivalry.

In *A Thousand Acres*, Larry Cook, the 'king' of his 'unmortgaged' thousand acres of well-cultivated land, is the epitome of power in the farming community. Larry is not just any farmer; he is also a public figure. As one of the most prosperous farmers, he is one of the most revered men in the community. After all, he is, as Ginny remarks, 'one of the biggest landowners' in Zebulon County (Smiley 1991: 141).

As king, Lear is also a public figure. In addition, as king, he is also the biggest landowner in the country. In Jacobean England, the political theory of kingship was defined 'as the possession of the kingdom and of the subjects who inhabit it' (Brayton 2003: 402). Lear's status as king is contingent on the land, 'the champaigns riched' and the 'wide-skirted meads' as his property, as well as on the obedience of those who inhabit this land, including his family (1.1.64-65). Despite his desperate attempts to retain 'the name' and 'all th'addition to a king'; losing possession of the kingdom means losing his identity as king (1.1.137). The experience of powerlessness - the loss of control over his subjects and his daughters - that comes with the loss of property is thus destructive to the family as well. Lear's role as a father is affected and directed by his kingship and the anxieties that come with this public role, or, perhaps even more, the anxieties that develop from the lack of this role. It is Lear's political decision to divide the kingdom that impinges upon the domestic sphere and leads to marital breaches between Goneril and Albany and the deadly antagonism between Goneril and Regan. It is in such a context that Goneril has to be regarded.

In *King Lear*, Goneril's mellifluous speech guides the reader's/audience's response to her, as well as Lear's. There is no doubt that she embraces Lear's decision. Critics of *King Lear* often perceive her attitude to the division and her flattering speech as signs of her hunger for power. In contrast, the reader of *A Thousand Acres* realizes that Ginny's attitude to the transfer is an ambivalent one: 'In spite of that inner clang, I tried to sound agreeable' (Smiley 1991: 19). Despite the inner caution, Ginny seems to support her father's proposal unconditionally. Cognizant of her inner thoughts, however, the reader understands that other factors are behind Ginny's affirmative reply to Larry's decision.

Larry has been assigned an almost God-like presence. In Ginny's childhood, her father is the provider of a centre, the protector against all

evil outside. Reflections of his God-like status in Ginny's eyes permeate her memories of Larry:

> When I went to first grade and the other children said that their fathers were farmers, I simply didn't believe them. I agreed in order to be polite, but in my heart I knew that those men were imposters, as farmers and as fathers, too. In my youthful estimation, Laurence Cook defined both categories. To really believe that others even existed in either category was to break the First Commandment. (Smiley 1991: 19)

The allusion to the First Commandment indicates Larry's standing, in the eyes of Ginny, as a divine authority. This image of the father keeps the daughters subdued, which in its turn invests him with additional privilege in the community. Awe of him is instilled in the daughters by his preservation as mysterious, omniscient, and majestic almost to the point of transcendence. Larry is used to being confirmed and revered by his daughters as well as by the other farmers, even by the minister in the Church: 'our minister, gave his yearly sermon about all worldly riches having their source in the tilling of the soil, which was guaranteed to appeal both to farmers' self-regard and to their sense of injury at the hands of the rest of society' (Smiley 1991: 35). Through Ginny's descriptions, the reader is made to understand that Larry's status in the community and in the family has always been marked by authority and power. Without influence and power over other people's minds and behaviour, Larry loses control.

During the transfer-scene, it becomes clear that Ginny does not act out of selfish reasons but out of dread for her father, a sense of daughterly duty, as well as according to different demands of loyalty. Ginny supports Larry's decision not only because she feels compelled to back up her father, but also because Ty, her husband, wants her to. She thinks Ty deserves to 'realize some of his wishes' (Smiley 1991: 25). Indeed, with him gazing at her, Ginny realizes what she has to do: 'Ty was looking at me, and I could see in his gaze a veiled tightly contained delight – he had been wanting to increase the hog operation for years' (Smiley 1991: 19). The gaze, associated with power, runs through *A Thousand Acres*. The reader is thus invited to attend to the way people look at each other and understand and read the silences, for example Albany's in *King Lear*, and as returning readers of *King Lear* we have become alerted to the fact that there could be more than one reason for Goneril's willingness to take over a third of the kingdom. *A Thousand Acres* helps us realize that Goneril is

acting in relation to other people besides her father; she is not only a daughter but also a wife.

The ways in which money, the transfer of property, and the uneven distribution of power can affect interpersonal relationships is illustrated symbolically in *A Thousand Acres* through the monopoly-game that Ginny, Ty, Rose, Pete, and Jess gather around in the evenings. The monopoly game – emblematic of capitalism and greed – foments not only rivalry between siblings and between spouses, but also between Pete (Cornwall) and Jess (Edmund). Pete and Jess are absolute opponents in the game, and the atmosphere it creates presses in upon their private relationship, prompting and stimulating rivalry between the two. Trying to surpass each other in the company of the others, they relate their respective adventurous experiences, one tale worse than the other. This is thus illustrative of the tension between the large world and the small one when power, property, and inheritance enter the domestic world. Playing monopoly, they all compete for the same thing: more property, more money, and more power.

The game also demonstrates symbolically what could happen between married couples when money and property eat into their relationship. When Rose wants Ginny to sell property to her, her husband Pete exclaims: 'Don't sell them to her' with 'the edge in his voice', as Ginny notices, 'not quite playful' (Smiley 1991: 88). Still, Rose and Pete are more supportive of each other than Ginny and Ty. Pete's and Rose's feelings about the farm and their attitude towards Larry's quirks are much the same. In response to Larry's spendthrift ways and irrational behaviour, Jess backs up his wife: 'Pete was angry too, and he encouraged [Rose] to dwell on it [...] Rose said, "A Thousand dollars! Right out the window"' (Smiley 1991: 87).

Ginny's and Ty's differing reactions to the transfer and towards Larry's increasing madness separate them from each other and alienate them. The property-transfer enters into the most steadfast relationships and the strongest loyalties, the loyalties that should exist between husband and wife. After the transfer, the relationship between Ginny and Ty enters a new phase, as their marriage has been transformed to incorporate a new sense of partnership. Through their share of the farm - which means a sharing of wealth and land - both of them acquire more power, and they have different ways of using that power. Ty's interest is only in fulfilling his dreams about the farm: to increase the hog-operation. As daughters, however, Ginny and Rose have never been included in the 'grand history'

of the farm (Smiley 1991: 371) The transfer thus entails a change of position and perspective from outsider to insider, from being an observer of history (men's history) to being part of that history (however critically). By Ginny's entrance into this previously closed space – a space formerly controlled by Larry - power relations inevitably change. Being brought up in a system that connects material wealth with power and authority, Ginny uses her new position to challenge Ty but also to question Larry's increasing unpredictable behaviour. After a car accident, when Larry is the most ashamed of himself, she avails herself of the opportunity to assume a position of power:

> It was exhilarating, talking to my father as if he were my child, more than exhilarating to see him as my child. This laying down the law was a marvellous way of talking. It created a whole orderly future within me, a vita of manageable days clicking past, myself in the foreground, large and purposeful. (Smiley 1991: 159)

Schiff points out that this scene 'marks a breakthrough' for Ginny and that she comes to resemble Goneril at this stage (Schiff 1998: 375). More importantly, we are made to understand the mechanism behind, and the allurement of, power. Ginny is a woman whose power over her life and even over her own body is severely impaired, by her father's sexual abuse, by Ty's reluctance to let her become pregnant, and by the farmers' poisoning of the well-water, which obstructs her reproductive capacities. It is the sudden change from a position of powerlessness to one of comparative power, and the effects this has on a person, that are important to bring to our reading of Goneril. *A Thousand Acres* does not ask whether certain actions or behaviour are morally reprehensible or not. The novel offers a context for understanding why and how a person can become blinded by power.

The bed and bed-chamber represent conjugal duties and loyalties, but it is precisely here that the 'small' battle between Ginny and Ty is played out. The home or the bed-room is no longer a retreat from the outer world or from external and public conflicts. As larger questions - about farm management, but also about how to handle Larry's peculiarities and growing madness – invade the domestic sphere, the tension between Ginny and Ty is seen to grow. The disagreement over how to handle Larry is significant: 'At bedtime, Ty said, "You women don't understand your father at all" [---] I said, "Then we have something in common with him, because he clearly doesn't understand himself". "He understands himself fine. He's just secretive, is all" "And what are his secrets?"' (Smiley

1991: 110, 111). Ginny has never openly disagreed with Ty before, but the changed situation creates new opportunities, and it becomes clear that the transfer of the farm puts loyalties and duties between husband and wife to the test.

The different goals and experiences of Ginny and Ty, and the misunderstandings between them, is something that the reader of *A Thousand Acres* brings to the marriage relation between Goneril and Albany in *King Lear*. Having been alerted to the ways in which breaches in a marital relation may arise, such a reader senses how fragile two spouses' relationship is when exposed to external influence and conflicts. In *King Lear*, Lear's love test becomes a test of loyalty and duty not only between father and daughters, but also, in extension, between husband and wife. The tension between Goneril and Albany is seen to be set in motion when Goneril has had enough of Lear's disorderly knights. When politics enter the domestic sphere, a rift opens between husband and wife. Private issues entering the public sphere cause a breakdown of the kingdom, as we see in act one scene one; public issues invading the domestic sphere seem to end in marital fissures. Goneril's reaction to Lear's rowdy entourage is not supported by Albany, who advocates patience. When Lear curses Goneril as his daughter, she begs Albany not to:

> afflict yourself to know more of it,
> But let his disposition have that scope
> As dotage gives it. (1.4.283-285)[4]

When Goneril asks Albany for support on a political level by turning to his authority in connection with Lear's threat to 'resume the shape' as king, Albany reveals his ambivalence to Goneril before she actually acts against Lear. It is clear that Goneril does not have her husband's support:

> I cannot be so partial, Goneril,
> To the great love I bear you. (1.4.304-305)

Does Albany let Goneril down by not proving his loyalty to her? As her husband, he owes her certain duties. Goneril's '[a] fool usurps my bed'

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[4] The edition used is *The Arden Shakespeare*, edited by R.A. Foakes. Surrey: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd, 1997.

(4.2.28) takes on more than sexual connotations, reminding us of other conjugal duties - but Albany refuses to choose between Lear and Goneril. Albany's loyalties are not, pace Paul W. Khan, 'divided between daughter and father' (Khan 2000: 42), but between wife and king.

Ty proves his disloyalty to his wife on several occasions. During the storm-scene in which Larry rages and curses Ginny, Ty stands literally 'behind [Larry]' 'unmoving, hands in pockets' (Smiley 1991: 194, 195). Ty's solidarity with Larry prevents him from coming to Ginny's aid at the height of the family crisis. Ty takes Ginny's new and more challenging approach to Larry as an attack on himself, as it also undermines his own status and power: 'Ginny, you and Rose are going about this all wrong' (Smiley 1991: 153). It is in Ty's interest to look up to and retain the reverence for authorities like Larry, to preserve *status quo* in order to preserve his own status and power in the eyes of the community.

Are Albany's motives for supporting Lear and being disloyal to his wife solely emotional or are they perhaps political? It seems contradictory to argue for the former since such bonds do not seem to exist between the two in *King Lear*. Is it possible for Albany to stand outside the social processes of society? *A Thousand Acres* hints at the impossibility of not being implicated in society's competitive configurations, and points to what happens when the family is compelled to operate in a new context and according to different notions of loyalty.

The relationship between Goneril and Regan is another dimension in the Shakespearean play that acquires fresh poignancy when the reader returns to *King Lear* after reading *A Thousand Acres*. In *A Thousand Acres,* it is not only Ginny's role as a wife that is foregrounded but perhaps even more her role as a sister. Psychoanalysts view sibling rivalry as beginning in infancy and becoming an integral part of siblings' interrelations as they grow up. Smiley alerts the reader to how sibling rivalry between the daughters is created from a very early age, how it is nourished and fuelled, and preserved through an inherent system of favouritism. The father in *A Thousand Acres* creates and then consolidates the differences between the daughters already in their childhood. The youngest daughter, Caroline, is singled out as Larry's favourite and this is a sore subject for Ginny. Her answer to Jess' question as to who is Larry's favourite child is revealing: "'It's always been Caroline, I'm sure'". The penetrating question causes Ginny to wince and shy away from the subject: 'I smiled the way you do when you want someone to stop probing a subject, but you don't want him to know that. I spoke idly: "Who's Harold's favourite?"' (Smiley 1991: 134). Early

experiences of favouritism help establishing Caroline as different from Ginny and Rose. The father's favouring of the youngest daughter has given rise to (seemingly) relentless solidarity and loyalty between Ginny and Rose. Rose has been an integral part of Ginny's life for as long as she can remember: 'no day of my remembered life was without Rose' (Smiley 1991: 5). Ginny thus establishes herself and Rose in an economy of sameness and Caroline as different from them. Smiley lets the reader notice Rose's and Ginny's special relationship quite early, as one which is in marked contrast to all other relations: 'Compared to our sisterhood, every other relationship was marked by some sort of absence – before Caroline, after our mother, before our husbands, pregnancies, her children, before and after and apart from friends and neighbours' (Smiley 1991: 8).

In *A Thousand Acres*, Caroline has had more freedom than Ginny and Rose ever had. As substitute mothers for Caroline, Rose and Ginny support Caroline in her every endeavour and guarantee that she receives a good education. They pave the way for her successful and independent life. Rose points out that Caroline 'doesn't have to be careful. She's got an income. Being his daughter is all pretty abstract for her, and I'm sure she wants to keep it that way. [---] She always does what she has to do' (Smiley 1991: 63). According to Marina Leslie, the incest is 'offering a context for [Larry's] very different treatment of the elder daughters and the favourite youngest child' (Leslie 1998: 36). Caroline, presumably saved from Larry's sexual abuse thanks to Ginny's and Rose's protection, does not remind Larry of his crimes. Favouritism, on a microcosmic level, develops between the siblings; as a result, Ginny and Rose have to vie for attention and love in a way Caroline never had to do, and this forces the two elder sisters into a system of competition.

The incest finds no literal correspondence in *King Lear*.[5] *A Thousand Acres*, however, adds dimensions to the destructive consequences of favouritism for the family in *King Lear*. Favouritism is seen to be the very foundation for many familial relationships in *A Thousand Acres*. Larry has always preferred Ty to Pete who is 'never on the right side of Daddy' (Smiley 1991: 32). In *King Lear*, Albany has always been 'more affected' than the duke of Cornwall (1.1.1). Moreover, Loren, who stands out as a 'nice guy', meets the news of his brother Jess' home-coming with a touch of bitterness, evoking biblical resonances: 'I notice he waited till we busted our butts finishing up planting before staging his resurrection' (Smiley 1991: 6).

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[5] Critics have, however, exposed Lear's figurative incestuous desire for Cordelia.

In the Gloucester subplot in *King Lear* favouritism, both on a socio-political (legitimacy) and on a personal level, sets the tragedy in motion. Gloucester favours Edgar, or at least the systems of primogeniture and legitimacy favour Edgar. Edmund thus regards his brother Edgar as a rival for power and property: 'Legitimate Edgar, I must have your land' (1.2.16).

As many critics are well aware and *A Thousand Acres* reminds the reader, the rivalry between the sisters in Shakespeare's play is noticeable already from act one scene one. Lear sets the example for how inheritance is to be allocated by disregarding the rights of primogeniture. Goneril is the eldest of the sisters, and according to the rights of primogeniture she should be the one to inherit the kingdom.[6] Indeed, Kent and Gloucester are both puzzled by the fact that control of the kingdom is not put in the hands of the Duke of Albany, the eldest daughter's husband. Demanding that his three daughters measure their love for him and inviting comparison between their protestations, Lear underscores rivalry between the sisters and fosters jealousy between them. The love-test impairs the loyalty between Goneril and Regan, as is evident in Regan's endeavour to top her sister's speech and declaration of love. Regan first states that she is made of that same 'mettle' as her sister, but then goes on to say that Goneril comes 'too short' in her expression of love for Lear. Whereas Goneril stays within a paradigm characterized by 'due' distance between father and daughter, Regan disrupts this convention, and that has important ramifications on the relationship between the two sisters. Regan's protestation of a deeper and more thorough love than Goneril's comes across as an attempt to undermine Goneril's privileges as the first-born. Regan has hence overstepped her 'rights' both on a political and on a personal level. Regan's speech makes it more difficult for Goneril to assert her authority as the elder sibling. This upsets the established power balance between the two sisters. Hence, an already existent schism materializes between Goneril and Regan during their speeches of love at the beginning of act one scene one, which we are made aware of through Smiley's way of establishing vital differences between the sisters and explaining how and why rivalry emerges.

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[6] In *Shakespeare's Festive Tragedy: The Ritual Foundation of Genre*. London and New York: Routledge, 1995, Naomi Conn Liebler writes that 'Lear violates his royal obligation to protect the realm, and also the custom of primogeniture in promising the "third more opulent" portion of the land to his youngest, not his eldest, daughter' (199).

Mutual trust is already subverted as a result of Lear's favouritism, and mutual distrust will be reinforced by Lear's efforts to trigger a division between the two sisters. Lear's threat to leave Goneril's abode to go to live with Regan further undermines the loyalty between the sisters. Taking up the abode with Regan would be a threat to Goneril, not only political:

> *Lear:* Degenerate bastard, I'll not trouble thee:
> Yet have I left a daughter.
> *Goneril:* You strike my people, and your disordered rabble
> Make servants of their betters. (1.4. 245-48) [7]

It is perhaps worth mentioning that critics have argued that after the banishment of Cordelia and Kent, the sisters are seen to plot together against their father.[8] This is, however, Goneril's way of asserting her authority over Regan. Goneril is trying to recover her power over her sister and find out where Regan really stands. Discussing this scene in relation to sibling rivalry could also explain why the sisters never actually implement their plan 'i'the heat'. Critics have found it puzzling that nothing comes of their meeting. Clearly, then, the relationship between Goneril and Regan is one of the aspects of Shakespeare's tragedy that take on new meaning when the reader returns to *King Lear* after a reading of *A Thousand Acres*.

The competitive configurations of the outside world were seen to motivate Larry's decision to hand over his farm to his daughters, and this make-up of society influences the relationship between Ginny and Rose. The competition between farmers and the repeated comparisons between Larry's farm and other adjacent farms create a system of rivalry on a larger scale with selfishness, greed, rights of possession, and desire to own as the

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[7] In 'The Image of the Family in *King Lear*'. In *On King Lear*, edited by Lawrence Danson. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981, Thomas McFarland has pointed out that in this scene Lear 'manipula[tes][...] the dynamics of family favoritism' (97).

[8] In James A. Schiff's 'Contemporary Retellings: *A Thousand Acres* as the Latest Lear'. *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction* 39, no. 4 (1998): 367-81, we read the following: '[Goneril] responds to her father's gift of land not with delight or gratitude, but with malice and paranoia, remarking to Regan that they must conspire together to "do something" to Lear so as to disempower him in his increasing madness' (7). But Goneril and Regan are not trying to conspire. They are anxious about their father's banishment of Kent and Cordelia, understandably enough, and Goneril wants to find out which side Regan is on as well as assert her power.

outcome. As a child, Ginny was 'indoctrinated' with such a conception of the world as the 'right order of things':

> I recognized the justice of Harold Clark's opinion that the Ericson land was on his side of the road, but even so, I thought it should be us. For one thing, Dinah Ericson's bedroom had a window seat in the closet that I coveted. For another, I thought it appropriate and desirable that the great circle of the flat earth spreading out from the T intersection of County Road 686 and Cabot Street Road be ours. (Smiley 1991:4)

This system of rivalry is hence established in the minds of Ginny and Rose very early on, and it is stimulated throughout their adult life. From early childhood, they have been used to competing for the same object, influenced by the competitive constitution of society.

Any external element that comes into Ginny's and Rose's world hence feeds the fire and sustains the rivalry. Ginny sees Rose as a rival for Rose's own children. Owing to nitrates (used by the farmer to fertilize the land), that poisoned the well-water, Ginny cannot become pregnant, and the sight of Rose and her two daughters affects her 'like poison'. Again, rivalry is prompted and Ginny's desire to own the children takes over: 'they were nearly my own daughters' (Smiley 1991: 8). Ginny tries to convince the reader that the jealousy she once felt towards Rose is set aside: 'the sight of those two babies, whom I had loved and cared for with real interest and satisfaction, affected me like poison [...] I was so jealous, and so freshly jealous every time I saw them, that I could hardly speak' (Smiley 1991: 8). A rhetoric of rivalry permeates Ginny's way of speaking in her efforts to convince herself that she has got over her jealousy.

The rivalry over Jess should thus be discussed with reference to competition in the larger world. Even if Jess *triggers* the 'outbreak of rivalry' between Ginny and Rose;[9] it is the transfer of property that exposes (and activates) the tacit and already existing rivalry between siblings in both *A Thousand Acres* and *King Lear*. When Jess in *A Thousand Acres* comes into the picture there is thus more at stake than merely sexual jealousy. They are unconsciously competing for the same object. Handsome, charismatic, and attractive, Ginny and Rose notice Jess at the same time, but importantly, Ginny also notices that Rose has

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[9] In 'Goneril's Version: *A Thousand Acres* and *King Lear*'. *South Dakota Review* 33, no. 2 (1995): 105-15, Tim Keppel suggests that 'Jess is the catalyst for Ginny's awakening, both physical and psychological' (113).

detected him. Ginny imitates Rose's desire in a typically Girardian fashion: 'Rose noticed him [Jess], too, right when I did' (Smiley 1991: 10). Rene Girard has presented a model based on triangular desire that is interesting in this context. He suggests that we base our desire on another person's desire, a person whom we admire. Ginny does not choose the object of her desire herself; it is a 'third person', i.e. Rose, that 'indicates to the narrator the object [she] will begin desiring passionately' (Girard 1965: 30). However, Jess does awaken Ginny to sexual awareness, and her subsequent knowledge that Rose has an affair with him seems not so much to lead to sexual jealousy as foster an awareness on Ginny's part that she is in fact a different person from Rose:

> My deepest-held habit was assuming that differences between Rose and me were just on the surface [...] that somehow we were each other's real selves [...] But after all, she wasn't me: Her body wasn't mine. (Smiley 1991: 332)

When Jess swaps Ginny for Rose, Ginny's sole purpose in life will from then onwards be to remove Rose by whatever means. Ultimately it becomes an end in itself, quite apart from any considerations about Jess. Ginny cannot control the story any more; the desire to poison Rose takes over. Being brought up in a system that feeds and sustains competition between people, they are forced into rivalry over something they think rightfully belongs to both of them, namely Jess (as property). They only recognize the justice of their own needs and their own rights. The deadly antagonism between the two sisters actually makes Ginny's attempted poisoning of Rose, to which some critics have objected, seem believable.

Thus Smiley rewrites and emphasizes the distinction between Ginny and Rose, which also has a bearing on our reading of *King Lear*. Many critics explain the rivalry between Goneril and Regan with reference to sexual jealousy over Edmund, although feminists have presented a more nuanced picture of the two sisters.[10] Goneril's and Regan's 'lust' for Edmund is not exclusively sexual; it is also based on a system of rivalry made palpable through Lear's love-test. It might be Edmund that triggers

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[10] In 'Horns of Dilemma: Jealousy, Gender, and Spectatorship in English Renaissance Drama', Katharine Eisaman Maus points out that '[e]ven Goneril and Regan, whose competition over a man reaches a murderous pitch, seem driven more by sibling rivalry, noticeable even in the first scene, as they strive to outdo one another in praise of their father – than by specifically sexual jealousy as the heroes experience it' (Maus 1987:564). Goneril, however, does not try to outdo Regan.

the rivalry between Goneril and Regan, but rivalry has certainly been lurking beneath the surface all along. The two sisters have to compete for love, attention, land, and power, being forced to vie for the same space, politically as well as personally - something Cordelia never had to do on the personal level, and arguably refuses to do on a political level when she says 'nothing'.

Whereas Ginny does not succeed in poisoning her sister and actually survives herself, Goneril succeeds in exterminating both herself and her sister. What was once so important to Goneril in *King Lear*, the battle between the kingdoms of England and France, yields to her desire to avoid experiencing, at any cost, her sister's alliance - sexual as well as political - with Edmund:

> I had rather lose the battle than that sister
> Should loosen him and me. (5.1.18-19)

The deadly rivalry between Goneril and Regan is no longer over Edmund. The competitive configurations of the political world have so deeply infringed on the relation between the siblings that nothing stands in their way when they wish to destroy each other. Towards the end of *King Lear*, Edmund himself is no longer important to Goneril; it is more important to her that Regan does not get him – just as possessing Jess had ceased to matter to Ginny in *A Thousand Acres* once she decided to try to kill Rose.

When we read *King Lear* against *A Thousand Acres*, the play's as well as the novel's deeply problematical preoccupation with relations between women, particularly the dynamics between Goneril/Ginny and Regan/Rose, is foregrounded. So is the complexity of marriage seen in the relationships between Goneril/Ginny and Albany/Ty. *A Thousand Acres* alerts the reader to other characters' influence on Goneril's, but also Regan's, behaviour and actions, helping us see how that influence affects the relationship between the sisters. The reader comes to realize that Goneril and Regan are part of a larger network of interpersonal relationships. *A Thousand Acres* thus shows the reader how women's position in patriarchy is informed by constraints rooted in their roles as mothers, daughters, siblings, and wives. When we return to *King Lear*, it is with a sharpened awareness of the complexity of family relationships.

The picture of the family as a site of dynamic interaction in *King Lear* is consequently intensified and brought to the fore through the interaction

between the two texts. The novel also draws attention to the tension between the domestic and the public. The stress on family relationships and the ways in which those relationships are seen to be informed by the competitive configurations of the outside world emphasize the tension between the microcosmic and the macrocosmic in *King Lear.*

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Reading Wordsworth after McGann:
Moments of Negativity in "Tintern Abbey" and the Immortality Ode

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> Is it not possible, under certain conditions and at certain times, for very important things to betray themselves in very slight indications? ... So let us not under-value small signs: perhaps from them it may be possible to come upon the tracks of greater things. (Freud: 31)

Since the mid 1980s, Jerome J. McGann has been the "most influential critic of Romanticism" (Cronin: 5). McGann's interventions in this field have been decisive in opening and revising the Romantic canon as well as in altering our approach to Romantic texts. Due in large part to McGann many more very different poets from the period are today being read in the historical, contextual manner he has theorised and advocated. As such his work has been and is a salutary source of inspiration for most contemporary Romanticists. Yet one serious problem remains: in book after book, essay after essay, McGann features William Wordsworth in the role of the partly cunning reactionary, partly deluded idealist, who wrongly suppresses particular socio-historical or psychic actualities from the surface of his poetry. In his major work in Romantic criticism, *The Romantic Ideology*, which provided the script and set the stage for Anglo-American Romantic criticism well into the 1990s, one of McGann's central premises is that Wordsworth's poetry enacts "a strategy of displacement" whereby "The poem annihilates its history, biographical and socio-historical alike, and replaces these particulars with a record of pure consciousness" (90). Here it only remains for McGann to add "that Wordsworth's ... is a false consciousness needs scarcely to be said" (ibid.).

It is not McGann's assumption of a historically elevated position from which to pronounce a devastating critique of the escapist tendency in Wordsworthian Romanticism's imaginative project that seems to be

problematic. Surely Romantic poetry of the Wordsworthian kind at first sight often appears to wish to be able to transcend rather than articulate its particular material enabling conditions, whether these are upsetting socio-historical events exterior to the poet, or psychic events interior to the poet. The problem is McGann's belief that Wordsworth manages *successfully* to displace and even 'annihilate' whatever causes his anxieties and crises. For McGann Wordsworth remains in a state of naive assurance that there is indeed full compensation in the imaginative idealities projected in the poetic works. However, neither Wordsworth nor his poems were ever as convinced that they had sufficiently stable grounds for asserting such assurance as they are made out to be in the criticism of McGann.[1] To substantiate this claim the following attends to 'moments of negativity' in Wordsworth's poetry; moments in which it anticipates an undeluded and sceptical critique of its own transcendent assumptions and affirmative visions.[2]

The exploration of these moments of negativity in Wordsworth has been a persistent concern of much twentieth century Wordsworth criticism from A. C. Bradley through Geoffrey Hartman and Paul de Man to Frances Ferguson, David Simpson and many others. These critics have in various ways developed insights provided by Bradley who in 1900 turned against the Victorian reception of Wordsworth. For Bradley, Wordsworth was not the nostalgic, necessarily solacing and over-emotional lover of nature readers such as John Stuart Mill and Matthew Arnold had found him to be. Wordsworth was a proto-modern poet who confronted "poverty, crime, insanity, ruined innocence, torturing hopes doomed to extinction, solitary anguish, even despair", and who "did not avert his eyes from it" (Bradley: 124). This understanding of Wordsworth stands in danger of being curbed by McGann's powerful influence insofar

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[1] For other critiques of the understanding of Romanticism professed by McGann and other new historicists and cultural materialists, see M. H. Abrams, "On Political Readings of the *Lyrical Ballads*", in his *How to Do Things with Texts: Essays in Criticism and Critical Theory* (New York: Norton, 1989), pp. 364-391, Peter Manning, "Placing Poor Susan: Wordsworth and the New Historicism", in his *Reading Romantics: Texts and Contexts* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 300-320, and Susan Wolfson, "Questioning 'The Romantic Ideology': Wordsworth", *Revue Internationale de Philosophie* 44:3 (1990), pp. 429-447. In granting Wordsworth some of the insights the new historicists typically refuse him the essays by Manning and Wolfson have been most useful.

[2] For a consideration of the role and articulation of negativity in literature, see the essays in Sanford Budick and Wolfgang Iser (eds.), *Languages of The Unsayable: The Play of Negativity in Literature and Literary Theory* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996).

as its probable consequence is a less than desirable return of Wordsworth studies to Victorian conditions.

Wordsworth often functions as the norm against which most other poets of the Romantic period appear interesting and appealing to McGann. In an essay on versions of elegy in Romantic poetry, "The Failures of Romanticism", McGann discusses what he calls 'a poetry of failure' as a special "mode of poetry": "Poetry as the expression and even the embodiment of loss and failure" (271).[3] This is a radically dark poetry, which McGann typically champions, and it exhibits an "Indurated Byronic sorrow [which] signifies a loss from which there is no redemption" (273). According to McGann, this dark mode of poetry, which is practiced by Byron, Keats and Shelley, derives from such late eighteenth century elegiac women poets as Charlotte Smith and Mary Robinson, and gets rearticulated by such later poets as Felicia Hemans and Letitia Elizabeth Landon. These poets McGann names sentimental and distinguishes from their Romantic contemporaries. Sentimental "poetical theory and practice [is] firmly located in history", writes McGann,

> ... indeed, its theory and practice make historicality, with all its nontranscendental features, a defining quality of the poetical. Romanticism feeds upon this theory, but only to raise up cries of resistance, or to build temples in excremental places. Sentimental poetry, by contrast, brings all of its illusions, including its lost illusions, down to earth. (285)

In order to focus and frame his reading of the sentimental tradition, which emphasises loss, the body, disillusion, death, materiality, the real, McGann constructs a Romantic tradition that emphasises the exact opposites of compensation, the mind, illusion, life, spirituality, the ideal. Presenting the normative Romantic tradition against which he promotes the more honest (we may assume) manner of confronting loss and failure in the sentimental tradition, McGann writes,

> The usual undertaking of these matters follows a Wordsworthian/Coleridgean line: 'For such loss ... abundant recompence'. According to this view, there is—there must be—a faith that looks through death. The philosophic mind of

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[3] See also McGann's chapter, "The Loss of Sentimental Poetry" in *The Poetics of Sensibility: A Revolution in Literary Style* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), pp. 150-173.

> romanticism works to redeem the harrowing logic of ultimate loss:
> perhaps even, as in certain Christian and Marxian schemas, to
> transform it into splendor. But a serious problem lurks beneath
> these elegant compensatory formulas. We know this from
> Wordsworth's own poetry, whose best moments regularly betray
> their conscious commitments. (271; McGann's ellipsis)

Wordsworth is here made to subscribe to an idea of a closed psychic economy in which it is possible to believe in full compensation for loss. He thus comes to represent an almost unbelievably naive position against which McGann can present his counter-tradition of sentimentalist poets, who consciously recognise and face the "problem" of "ultimate loss" that McGann claims Wordsworth only articulates by accident when his poems "betray their conscious commitments".

McGann is clearly being hyperbolical in his construal of Wordsworth as the norm transgressed by the *therefore* newly interesting sentimental poets. Yet this is exactly the problem. One of the easiest ways to legitimate the retrieval of any of the numerous neglected Romantic poets is to claim that this or that poet or group of poets departs from and transgresses 'the norm'. As always in such undertakings what is posited as the norm has to be a unified and self-identical entity, which at most can contradict itself when it betrays its "conscious commitments" in unintended slips and lapses. However, the unnecessarily high price for this salutary recuperation of a counter-tradition at work in the Romantic period is a misreading and re-mystification of Wordsworth which threatens to become the normative understanding of Wordsworth insofar as McGann's influence has come to assume hegemonic status in current Romantic criticism

When he presents Wordsworth's allegedly closed economy of loss and full compensation in "The Failures of Romanticism", McGann refers to two famous poems and passages by Wordsworth. He quotes a line from "Tintern Abbey" (1798) and he alludes to stanza ten of the Immortality Ode (1804/05) and presents this as evidence that there is, as there must be, abundant recompense in the face of loss in normative Wordsworthian Romanticism. This essay is essentially a testing of McGann's evidence. The use of "Tintern Abbey" will be reconsidered first in order to begin to suggest that on a second look, Wordsworth is not saying exactly what McGann takes him to be saying. Next, a historical frame is provided to situate the discussion of the value of poetry and the imagination in the Romantic period itself, which finally leads to a reading of a passage in the Immortality Ode which, like the passage from "Tintern Abbey",

profoundly problematises and complicates what McGann leaves as an unproblematised given: that Wordsworth's poetic language aims to convince us in the affirmative that it provides full compensation for the losses it registers.

I

"Tintern Abbey" is about what it means to be in time: a revisit to a formerly visited spot in nature compels the speaker to measure what is lost against what is gained as time passes. The poem makes use of one of Wordsworth's most characteristic artistic techniques, what Carlos Baker terms "the double-exposure technique" (106). As Baker explains, Wordsworth used the technique to explore his major theme of personal growth by juxtaposing "two widely separated periods of time in such a way that we are made dramatically conscious of the degree of growth that has taken place between Stage One and Stage Two" (ibid.). The poem suggests that the speaker has lost an immediate, direct, sensuous relation to nature such as that experienced in early youth. Yet Wordsworth will not lament this loss, because something is gained from it. What is gained is the experience *as such*, the memory of it, which on the one hand can serve as a substitute for nature when the speaker is away from nature, and on the other hand makes evident the power of consciousness to function in the immediate absence of the world. In "Tintern Abbey", according to Baker, "As [Wordsworth] overlooks the scene once more, with the mental landscape of the past still in his purview, he is made doubly aware of a sense of loss (the past will not return) and a sense of compensation greater than the loss (the new maturity and insight which the advancing years have brought)" (107). Although they disagree in their evaluation of Wordsworth's poem, Baker's reading is consonant with McGann's. They are both confident that Wordsworth in "Tintern Abbey" receives "abundant" compensation for the losses registered in the poem.

Yet McGann represses the undercurrent of sceptical doubt that qualifies Wordsworth's affirmations and manifests itself in certain moments of negativity in the poem. McGann cites a crucial phrase from the poem to illustrate his idea that in Wordsworth there is full compensation, but he leaves something out of the quotation, which can be seen to qualify and negativize the affirmation that encapsulates it. Wordsworth registers the loss of his earlier self and the immediate relation to nature he experienced on his first visit to Tintern Abbey:

> That time is past,
> And all its aching joys are now no more,
> And all its dizzy raptures. Not for this
> Faint I, nor mourn nor murmur: other gifts
> Have followed, for such loss, *I would believe*,
> Abundant recompence. For I have learned
> To look on nature, not as in the hour
> Of thoughtless youth, but hearing oftentimes
> The still, sad music of humanity,
> Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power
> To chasten and subdue. (Gill: 134, ll. 84-94; emphasis added)

In "The Failures of Romanticism", McGann deliberately erases the crucial italicised phrase that Wordsworth deploys to destabilise the naive notion of full compensation in the closed economy of loss and gain implied in the passage. Commenting on this and other moments of negativity in the poem, Susan Wolfson astutely points out that "to phrase a spiritual economy ... with a tentative auxiliary ... is to deplete the store of recompense. Wordsworth's rhetoric of affirmation in 'Tintern Abbey' indulges a form of negative assertion" (439). To suggest that we are merely dealing with minor and relatively insignificant details—or with an instance when Wordsworth inadvertently betrays his "conscious commitments"—would be to profoundly misread him. As Christopher Ricks points out and amply demonstrates in his attention to minute, particular details in Wordsworth, "So simply lucid is Wordsworth's speech that it can constitute a temptation: we may not pay sufficient attention to the very words, since we are so confident of what they are saying" (127). In a certain sceptical readerly mood, the "I would believe" admits the illusory or at least tenuous ground on which Wordsworth builds his hopes for full compensation. If we recover McGann's repressed passage and bring the proper weight to bear on the tentative modal auxiliary 'would' in "I *would* believe", then we understand Wordsworth to be saying that in fact he does not believe that he has had or ever will receive "abundant recompence" in the face of loss, absence, death.

Wordsworth almost, but not exactly, says the opposite of what McGann wants him to be saying. McGann wants Wordsworth to be writing in the indicative and to be stating a held fact, whereas all Wordsworth can do is to write in the optative thus expressing a wish, which may or may not be fulfilled. "I would believe" comes close to

implying, 'I would if I could', or 'I would but I don't'. Following this line of thought we begin to sense the oxymoronic nature of the sheer idea of "abundant recompence" and to raise the question of whether a representation—be it in the form of mental imagery held in memory or verbal poetry—under any circumstance can be said to substitute adequately for what it represents, and not rather function as a reminder of loss, a complex sign of absence as much as presence. McGann's construal of a binary opposition between a Wordsworthian, optimistic and compensatory vision and its dark, sentimental, Byronic counter-vision begins to dissolve as we recognize that Wordsworth encompasses both what McGann calls the sentimental and what he calls the Romantic elegiac current. If Wordsworth's negations are never absolute nor, by the same token, are his affirmations.

II

To understand more fully where McGann's understanding of Wordsworth's poetry derives from, and to see more clearly what is at stake in recuperating certain moments of negativity in this poetry, it is necessary to recapitulate the way in which poetry was aggrandised and evaluated as a kind of substitute religion in the Romantic period and after. Normatively Romanticism has been said to centre on the idea that imaginative literature can somehow correct the wrongs of the world; that the failures of the real can be amended at the ideal level of human consciousness through the redemptive intervention of the imagination. Imagination is the mental, quasi-divine faculty that is mobilized in Romantic aesthetics in order to compensate in ideality for the short-comings of reality.

In a letter from 1807 Wordsworth says that his vocation is to create poetry, which at some future date will "console the afflicted, … add sunshine to daylight by making the happy happier, … [and] teach the young and the gracious of every age, to see, to think and feel, and therefore to become more actively and securely virtuous" (De Selincourt 1969: 146; 150). This captures what McGann takes Wordsworth's poetry to exemplify and articulates some of our culture's most deeply entrenched ideas about what imaginative literature is and is supposed to do: console in times of distress, add sunshine on a rainy day, and provide a means to cultivate the faculties of seeing, thinking, and feeling to realise our full human potential. In the Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads*, Wordsworth similarly writes:

> Poetry is the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge.... [The poet]
> is the rock of defence of human nature; an upholder and preserver,
> carrying everywhere with him relationship and love. In spite of
> difference of soil and climate, of language and manners, of laws
> and customs, the poet binds together by passion and knowledge
> the vast empire of human society, as it is spread over the whole
> earth, and over all time. (Gill: 606)

As Raymond Williams points out, for Wordsworth poetry ideally
embodies and transmits to the reader "certain human values, capacities,
energies, which the development of society towards an industrial
civilisation was felt to be threatening or even destroying" (36). Indeed,
especially in the nineteenth but also in the twentieth century,
Wordsworth's poetry was often valued for its therapeutic effects, its
capacity to function as a refuge, antidote and source of humane value in
an increasingly urbanised, industrialised, capitalised, and ultimately
godless modern world of science and cold calculation.

A few lines from Keats can be taken to sum up the Romantic idea of
poetry's humanising agency. In one of his last poems, the unfinished
meditation on the sources of artistic inspiration and creation as well as the
role of the poet in the modern world, the *The Fall of Hyperion* fragment
composed in the summer of 1819, Keats asks:

> '... sure not all
> Those melodies sung into the world's ear
> Are useless: sure a poet is a sage,
> A humanist, physician to all men [?]' (Barnard: 440, ll. 187-90)

One of the contexts necessary for understanding Keats's desire to know
whether poetry is "useless" is the philosophical movement of utilitarianism,
which had its origins in late seventeenth century Britain and received its
classical formulations in the work of Jeremy Bentham. As M. H. Abrams
points out, the utilitarian thinkers "attacked poetry for being an outmoded
luxury trade, or a functionless vestige of a primitive mentality" (326). In the
face of a material-minded public that espoused such ideas about poetry, the
Romantics invested their poetry with absolute value by promoting it as the
humane agent for secular redemption, something all humans need for their
emotional and mental well-being. Thus Shelley claimed, in response to
Thomas Love Peacock's utilitarian theory of poetry in "The Four Ages of

Poetry", that "Poetry is ... something *divine*" and that poets are the "unacknowledged legislators of the world".

A famous incident from the period relates how John Stuart Mill was saved from a state of depression and mental breakdown by reading Wordsworth's poetry in 1828. Mill famously describes this in his *Autobiography* (1873) in terms of a quasi-religious conversion experience. Mill had been engaged in the utilitarian project of reforming and improving society and its institutions in order to increase the material well-being and therefore the happiness of the largest possible number of humans. "But the time came when I [awoke] from this as from a dream", Mill recognises, and continues:

> It was in the autumn of 1826. I was in a dull state of nerves ... unsusceptible to enjoyment or pleasurable excitement... In this frame of mind it occurred to me to put the question directly to myself: 'Suppose that all your objects in life were realised; that all the changes in institutions and opinions which you are looking forward to could be completely effected at this very instant: would this be a great joy and happiness to you?' And an irrepressible self-consciousness distinctly answered 'No!' At this my heart sank within me: the whole foundation upon which my life was constructed fell down. All my happiness was to have been found in the continual pursuit of this end. The end had ceased to charm, and how could there ever again be any interest in the means? I seemed to have nothing left to live for. (Stillinger: 80-81)

Yet, having reached this low point, Mill discovers Wordsworth's poetry:

> This [depressed] state of my thoughts and feelings made the fact of my reading Wordsworth for the first time (in the autumn of 1828), an important event in my life.... What made Wordsworth's poems a medicine for my state of mind, was that they expressed, not mere outward beauty, but states of feeling, and of thought coloured by feeling, under the excitement of beauty. They seemed to be the very culture of the feelings, which I was in quest of. In them I seemed to draw from a source of inward joy, of sympathetic and imaginative pleasure.... I needed to be made to feel that there was real, permanent happiness in tranquil contemplation. Wordsworth taught me this. (88)

Mill's understanding of Wordsworth's power to give mental relief was prefigured by Wordsworth himself in the movements of his major poems. As Mill puts it with reference to the Immortality Ode, "I found that

[Wordsworth] himself had had similar experience to mine; that he also had felt that the first freshness of youthful enjoyment of life was not lasting; but that he had sought for compensation, and had found it" (89).

Mill found relief from his depression through reading the Immortality Ode and from recognising that Wordsworth had experienced a similar crisis, but had found relief from it and regained his strength. The kind of hope invested by Wordsworth in the consolatory and humanising power of his poetry would seem to have been realised by Mill when he read Wordsworth in 1828 at a time when Romantic ideas about poetry and the aggrandisement of art as redemptive were being disseminated in and adopted by the culture at large through such reading experiences as Mill's or that other Victorian sage, Matthew Arnold, who in "Elegiac Verses" (1850) asked, "where will Europe's latter hour / Again find Wordsworth's healing power?" (Bryson: 188).

III

It should now be possible to see more clearly the origins of the understanding of Wordsworth that McGann presents in "The Failures of Romanticism" and elsewhere: Stuart Mill's is a major nineteenth-century celebration of what McGann calls Romanticism's "elegant compensatory formulas". More recently, Helen Vendler, Michael O'Neill and Duncan Wu have reasserted the transcendent 'healing power' of Wordsworth's Immortality Ode. According to Vendler, "Arnold was uncannily accurate in speaking of Wordsworth's 'healing power': the Ode is self-therapeutic" (78-9), and for O'Neill, the poem is concerned with the "curative properties of expression" (48). Likewise, in his investigation of the extent to which "the force that exerted most influence on [Wordsworth's] poetic life was grief" (309), Duncan Wu maintains that Wordsworth in the Ode held that "grief could be transcended" and that this position was in need of "no justification" (202), even as Wu admits "a perceptible tendency in his poetry towards scepticism" (309).

Yet, this understanding of the Immortality Ode is premised on a blindness *vis-à-vis* certain moments of negativity that pull in the other direction. A number of critics have pointed to the ways in which the Ode undermines its own affirmations. In one of the fullest examinations of the Ode, Jeffrey C. Robinson describes a 'classroom experiment' of spending an entire semester reading the work. Through close textual analysis that emphasised the poem's 'questionings' and by means of a variety of

contextual placements as well as attention to the stages of composition and revision, Robinson's students were led to revise their initial sense of "Wordsworth's generally consoling intention" to become "tangled in Wordsworth's own confusions of loss and gain" (63). Also responding to the complexities of the poem's 'questionings' of its own certainties, Peter Manning has shown how it "exploits the resonance of Christian faith without committing itself to belief, to the conviction that would lessen its human uncertainty" (80), and, more recently, Fred Hoerner has argued that in the Ode the "loss that breaks the heart rekindles a dialectic of joining and questioning, presence and absence" rather than a "retreat away from suffering and into consolation" (656). It is with reference to these and other more full explications of the negative thrusts in Ode that I focus in the following on one unsettling moment of negativity in the poem.

The first three stanzas of the poem that cured Mill's depression capture the total movement of the poem, a full reading of which can only be sketched here:

> There was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,
> The earth, and every common sight,
>   To me did seem
> Apparelled in celestial light,
> The glory and the freshness of a dream.
> It is not now as it hath been of yore;—
> Turn wheresoe'er I may,
>   By night or day,
> The things which I have seen I now can see no more.
>
>   The Rainbow comes and goes,
>   And lovely is the Rose,
>   The Moon doth with delight
> Look round her when the heavens are bare;
> Waters on a starry night
> Are beautiful and fair;
>   The sunshine is a glorious birth;
>   But yet I know, where'er I go,
> That there hath past away a glory from the earth.
>
> Now, while the Birds thus sing a joyous song,
> And while the young Lambs bound
> As to the tabor's sound,
> To me alone there came a thought of grief:

A timely utterance gave that thought relief,
And I again am strong.
The Cataracts blow their trumpets from the steep,
No more shall grief of mine the season wrong;
I hear the Echoes through the mountains throng,
The Winds come to me from the fields of sleep,
And all the earth is gay,
Land and sea
  Give themselves up to jollity,
And with the heart of May
  Doth every Beast keep holiday,
Thou Child of Joy
Shout round me, let me hear thy shouts, thou happy Shepherd-
boy!

A three-step dialectic of remembered joy, its loss, and its subsequent retrieval is being articulated. The movement begins by recalling a state of plenitude and joy experienced in childhood ("The glory and the freshness of a dream"). But this plenitude is registered as past and lost ("there hath past away a glory from the earth"). This loss leads to, yet is not presented as the direct cause of, the speaker's thought of "grief", which marks the climax of the speaker's crisis ("To me *alone* there came a thought of grief"). In the final movement strength is regained despite irretrievable loss, grief finds relief, and the crisis is overcome. The poet, as Mill puts it, has "sought for compensation, and [has] found it". The means to overcome the crisis, most readers recognise, is poetic utterance ("timely utterance"). This utterance yields "Echoes" that signal a re-established positive correspondence between the subject and the object which counters the negative state of being isolated in thought; "No more shall grief of mine the season wrong; / I hear the Echoes through the mountains throng".

    Poetic utterance is what finally allows the speaker to feel and sense that "all the earth is gay" and to participate, although vicariously, in this rejuvenated life. This movement captures the larger and highly complex movement of the poem from loss toward the possibility of compensation. Towards the end of the poem, in lines alluded to by McGann in "The Failures of Romanticism", Wordsworth acknowledges his loss, but presents the thoughts of suffering, which are evoked by loss, as adequate recompense for what is lost:

  Though nothing can bring back the hour
  Of splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower;

> We will grieve not, rather find
> Strength in what remains behind;
> In the primal sympathy
> Which having been must ever be,
> In the soothing thoughts that spring
> Out of human suffering;
> In the faith that looks through death,
> In years that bring the philosophic mind. (Gill: 302, ll. 180-189)

This affirmative statement that compensatory "strength" can "spring" out of "soothing thoughts" of "suffering" (the formal rhyme spring/suffering which is underscored by enjambment almost enacts the semantic message to suggest both the sense of 'to originate out' of and 'to escape from' suffering) may be read in the light of what was said earlier in stanza three, in particular in these lines:

> To me alone there came a thought of grief:
> A timely utterance gave that thought relief,
>   And I again am strong.

In the same moment that the thought of grief is noted, Wordsworth goes on to state that he has found relief and regained his strength through what he calls "timely utterance".

"I again am strong" seems an unnatural word order compared to the more straightforward 'I am strong again'. The inversion of the more straightforward word order may be explained by the need to find a rhyme-word to chime with the stanza's first rhyme-word, 'song'. The fact that 'song' and 'strong' rhyme indicates that uttering this rhymed song is what makes Wordsworth strong. In *The Verbal Icon*, William K. Wimsatt points out that rhymes "impose upon the logical pattern of expressed argument a kind of fixative counterpattern of alogical implication" (153). And as Roman Jakobson explains, "Rhyme necessarily involves the semantic relationship between rhyming units.... Whatever the relation between sound and meaning in different rhyme techniques, both spheres are necessarily involved" (45-6). Thus, Michael O'Neill concludes about these textual movements in Wordsworth's poem, "The rhyme ..., kept apart for five lines, suggests that strength lies in song, and Wordsworth's 'timely utterance' suggests the curative properties of expression" (48). The rhymes on grief/relief and spring/suffering accomplish the same thing:

giving rhythmic utterance to something painful is a way towards relieving the mind and overcoming crisis. The song makes the speaker strong, gives relief from grief. The making or uttering of the poem compensates for the losses it is about. In essence, this is what the poem is about for John Stuart Mill, Helen Vendler, Jerome McGann and Michael O'Neill, despite their significant ideological and methodological differences. However, we should not take leave of the poem carrying only an affirmative understanding of it as simultaneously asserting and affirming a "therapeutic success" (Vendler: 79) through "the curative properties of expression" exemplified and instanced by the magic of rhyme.

If what has been said concerning the importance of the rhyme of 'strong' and 'song' and 'grief' and 'relief' is granted, what are we to make of the fact, which O'Neill and all other readers of the Ode neglect to mention, that 'song' and 'strong' also rhyme with 'wrong'? Is this the poem's subtly 'alogical' (Wimsatt) way of implying that its overt assertions of "the curative properties of expression" may be 'wrong'? That it is somehow 'wrong' to search for consolation, relief, and strength in poetic utterance? Is the song in other words saying that it is wrong to seek compensation in "thoughts that spring / Out of human suffering"? On a straightforward reading the line "No more shall grief of mine the season wrong" could not be clearer in its rejection of despair. Yet the rhyme nonetheless imparts enough of a questioning note of scepticism into this resolute affirmation to suggest that even as the poem is saying one thing in an affirmative mode it is doing another thing in a negative mode.

Despite the fact that it relates to the French context, which was never exactly parallel to the English when it comes to the force of Neoclassical doctrines of decorum and positions on rhyme (because the English had to take account of a native blank verse tradition much stronger than anywhere on the continent), the following may be read as an account of the apparently irrational and inexplicable use of rhyme in the Ode:

> In upholding the essentially Cartesian view that Truth expressed itself as clear and distinct ideas, neoclassical French theorists of poetic language, of whom Boileau is the best known, recommended the suppression or, at least, the strict control of language's more irrational potentialities. One of the chief problems here was deciding on the function and status of rhyme. Rhyme was a necessary feature of regular French verse: it provided essential phonetic reinforcement to the verse line and guaranteed formal unity. But at the same time rhyme was, from a semantic point of

view, potentially a subversive agent. If not strictly disciplined, it could neglect its duty as an element in a logically structured discourse and assert itself as a feature in its own right, establishing through phonetic similarity with other words (rhyme or otherwise), an oblique or irrational connection which might run counter to the proposition of which it was, in theory, part.... With the Romantics, words were permitted to regain some of their opacity which had been refined out of them by the demands of rational discourse in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. (Scott: 15)

To transpose these insights to the English context, reference might be made to John Dryden's *Essay on Dramatic Poesy* (1668). Before the essay's truly significant discussion of the use and relative merits of rhyme and blank verse in drama, Dryden sums up received wisdom concerning "the sweetness of English verse". This, he says,

is improved by the happiness of some writers yet living; who first taught us to mould our thoughts into easy and significant words,— and to retrench superfluities of expression,—and to make our rime so properly a part of the verse, that it should never mislead the sense, but itself be led and governed by it. (Arnold: 16)

Dryden here recognises, even as he resists, the potential of rhyme to mislead the sense, to undermine the logic of sense making. Considering the influence of the *Essay* on subsequent English literature and taste, this statement not only reflects received wisdom concerning the relation of rhyme to sense, it certainly generates the idea that the two are, as Pope was later to put it, to echo one another with sense or 'reason' being the source, and rhyme or 'language' being the faithful, mimetic echo. This corresponds to the Neoclassical idea that language is a dress for thought, something which fits more or less adequately, but which is ultimately a mere ornament to the sense and not, as the Romantics will come to believe, something that embodies thought, and crucially, something which need not always make sense in the same way Pope desires. As Pope writes to introduce *An Essay on Criticism* (1711),

'Tis hard to say, if greater Want of Skill
Appear in *Writing* or in *Judging* ill;
But, of the two, less dang'rous is th' Offence,
To tire our *Patience*, than mis-lead our *Sense*. (Audra and Williams: 239, ll. 1-4)

One way of keeping "Writing" from "mis-lead[ing] our Sense", and thus of controlling the autonomous force of language while still retaining rhyme, is to promote and use closed couplets. In couplets the distance between rhyme-words and thus language's potential to produce aberrant meanings is kept to an absolute minimum to meet the Popean *dictum*: "The *Sound* must seem an *Eccho* to the *Sense*" (Audra and Williams: 281, l. 365).

Romanticism's resistance to and departure from the closed couplet may be a departure from the desire to control the potential of rhyme to produce 'unintended' meanings and a move to liberate what David Scott calls "language's more irrational potentialities". In other words, it may be said that there is a paradoxical intent to produce unintended meanings to be located in certain Romantic poems such as the Ode rather than what McGann postulates when he accounts for Wordsworth's few "best moments" when the poetry betrays its "conscious commitments" and apparently says more than it means.

If only we knew what Wordsworth's thoughts, intentions, commitments were when he allowed his language to indulge in such apparently contradictory and mind-bafflingly irrational rhymes! Then we might have said with McGann that the rhyme of song and wrong is an unintentional accident of language and not something we should take as essentially Wordsworthian. But we do not know why he made that fatal rhyme. Indeed, the odds are that these rhymes are far from accidental. In his diary, Thomas Moore paraphrases Wordsworth's conversation on the relative merits of English and Italian with regard to rhyming: "In struggling with words one [is] led to give birth to and dwell upon thoughts, while, on the contrary, an easy and mellifluous language [like Italian is] apt to tempt, by its facility, into negligence, and to lead the poet to substitute music for thought" (O'Donnell: 41-2). In the same place, Moore reports Wordsworth speaking of "the immense time it took him to write even the shortest copy of verses,—sometimes whole weeks employed in shaping two or three lines, before he can satisfy himself with their structure" (O'Donnell: 256n35). Surely Wordsworth was conscious and committed when he utilised the irrational powers of language in rhyming song, strong, and wrong in the Ode. Yet whether or not the rhyme is finally seen as an accident, it is there on the open page, and thus susceptible to being interpreted as an untimely sign of the poem's own subversion of the naively affirmative understanding of it as merely medicine for a depressed state of mind.

The double pull of the language of the Ode can be understood in terms of a distinction between Romantic 'ideology' and Romantic 'work', which McGann introduces in *Romantic Ideology*. "The grand illusion of Romantic *ideology* is that one may escape ... a world [in which, as Shelley writes in the *Defence*, 'man, having enslaved the elements, remains himself a slave'] through imagination and poetry. The great truth of Romantic *work* is that there is no escape, that there is only revelation (in a wholly secular sense)" (131). The presence of a certain negativity at the core of the language of what has been read as one of the most affirmative poems by Wordsworth suggests that we should not uncritically repeat the therapeutic reading of Wordsworth. This moment of negativity in the Ode resonates with McGann's description in *Romantic Ideology* of Romantic poetry's "greatest moments of artistic success", which, he continues, "are almost always associated with loss, failure, and defeat—in particular the losses which strike most closely to those Ideals (and Ideologies) cherished by the poets in their works" (132). Yet McGann insists on problematising the idea that the greatness of Romantic poetry is connected with its capacity to lead to an authentic critique of its own dominant ideology. He writes that Romantic poetry's "greatest moments usually occur when it pursues its last and final illusion: that it can expose or even that it has uncovered its illusions and false consciousness, that it has finally arrived at the Truth". This is essentially what the Ode has been taken to achieve in the key-rhyme dwelled upon above. Yet, McGann continues as he turns the tables upon such an argument: "The need to believe in such an achievement, either immediate or eventual, is deeply Romantic (and therefore illusive) because it locates the goal of human pursuits, needs, and desires in Ideal space" (134). However, nothing seems further removed from the truth than this confusion of real, material textual space, the space of the poetic *work*, with an Ideal space, the space of Romantic Ideology. Wordsworth's implied critique of the compensatory potential of poetic language may not qualify as the Truth, but it is certainly not a critique that happens in an Ideal and therefore illusory space, it happens right before our eyes.

Wordsworth is not simply the affirmative poet McGann turns him into, nor is he the opposite. He is both and in a sense neither. This duality is reflected in Wordsworth's fundamental ambivalence regarding the force of poetic language. In one of the *Essays upon Epitaphs* from 1810, for instance, Wordsworth famously presents words as in possession of a power to give or to take away life:

> If words be not ... an incarnation of the thought but only a
> clothing for it, then surely will they prove an ill gift [which has] the
> power to consume and to alienate [the reader] from his right mind.
> Language, if it do[es] not uphold, and feed, and leave in quiet, like
> the power of gravitation or the air we breathe, is a counter-spirit,
> unremittingly and noiselessly at work to derange, to subvert, to lay
> waste, to vitiate, and to dissolve. (Owen and Smyser: III, 84-5)

Likewise, in a letter from 1829 he writes, "words are not a mere *vehicle*,
but they are *powers* either to kill or to animate" (De Selincourt 1979:
185). As he puts it in Book Five of *The Prelude* (1805),

> .... Visionary power
> Attends upon the motions of the winds
> Embodied in the mystery of words;
> There darkness makes abode, and all the host
> Of shadowy things do work their changes there,
> As in a mansion like their proper home;
> Even forms and substances are circumfused
> By that transparent veil with light divine;
> And through the turnings intricate of Verse,
> Present themselves as objects recognised,
> In flashes, and with a glory scarce their own. (Gill: 450, ll. 619-
> 629)

Words are a mystery partly because they are at once the loci of darkness
and shadows and the media of divine enlightenment and momentary
insights. Wordsworth contains and encompasses, in a radically unstable
conjunction, both what McGann identifies as the sentimental-materialist
strain in Romantic period writing, and the opposite, more idealist-
transcendentalist strain of what is more traditionally understood as
Romanticism. The interplay and tension between these surely needs to be
considered if we are to account for the full force of his work.

From the Freudian perspective of my epigraph we know that
mistakes, slips and errors are never just that. They are tremendously
important details that open almost limitless possibilities for interpretation.
As Freud warns, "let us not under-value small signs: perhaps from them it
may be possible to come upon the tracks of greater things". Wordsworth's
rhymes are such "small signs" that may lead to "greater things" such as the
nature and value of Romantic poetry, and to the claim that in order to
read the Ode in the right manner—and not only this poem, but any

Romantic poem—a constant awareness of the duplicity of language, language as both, at once, animating and killing, medicine and poison, must be present in the mind of the reader. In Wordsworth and in Romantic poetry, every affirmation of "abundant recompence" carries within itself the seeds of its own undoing in the shape of a sceptical and hesitant "I would believe".

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The Narrated Self and Characterization: Paul Auster's Literary Personae

ANNE MARIT K. BERGE

Introduction

Paul Auster's *The New York Trilogy*, published in the period 1985-1987, has been read as a typical example of postmodern literature. One important feature is the theme of complex identity, and the novels can be read as an exploration of identity problems in the postmodern age, where the idea of the autonomous subject has given way to an understanding of subject and identity characterized by instability and complexity. The trilogy's short novels all depict characters that in different ways and on varying levels struggle to find meaning in what they do, and who are forced to explore their identities during their quests, in confrontation with the antagonists of the stories. Daniel Quinn, who has lost his family, tries to return to life through a hunt for a mysterious linguist. Blue encounters his own self when shadowing the secretive Black. The nameless narrator of the last novel finds himself entrapped in the life of his childhood friend and doppelganger Fanshawe. In his more recent novel, *The Book of Illusions* from 2002, Auster returns to this theme. The main character here finds himself in a state of half-life much like Daniel Quinn, but he is able to find new meaning to his life and solutions to his problems in his encounter with the story of another man's crisis.

An interesting aspect in the study of characters in Auster's works is the importance of narration for creating identity as well as for depiction of literary character. In studies of the modern self, the narrated self has become a central theory. I will suggest that the characters' self-perception relies on their concept of their narratives. Characters in a literary text exist through narration, but in postmodern literature, mimesis is toned down, and their narratives are often fragmented, contradictory and challenge the readers' ability to perceive the characters as personae. I will try to point at

the importance of narratives for the characterization in these novels, applying narrative theory to analyze the function of narration.

Identity and narration

Alasdair MacIntyre introduces a theory of the narrated self in his work of moral philosophy, *After Virtue* from 1981. In his discussion of moral philosophy's standing today, he explains the "concept of selfhood, a concept of a self whose unity resides in the unity of a narrative which links birth to life to death as a narrative beginning to middle to end" (205). He tries to "show how natural it is to think of the self in a narrative mode" (206). Furthermore, MacIntyre links the effect of the failure of these narratives to meaninglessness and the obliteration of self: "When someone complains [...] that his or her life is meaningless, he or she is often and characteristically complaining that the narrative of their life has become unintelligible to them, that it lacks any point, any movement towards a climax or a *telos*" (217). The necessity of others to correct and adjust the narrative of one's own life is also emphasized:

> The other aspect of narrative selfhood is correlative: I am not only accountable, I am one who can always ask others for an account, who can put others to the question. I am part of their story, as they are part of mine. The narrative of any one life is part of an interlocking set of narratives. Moreover this asking for and giving of accounts itself plays an important part in constituting narratives. (218)

Sociologist Anthony Giddens claims that a person's identity can be found "in the capacity *to keep a particular narrative going*" (1991, 54). But these narratives are by no means unambiguous; the potential facts to select from for such a story are exceedingly numerous, leaving the question of identity rather ambiguous (55). This multiplicity of possible stories suggests the difficulty encountered when writing a biography, or an autobiography. Giddens also states, "the biography the individual reflexively holds in mind is only one 'story' among many other potential stories that could be told about her development as a self" (55). A biography changes according to the choices of the person who writes it.

A narrated structure is often perceived as more real than fragments, since it conveys connections that create meaning. Donald E. Polkinghorne bases some of his theories on MacIntyre's argument, and sees narrative as

essential to the experience of being human, arguing in his work on psychology and "narrative knowing" that

> [H]uman beings exist in three realms – the material realm, the organic realm, and the realm of meaning. The realm of meaning is structured according to linguistic forms, and one of the most important forms for creating meaning in human existence is the narrative. The narrative attends to the temporal dimension of human existence and configures events into a unity. The events become meaningful in relation to the theme or point of the narrative. Narratives organize events into wholes that have beginnings, middles and ends. (Polkinghorne 1988, 183)

If one applies this to the narrated self, it is possible to suggest that the self-identities that are based on a strong narrative must be seen as more real than those with less developed biographies, and such a conflict plays a major role for the progression of the characters of Auster's novels in their struggle with conflicting identities. This is particularly apparent in the trilogy.

The structured, logical, coherent story needed for the narratives of identity, can be viewed in light of literary theory. The plots of stories are the basis of the history of poetics from Aristotle onwards. An element of plot is always required to structure a story: beginning, sequence and end, a sense of time and causality. Peter Brooks states that for anything to be narratable, it must "in some sense be plotted, display a design and logic" (1984, 5). "Plot is [...] a constant of all written and oral narrative [...] Plot is the principle of interconnectedness and intention" (5). The fact that we structure our conceptions of identity and personality in the form of a narrated story makes the relation between narration and fiction more ambiguous. The perception of a character based on its narration in a text might thus be closer to how we perceive ourselves and other real people than what is commonly assumed in narratology.

According to theories of psychology and sociology, a feeling of meaning can be strengthened through having a secure identity, a sense of *basic trust*, achieved especially through meaningful relations with others, and by sustaining a coherent biographical narrative. One can say that in order to build an identity, one needs to be able to tell one's story. This requires ability to see connections, relations between different elements, to structure details and understand causality. Such an ability or tendency is closely related to our general need to draw conclusions, even if based on inadequate information, to smooth out inconsistencies and to make all details create a rational whole. This process is closely related to storytelling

and reading, which are activities where these skills apply to a very high degree. Brooks explains how we perceive plot as a minimum of causality and temporality. Only suggested connections will still function as connections for the readers, since readers ordinarily fill in the bone structure of information provided (1984, 113, 177, 315).

Throughout *The New York Trilogy*, play with identities is a central aspect in order to understand the quest for meaning, which is usually seen as the most important theme in the novels. Each main character tries to re-define himself, related to the encounters with others who challenge the character's previous view of himself. The palimpsest identity and the assumed roles and masks that replace autonomous identity, and the importance of narration for a concept of self, are here explored through literary texts. The incomplete narratives of the protagonists are linked to other, parallel identities, in such a way that the structures of these fill in the missing parts in those of the main characters. The three novels are literally packed with cross-references to parallel identities, within each novel as well as between the works (see Springer 2001a).

The confusion of identity experienced by Daniel Quinn, the protagonist of *City of Glass*, is caused by his grief after losing his wife and son. Transitional moments like a personal crisis can often lead to a change in one's perception of self-identity (Giddens 1991, 143). Crises as an important factor in Auster's works have been treated extensively by Springer (2001b). In *The Book of Illusions*, Zimmer notes a quote from Chateaubriand's book that Hector Mann has underlined, which seems to point directly at the key to understanding both characters in terms of crises: "The book fell open somewhere in the middle, and I saw that one of the sentences had been underlined faintly in pencil. *Les moments de crise produisent un redoublement de vie chez les hommes*. Moments of crisis produce a redoubled vitality in men" (238). Transitional moments acquire the form of peripeteia, climax, end, and subsequently possibility of new beginning in the biographical narratives of the characters, thus attaining a narratological function beyond psychological effect.

As MacIntyre has explained, the unity of self is determined by the unity of its narrative, and for Quinn, the fragments of his characters' stories take this place, since they are the only form of narrative he is exposed to in his isolation. This leads to a complexity of characterization in the novel. Since storytelling is such a powerful element in the sustenance of identity, Quinn is drawn to his fictional characters rather than to experiencing his real self. He fluctuates between three separate

identities as the story begins, the more fictitious of them experienced as the more real to him, and as the plot begins to develop, he involves himself in even more complicated role play and masquerade in order to solve the mystery of his "case". Quinn writes his not very ambitious detective novels under the name William Wilson, a pseudonym named after the narrator of an Edgar Allan Poe short story about doppelgangers. Wilson is also the name of a centre-field player on the Mets baseball team. He has no life story, for Quinn never invented one for him. Quinn's detective narrator, "private eye" Max Work, is on the other hand a character he strongly identifies with. He is his "private I" as well as the main literary character of his works. Work was the one "who gave purpose" (6). "If he lived now in the world at all, it was only through [...] Max Work" (9). He is an identity born from the telling of stories. Nobody is there to tell or listen to Quinn's story anymore, while Work's story has an audience, shown in the scene with the reading girl on the bench. Thus the Work identity feels stronger and more real to Quinn than his own self, "it reassured him to pretend to be Work as he was writing his books, to know that he had it in him to be Work if he ever chose to be, even if only in his mind" (9). It is through this identification that Quinn is able to react to the mysterious telephone request for "Paul Auster," private detective. He starts to pursue the Stillman case and initiates a change in his life. Losing his own identity is the ultimate consequence of this role-play, however, as he loses more and more of Quinn while he becomes the detective, and also since he gets lost concerning the case. Posing as "Paul Auster" he has no knowledge of any story, "memories or fears, [...] dreams or joys" (61), and feeling secure in this identity is difficult, because there is no meaning beneath it, no biographical narrative to reflect. When he discovers that Auster is an author like himself, the picture is torn, and Quinn moves another step towards selflessness. The last of Quinn's multiple roles, the bum he is transformed into through his ascetic project, has a strong resemblance to old Stillman on his strolls around the New York streets collecting junk. He adopts Stillman's biographical story, and replaces it for his own self, when the inner identification as the good detective falls apart. When the Stillman case that had been his motivation and goal for so long has lost all its importance, Quinn is depicted as a totally dissolved self, only living to express words, continuing Stillman's project of recreating language; his self is completely engulfed at this point.

Characterization in this novel could be described in James Phelan's terms of *foregrounding the synthetic*. According to Phelan, the three basic

constituents of mimetic, synthetic and thematic dimensions (qualities of a character seen in isolation from the work) create a literary character. The synthetic is what he calls the "artificial" component, what makes the reader aware of the linguistic construct (1989, 2-3).The depiction of Quinn starts out as mimesis; he is described as a realistic person with certain characteristics or qualities. Phelan explains the *mimetic* dimension as the "realism" of a character, "this person," the elements that make the readers believe in the characters as people. The mimetic dimension is not always developed, especially in modern and postmodern literature. Dimensions can become *functions* if they are significant for the text's plot or progression (9). Quinn's attributes of interpretative skills, loneliness and seclusion are part of what makes readers consider him a possible and realistic person, and in the course of the novel's progression, the reader believes in his downfall because it is highly related to his qualities and situation. The progression of the novel becomes possible because of Quinn's character attributes of insecure identity; they become mimetic function as well. This mimetic function is necessary to make the reader believe the beginning of the plot.

Moreover, these attributes also lead to the novel's themes of postmodern identity conflicts, and accordingly turn into *thematic* functions (the significance of a character as a representative entity of themes in a text) of the character Quinn. They are necessary for the novel's progression; Quinn's decision to follow Stillman is dependent on his having such qualities. The absurdity of the "Paul Auster" identity, which is so similar to the real author's biographical facts, is another example of foregrounding the synthetic dimension of the characters. The functions of a character relate to the progression, which in turn consists of narration: causality and temporality. When these elements are scarce, as when the synthetic function is pronounced, it points directly at the identity crises of the characters, through the breakdown of their narrated selves. Literature applying such devices emphasizes the reader's awareness of the novel being a construct, and the characterization's objective to explore a theme rather than describe a realistic person. It is interesting, however, to see that it is this foregrounding of the synthetic dimension of the literary characters that makes it possible to describe the complexity of identity related to postmodern ideas, very different from more conventional literature applying mimesis as the main device of characterization.

The very idea of narration implies a narrator to tell the stories; accordingly the choice of narrative technique is important for the reader's perception of the different characters, as "characters are constructed by the reader" (Rimmon-Kenan 1983, 119). At the beginning of *City of Glass*, one can identify an *extra-heterodiegetic* narrator (Genette 1972, 248) who does not participate in the actual story, but uses external *focalization* or perspective to relate the events from within, having access to the main character's mind, as well as all other necessary information available. In the use of *we* in the second paragraph, "We know, for example, that he was thirty-five years old" (3), the narrator seems to include the narratee in his account of the situation. In the course of the first pages, the narrator passes many judgments on Quinn's character, explaining to the reader about his past, his current activities and preferences. The narrator has access to any characters' thoughts from within, which is apparent in three identical passages referring to Quinn's dreams: "In his dream, which he later forgot, he found himself [...]" (9, 72, 106). In spite of these traces of external focalization, however, most of the novel is narrated through an internal focalizer, from within Quinn. Apart from the use of the third person pronouns, this comes very close to a first person narration, and limits the access of information to the focalizing character's perceptions, thoughts and feelings. This is how Quinn's narrative is presented to the reader; every other character is perceived through him, and the reader may only find out facts that are also known by Quinn. Only in the very last pages of the novel do we realize that the use of this narrative technique has been a game. The "I" of a narrator appears, revealing his detective-like work of trying to reconstruct Quinn's life and the Stillman case. In this sense, the narrating "I" is also a detective, appearing to use Quinn's notes and the talks with Auster to retrace Quinn's story.

The narrative technique is important to achieve the reader's perception of Quinn's disappearance. The visual and temporal perspective is moved away from Quinn as the focalizer changes to external again. When the narrating "I" appears, the use of "we" is suddenly turned to mean him and Auster, his friend, and the narrator is a *homodiegetic* one, a character in the story. However, from a thematic perspective, this is an impractical construct. The story of Quinn is the most important, it is his mind we as readers are trying to penetrate in order to understand his narrative, and the most important aspect of the "I" is how its use creates an additional effect of distance to Quinn and accentuates his narrative fading out of the actual story.

Similarly to *City of Glass*, the narrator of *Ghosts* is seemingly extra-heterodiegetic, outside the story. The focalization is internal, inside the events, from within Blue through most of the novel, and sometimes the narrator follows his perspective very closely, coinciding directly with Blue's thoughts. However, in certain passages, particularly in the beginning and at the end, there is an ironic distance to the main character, and everything is seen through an external focalizer, having access to knowledge beyond the characters' thoughts. This focalizer is placed close to the narrating situation, here from an unknown future, looking more than thirty years backwards in time. The narrator places the beginning of the plot very accurately in 1947, and here the distance in time is clear: "Little does Blue know, of course, that the case will go on for years" (136). The reader is also positioned as distant from the events through the addressing of a narratee, "who are we to blame him" (157). The narrator never uses the focalization of other characters. Even if the narrator does not see Black's perspective, we get evidence that he has knowledge of the truth about him and White (163), as when he mentions that reading slowly would give Blue the full understanding of the case. These passages with external focalization give the impression that the narrator wants to tell this story to underline a point, and that obtaining the realism of a detective novel is not the purpose. The narrator gives a strong sense of structuring, interpretation and control in relating the facts in the beginning, for instance when he states how it all begins with White walking in through the door. The narrator gives his view on what is important, and the selection of facts is apparently very deliberate, keeping most of it to a minimum. The narrator's position is still not neutral; he evaluates Blue's actions and thoughts from the outside, in a way that only a narrator from a distance in time and place can do: "To be fair to Blue" (135), he says about Blue's lack of critical questions in the beginning. Sometimes he passes judging comments as if he were a typical "omniscient", all-knowing narrator from the early 18th century novels: "For Blue is a solid character on the whole [...] This is perhaps his greatest talent" (157).

The narrative "I" comes in at the very end of *Ghosts*, just like in the first novel, underlining that the uncertainties of facts are strong, since this happened such a long time ago. But here the narrator seems to give up control of his fictionalized character; since the story is over, "[a]nything is possible [...] I myself prefer to think that he went far away, boarding a train that morning and going out west to start a new life. [...] In my secret dreams I like to think of Blue booking passage on some ship and sailing to China" (195 – 196). The narrator chooses to let go of Blue, a character he

has created, and the creative power and control that the author normally has, pretending to know as little as the reader: "From this moment on, we know nothing" (196). Black/White writes Blue's story, and thus his life becomes the narrative of the isolated man doing nothing but watching in the window. The external focalizer of these two novels functions as an illustration and thematization of the difficulty of penetrating the mind of others as well as a means of structuring the fragmented parts of the characters' lives as coherent narratives, pointing at causality and temporality.

The narrative technique stresses the foregrounded synthetic dimension of the characters in *Ghosts*, maybe even more so than in the other two novels. The focalization is external and the narrator overt to a stronger degree than in the others, and the introduction of the setting works as an invitation to read the story as a hypothetical situation. The use of present tense in the main narrative also points to depicting a hypothetical situation more than the relating of a story, and this applies to the whole text except from the retrospective parts, when Blue thinks about the stories of others or his own past outside the scope of the narrated time. The pretence of uncertainty is also shown at the novel's closure: "Let it be China, then" (196), and in the above mentioned quote: "I myself prefer to think that he went far away" (195). Unlike the narrator of *City of Glass* who expresses helplessness in finding out Quinn's fate, the narrator here deliberately shows his control, through ironically displaying alleged ignorance. The distance creates a certain opacity of Blue's narrative, blurring his identity.

The minor characters of *Ghosts* also have a mainly synthetic dimension, but even if they play very small parts, the thematic dimension is still important, as they add to the issue of fragmented identity. All names in this story are colors – it is not psychology that is important, but thematic consequences, and the more hypothetical aspect of the whole story: not to focus on realistic plot and characters, but on the sketching out of a situation to demonstrate an idea. The characters are not provided with much of a biography; their stories are only hinted at. Avoiding conventional realism foregrounds the philosophical and metaphysical aspects of the novel. The use of narration as identity creation in characterization is here stripped down to a minimum of fact.

The narrative technique of *The Locked Room* is different from the other two. Even if there is a narrator-protagonist relating his own story, he is placed in an extradiegetic writing situation, above the actual diegetic or story level, seven years after the events of the main plot start: "Seven years ago this

November, I received a letter from a woman named Sophie Fanshawe" (199). Since the narrator is homodiegetic, telling his story in the first person, focalization and voice is mainly his. "[M]y struggle to remember things as they really were, I see now" (209) shows how there is a marked difference in time and experience between the narrator's writing situation when all is over, and when the story starts seven years earlier, although he is never quite clear as to what insight he has achieved. The narrator's extradiegetic level is concerned with the narration itself outside the actual events depicted, creating a distance in time, and this is shown through various comments on his part about his failing judgments at the actual events: "I understand now how badly I was deceiving myself" (242). The retrospect of the narrator's story creates some distance to the material; however, some of the events, especially the final scene, are told without signs of this hindsight, as if nothing had happened afterwards. The effect on the novel is that the reader perceives this as an *end*, and links the tearing of the notebook scene to the closure of the narration as a whole as well as the 'answer' to thematic questions raised. The characterization thus approaches closure, and achieves completeness of structure. Unlike the other two stories of the trilogy, where the narrative technique creates a distance to the narrated events as if stepping back, however obscured or opaque the view becomes, this closure is different since it shows the character's reaction at the time, and as such it becomes crucial to our perception of Fanshawe's obliteration, and the narrator's return to a new life.

The internal focalizer, which would ordinarily be the same throughout a text written in the first person, is also somewhat ambiguous. Auster observes in an interview that "certain sections of it are actually written in the third person" (1997, 317), where the narrator describes the events as from an external focalizer seeing Fanshawe from the outside. The main parts of the discourse circle around Fanshawe's narrative, trying to penetrate his secret inner self, while the narrator reveals that his own self also becomes opaque for him. In this way, Fanshawe is as present in the text as the narrator is. His invisibility at the end, behind the door, again adds to the idea that he only exists as an idea in the narrator's mind. All the three novels show various degrees of blurring the characterization for the reader, through the choice of narrative techniques that create distance.

Reflexive Identity

The actual narrative situation is connected to the reflexivity of the self: Auster points to the fact that "[a] story [...] posits the existence of others" (1982, 152). In his novels, there is always a play between reader and writer, both within the novels and as overt comments to the reader on the actual reading situation. Auster claims in an interview with Finn Skårderud that "a book does not exist unless it is read. It is always a relationship. Writing is an act of love" (2002, 79, my translation). But as an opposition or contradiction to this, there is the fact that writing is done in solitude, which is necessary to create art, but problematic for self-identity. This conflict between the creation of art and the need for communicative context is especially shown in *Ghosts*, where Black hires Blue to ensure his own existence.

There are many references to the silent, solitary artist in Auster's works, and also the disappearing artist can be said to be a motif exemplified in Quinn, Hector Mann and Fanshawe. Solitude is necessary and liberating, but if used destructively, it might approach solipsism and involve the negation of self-reflexivity. A narrated Self needs the audience of an Other. The typical postmodern identity conflicts of meaninglessness and existential doubt arise from the difficult balancing act of keeping one's self-image intact in a context of numerous choices. This can be seen in relation to the writings of Jacques Lacan, who is also mentioned by Auster in interviews as having influenced the writing of *The Invention of Solitude*. Auster observes that "Lacan calls it the 'mirror-stage,' [...] we can only see ourselves because someone else has seen us first. In other words, we learn our solitude from others" (Auster 1997, 314-315). Lacan states that formation of the self only happens through an acknowledgement of the Other: "I am led, therefore, to regard the function of the mirror-stage as a particular case of the function of the *imago*, which is to establish a relation between the organism and its reality – or, as they say, between the *Innenwelt* and the *Umwelt*" (1966, 4). Lacan speaks about this theory in terms of infants and animals, but there are also general applications for this effect. Mirror images can be seen as a way to define one's self as divided from the surroundings, as roles in society, to realize who one is through seeing oneself in the reflection of others.

In *Ghosts*, the main character's world has so far consisted of simple, concrete things, while now he begins to *speculate*, to see truths as they are conveyed in a mirror, that is, reflecting back on himself. Blue only

becomes aware of the meaninglessness of his existence through realizing that he is the mirror image of Black. The Algonquin bar scene where Black tells Blue he is a private detective watching someone, describing Blue's situation to the last detail, is an absurd episode, but it is also a clue to the roles they play in each other's lives. "My job is to watch someone," Black tells Blue, and the irony here is that Blue needs Black to act out the part of watcher in order to see the situation, as if he were really watching himself through the mirror. Black tries to enlighten Blue further: "I think he's writing about himself. The story of his life. That's the only possible answer [...] he needs [...] my eye looking at him [...] to prove he's alive" (181). Black uses Blue's reports as a reference from the outside and can therefore see himself in the "reflection," while Blue at this point loses himself in his solitary observations that he cannot make any sense of.

The middle story could be read as an exploration of the forming of a reflexive self, where the plot functions on a metaphorical level as a description of formation of self and the mirror stage that occurs in all infants' lives their first 6-18 months. *Ghosts* is set at the actual birth date of Paul Auster; White comes to Blue's office on 3 Feb 1947, and the developing identity-plot is necessary for Blue to discover the Other to form a self. The separation of the self from the other is illustrated by Blue's killing Black. At the end of the short novel, the narrator comments on his own placement in time: "For we must remember that all this took place more than thirty years ago, back in the days of our earliest childhood" (195), implying that the writing situation takes place much later. The successful narration of self is dependent on the Other in the function of audience. Black needs Blue to write his continuous biographical narrative, literally speaking, since he is sequestered from all other contact with real life, to keep his last link with life as he writes his book. The solitude of the writer treated by Auster in "The Book of Memory" (1982) is thereby exemplified and problematized in Black's project. Black needs the solitude to be able to write, but that also means that he has no life apart from his writing. When he talks to Blue disguised as the bum Jimmy Rose, he tells Blue that "[w]riting is a solitary business. It takes over your life" (175). At the final confrontation, Black explains:

> ... I've needed you from the beginning. If it hadn't been for you, I couldn't have done it.
>
> Needed me for what?

> To remind me of what I was supposed to be doing. Every time I
> looked up, you were there, watching me, following me, always in
> sight, boring into me with your eyes. You were the whole world to
> me, Blue, and I turned you into my death. You're the one thing
> that doesn't change, the one thing that turns everything inside out.
> (194)

It is quite apparent how this illustrates the role of the Other as a mirror reflection of oneself. Blue loses the feeling of control of his world when he realizes that he has been lured into a sham, and that his function was to be Black's reflection in the mirror, or rather through the window. He has no choice but to try to kill him to be released from his entrapment.

Relations with others are central not only to the formation of identity through the mirror stage, but also to sustaining it in a secure way. Giddens discusses the *pure relationship*, which is defined as "reasonably durable sexual ties, marriage, and friendship" (1991, 87), sought only for what the relationship itself can bring, and characterized by its continuous, reflexive nature. It is "a key environment for building the reflexive project of the self, since it both allows for and demands organized and continuous self-understanding" (186). Hope and trust are generated (186), especially via the creation of "shared stories" (97). In Auster's novels, the characters' lack or loss of these relationship ties are at the heart of their crises, and for the two characters who are able to return to a life, the new relationships are important anchors in their new life situations. *The New York Trilogy* and *The Book of Illusions* can both be seen to explore how the interplay with other human beings influences the way a person defines who he is.

The third novel of the trilogy also deals with identity linked to others, illustrated by the doppelganger motif. The nameless narrator experiences identity confusion related to the disappearance of his childhood friend Fanshawe, in many ways his double; through this encounter, the narrator experiences an existential crisis, resulting in the novel's quest for the truth about Fanshawe. In contrast to *City of Glass* where the hunt leads to disappearance, the main character of this story has to confront and assimilate his double, as hinted at in the intermediate *Ghosts*, where Blue attempts at confrontation to solve the mystery. In the course of *The Locked Room*, the narrator-protagonist gradually takes over the life of his childhood friend, but the identity problems this causes are difficult to handle. Fanshawe has been the narrator's friend since their earliest childhood, from before language, consequently before consciousness of any other life. As a child the narrator is strongly influenced by Fanshawe, copying his interests and ways, but the fact

that "I don't think I was ever entirely comfortable in his presence" (209) shows the ambivalence of his admiration. The narrator's feeling inferior to his friend is a character attribute that becomes a very important thematic function of his character. The main character's story is like a pale version of Fanshawe's story, and this is what makes his identity confusion possible.

The power of the narration strengthens identity, but here also introduces identity problems, of not being able to distinguish who is who. The question is whether these doppelgangers are supposed to be read as one or two characters, since they seem to be mirror reflections of each other (Springer 2001b, 127), while at the same time they are described as characters with stronger mimetic dimensions than the other main characters in the trilogy, that is, they seem to be a little more realistic than Quinn or Blue. This is caused by the use of internal focalization through the homodiegetic narrator, which leads to more "realism" of psychology, as we supposedly read the thoughts of a person seen from within his own mind, instead of focalized through an external narrator as in the other two novels. In this novel, the foregrounding of the characters' synthetic dimensions is shown through the ambiguity of the two characters, and is not as pronounced as in the other two novels of the trilogy. The issue of character merger is never clear, but it points to the problems of Other and Self, in the form of confusing the mirror image with somebody else.

MacIntyre's ideas of a narrative to express identity become central in order to understand the narrator's motives. The plan of writing Fanshawe's biography appeals to him as a way to gain control over Fanshawe. However, the struggles of writing lead his thoughts to the problem of describing a person through his biographical facts. The narration of one's identity is essential here: a person will listen to the story about another person, and use the outward facts to create a "real" story about the person, giving the false impression that he knows who the person is. Auster has in an interview said that it is very problematic to relate to the lives of others since we do not know enough, not even about ourselves, to write a reliable biography (Skårderud 2002, 64). Narratives of other secondary or minor characters are in general important in this novel also, as *mise en abyme* (Rimmon-Kenan 1983, 93). One of these is found in Fanshawe's notebook: "Fanshawe shows a particular fondness for stories of this kind. Especially in his notebooks, there is a constant retelling of little anecdotes, and because they are so frequent – and more so toward the end – one begins to suspect that Fanshawe felt they could somehow help him to understand himself" (254). This sounds like a direct

rephrasing of the theory that narration of incidents in other people's lives gives perspective to one's own life, as related by MacIntyre.

In spite of the allusion to Quinn's disappearance (202), *The Locked Room* does not treat the fragmented identity to such an extent as the other two novels of the trilogy. However, it is a continuation of the double-identity problem sketched out in *Ghosts*, in a story that seems to be more realistic, but ends up being just as confusing as the other two. Sophie Fanshawe is a secure point in the narrator's chaotic hunt for truth and himself. His obsession that makes him forget his commitment to her is what leads him into trouble, in a more complex way than in the two previous novels. When the narrator decides to hide facts from her, such as Fanshawe's letter, the intimacy and commitment of the relationship also fall apart and he loses the support he could have received through the creation of shared stories. A clue to understanding the three novels is the role of the women, who represent the reality the lost detectives reject. In *Ghosts* women are barely mentioned, and it is obvious that Blue does not give "the future Mrs Blue" much thought. The men reject the crying, emotional women, but thereby also the intimacy of the pure relationship.

Fifteen years after finishing the trilogy, Auster returned to the same starting point, and wrote a story related to *City of Glass*. The rebirth after crisis of the main character in *The Book of Illusions* is influenced by his encounter with a man supposed to have died many decades earlier. It is the retracing of the disappeared filmmaker's escape from his identity that leads Zimmer back to life. The parallels of different identities are also present in this novel, but the importance of relating to others is explored more extensively. The main character of *The Book of Illusions*, David Zimmer, suffers a serious personal loss and is bereft of his family, parallel to what happens to Quinn, but the story in this novel takes a different turn. What helps Zimmer out of his grief is discovering the narrative of a man who has suffered and experienced similar losses, in addition to creating a mysterious image of himself, that takes quite a bit of detective work to explore. Instead of falling to pieces like Quinn, he has more success in puzzling Mann's mystery together. Hector Mann turns out to be a more constructive and humane character than Stillman was, with more apparent mimetic dimensions than the characters in the trilogy. Mann is recreated through his narrative in the book Zimmer writes, but only after everybody involved, who could verify the story of his life, is dead. Accordingly, the book is turned into a "Book of the Dead", or rather

a Chateaubriand-like *Mémoires d'outre-tombe*; it is the book that brings Mann to life.

The New York Trilogy's extensive use of mirrored identities and characters is repeated in this novel, but in a different way. It is more a question of situations than whole characters that are reflected, as the example of parallels between Mann and Chateaubriand. We find the same relationship between Zimmer and Mann, where incidents of crises and loss are mirrored. For Zimmer, the similarities between Mann and himself serve as signs of a link between them. His identification with Hector Mann increases as he learns his story, and both Alma and Hector have enormous influence on him. Hearing about the death of Hector and Frieda's son Tad, he realizes that they have experienced a similar crisis, and since this is the secret clue to why Mann starts making films again, Zimmer's interest in the films grows. Zimmer's second loss, that of Alma, is experienced as different, because he is able to see how short their relationship was, plus continue his work (314) and focus on their common goal; to tell Mann's story helps him reconnect to his own. The nature of Mann's biography is a mystery that requires investigation and interpretation: Zimmer is able to retrace some of Hector's past life through the willfully obscured facts of the camouflaged interviews, choosing between the many versions of the Mann story. "Put these contradictions together, and you wind up with nothing, the portrait of a man with so many personalities and family histories that he is reduced to a pile of fragments, a jigsaw puzzle whose pieces no longer connect" (83). The fragmented identity is in this novel not represented by Zimmer himself, but by Mann, who is described as having a palimpsest of identities.

Mann's new chance with Frieda is a new transitional moment for Mann; at the verge of death he regains identity, but in a new form which enables him to start a new life. After his second crisis, the death of his son, he is lured back to life a second time through a renewed film project, and this can happen because Frieda is there to influence him, he is not isolated like the first time. For Zimmer, the knowledge of Mann's transformations after devastating experiences helps him see possibilities for himself; the stories of Mann create the mirror effect. Zimmer's role in Hector's life becomes a "witness of the witness" (280). Alma needs Zimmer as a witness to vouch for the truth of her work, the biography of Hector Mann, since after his death and the destruction of his works, the only verifiable facts about the film maker will be those already known, the ones Zimmer has used in his book. Alma says "my statements won't be credible unless I have another person to back me up" (105). When every piece of evidence

is obliterated and burnt by Frieda, Zimmer is left alone with his information, and gives it all up as no one would believe what he says. Only as a "Book of the Dead" can he tell the story, which then could appear as fiction – an illusion – just as well as a biography. Playing with these notions and how the reader will interpret the story are part of the reading experience.

The narration of *The Book of Illusions* consists of multiple levels. The use of Zimmer as homodiegetic narrator is in itself quite simple, but it is his relation of other stories through a Chinese box principle, using different diegetic levels and a complexity of story and discourse time span that adds to the plot. The extradiegetic level is David Zimmer's writing situation: he is not yet forty at the point of the accident in June 1985 which is the start of the diegetic level, while the extradiegetic Zimmer in his mid-fifties looking back and describing the events must be set around March 1999. The fact that he at the end says he will be "following Chateaubriand's model" (318), implies that he is dead at the point of publication. There are several hypodiegetic stories, told by Zimmer (all the film synopses), Alma (relating Mann's story on the plane), or Hector Mann (diary extract). Thus, Alma also functions as narrator, as she tells the story of Hector Mann's life after his disappearance in 1929. Quite like the technique applied in *The Locked Room*, characters have developed mimetic dimensions; the synthetic is not as foregrounded as in the sketched out situation described in *Ghosts*, giving *The Book of Illusions* a more traditional form. Zimmer is an extra-homodiegetic narrator, but is still able to keep more of a distance to the events than the narrator of *The Locked Room*, probably because he has had the opportunity to change and develop an understanding that this narrator lacks. As its Egyptian and Tibetan models suggest, Zimmer's "Book of the Dead" has provided him with not only a prescription for dealing with death and after-life, but also for how to live his life. Zimmer as narrator has, through his extradiegetic position, achieved an understanding of his own narrative that the characters in the trilogy never develop; accordingly his identity-narrative is restored.

Conclusion: Stories of the Self

In this article, I have tried to show that the struggles with identity formation the characters go through in the four novels, have different outcomes depending on how well the protagonists are able to create and sustain the narratives of their own selves, as well as learn from the stories

of others. There is a progression in the way these four characters relate to their troubles. Quinn is the extreme version. He identifies too much with Stillman and his stories, and gets lost in his obsession; his disappearance seems unavoidable. When he tries to put the fragments of his multiple identities together, he ends up being nobody, like Stillman's son, and all the dangers of deprivation of human contact are exemplified in the turn of this story.

Blue has little understanding of who he is, as well as limited insight into the mystery of his case, but he becomes aware of himself for the first time through the mirror reflection of a narrative identical to his own which leads to a process of self-reflection. Through confrontation with his problematic antagonist, some self-understanding is achieved, and not stagnation and dissolution as for Quinn. The situation is somewhat similar for the nameless narrator of the third novel, who finds that the narrative of his childhood friend is so intertwined with his own that his sense of self is threatened. Fanshawe's stories tell the narrator nothing, and need to be destroyed to free him; the retracing of his friend's story is ended by his tearing of the notebook, which the narrator substitutes for Fanshawe himself. Fanshawe exists through his texts, and destroying the notebook enables the narrator to let go of his obsession and thus return to the world of other people, represented by his family. Both the narrator and Blue begin to move away from their isolation, and relate to other people and to the outside world again.

For Zimmer, Mann's stories, both his biography and his films, help him to return to something. Zimmer's role as a reader of Mann's biographical narrative changes his view of himself, because he can identify with Mann's crisis, and Zimmer is able to break through his isolation. The narrative of another man becomes a mirror of his own problems. The importance of relationships is shown through Zimmer, whose contact with Alma becomes an important factor in his development, unlike the main characters in the trilogy's first two novels, who fail at relationships, and the narrator of the third, who only returns to his wife after the crisis is over. The narrative technique playing with the narrator-narratee relationships reflects the reader's perception of the characters as personae. There seems to be a turn here in Auster's method, parallel to the characters' development; the narratives that are expressed as more coherent for the reader also approach solutions to these characters' identity crises. The literary play Auster employs in characterization, provides an arena in which it is possible to deal with the complexity of narration as a means of

forming identities, while the postmodern techniques of narrative self-reflexivity create a possible literary form for these ideas.

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Coppola's Exhausted Eschatology:
Apocalypse Now Reconsidered[1]

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In the fall of 1994, as an undergraduate student at the University of California, Santa Barbara, I wrote a term paper for Anna Brusutti's "Introduction to Cinema" class. The paper was called "Editing, mise-en-scene, and cinematography in a selected sequence from *Apocalypse Now.*" Although the reader's general comments were quite sympathetic to my rather flagrantly formalist analysis of the "Suzie Q" segment, he did point out that I had, to quote a remark scribbled in the margin on the last page, "glossed over... some of the historical imagery." Little did I know then that the question of history in relation to *Apocalypse Now* would resurface almost a decade later in a slightly more ceremonial context. Given the chance, am I going to skirt the issue once again? Can we felicitously talk about a form of historical imagery that has not been sublated by what Thomas Elsaesser in his book on Weimar cinema calls the historical imaginary?

Embedded in the current topic, quite intriguingly, is a peculiar type of paradox. On the one hand, I am specifically asked to present *my* analysis of Francis Coppola's excessive and perhaps over-discussed film *Apocalypse Now* (1979), on the other hand this analysis is one that should be carried out with special reference to the interpretive—or perhaps methodological—categories of film genre, historical context, and literary pretext. We are clearly in the realm of prefixed textualities here. However, I am not at all sure that an analysis of *Apocalypse Now* that is authentically my own would in fact be compatible with the concerns indicated in the lecture topic. That is, had it occurred to me to do scholarly work on this

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[1] This essay is a revised version of a lecture offered as a "trial lecture" for the degree of Dr. Art. at the University of Bergen, December 11, 2003. The topic for the lecture was "Your analysis of Francis Coppola's *Apocalypse Now* (1979) with special reference to the film's genre, historical context, and literary pretext." The occasion usefully presented me with an opportunity to reassess the nature and substance of Coppola's vision in terms of what may be seen as an anti-generic yet re-historicized sensibility.

particular film, my critical emphasis would in all likelihood be different. Can I, therefore, legitimately discuss Coppola's film with regard to genre, context, and pretext and still call the analysis mine? The struggle to reconcile these conflicting perspectives will in diverse ways inform the present argument, indisputably providing much horror along the way.

Reflecting upon *Apocalypse Now* for the first time in years, I realize that it is very difficult, perhaps even impossible, to conceive of the film's narrative as a phenomenological entity entirely divorced from notions of sheer size, scope, scale, or magnitude. A 16-month shooting schedule, 200 hours worth of footage, an editing process that took three years to complete, three different endings, and a sense of a general turmoil on the set (substance abuse, a heart attack, threats of suicide) that would probably impress even Sam Peckinpah—the significance of these facts is not merely anecdotal. The confounding enormity of the film is an inextricable part of Coppola's text and as such it militates against any predilection for structuralist ramification; as a cinematic project, *Apocalypse Now* is simply too monumentally unwieldy to be relegated to the formal stringencies of genre. Moreover, an essential question that needs to be addressed is how our appreciation and understanding of Coppola's film is enriched by defining it as a Vietnam film, a war film, or even as a genre film to begin with. If, for instance, *Apocalypse Now* is a Vietnam film, is it a Vietnam film in the same way that, say, *Casualties of War* (Brian De Palma 1989) is one? Does the former suggest a generic intention, or intentionality, in the same way that for example *Chicago* (Rob Marshall 2002) intends to be (in the sense of wanting to be or aspiring to be) a musical, or *Far From Heaven* (Todd Haynes 2002) a melodrama? Furthermore, why is it that the problem of genre may be brought up with respect to *Apocalypse Now* but hardly in relation to the literary text from which it putatively draws its principal inspiration? (*Heart of Darkness* is not adventure, not travel literature, but a novel or novella, period).

The idea of genre usually implies an inherited array of formal or thematic conventions or attributes, which in turn comprises a tradition. Meticulously to pinpoint the textual features that conform to pre-established generic taxonomies is on the whole an unwelcome enterprise, an analytical process that soon would have to confront what Andrew Tudor once referred to as the "'empiricist dilemma'" (1986: 5): to determine whether a given film is a Western requires a set of empirically verifiable criteria, but in order to know what these criteria are one would first need an a priori conception of what constitutes a Western. Such

tautological gymnastics rarely represents anything more than "a crudely useful way of delineating the American cinema" (1986: 3). According to Thomas Sobchack, the genre film is a structure that embodies the idea of form and the strict adherence

> to form that is opposed to experimentation, novelty, or tampering with the given order of things. The genre film, like all classical art, is basically conservative, both aesthetically and politically. To embody a radical tenor or romantic temper in a classical form is to violate that form at its heart. (1986: 112)

Splendidly experimental, Coppola's sensibility seems by and large antithetical to this dogmatic "adherence to form" which typifies the genre film. Kurtz and Kilgore, for example, are a far cry from the kind of stock characters that populate generic fiction.

In the case of *Apocalypse Now*, the all too probable dysfunctionality of rigorous generic formations which Tudor hints at is certainly not diminished by taking into account the unambiguous auteur status conferred upon Coppola at the time. Auteurism, a concept which seems to grow increasingly recalcitrant the more indignantly it is declared to be defunct, has always had a troubled relationship with the notion of genre.[2] Thus, *Barry Lyndon* is a Stanley Kubrick film first, a costume drama/historical epic only second; *Reservoir Dogs* is a Tarantino film first, a gangster movie second. This particular ambivalence which characterizes the relation between genre and auteurism is crystallized by the case of John Ford; his films are not merely Westerns, but, much more revealingly, John Ford Westerns, which is something altogether different. Finally, a genre's visual and narrative codes, or "iconographies," which Sobchack calls them (1986: 106), may occasionally be deceptive. Jane Campion's recent *In the Cut* (2003), for example, is gynocentric yet post-feminist art cinema in the guise of a conventional thriller. The point is not however that any generic reading of the film is invalid but rather that a comprehension of a film like *In the Cut* in terms of genre unnecessarily constrains the film's hermeneutical compass. Undertaken slavishly, genre criticism becomes a guarantor for the reaffirmation of the obvious. In short, the thematic-stylistic strictures of genre may at times promote a particular kind of myopia; generic conventions become an obfuscatory screen which thwarts

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[2] See Tom Ryall's article "Genre and Hollywood" for a more thorough discussion of the relationship between auteurism and genre.

any attempt to move beyond a surface reading of a text. As the late Raymond Durgnat argued, "Insofar as no two movies pose quite the same problem in quite the same terms, no two movies can have quite the same theme" (1977: 8).

And yet—with regard to *Apocalypse Now*—we cannot really dispense whole-heartedly with the notion of genre. That would be too facile. Perhaps Coppola's movie is akin to that other leviathan of American cinema, *Citizen Kane*, in that, although it displays some elements that could be described as generic, it is not in any fundamental way a genre film. Adventure, war film,[3] noir, Vietnam film, action movie, psychodrama, travel film—*Apocalypse Now* contains figural shards of all these genres, and thus the film may best be characterized as transgeneric. Just as the inter-relations between different genres are essentially "mobile," which Nick Browne points out in his preface to the 1998 anthology *Refiguring American Film Genres* (1998: xiv), so are the intrafilmic relations between different generic constellations volatile and fluid. The performance of such hybridity in *Apocalypse Now* makes the film generically impure. Co-existing on the same narrative canvas are features associated with the Vietnam film (the diegetic chronotope, the setting, is Vietnam and Cambodia during the war); the action film (Coppola resorts to spectacle in the scene where Kilgore's Teutonic army attack the village); the hardboiled genre (Michael Herr's voiceover narration, as John Hellmann has remarked, seems to emulate the style of Raymond Chandler (1986: 191));[4] the travel/adventure film (the expedition up the river)—in this context perhaps a kind of primordial inversion of the road movie; and, finally, the psychological drama (the speculative exploration of the fractured psyches of both Willard and Kurtz). In addition, Coppola also alludes to the Western; the circumstances in which Willard is assigned his mission are reminiscent of those seen in countless Westerns in which an

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[3] Gilbert Adair, interestingly, has called attention to the fact *Apocalypse Now* "bears little resemblance... [to] the traditional war movie" (1981: 148).

[4] Hellmann partly builds on Veronica Geng's observation in the *New Yorker* that "Willard talks in the easy ironies, the sin-city similes, the weary, laconic, why-am-I-even-bothering-to-tell-you language of the pulp private eye" (1979: 70). This interpretation is supported by Storaro's camera's itemization in the film's opening scene of objects often associated with the hardboiled genre, like the bottle of liquor, the revolver, the cigarette dangling Humphrey Bogart-style from Willard's lips. Then there is the fact that the name of Chandler's most famous protagonist is almost identical to that of Conrad's narrator in *Heart of Darkness*.

apprehensive community talks the drunken and disillusioned gunfighter into taking on one last job in order to save the township from the thugs who control it. *Apocalypse Now* also abounds with iconographic debris from the Western, an obvious example of which would be the cowboys-and-Indians regalia in the "Suzie Q" sequence.

Last but not least, the film may also be approached as a modern-day reworking of one of the oldest of American textual genres, the late 17th century captivity narrative. This is a structural affinity that, as far as I am aware, has not been explicitly invoked anywhere in the extensive secondary literature on the film.[5] Like the 17th century frontiersman, both Kurtz and Willard leave their families (and "civilization") behind to venture into the wilderness, which according to Puritan philosophy was seen as a materialization of the topography of metaphysical hell (Slotkin 1973: 109). Kurtz's descent into madness evidently entails a transformation of self that recalls facets of the conversion narratives: the suspension of all principles related to Christian morality, the adoption of the inhuman laws of the wilderness, the complete abandonment of civilization, and the horrifying reinvention of oneself as "a beast, a wilderness thing," to cite Richard Slotkin's characterization of Mary Rowlandson's process of Indianization (1973: 110). Although in *Apocalypse Now* Kurtz is the captor rather than the captive, he still seems to be enslaved by the anarchic forces of the savage wilderness. After all, the film opens with an ominous image that literalizes that "wilderness of pain" which Jim Morrison sings about on the accompanying soundtrack. This is an image to which complex relationships accrue as we come to learn that these visions may be the projections of Willard's mindscreen, to use Bruce Kawin's term (2000: 79). At any rate, the subtext of the captivity narrative in *Apocalypse Now* is a subject which deserves to be examined more extensively elsewhere. Particularly exciting in that respect is the intimation of a connection between Puritan mythography and its emphasis on regeneration on the one hand with *Apocalypse Now*'s inscription of the legend of the Fisher King on the other.[6]

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[5] Although he does not use the term, John Hellmann seems to allude to the genre of the captivity tales when he interprets Kurtz's deflection as an escape from the decadence of American society comparable to the "mythic journey by which the Western hero continually regenerated the American identity" (1986: 196).

[6] A critic like Karl French, for example, sees the Fisher King narrative as "the defining myth" of the film (1998: 78).

This expressionistic internalization of the horrors of war with which *Apocalypse Now* begins situates the narrative on the threshold of history and allegory. The self-consciously surreal scene by the Du Long bridge, for example, appears to allegorize the absence of military leadership in Vietnam (Tomasulo 1990: 151). Occupying an indeterminate, liminal textual space which at once flows away from and back into history, the film creates an oscillatory historical context that is continuously superseded by intertextuality, myth, and the work of semiosis. Despite its occasional immersion in pyrotechnics, *Apocalypse Now* is a strangely introspective movie, one that seems more content with exploring the nature of the unhinged mind—along with the sedimentation of cultural memory in the form of quotation—than in elaborating on the many references to the Vietnam war which overlay the narrative. Throughout the film one gets a sense that the Vietnam setting merely provides a geographical and conceptual backdrop for an examination of other issues. In this sense *Apocalypse Now* is no more about Vietnam than Terence Malick's *The Thin Red Line* (1998) is about the second world war. Coppola's failure properly to address the war experience is according to Albert Auster and Leonard Quart due to the fact that the film "universalizes and abstracts the war by making its terror part of the human condition rather than a result of specific social and political forces" (1988: 70). While it is evident that sequences such as the one in which Willard murders the Vietnamese woman on the boat resonate with historical association (in this case to the My Lai massacre), (See Jeffrey Chown 1988: 138), they nevertheless seem parenthetical, narratively speaking, within the context of the allegorical framework of the film as a whole. In any event, whatever historical saliency these references possess is easily dwarfed by the more resolutely surreal and metaphysical final part and by the shadowy appearance of the figure of Kurtz in particular. Though I cannot endorse Frank P. Tomasulo's definition of the film as "ahistorical," his claim that *Apocalypse Now* "elided the specificity of its historical moment" by "seeking timeless and universal Truths about the Human Condition" is by far a more convincing reading of the film than those which foreground its historical embeddedness (1990: 154).[7] The apparent

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[7] At stake in those readings which do in fact assume that *Apocalypse Now* is "about" Vietnam is, quite evidently, the question of the film's position vis-à-vis the conflict. While critics like Jakob Lothe consider the film to be both a critique of American warfare in Vietnam and "a fictional statement on... the human psyche" (2000: 178), Tomasulo (despite elsewhere labeling the movie "ahistorical") proffers a more critical reading that

ease with which the filmmaker has transposed Joseph Conrad's Congo into America's Vietnam/Cambodia adds credibility to this assertion.

That Coppola's Vietnam represents a setting more symbolic than real was a dimension critics also soon picked up on. Reviewing the film for the *Atlantic* in December 1979, Ward Just panned it for its failure to reflect or portray the war in realistic terms: "I am puzzled and appalled," he writes, "at the need for inventing a metaphor for the Vietnam war" (1979: 63).[8] Does Tomasulo's argument that the director "turned the real-life specificity of U. S. imperialism into an abstract and philosophical cinematic meditation on good and evil" then constitute a feasible assessment of the film (1990: 147)? I would submit that his thesis both overemphasizes the metaphysical aspect and unduly downplays the film's historical import. The crucial question, as I see it, is not whether *Apocalypse Now* engages with history but rather how it does it. It seems indisputable, however, that Coppola has failed to make a movie that in any meaningful way can be said to be a reflection of history in the mimetic sense. Yet this is a film which is highly cognizant of historical issues, and specifically of history as a textual process. Some scenes in *Apocalypse Now* in fact come across as a critique of the popular media's appropriation of historical imagery. The "Suzie Q" moment, for instance, collates a range of fragments of disparate cultural phenomena into one commanding trope: the western-style outfits which the playmates wear suggest both the history of frontier atrocity and imperialism and Hollywood's rather loose reconstruction of that history; this suggestion in turn establishes a rhetorical analogy between the Indian genocide and Vietnam (a comparison accentuated by cut-aways to the Vietnamese throng separated from the soldiers by a fence, a spatial relationship which further connotes

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suggests that *Apocalypse Now* is "filled with double binds and mixed messages in its attempt to have it both ways" (1990: 153). According to Tomasulo, it is this moral vacillation which renders the film apolitical. "It is tantamount to ethical 'fence-sitting'," he maintains, "to suggest that the political and combat realities of an illegal and imperialist war can be incorporated into a vague philosophical unity of opposites" (1990: 154). More a prowar than an antiwar narrative, Tomasulo asserts that Coppola "might be saying that had Americans made war with the passion of Colonel Kilgore, the cool of Captain Willard, and the brutal honesty of Colonel Kurtz, the United States would have won" (1990: 149).

[8] The tone of Just's criticism was to some extent symptomatic of the critical reception of the film; the reviewers attacked the film for its costly production, for its autobiographical dimension, and for being politically conservative (Lewis 1995: 170). In *Overexposure*, David Thomsen alleged that the film was "as conservative as *Birth of a Nation*" (1981: 312).

American reservation policy); the sequence features several reaction shots which present the soldiers' euphoric response to a diversion which brings together the twin legacies of misogyny and racialism; and, finally, the showbiz factor that permeates the entire sequence testifies to the significance of history as spectacle in the American consciousness. The performance of ersatz history in the "Suzie Q" segment thus becomes a truly cinematic rethinking of the past as it impinges upon the present.

I have chosen to delineate the logistics of this scene in such detail because it pertinently illustrates the importance of the look as far as the relationship between filmicity and historiography is concerned. The numerous reaction shots of the crowd cheering and looking offer a visual shorthand for the way in which the spectator's gaze both inscribes and is inscribed by the contingencies of textualized history. Any discussion of a film's historical context should at the very least be aware of the instability of the process of looking and of the impossibility of an ahistorical gaze. Hence, it is not necessarily the film that should be the primary object of historicization but rather the look itself, sited as it may be in the exigencies of the historical moment.

The problem of sight as it encroaches upon the hermeneutical task brings me to that profusely debated issue of the relation between Conrad's novella and Coppola's film. How the film both differs from and is similar to the novella has been painstakingly mapped out elsewhere, and I will not pretend to be interested in rehashing the minutiae of this work here. What concerns me more is the conceptual link between the two texts. Although I do not believe that an analysis of *Apocalypse Now* requires an (unhyphenated) pretext, literary or otherwise, there can be no doubt that the eccentricity of the connection between Conrad and Coppola provokes a peculiar fascination. Jean-Pierre Coursodon once characterized the cinema of Arthur Penn as "consciousness struggling to emerge from darkness" (1983: 264). It is tempting—and again we are operating on a purely conceptual level—to read *Apocalypse Now* as a cinematic elucidation of the darkness of its literary source. Conrad, who first published the story in the appositely entitled *Blackwood's Magazine* in 1899, after all referred to Congo as "the threshold of the invisible" (1969: 593). In an article on Herbert Lang's Congo photographs, moreover, Nicholas Mirzoeff writes that the encounter with the heart of darkness was "a visual problem from the outset" (1998: 172). Vision, of course, often functions as a metaphor for perception on an intellectual level, insight in short (consider for instance the etymology of the term "theory"), and it is

the implications of this metaphor for our reading of Coppola's text and its relation to its precursor text that might be further delved into. The significance of the act of looking seems to be overtly thematized near the end of *Apocalypse Now*, more specifically in the scene where Willard's crew is approaching Kurtz's miasmic village through an impenetrable fog. "Do you see anything, Chef?," Chief shouts shortly before he is killed by a spear. When Willard is finally introduced to Kurtz, the colonel's face is engulfed in shadows. The man seems to be gradually emerging from darkness, just as Coppola is gradually recuperating Conrad's vision. This repossessive method represents perhaps an act of what Vittorio Storare— Coppola's cinematographer famous for his collaboration with Bernardo Bertolucci and Carlos Saura—calls *writing with light* (which is also the title of his recent book on cinematography). However, an even more urgent object of recuperation for Coppola's film may be Orson Welles's aborted project *Heart of Darkness* from 1940.[9] *Apocalypse Now* seems to be haunted by the film that was never made and by the conceivable permutation in Welles's mind of the figures of Citizen Kane and Citizen Kurtz. (See also Elsaesser and Wedel 1997: 151).

There is little justification for considering *Apocalypse Now* to be an adaptation. In fact, the only official recognition of *Heart of Darkness* as the basis for the film occurs in its nomination for Best Screenplay based on material from another medium at the Academy Awards (French 1998: 4). How do we explain this act of omission? Why has Coppola suppressed this literary pre-text? Throughout cinema history there have been quite a few instances in which a literary source has in fact been acknowledged even when the film exhibits no tangible traces of its alleged precursor. A case in point would be Carl Theodor Dreyer's *Leaves From Satan's Book* (1919), which has little to do with Marie Corelli's *Sorrows Of Satan*. According to Mikhail Iampolski, this kind of misquoting transpires when a text willfully represses its source: "Intertextuality... works not only to establish precursors but also to deny them" (1998: 79). Iampolski's Bloomian-inflected theory is particularly appropriate for a reading of *Apocalypse Now* in that the

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[9] Welles first adapted Conrad's story as a radio production for his Mercury Company. When he later came to Hollywood, Welles intended to make a movie in which he both directed and played the roles of Marlow and Kurtz. Unfortunately, due to financial difficulties, Welles ultimately had to abandon the project (French 1998: 99). For further insights into Welles's radio version of *Heart of Darkness*, see Robert Spadoni, "The Seeing Ear: The Presence of Radio in Orson Welles's *Heart of Darkness*," *Conrad on Film*, Ed. Gene M. Moore, Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997, 78-92.

mechanism of textual repression and replacement finds a diegetic counterpart in the relationship between Willard and Kurtz. Significantly, the text represses even this "degradation of the father" motif (Elsaesser and Wedel 1997: 157), for instance in that the part of the film's signature song in which Jim Morrison gives full vent to his Oedipal ravings is omitted.

The reason for Coppola's repression of Conrad's novella, I would surmise, might become clear if we bear in mind that *Apocalypse Now* stands as perhaps cinema's most unashamedly obvious act of self-mythologization. As Karl French points out, this was a film that was "designed as a modern myth" and "granted near-mythical status even in its making, long before anyone had seen it" (1998: 96). The film's self-reflexive, metacinematic quality is also made manifest by Coppola's cameo where he tells Willard "Don't look at the camera. Just go by as if you're fighting," a rhetorical maneuver later referenced by Stanley Kubrick in his considerably more audaciously anti-war film *Full Metal Jacket* (1987). As a matter of fact, the production history of *Apocalypse Now* competes with the film's story itself when it comes to madness and excess, and the finished movie is less a reflection of historical events than of the aspirations and conditions of its own making.[10] "I thought I was making a war film," the director told Charles Michener in an interview in *Newsweek*, "and it developed that the film was making me" (1979: 101). Fraught with a hubris and a singularity of vision no adaptation can sustain, the film has to suppress its source material so as not to appear derivative. However, as far as intertextuality is concerned, Conrad's text is just the tip of the iceberg.

Again watching the opening sequence of *Apocalypse Now*, listening to Jim Morrison intone the words "This is the end," I cannot help but be reminded of another illustrious end, that of Jean-Luc Godard announcing the "end of cinema" in *Weekend* (1967).[11] And it then occurs to me that this cataclysmic preface to Coppola's film may be thought of as a narrative enactment of Godard's proclamation. A movie that from its inception was intended as cinema's most extravagant statement, *Apocalypse Now* sets out to transcend cinematic history by obliterating its influences. The series of

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[10] One may note that for Auster and Quart, it is this interference of the filmmaker's "personal quest" that "clouds the connection between *Apocalypse Now* and the Vietnam experience" that the film purportedly aimed to depict (1988: 70).

[11] As Lothe has pointed out, the scene which inaugurates the narrative of *Apocalypse Now* invokes both a "prologue and [an] epilogue at the same time" (2002: 50).

superimpositions with which the narrative starts—the jungle ablaze, Willard's face, the rotating fan—gestures toward the film's palimpsestic aesthetic. *Apocalypse Now* is of course nothing if not a densely though elusively allusive film, and apart from the more palpable references to Conrad, Eliot, Frazer, Weston, and the Book of Revelation, there is a munificent spillover of evocative and haunting traces from other texts. I propose the term *liquid figurality* for this spillover function.

Educated at Hofstra University and UCLA, Coppola belonged to the first generation of filmmakers that were movie-literate in a more academic sense, a circumstance which to some extent accounts for his "penchant for allusionism" (Tomasulo 1990: 156).[12] That the director must have been somewhat conflicted in his approach to his own work may be evidenced in two largely contradictory statements that he made around the time of the film's release. At the Cannes press conference, he declared rather pretentiously that "My film is not a movie. My film is not about Vietnam. It *is* Vietnam" (French 1998: 24, emphasis in original). But in an interview with *Rolling Stone* the same year, he told reporter Greil Marcus that "style was going to be the whole movie" (1979: 55). There seems to be an inherent antagonism here between two different conceptions of the film, one which stresses its "hyper-reality," the other emphasizing its aestheticism. It is the latter that ultimately prevails.

Some critics have argued that *Apocalypse Now* epitomizes "Hollywood's attempt to recover its position as a preeminent mythmaker in American culture" (Auster and Quart 1988: 71). As I have indicated elsewhere, making sense of individual films by applying mythological registers may be a rather hazardous and even methodologically unsound approach which tends to court an irksome disregard for textual specificity and for the material sensuousness of the filmic image. Because it is helplessly postmodernist first, *Apocalypse Now* cannot be but post-mythological also. Perhaps there is an irrepressible tension here, between on the one hand the film's ambition actually to be, oxymoronically, a postmodern myth (hence its repression of many of its sources), and on the other its often inadvertent yet endemic allusionism (or what I have just referred to as liquid figurality). *Apocalypse Now* signals not only the demise of a coherent mythology, but, more importantly, the end of the temporality of texts, to modify slightly the title of Fredric Jameson's recent

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[12] In Tomasulo's view, it is precisely this inclination toward citation which is seen as responsible to the "depoliticization" of the Vietnam conflict in the movie (1990: 156).

article in *Critical Inquiry*. By synthesizing canonical and contemporary texts, by turning textual chronology into discursive spatiality, the film reconfigures cinema's relations with genre, history, and its literary origins. The overall effect might be something analogous to what Jameson refers to as "the reduction to the present" (2003: 717).

Quite evidently, then, *Apocalypse Now* is a semiotically overdetermined film, with all the possible repercussions this may have for the modes of spectatorship. In their analysis of the sonic textures of Coppola's movie, Thomas Elsaesser and Michael Wedel call attention to a similar issue in the following passage:

> Through the jungle of discourses that constitute its textual form,
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> from the biographical to the technological, from the aesthetic
>
> to the political, its textual density seems if anything to have become more 'substantial' as time goes by, without thereby becoming
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> either more realistic or more fantastic, but demanding a different 'ontology of the filmic image,' which is to say, a different spectator (1997: 172)

This is a spectator who in her reading will have to accommodate the prerequisites of a liquid figurality, who will have to be as aware of the film's references to movie history as of those to Greek mythology. It certainly is significant that Willard's PBR is named *Erebus*, after the Greek son of Chaos and brother of Night, and that he is mentioned in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, and in turn that this play is a key source for Eliot's poem "The Hollow Men," parts of which are indistinctly recited by Brando's Kurtz at the end of the film. Erebus is of course also mentioned in Virgil's *The Aeneid*, which Coppola's original scriptwriter John Milius has cited as his main inspiration for the story. But, it is equally significant that the idea of using Richard Wagner's "The Ride of the Valkyries" is lifted from D.W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation* (1915), that the sequence in which Kurtz is killed and the water buffalo sacrificed borrows not only from Coppola's own *The Godfather* (1972) but, more prominently, from Sergei Eisenstein's *Strike* (1925; and see Chown 1988: 145), and that the photograph of Kurtz that Willard keeps looking at on the boat is actually the Weldon Penderton character played by Brando in John Huston's *Reflections in a Golden Eye* (1967).

As a filmic art object, *Apocalypse Now* is a supreme instance of what Rick Altman terms a *"scarred palimpsest,"* a text that upon further scrutiny discloses "diverse discursive layers" (1992: 10, emphasis on original). These layers, or what I would call a textual spillover, are also operative on the level of characterization, superimposed as they are on the character of Willard, turning him into Coppola's own "hollow man." According to Milius, Willard is Adam, Faust, Dante, Aeneas, Huckleberry Finn, Jesus, the Ancient Mariner, Ahab, Odysseus, and Oedipus (Thompson 1976: 15). And the list could go on. If it had not been for the "with-special-reference-to" clause of this assigned topic, I would have gravitated more toward the specifically American intertextual figurations in *Apocalypse Now*, figurations that I would claim are just as—if not more—salient for a contemporary reading of the film. An entire paper could have been written on Martin Sheen's inexpressive performance of the James Dean persona from *Rebel Without a Cause* (Nicholas Ray 1955).[13] *Badlands*, Terence Malick's austere 1973 dramatization of the Starkweather killings, seems to be another template for Sheen's Willard. Likewise, articles could be written on the californification of the Vietnam war in *Apocalypse Now* (the references to surf culture, drug-taking, the rock music of bands like the Beach Boys, The Doors, Charles Manson, Raymond Chandler, Disneyland, and so on), as well as on the *Wizard-of-Oz*-like trajectory of the film's narrative. (See French 1998: 239). Moreover, I suppose I am not the only one who notices that the transformed Willard who monolithically emerges after having killed Kurtz bears a faint yet disturbing narrative resemblance to Kubrick's Star Child at the end of *2001*.[14] And could it not be argued that "the horror! the horror!" that Eliot at one point considered as an epigraph for *The Waste Land* seems somehow obliquely evocative of that unbearable whiteness of Melville's whale? Perhaps.

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[13] There is already some precedence for considering Sheen's stylized acting in the film as a derivation from Dean's Jim Stark in Ray's movie. See Hellmann (1986: 191) and French (1998: 109).

[14] More explicitly, *Apocalypse Now* also alludes to a host of other films, notable among which is David Lean's *Bridge on the River Kwai* and *Lawrence of Arabia* (1957, 1962), *Dr. Strangelove*, another Kubrick film (1964), *Deliverance* (John Boorman 1972), *Aguirre: The Wrath of God* (Werner Herzog 1973), and *Nashville* (Robert Altman 1975).

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Churchill: The Continuing Story

JØRGEN SEVALDSEN

The iconic position of Winston Churchill, the great statesman and orator (1874-1965), was confirmed in a very public and spectacular fashion when in 2002 a popular BBC poll made him a clear winner of the title of the Greatest Briton ever. With 28.1% of the final vote, he beat not only his nearest rival, the Victorian engineer Isambard Brunel (24.6%), but also celebrities better known outside Britain such as Shakespeare (6.8%) or Admiral Nelson (3%). This essay will look at other manifestations of the continued contemporary interest in Churchill and discuss why it is that his career, views and personality are still felt to be of contemporary relevance.

The literature on Churchill is overwhelming and new biographies and monographs on aspects of his life are coming out every month. A visit to some of the most important Churchill web sites will confirm that the Churchill industry is alive and well.

There are obvious reasons for this. Churchill's political career covered most of the 20th century, he held important ministerial posts in many governments, including the position as prime minister 1940-45 and 1951-55, and he was, of course, a key player in British politics in the early phases of the Second World War when the fate of Britain and the future of the democracies of Western Europe was being decided. As an individual he was colourful and unpredictable, and there are so many military adventures and political and personal ups and downs in his life that it would seem impossible to write a dull biography of him. At the same time he was a master of words, both written and spoken, and his towering political prestige after World War II combined with his ability to coin phrases that were born as aphorisms has made him one of the most quoted politicians of all times. 'As Churchill said' is a sentence you constantly run into when speakers or writers try to borrow his wit or to capitalize on his political prestige. A superficial indication of the frequency with which Churchill is quoted in the English-speaking world compared with other famous or infamous figures may be had via the internet search machine 'Google'. A search (August 2004) on the word combination "As Churchill

said" gave 1,830 hits. If you substitute 'Shakespeare' for 'Churchill', the Bard admittedly scored 3,050 hits, and 'Lincoln' beats the British lion narrowly with 1,940 mentions. Other comparable figures, however, trail far behind him: Napoleon (746), Stalin (578), Hitler (451), Roosevelt (305), Margaret Thatcher (150), Lloyd George (31) and Attlee (4). Sometimes you even see aphorisms attributed to Churchill which were in fact uttered by others. He has, in other words, become a popular source of political wisdom and one that many will automatically turn to for verbal support of their case.

Let me just give one example of the contemporary use of Churchill's authority. The – perhaps unlikely – admirer is the American linguist and radical political activist Noam Chomsky, who twice refers to Churchill in a preface to a book on the erosion of civil rights in the USA after the events of September 11 2001. In his first passage, he uses him as an example of imperialistic Western attitudes towards third world countries:

> ... The resort to violence to intimidate – "terrorism," in the technical sense of US official documents – has long been a standard tool of domination ...The commanding officer responsible for the Amritsar massacre in India [1919] defended his actions on the grounds that ..."it was no longer a question of merely dispersing the crowd, but one of producing a sufficient moral effect, from a military point of view, not only on those who were present but more specially throughout the Punjab." Churchill's impassioned advocacy of 'using poisoned gas against uncivilised tribes' [in Iraq] shortly after was based on similar reasoning. [Churchill dismissed] with contempt the 'squeamishness' of those who worried about popular reaction to what was then regarded as the most criminal weapon of war...

In the second, he quotes him approvingly for his staunch defence of the principles of the rule of law, even in times of crisis:

> ...In this connection, it might also be wise to recall some words of Churchill's : "The power of the executive to cast a man into prison without formulating any charge known to the law, and particularly to deny him the judgment of his peers, is in the highest degree odious, and the foundation of all totalitarian government whether Nazi or Communist." Churchill's warning against such abuse of executive power for alleged intelligence and preventive purposes was in 1943, when Britain was facing threats that were not exactly trivial.

In other words, within the space of a few pages, Churchill is called on to exemplify both the worst in Western arrogance and the best in enlightened thought on civil rights (Chomsky 2003: ix and xii).

Before expanding on the contemporary political use of Churchill's reputation, I would, however, like to return very briefly to the present academic interest in the great statesman.

1. Churchill and the historians

The mainstream accounts of Churchill tend to present him as the 'Man of Destiny'. A man 'larger than life', with a difficult early life, but with a strong belief in himself and in his mission to achieve great things for the nation that he loved. For a long period of his life, his political career saw great triumphs, but also met with setbacks which would have crushed ordinary mortals. He never despaired, however, and took it upon himself to warn the British against the evil nature of Nazism and against German aggression in the 1930s, even if his warnings were largely ignored till shortly before the outbreak of war in 1939. Finally, he met his historical moment as Prime Minister, when his defiance of Hitler in the crucial years of 1940-41 turned him into what we can now recognize as a saviour of Western civilisation.

The basis of this narrative was provided by Churchill's own autobiographical books, such as *My Early Life* (1930), and the extensive volumes on World War I (*The World Crisis* 1923-31) and World War II (*The Second World* War, 1948-54). Often quoted in this context is his remark that he was sure history would be kind to him, because he intended to write it himself! His family, too, took part in this work. His son, Randolph, wrote the first volumes of the official biography, his daughter Mary Soames has written about the family, in particular about her mother, Clementine Churchill; and other relatives have made their contributions to the canon. The basic story was repeated in the official eight-volume biography, largely written by the historian Martin Gilbert, who also edited the massive companion volumes of documents for the biography. It is not that Gilbert suppresses facts or documents that might put Churchill in an unfavourable light; but his basic approach is one of reverence, and you might say that in situations where a positive or a negative interpretation of Churchill's aims and motives might be constructed, Gilbert rarely chooses the negative one. All later one-volume biographies have relied on the narratives and documents left by the

Churchill family and by Gilbert's gigantic endeavours, and most of them see Churchill's life through the prism provided by them.

Until recently, alternative and critical voices were mostly heard either from historians on the left, where there is a tradition of seeing Churchill as an anti-labour, upper-class alcoholic, a racist and a trigger-happy militarist; and from professional soldiers and military historians, who have occasionally accused him of being an amateur meddling in affairs which should have been left to the true professionals (Ponting 1994; Barnett 1991). During the 1990s, however, a new critical trend emerged, this time from historians and politicians from the 'national right' – people who were both hostile to European integration and Britain's participation in the EU, and sceptical of Britain's perceived subservience to the USA. They accused Churchill of being a romantic whose determination to fight Hitler and whose deference for the Americans hastened Britain's decline unnecessarily. The main proponent of this view, the historian John Charmley, pointed out that Churchill had two major ambitions in his political life: to fight bolshevism and to preserve the British Empire. But see what happened? After World War II, the Soviets dominated Eastern Europe, and the British Empire broke up. The US became the dominant western superpower, and Britain a client of the Americans. All this, they say, might have been avoided if Churchill had been open to the conclusion of a separate peace with Germany in 1940. That might have given the British Empire a new lease of life and perhaps limited the damage inflicted by Stalin on Europe and the world (Charmley 1993: 649; 1995: 46).

Few historians are now (2005) running with this particular ball. Nevertheless, the furore created by Charmley's revisionism was no doubt one of the factors that created space for new biographies and new interpretations of Churchill's life and legacy in the early 2000s. The most successful recent biographies such as those by Geoffrey Best and Roy Jenkins are adamant that Churchill deserves the epithet 'great', and Best in particular insists that Charmley's belief in a continued life of Britain as an imperial world power following a British-German peace in 1940 is an unrealistic dream. Hitler would never have kept his word or limited his ambitions, and in the end Britain is in a better position now as an American client with its self-respect intact than it would have been as a German vassal.

So most of the new books about Churchill are still within a recognizable mould and are content with rehearsing well-known

controversies on for example the responsibility for the Gallipoli campaign, which ended Churchill's career as First Lord of the Admiralty in 1915, or the controversies between Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin during World War II on allied strategy towards the Axis powers. A number of recent contributions have, however, tried to explore Churchill's legacy from fresh angles. David Stafford's *Churchill & Secret Service* (1997) illuminates Churchill's dealings with and use of the intelligence services on the basis of recently freed documents, and reminds us that if material likely to expand our knowledge on Churchill's career in important ways is ever likely to turn up, it will probably come from hitherto closed intelligence files. John Ramsden's path-breaking *Man of the Century. Winston Churchill* (2002) explores Churchill's legacy and the ways in which he has been celebrated – or the opposite – in various parts of the world, including Scandinavia. David Reynolds' *Churchill fighting and Writing the Second World War* (2004) is a detailed examination of how Churchill compiled his *The Second World War* (1948-1953) and compares Churchill's version of events and the version that emerges from a study of the contemporary war records. The outcome does not seriously change our picture of Churchill's role in the war, but the book provides a fascinating insight into Churchill's working methods as a writer. It makes it clear how much he relied on the drafts of his professional research assistants, and gives examples of themes that were underplayed in the memoirs in order to put Churchill himself in the best possible light or that were politically inconvenient to dwell on in the light of the international situation of the 1950s. Again, it is not unknown for authors of autobiographies to have selective memories, and Reynolds' strength is the methodical and exhaustive treatment of the topic rather than conclusions that require radical revisions of the history of World War II. In general, Reynolds' attitude to his subject is dispassionate. His research does not, for example, leave him as a great admirer of Churchill's skills as a military strategist: as a former solider, he had 'real ... experience of war', but 'he did not command any formation larger than a battalion, he had never attended Staff College and learned to plan operations, and had no interest in logistics – that essential science of supply. In other words Churchill knew battle but did not really understand modern war – large-scale, resource-intensive operations involving the mobilizing and deployment of complex formations and different arms.' (Reynolds 2004: 244).

2. Churchill and Scandinavia: From Norway 1940 to the Nobel Prize in 1953.

Apart from the unsuccessful Allied attempt to force the Straits of the Dardanelles in 1915, which resulted in Churchill's resignation as a minister, the Norway campaign in 1940 has to be rated as the most spectacular military failure overseen by Churchill in his capacity as First Lord of the Admiralty. This was a post that he held in the first months of World War I as well as of World War II. On both occasions the British and the Germans and their respective allies devoted a great deal of diplomatic and economic attention to the peripheral areas of the Continent: To the Balkans and to Scandinavia. The aims of the warring powers were to try to persuade the small neutral powers in these regions to join them as allies or at least to prevent them from joining the enemy coalitions, and at the same time to secure continued access to important raw material such as, in the Second World War, Rumanian oil and Swedish iron ore. In both 1914-15 and 1939-40 Churchill's mind was thus frequently occupied by schemes that might bring British naval power to bear on Germany by actions through the Danish Straits directed against Germany's Baltic coast. In 1915 the plans were postponed in favour of the Dardanelles scheme and abandoned after the failure to force the Turkish Straits; in private, however, Churchill continued to wrestle with the idea of breaking the deadlock on the Western Front through daring actions in the Baltic. When in September 1939 he joined the Government and was put in charge of the Royal Navy, he returned to the plans for naval actions in the Baltic and also worked on a number of schemes designed to stop the transportation of iron ore from Narvik to Germany and even occupy the mines in Kiruna in Northern Sweden to control their output of ore.

There is no space here to retell in detail the complicated story of the Allied and German plans and ambitions in Scandinavia during the 'Phoney War' between the German attacks on Poland in September 1939 and on Denmark and Norway on 9 April 1940. Allied plans to start operations in the North of Norway and Sweden to support the Finns in their Winter War against the Russians and occupy the mines of Kiruna on the way never materialised, as the governments of neutral Norway and Sweden refused to cooperate. It is clear, however, from recent literature on Churchill and the events of 1939-40 that his advocacy of actions against the Norwegian coast was not only motivated by a wish to stop the iron ore trade, but also by a hope that Hitler would retaliate so that the British and

French might open a front against Germany in an area where the British navy could act from a position of supposedly superior strength. Where Neville Chamberlain and his foreign secretary, Lord Halifax, hesitated to embark on operations in breach of international law and carrying a risk of British troops being resisted by Norwegian and Swedish soldiers, the end justified the means to Churchill. According to the most recent historian of British policies during the phoney war, he 'cared not a fig for Norwegian or Swedish resistance, and positively welcomed an aggressive German reaction' (Smart 2003: 139).

The upshot of the deliberations in London and Paris was the British operation launched on 8 April to mine the approaches to Narvik within Norwegian territorial waters. At that time, German ships were on their way to the North Atlantic, and turned the tables on the allies with their invasion of Denmark and Norway on 9 April. Although Churchill was at first hopeful that the British navy would now be free to engage the Germans and strike a decisive blow against Hitler's maritime power, events soon turned into a disaster for the allies who were unable to prevent the Germans from occupying Norway.

On the German side, the navy had long advocated occupation of the Norwegian seaboard in case of a war with Britain. Planning for such a contingency had begun in October 1939. During the early months of 1940, as the Allied interest in some form of intervention in Scandinavia became public knowledge, Hitler's interest in the project grew. The Germans were planning their big assault on their Western neighbours, and Hitler decided that he had better protect his Northern flank against British operations before he turned on the French. Hence the directive for the occupation of Denmark and Norway on 1 March, and the final order of 2 April to proceed with operation 'Weserübung' during the early hours of 9 April.

In retrospect, it is not difficult to find an explanation for the success of the German operations. Whereas the British, and not least Churchill, were quite open about their interest in the Swedish iron ore traffic and in the way in which the Scandinavians administered their neutrality, the German military plans were laid in total secrecy. When German naval movements were detected on 8 April, British intelligence misinterpreted the directions and purposes of the German operations so that the Germans managed to put their expeditionary forces ashore before the British discovered the true proportions of the German attack. Finally, Churchill and others had not foreseen the extent and significance of the

German air superiority during the operations and the ability of the Germans to land troops in Norway from the air.

In Britain, the setback in Norway was also a blow to Churchill's prestige, but not, as it turned out, to the extent that it prevented him from becoming Prime Minister. On May 10 Chamberlain had to stand down after the Norway debates in the House of Commons and the German attack on France, and Churchill was the only politician with stature and self-confidence enough to take on the daunting task of war leader in Britain. In Norway and Denmark, the experience of the German occupation, the position of Churchill as the central figure in the fight against Hitler in the crucial years of 1940-41, and the role of Britain as the liberator of the two countries from German rule ensured that the reputation of Churchill was transformed. Where before April 1940 he had been regarded by many as a slightly eccentric political maverick, his war leadership gave him an iconic position in the two countries. He made triumphal visits to Norway in 1948 and Denmark in 1950, and statues of him were put in place in Copenhagen in 1955 and in Oslo in 1976. By giving Churchill the Nobel Prize for literature in 1953, the Swedes provided him with an opportunity to visit their country. He was, however, unable to take it. At that point, he was in his second period as Prime Minister (1951-55), and had arranged a summit meeting with his American and French colleagues in Bermuda at the time of the ceremony in Stockholm in December 1953. So his wife, Clementine Churchill, went to receive it on his behalf and contributed to making it an occasion marked by warm appreciation on all sides.

Nevertheless, Sweden was hardly among Churchill's favourite countries mainly, of course, because he resented Swedish neutrality policies during World War II. During his visit to Copenhagen in October 1950, a year after Denmark and Norway had joined the Atlantic Pact, he discussed Scandinavia's position vis-à-vis Soviet Russia with Hans Hedtoft, the Danish Prime Minister. Hedtoft was a Social Democrat with very positive attitudes towards Nordic co-operation who regretted the failure to establish a Nordic defensive pact prior to the Norwegian and Danish decision to join NATO. When he assured Churchill that the Swedes were brave enough and would fight as well as the Norwegians and Danes if attacked by the Russians, Churchill replied that Swedish policy was 'governed by a professional neutrality' and that Sweden 'did not have the right sense of solidarity, although that might come' (Sevaldsen 2004: 359). This difference

between the positions of Denmark, Norway and Sweden in Churchill's universe is summed up thus by the historian John Ramsden:

> ... The Swedes were simply not part of the club of nations that had accepted Churchill's moral lead in the Second World War, an exclusion that was marked in 1965 by the British Government's decision to award two places for official mourners to each country that had been a British wartime ally, but only one to countries that had then been hostile – or neutral. The Danes and Norwegians were thus each given two seats in St Paul's Cathedral for Churchill's funeral, the Swedes only one. This was noted and somewhat resented in Stockholm, as American diplomats reported back to Washington, for, as some Swedes carefully pointed out, neither Denmark nor Norway had actually chosen to join the allied side in the war, they had merely found themselves there when Germany invaded them (Ramsden 2002: 296).

It must be said, however, that Churchill did not in general concern himself much with the problems of smaller states. The world with which he was familiar was a world of empires and great powers with global spheres of influence. Small states were impractical and often in the way, and Churchill at times suggested that they should band together in regional federations. Nor was he willing to subscribe to their right to remain neutral in all circumstances of war. In a situation where Britain was fighting for her existence against an aggressive Continental power, she must reserve the right to herself to carry out operations that technically violated the rights of small countries for the sake of the greater good. Churchill was steeped in British history and could find examples in the past to justify a robust British attitude towards minor powers. A passage in his popular book, *A History of the English-Speaking Peoples* (1956-58), on the British action against Denmark in 1807 may serve as an illustration. Churchill is writing about the Napoleonic Wars and is discussing the situation after the signing of the Franco-Russian alliance at Tilsit in July 1807. Napoleon now dominated the Continent and Britain had to rely on her naval superiority and ability to enforce her blockade of Continental trade:

> ... Grave and threatening news was conveyed to London from the raft where the two Emperors had met upon the River Niemen. An English secret agent reported that an arrangement had been reached whereby Napoleon was to seize the Danish Fleet and gain control of the entrance to the Baltic. This was to be a preliminary to a joint invasion of England with the help of the Russians. The

Cabinet acted with praiseworthy decision. Admiral Gambier was immediately ordered to enter the Baltic with twenty ships of the line and procure, by force if necessary, the surrender of the Danish Fleet. After a heavy action in the harbour of Copenhagen the Danes yielded to this humiliation. This act of aggression against a neutral state aroused a storm against the Government in Whig political and literary circles. But events vindicated the promptitude and excused the violence of their action. Two days after the British Fleet left home waters Napoleon had informed the Danish Minister in Paris that if England were to refuse Russian mediation in the Great War Denmark would be forced to choose sides. Had the British Government not acted with speed the French would have been in possession of the Danish Navy within a few weeks.

(Churchill 1957: 253).

Churchill and his research assistants are not the only writers who mix up Nelson's naval battle at Copenhagen in 1801 with Wellington's and Gambier's action in 1807 which secured British aims through a bombardment of the city and its civilian population. Nevertheless, the argument is clear enough, and the reader is no doubt invited to see the parallels with both Churchill's plans for actions against Norway and the Baltic in 1939-40 and the Royal Navy's sinking of a section of the French navy off Oran in July 1940 to prevent the French ships from falling in the hands of the Germans.

3. Contemporary uses of Churchill

The steady interest in Churchill which has been apparent since his death in 1965 took a dramatic upturn after the attack on the World Trade Center in 2001 and the Anglo-American decision to invade Iraq in March 2003.

The tragedy in New York on 11 September 2001 immediately conjured up images of Churchill. The visits by Rudolph Giuliani, the Mayor of New York, and by President Bush to the ruins evoked memories of Churchill's walkabouts in the blitzed parts of London in 1940, and the rhetoric of Giuliani and Bush was equally reminiscent of Churchill's defiance of foreign tyrants. Such references continued in the period leading up to the decision to attack Iraq in 2003. The British war leader's name was frequently invoked to justify preventive action against the threat posed by Saddam Hussein's regime. Two themes in particular were presented:

Firstly, Churchill's wisdom in realising that appeasement does not work against unscrupulous dictators. Opponents of armed intervention against Saddam Hussein were compared with the followers of Neville Chamberlain and accused of making the same kind of misjudgement of their opponent's intentions that the appeasers made in the 1930s.

Secondly, that we should learn from Churchill's courage in standing up for views that were unpopular during the years before the war and in taking the difficult decision to fight on against Hitler in 1940 in spite of scepticism among his colleagues. President Bush and especially Prime Minister Blair knew that many of their voters were uncomfortable with their policies on Iraq, and Churchill provided a tempting model of a politician who dared lead from the front. As Bush expressed it in February 2004: 'In his determination to do the right thing, and not the easy thing, I see the spirit of Churchill in Prime Minister Tony Blair.' On the same occasion, Bush declared himself 'a great admirer of Sir Winston Churchill, admirer of his career, admirer of his strength, admirer of his character – so much so that I keep a stern-looking bust of Sir Winston in the Oval Office. He watches my every move.' (Bush 2004). Tony Blair on his part styled his speeches in a manner that often recalled famous phrases from Churchill's wartime speeches: 'We the British are a people that stand by our friends in times of need, trial and tragedy...' (14 September 2001); 'People should have confidence. This is a battle with only one outcome: our victory, not theirs' (30 March 2003); 'On its outcome hangs more than the fate of the Iraqi people' (*The Observer,* 11 April 2004).

The appeal to Churchill was not, as Danish newspaper readers will know, confined to the countries of the 'Anglosphere'. In Denmark, too, politicians and commentators supporting the Danish participation in the military action against Iraq frequently reminded their critics of Churchill's uncompromising stand against tyrants and of the debt of gratitude that Danes owe him and the British people (Sevaldsen 2004: 392).

In the context of President Bush and Prime Minister Blair, however, the close relationship between them during the Iraq crisis was in itself seen as a vindication of the 'special relationship' between Britain and the USA, and thus of an ideal that Churchill himself had cultivated more than any other British statesman in the 20th century. Born of an American mother, he saw the relationship as based not just on a community of interests, but on a shared history and common democratic and constitutional ideals. This is what he elaborated over four volumes in *A History of the English-Speaking Peoples* (1956-1958), and which he translated into a special duty

of the two leading English-speaking countries to secure and uphold an orderly and democratic world. Thus, in his famous 'iron curtain' speech in Fulton, Missouri, in 1946 on the threat from Soviet totalitarianism, he dwelled on the position of the USA as the champion, with Britain, of human rights, freedom and the rule of law. 'Here are the title deeds of freedom which should lie in every cottage home. Here is the message of the British and American peoples to mankind. Let us preach what we practise – let us practise what we preach.' (Cannadine 1990: 300). In the context of an emerging Cold War, he stressed the special role of the USA and Britain, within the new organisation of the UN, to ensure order and stability in the world. Churchill tried as long as possible to insist on an equal status between the US and Britain and its Commonwealth in this task, even though he recognized that the North American cousins were the superpower of the future. Nowadays, the idea of the US as the heir to Britain's world role has been taken up by historians such as Niall Ferguson, who famously called the USA 'an empire in denial' (Ferguson 2004a). The argument of Ferguson and other Anglo-American neo-imperialists is that the world needs a benevolent superpower to ensure order and stability. Britain fulfilled this role in the 19th century through its Empire, which was, by and large, a good, progressive and stabilizing thing. What is needed now, in this view, is that the USA takes it upon itself to play this role in full recognition of what it is doing.

And what, then, should Britain's role be in a world dominated by the USA? Here, too, Churchill's legacy plays an interesting part in the discussions. The fact that his and Britain's finest hour in 1940 was a case of 'standing alone' against dark forces emanating from the Continent is seen by many as having had a lasting effect on British perceptions of Europe. It is true that in the late 1940s Churchill acquired a reputation as one of the fathers of a united Europe through his sponsorship of the Council of Europe in 1949, but it quickly became clear that he was against British participation in any form of supra-national European co-operation. A United Europe for him was an instrument of French-German reconciliation, not a construction that should lure Britain away from her imperial or Atlantic destinies. So he did not use his authority to prepare the British for a life as one among many European players. The pro-European conservative historian John Ramsden comments on the 'extremely high regard with which both Churchill and Britain itself were held across Europe after 1945' and deplores 'the recklessness with which such a national asset was wasted by British Governments over the next two

decades. Whatever role Britain might have sought to play after 1945, Churchill had ensured that the ball was at our feet, though somehow neither he nor his successors were ever able to run with it. This was a failure of foreign policy that could well come to weigh heavily in the historical scales of judgement.' (Ramsden 2002: 321).

On the other hand, it has been easy and obvious to use Churchill's authority in support of maintaining close links with the USA. The Churchill-Roosevelt relationship has been compared with the Thatcher-Reagan partnership and with Blair's relations with both Clinton and Bush. As mentioned before, Blair's policy of sticking to the partnership with Bush partly out of basic sympathy for the American view of the world and partly because of an ambition to maximize British influence on American decisions is easy to present as one modelled on the example of Winston Churchill. There has been an ongoing discussion about the validity of such a parallel between the experts. Thus in July 2004, Jon Meacham, the author of *Franklin and Winston* (2003), warned against historical comparisons of this kind and against seeing too many likenesses between George W. Bush and Tony Blair on one side and Churchill and Franklin D. Roosevelt on the other: ' Bush eschews complexity; FDR and Churchill embraced it. Bush prefers to decide, not go into details or revisit issues; FDR and Churchill were constantly examining their own assumptions and immersing themselves in postwar planning. Bush is largely incurious about the world; FDR and Churchill wanted to know everything.' (Meacham 2004). In contrast, Martin Gilbert reminded us in December 2004 that in their time, Churchill and Roosevelt were the target of much criticism, too, and argues that if a democratic Iraq and an Israeli-Palestinian agreement emerge at the end of the difficult war in Iraq, Bush and Blair 'may well, with the passage of time and the opening of the archives, join the ranks of Roosevelt and Churchill.' He also saw the intervention in Iraq in the context of Anglo-American idealism as expressed in the Atlantic Charter: 'Churchill and Roosevelt worked together to shape the postwar world. The Atlantic Charter, which they both signed in August 1941, set out the parameters of self-government, free elections and democracy for all those nations that had been subjected to Nazi tyranny. In Iraq, Bush and Blair have adhered to the Atlantic Charter concept. Hussein was overthrown in order that a democratic Iraqi leader could be put in his place, and both leaders are persevering in this task.' (Gilbert 2004).

There are, of course, other roads for Britain than the Atlantic or the European ones. The historian Timothy Garton Ash has recently tried so

summarise the various options discussed in Britain as the following four strategies:

I. Regain independence. This is a narrative that 'draws on an immensely powerful self-image: that of Britain fighting heroically on, led by Winston Churchill, after France had fallen to Hitler's armies in the summer of 1940', and which concentrates on pulling out of Europe.

II. Choose America. The voices recommending this say that Britain must choose between the US and Europe, and that she should choose the US and join the North Atlantic Free Trade Area.

III. Choose Europe. Only through pooling its sovereignty with the partners in the EU, say the proponents of this option, can Britain free herself from her servitude to the US and regain her natural place as a leading force in Europe. Britain needs to realise that culturally and in terms of social values, she is a European country.

IV. Try to make the best of Britain's intimate relations with both America and Europe. This is, in fact, what the Blair government tries to do, and which most British people would no doubt opt for, whereas the media tend to be more polarised between 'Eurosceptics', 'Europhiles' and 'Atlanticists'.

In this scheme of things, Winston Churchill, in Ash's view, is 'the prime witness, role model and adopted patron saint' of the first two options (Ash 2004: 30). Options which are still alive in the British debate, where participants are still trying to capitalise on Churchill's immense reputation.

4. Historical role model?

For historians, this leaning on a historical authority like Churchill in contemporary political controversies raises the old and familiar question of learning lessons from history. In the case of Churchill: Are there sufficient similarities between the situations in the 1930s and the present day for a comparison between Churchill's stand against Hitler and Blair's against Saddam Hussein to be meaningful?

In the late 1930s, Churchill certainly was more alert to dangers coming from Hitler's Germany than many of his contemporaries were. As to the

question of how to contain Hitler's ambitions, Churchill's main advice was (1) To build alliances against him in Europe while strengthening the League of Nations, and (2) To build up Britain's defences so that the country could negotiate from a position of strength. He never proposed a preventive war on Germany to force the country to disarm or to rid it of the Nazi regime. During the crisis in 1936 caused by Germany's remilitarisation of the Rhineland, he did not oppose the official policy of trying to find a negotiated settlement of the crisis. In 1939, the final decision of Neville Chamberlain's government to go to war with Germany was taken as a response to a direct German attack on Poland.

In other words, it seems difficult to compare the situation in the 1930s with the 2003 scenario of a perceived threat from a minor power ruled by a vicious dictator possibly possessing weapons of mass destruction. If you want to find historical situations in which Churchill advocated intervention for preventive or humanitarian reasons you would have to look at other episodes in his long career. Thus, his advocacy of allied intervention against the Bolsheviks in Russia in 1920 may be said to have sprung from a sort of liberal interventionism. In that situation, however, as in the case of his intervention in the Greek civil war in 1944-45 on the side of the anti-communists, there already were internal conflicts taking place in which Churchill chose to support one of the parties. He also cheered, as Prime Minister, the American-led operations against the Iranian politician Mohammad Mossadegh in 1952-53 which led to Mossadegh's fall. Churchill had resigned as Prime Minister when the British, French and Israelis invaded Egypt in 1956 in response to President Nasser's nationalisation of the Suez Canal. He appears not to have had qualms about the intervention in itself, but reservations about the wisdom of going in without assurance of American support. In any case, the military interventions against local autocrats in Iran in 1953 and in Egypt in 1956 took place to protect British economic and strategic interests; they were not defended as actions to rid the world of dangers to the peace or to liberate the Iranian or Egyptian peoples from oppression. If Churchill had been alive in 2003 and in a position to confer with Tony Blair on the merits of intervention in Iraq, my guess would be that he would have been attracted by the idea of a joint Anglo-American action to punish a local tyrant, but also doubtful about whether key British interests were at stake, or whether the liberation of the Iraqi people from a despotic ruler was a strong enough argument to warrant military action.

In fact, Churchill did not always act in heroic and uncompromising modes. His policies could be very pragmatic. As Prime Minister 1951-55 he was very much aware that the West was confronting a country that had nuclear bombs, and was more careful to avoid provoking the Soviets than was his US partners. Like them, he sincerely wanted the demise of the Soviet Union. He was certain that the communist regimes would fall, but thought that the breakdown of the Soviet bloc would be a result of a long process of attrition and of the effects of increasing cultural and economic pressure from the West. You might say that here was another issue on which history was to prove him right.

So the conviction that Churchill would be a certain supporter of the Coalition attack on Iraq, had he been with us today, seems difficult to sustain if you look at the specifics of each of the historical situations that might be compared. It may also be that the fans of Churchill choose to appeal to him more generally as a politician with a heroic and activist approach to the conduct of foreign policy. By the end of 2004, however, the increasingly messy and un-heroic circumstances of the intervention in Iraq lessened the inclination of Anglo-American leaders to draw in Churchill in the debate. Who knows, perhaps the Churchill that will be quoted over the next few years will not be the opponent of appeasement in the 1930s, but the minister who in 1920-21 fought relentlessly against IRA terrorists in Ireland, but in the end decided that enough was enough and that a settlement could only be reached through negotiations with the terrorists? As the quote from Noam Chomsky referred to at the beginning of this essay illustrated, Churchill's speeches and policies span so many positions that his authority can be called upon to support a wide range of views.

There are, finally, a number of other reasons why Churchill will no doubt continue to be quoted and used as an authority. They have to do with aspects of his personality which mark him out as a modern or even post-modern politician:

Firstly, his ability to set the scene and create reality through rhetoric, especially in 1940. All spin doctors must admire his ability during the period after the fall of France to persuade the British population that their country was in a position to win a war with the axis powers, when all rational analysis pointed in the opposite direction. This has always been recognised as a superior feat of political persuasion, which was even more remarkable as he was, of course, his own spin doctor.

Secondly, his very modern way of 'branding' himself as a politician. There were certainly other leaders with strong public profiles during the

1930s, but among democratic politicians he was remarkable in his early ability to brand himself through the weird variety of hats he used, his cigar, bow tie, and the V-sign that he cultivated during World War II. He was extremely careful about this and very conscious of cultivating and maintaining his public image.

Thirdly, his leadership style. Certainly, his reputation among his contemporaries and his staff on this score is mixed. He was known as a person who drove his secretaries to despair by demanding their services at improbable hours, as an addict of one-way communication and therefore a hopeless chairperson of meetings. Nevertheless, other aspects of his style of leadership are attracting interest at business schools and other centres of management studies: His ability to inspire his staff through his energy and ceaseless interest in even minute details, which made him an 'inspirational' and 'hands-on' leader; his curiosity, which made him want to see for himself what went on in the offices, ships, airfields, munition factories or whatever other establishments that were part of his ministerial responsibilities. Experts have declared him a prime example of the 'MBWA' style of leadership: Management By Walking About (Roberts 2003: 101).

These 'modern' features are to be found, it should be remembered, in a person who was born into the upper echelons of the British aristocracy. This is one of the many apparent contradictions which make him so fascinating: at the same time progressive and aristocratic, social reformer and anti-socialist, cautious pragmatic and heroic firebrand, realistic power politician and romantic nationalist, prophetic seer and detail-obsessed administrator. You should, in my view, always be sceptical of anybody claiming authority for contemporary courses of action from the great statesman, but it will always be fascinating and often inspiring to see how he coped with the challenges that he and his country met with in his lifetime.

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Johansson, Stig, and Anne-Line Graedler.
Rocka, hipt og snacksy. Om engelsk i norsk språk og samfunn.
Kristiansand: Høyskoleforlaget, 2002

GUNNEL MELCHERS

A review of this engaging and informative book is long overdue and was, in fact, originally meant to be included in the recent special issue of *NJES* (Vol.3:2, 2004), devoted to the influence of English on the languages in the Nordic countries. The obvious advantage, however, of waiting to produce this review is that it should benefit from last year's *NJES* thematic issue, which provided a great deal of interesting comparative material and a variety of perspectives on the topic. Johansson & Graedler's pioneering work, in fact, includes aspects of virtually all the issues represented in the *NJES* volume, published two years later and dealing with a larger area comprising several different polities and speech communities. Thus both publications discuss types of borrowing, the effect of English on L1 word formation and sentence structure, changing practices in naming, sociolinguistic differences, domain loss, and attitudes to the impact of English.

Johansson 1995, an article which can be viewed as a preliminary or forerunner to the book under review, is introduced as follows:

> The influence of the English language and of Anglo-American culture has been strongly felt in Scandinavia in this century. Yet it is a topic which - until recently - has not been given much attention in linguistic research, although it has been frequently commented on in articles and letters to the editor in the press. (Johansson 1995: 269)

Indeed, with the exception of some ambitious, data-based descriptions of loanwords, such as Stene 1945 (on Norwegian), Sørensen 1973 (Danish), Seltén 1993 (Swedish), a corpus-based study of English as used in the Swedish press (Chrystal 1988) and a large-scale informant study on attitudes and usage (Ljung 1985, 1988), the topic does not seem to have caught the attention of many linguists based in the Nordic countries. Yet the first years in the new millennium have seen an upsurge in research.

Speculating on reasons for this change of affairs, one might suggest the increased awareness of language contact as an important factor in change and variation, the growing interest in 'World Englishes', the rapidly increasing availability of written as well as spoken language corpora, the interest in youth culture, and the fear of domain loss and endangerment.

As last year's *NJES* thematic issue also clearly demonstrates, in its very existence as well as its contents, important steps have been taken in the Nordic countries towards joint efforts in the field, linguistically as well as politically. The most important linguistic manifestation of such co-operation so far is probably the large-scale project *Modern Loanwords in the Nordic Countries*, presented in Anne-Line Graedler's contribution to the journal. The aims of the project are not only to produce a detailed comparative survey of the treatment of modern loanwords in the languages in the Nordic countries but also to study 'the linguistic climate', i.e. attitudes, and to provide a background for discussion and decision-making on the part of language councils. The useful list of references concluding the presentation clearly reflects the weight and wealth of empirical research carried out during the last decade. In Norway, the most substantial contribution no doubt derives from the work done and inspired by the writers of the volume under review.

As seen from its title, Johansson & Graedler's monumental monograph is written in Norwegian, which is understandable, although its contents should be of interest to anyone concerned with the globalisation of English. Its target readership is not explicitly specified, but seems to be a fairly general Norwegian audience. The presentation is admirably straightforward and free of linguistic jargon. In part, it is definitely of a didactic character and the book will indeed make an excellent textbook. Each chapter is concluded by a list of suggestions for further reading and the book is accompanied by a website providing tasks relating to topics discussed.

The bulk of the book's ten chapters and 318 pages deals with lexical borrowings: their history, users, domains, integration, etc. In view of this, the book's all-embracing subtitle would appear to be somewhat misleading; yet the first two chapters and the concluding one address other levels of language as well. Clearly, it could be argued and is also well documented that the impact of a donor language tends to be strongest and most easily perceived with regard to the lexicon.

The introductory chapter, *Engelsk - bro eller barriere?* ('English - bridge or barrier?') immediately whets the reader's appetite by quoting a

prediction voiced in 1960 by a Norwegian publisher to the effect that English would be the dominant language in Norway before the new millennium. As we all know, this has not happened, in spite of an ever-increasing 'pressure' from English, the character and extent of which the authors illustrate by some striking examples found in newspapers appearing on a randomly selected day in the year 2000. Still, the authors' general impression after this search was that - with the exception of advertisements - there were relatively few English words and expressions in most of the articles, which corresponds with the overall results of Chrystal's large-scale 1988 study of Swedish newspapers.

A particularly interesting section in the chapter discusses its main theme, as suggested in the title. Although the mastery of English is obviously a 'bridge' in that it enriches our existence by the possibility to communicate with people and to gain access to cultures all over the world, its global spread and especially its impact on the mother tongue can also have an excluding effect. The youngest and oldest age groups in a population, for example, often have no knowledge of English, and a sizeable number of school learners never acquire the skills required to benefit from or even understand all the information supplied in English only. By means of illuminating examples, taken from various genres, the authors demonstrate the problems of this information gap, which has largely been neglected but is clearly of vital importance and should be subjected to sociolinguistic research. In Norway as well as the other Nordic countries there is, unfortunately and mistakenly, something of a myth claiming that we are all virtually bilingual.

This rich and stimulating chapter, which encapsulates a great deal of the authors' message, continues by clarifying that *anglonorsk*, i.e. 'English as used in Norwegian' does not necessarily bear complete resemblance to the language as used in an English-speaking country. For one thing, words may be inflected according to the grammar of the receiving language, but they may also have acquired a new meaning. The three words that make up the main title of the book are used to illustrate this phenomenon, but - curiously - their exact significance and use is not described. The social aspect of the use of English is further highlighted by a plea for language awareness and consideration of audience in writing and speaking. It is argued that many English borrowings could easily be replaced by Norwegian words. This, again, is an interesting topic, highlighted by the language councils in the Nordic countries, among which the Norwegian council no doubt is the most militant (cf. www.sprakrad.no). In the

opinion of the present reviewer, the advice given tends to be too categorical, since the borrowings often stand for a special aspect or may express a particular involvement. Replacement can also be problematic for formal reasons: *e-post* instead of *e-mail* as exemplified by the authors is not equivalent/synonymous in that it cannot be used as a countable.

The chapter further contains a brief section exemplifying English-based changes in Norwegian sentence structure. These often subtle, unobtrusive changes are plentiful in the Scandinavian languages but are still waiting to be researched at length. As recently shown by Ljung (2004), the existence of large text corpora makes syntactic studies in this field feasible and worthwhile. Finally, the crucial problem of domain loss is briefly touched upon and an account is given of the aims and data collection of the project on which the present volume is based.

Chapter 2 provides a succinct, but in part unnecessarily detailed, overview of the history of the English language, including its global spread. Whereas it is not quite clear why descriptions of varieties such as pidgins and creoles should be included in this work unless it is shown that a learner language may display certain pidgin-like features, other topics are well placed, e.g. Kachru's model of World Englishes. Admittedly, in part the presentation does link up well with certain recommendations for the teaching of English in Norwegian schools given in Chapter 10.

Beginning with the next chapter, the focus is on borrowings, or rather 'loanwords', which is the term used by the authors throughout the presentation. This chapter, again, is largely a lesson in the history of the English language, describing the complicated shaping of its vocabulary through language contact. Although the presentation is very readable as such, it could be questioned whether it really deserves its place in this volume. The chapter also includes a historical account of loanwords in Norwegian, which is definitely more justified and includes important information on early borrowing from English. It also reviews some early studies on English loanwords in Norway, notably Stene 1945, who found that the number of English loanwords in data from the 1930s hardly exceeded loanwords from some other languages. The detailed account of Haugen's work on the Norwegian language in America deserves its place here, since interesting similarities as well as differences are to be found in the character and use of the English borrowings as compared to the situation in Norway today. A comparison of these two rather different scenarios would constitute a worthwhile project in its own right.

The following chapter, *Hvem bruker lånord og hvorfor?* ('Who uses loanwords and why?'), can be characterised as highly informative as well as innovative. In some 50 pages the authors succeed in producing subtle descriptions of the particular settings and attitudes determining the scope and character of the borrowings as well as detailed data-based examples and figures. The chapter opens with an interesting discussion of problems in determining what to include in the category 'loanword'; hence it is difficult to establish just how many loanwords there are at a given time. Should, for example, a word that has been totally integrated, such as *jobbe* ('work'), be included? Incidentally, an informant study as to what is considered a loanword or not, should be interesting. In a course on language change at Stockholm University a 20-year-old student recently gave the word *container* as an example of a completely integrated loanword, claiming that 'it had been around for so long'. As for myself, about 50 years her senior, I view the same word as a very recent addition to the Swedish language and clearly marked as a borrowing.

The chapter abounds with interesting ideas and discussions. Among other things, the authors ask themselves why there seems to be a general impression that English loanwords are extremely frequent in running texts, such as newspaper articles, when this is not really the case. In the interesting section called *Synlighet* ('Visibility') it is put forward that not only do the English words mostly represent 'content-bearing' nouns, but they are also highlighted through deviant spelling conventions and - if spoken - pronunciations. In addition, they often occur in prominent positions, such as headlines, and are often new and topical (*reality TV, web design*), sometimes even 'loaded'. As is well known, the frequency of English loanwords is very dependent on text type, subculture and domain. The following settings are presented: popular music (where Norwegian is seriously endangered), fashion, sport (concluded by an interesting account of a number of sports-related borrowings which have acquired more generalised meanings), film and TV (including an interesting study of the increasing use of all-English titles, some of which have even been changed in Norway, e.g. *Miss Congeniality*, called *Miss Undercover* in Norway; in Sweden, by contrast, its title is *Miss Secret Agent!*), advertising (where a great deal of punning presupposing a knowledge of Norwegian is found), economics, names of various kinds (cf. Pahta & Taavitsainen 2004 studying Finnish telephone directories), the computer world, and spoken language (still very much under-researched). An informant study as to the acceptability of English loanwords in Norway showed clear differences

with regard to region (lower acceptability in the North), occupation (low acceptability on the part of teacher trainees as compared to a group doing their military service) and gender (somewhat lower acceptability among women). The chapter is concluded by speculations on some underlying reasons for preferring English words, such as expressing modernity, seeking attention, punning, expressing emotion, involvement and identity.

Chapters 5 to 8 carefully account for the treatment of the loanwords: their integration viewed from different perspectives (formal, social, psychological and lexical), their varying pronunciation and spelling, including the role of the Norwegian language council in this respect), their morphological integration (including an interesting study of grammatical gender assignment to English loanwords), semantic change, and the category labelled 'indirect' loans, especially 'substitution' loans, whereby a word already existing in the receiving language extends its meaning due to influence from the donor language. The last-mentioned topic is richly illustrated by results from a pioneering study.

Chapter 9, which is devoted to code-switching, is more general and impressionistic. The authors deplore the fact that very little work has been done on spoken language; in fact, Sharp 2001 seems to be the only large-scale study in the Nordic countries so far.

The title of the final chapter is *Engelsk eller ikke engelsk - is that the question?* ('English or no English - …'). This wording, which does not lend itself to a completely adequate translation into English, is meant as a response to a Danish publication with a similar-sounding title but ending in a statement, viz. *that is the question.* Graedler & Johansson wish to emphasise that both languages are needed; the question is rather when to use one and when the other. In considering what might constitute the greatest threat to the Norwegian language the authors briefly advocate some restriction in the use of English loanwords, e.g. in talking or writing to/for an audience to whom language might be a barrier. Quite rightly, however, the bulk of the discussion of endangerment has to do with domain loss. This is, incidentally, also the main concern of the language council in Sweden, which is referred to in the chapter (cf. www.spraknamnden.se/SSN/handl.htm). Furthermore, the authors recommend changes in the teaching of the mother tongue as well as English with a view to raising language awareness, e.g. by considering varieties of English other than standard varieties found in Britain or the U.S. The interesting and important topic 'English as a lingua franca' is briefly discussed towards the end of the chapter.

In all, this is a solid as well as stimulating book to simply enjoy reading and to keep for continuous reference. I cannot claim to have done justice to its richness but I hope at least to have demonstrated one of its many merits, viz. the wealth of information and ideas that suggest and inspire further research. This, if anything, is the hallmark of good educational and scholarly writing.

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