# Table of Contents

# Foreignisation and resistance: Lawrence Venuti and his critics

*Kjetil Myskja, Volda University College*

Abstract
This article evaluates whether Lawrence Venuti's translation approach of "foreignisation" is likely to achieve his stated goal: translations that can resist cultural dominance. This is assessed in light of criticism of his approach from other translation scholars also concerned with cultural encounters and power relations: Maria Tymoczko, Mona Baker, Tarek Shamma and Michael Cronin. The article concludes that it is problematic to identify foreignisation and predict its effect. In spite of this, Venuti's focus on the dangers of a one-sided privileging of fluent translation strategies is important and valuable, not least in the perspective of the internal cultural and linguistic struggles that will take place within the target culture.

## Introduction

In this article, I aim to evaluate whether a translation approach which emphasizes "foreignisation" as proposed by Lawrence Venuti (1998, 2008, 2010) can be expected to resist "ethnocentrism and racism, cultural narcissism and imperialism", as is his aim (Venuti 2010: 78). The relevance of his concept will be assessed in light of criticism which has been aimed at his approach from other translation scholars also concerned with questions of cultural encounters and power relations, namely Maria Tymoczko (2000, 2006), Mona Baker (2010), Tarek Shamma (2009), and Michael Cronin (1998). First, I will briefly position Venuti within translation studies, and examine his concepts of foreignising and domesticating translation. The discussion will then go on to problems of defining and delineating foreignisation, drawing mainly on Tymoczko. I see this as a central problem and one which will reoccur as a part of the criticisms raised by other scholars: it is certainly closely connected to the problem discusssed in the next section: the inherent problems of dichotomous categories mentioned by Baker as well as Tymoczko. This will be discussed quite briefly. The problem of definition also reoccurs in my somewhat more detailed discussion of the relationship between foreignisation and exoticism, which will be based on Tarek Shamma's criticism of Venuti and Venuti's response to this. I will next briefly examine Cronin's claim that foreignisation as a

translation strategy is particularly unsuited to minority languages threatened by major ones: this is a point which can be seen as more separate from the question of definition. Finally, I shall conclude by acknowledging the problems inherent in using a set of terms for characterising the overall effect of a translation text when these effects are dependent on the cultural and political situation of the reader, yet I shall also emphasise the value of Venuti's concepts as a reminder of the consequences of translation choices.

This list of points of criticism is not meant to be exhaustive, nor even to take up all points raised by the scholars mentioned, and, as indicated above, some of these points will have to be treated fairly cursorily. It can perhaps be claimed, though, that the way in which I see the problem of achieving a stable definition as a recurrent one makes the more cursory treatment of some of the individual points less problematic.

### Venuti and foreignisation

The relevance of cultural identity and cultural difference to translation is too obvious for this aspect ever to have been completely neglected, yet in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the idea of a "Cultural Turn" within these studies emerged (Munday 2009: 11). This interest in translation studies as closely related to culture studies supplemented, or challenged, an interest in translation as primarily a linguistic process, in which cultural differences were an inevitable obstacle to overcome in order to communicate the source language meaning. Instead, translation came to be seen as "a more complex negotiation between two cultures" (Munday 2009: 179), in which questions of power relations would have to be central. This applies both to relations between dominant and subjugated (or numerically threatened) cultures globally and to relations between dominant and marginalised linguistic and cultural forms and their representatives within the same culture.

Lawrence Venuti is an influential, but also controversial translation scholar within this "cultural turn". He is interesting not least because he takes up and seeks to develop a tradition in translation strategy which which he sees as going back to Friedrich Schleiermacher (Schleiermacher 2007, Venuti 2008: 15-16), and including Walter Benjamin and Antoine Berman among its later proponents, of "linguistically marked" translation, and which he sees as responding to

the need for awareness of cultural differences between source and target cultures (Venuti 2004: 72 and 225). However, while explicitly tying in his ideas with scholars who defend "faithful" rather than "free" renderings of the source text, Venuti reorients his approach from a literalist concern with preservation of the source language structures, to a concern with the exclusion or inclusion of peripheral and minority forms within the target language in the translation process.

Venuti develops the distinction between what he terms "domesticating" (from Schleiermacher's "einbürgernde") and "foreignising" (Scleiermacher's "verfremdende") translations to describe two extremes of how a translator positions a translated text in the target language and in the textual environment of the target culture.

In a domesticating translation, one strives for a style as indistinguishable as possible from a text originally written in the target language; fluency and "naturalness" are prioritized. A central contention of Venuti's is that prioritization of "naturalness" in this context will tend to limit linguistic and cultural choices in the translation process to the dominant discourse in the target culture, while choices that would be associated with marginalized groups tend to be avoided. He also claims that domestication and fluency have become the expected mode of translation, at least within Anglo-American culture. In *The Translator's Invisibility* (2008: 3-4), he supports this claim by quoting from reviews of translated texts from 1947 to 2005, reviews in which naturalness and fluency are the recurrent terms of commendation. He also uses these reviews to ascertain or confirm which features characterize this apparently desirable fluency, among which are current rather than anachronistic or archaic usage, standard forms rather than dialect or slang, and avoidance of a mixture of standards (e.g. British and American).

In a foreignising translation, on the other hand, the translator intentionally disrupts the linguistic and genre expectations of the target language in order to mark the otherness of the translated texts: "Discontinuities at the level of syntax, diction, or discourse allow the translation to be read as a translation […] showing where it departs from target language cultural values, domesticating a foreignizing translation by showing where it depends on them" (Venuti 2010: 75). These discontinuities can be created by utilizing precisely those marginal and minority forms within the target language which are excluded by the

expectation of fluency. Venuti emphasizes the patterns of power and dominance found in any cultural/linguistic realm: "Any language use is thus a site of power relationships because a language, at any historical moment, is a specific conjuncture of a major form holding sway over minor variables" (1998: 10). These minor variables (minor in the sense of being marginalized and put into a minority position), which Venuti with a term borrowed from Lecercle (1990) calls "the remainder", constitute a foreign element within the target cultures which can be used to mark the foreignness of a translated text. Good translation, Venuti contends, "…releases the remainder by cultivating a heterogeneous discourse, opening up the standard dialect and literary canons to what is foreign to themselves, to the substandard and marginal"[1] (1998: 11). Activating this remainder will disrupt fluency and create its opposite: a resistant translation. The significance of resistancy, as of fluency, is obviously not limited to translation; it has relevance for all communicative acts. However, in translation it gains an extra level of significance in preserving the foreignness and otherness of the translated text.

The focus on the use of the marginal in the target language and culture to mark the otherness of the translated text, shows that foreignisation in this sense is a choice that takes place within the target language framework. "The foreign in foreignizing translation is not a transparent representation of an essence that resides in the foreign text, and is valuable in itself, but a strategic construction whose value is contingent on the current situation in the receiving culture. Foreignizing translation signifies the differences of the foreign text, yet only by disrupting the codes that prevail in the translating language" (Venuti 2008: 15). However, while it might seem, based on this, that foreignisation is only about disrupting the majority within the target culture, this is not unambiguous in Venuti's account. He is concerned with the marginal in the source language as well as in the target language. He sees the choice of a text or genre which will appear as marginal in the target language as minoritising, but also the possibility of choosing what is marginal in the source language as having the potential for the same effect. The distinction between the terms foreignisation and

---

[1] Venuti mentions some examples of such foreignising, and in his view good, translations, among others Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky's translations from Russian, such as *The Brothers Karamazov* (1990).

minoritisation is not very clear, but they may perhaps be seen to cover the same reality from two different perspectives: a translation conducted along these lines is meant to be foreignising in that it marks the otherness of the translated text, but it is minoritising in that it uses minority forms within the target language and culture to create this text. The term minoritisation may also be intended to point to a more overarching objective: to put the majority into a minor position in order to disrupt a cultural hegemony, e.g. by using a marginalised form of the target language for translating prestigious works from a dominant culture.

When Venuti above speaks of "good translation" as containing an element of foreignisation, this makes it clear that the choice between the alternative strategies is not to him a neutral one: the disruption implicit in foreignisation is not just a possible strategy, but also a desirable one. He describes domestication and foreignisation as *ethical* attitudes to translation (Venuti 2008: 19). The ethical aspect of foreignisation may be seen as touching on the translation's relationship with the source culture, the target culture and the individual reader.

In relation to the source culture, Venuti sees translation as an inherently violent process: the translator must always "eliminate", "disarrange" and replace the source language text (Venuti 2008: 14). While this domesticating violence is to some extent inevitable, he sees it as deeply problematic when the domestication becomes "wholesale" (ibid.); he writes of the need to "do wrong at home" in order to "do right abroad" by "deviating enough from native norms to stage an alien reading experience" (Venuti 2008: 16). The terms he uses here suggest that the ethical question in this case concerns the relationship between the source and the target culture; that the translator has an ethical obligation to indicate the otherness of the source text and the source culture in the translation. This must then be understood as an *obligation* the translator has towards source text and source culture—to maintain, as far as possible its separate identity within the target language and culture—and would be an ethical consideration he inherits from preceding translation scholars who argue for a foreignising approach (Schleiermacher, Steiner, Berman).

More than his predecessors, however Venuti is also concerned with the ethical *effect* of translation on the internal power structures of the target culture. A regime of translation which selects foreign texts for translation based on their potential ability to enter into the dominant

discourse of the target culture without resistance, and which domesticates texts in order to achieve such a resistance-free integration, does not only affect the relationship between the source and the target culture; it also strengthens this dominant discourse within the target culture in relation to potential rival discourses within this culture. As Venuti puts it "Translation enlists the foreign text in the maintenance or revision of dominant cultural paradigms, research methodologies and clinical practices that inform disciplines and professions in the receiving culture" (2008: 15). This clearly implies that domesticating translations will tend to serve to maintain these structures and that foreignisation potentially may serve to revise them. However, the meaning of the term "revision" here apparently needs to be specified: according to Venuti "The aim of minoritizing translation is 'never to achieve the majority,' never to erect a new standard or establish a new canon, but rather to promote cultural innovation as well as the understanding of cultural difference by proliferating the variables within English" (Venuti 1998: 11). Thus, the goal seems to be to establish a cultural situation in which a number of voices are allowed to exist simultaneously.

The ethical issues of translation as regards the individual reader are closely tied in with what Venuti refers to as the invisibility of the translator (and of translations) within the prevailing regime of domestication. He sees it as problematic that the fluent and domesticating translation represents an interpretation of the text as if it were the original (Venuti 2008: 5). By using an apparently transparent medium (and by choosing for translation those texts which are easily adaptable to target language values), a culture of domestication renders invisible the role of the translator, thus, according to Venuti, marginalizing the role of the translator, but also paradoxically makes the reading of the text in the translation more authoritative, by presenting it as the thing itself rather than a reading. A translation positions itself between the source language text and the target language reader, and by communicating its reading of the text, it simultaneously gives and denies the reader access to it. A foreignising translation would in this situation cloud its own surface, and thus draw attention to itself and its status as a reading. The reader is still dependent on the translation for access to the original, but she is regularly reminded that the text she is reading is in fact not the original; it is another text in which potential for meaning has been eliminated and added. In this it may be said to be striving to de-

legitimise itself. How is this more ethical than a domesticating "transparent" translation? Presumably in that Venuti sees non-transparency as a more honest and (if I may) more transparent approach, which does not attempt to hide its own distinctiveness vis-à-vis the original, and thus also sets the reader free to question it. This can then be seen as relating to both the obligation of the translator towards the reader, and the effect of the translation.

*Problems of defining foreignisation: Tymoczko*
Maria Tymoczko, while in sympathy with Venuti's general goals, sees the chances of his approach to achieve these goals as slim. She criticizes Venuti's concepts as not strictly defined: she points out that necessary and sufficient criteria for foreignisation are never established. This is of course more than a theoretical problem: if one cannot establish what constitutes foreignisation, how can translators then take it in use to achieve the desired resistance? Tymoczko acknowledges that the lack of a "tight definition" may not in itself constitute a problem—that the definitions of "domestication" and "foreignisation" may be of the Wittgensteinian "family resemblance" type (Tymoczko 2000: 36). However, Tymoczko maintains that when Venuti claims foreignisation may result from the choice of text to be translated, regardless of the translation discourse, as well as from the conscious choice of translation discourse, he ends up with a definition by "…disjuncts of various properties rather than partial overlaps" (2000: 36). Tymoczko claims that Venuti proposes his terms (domestication/fluency vs. foreignisation/minoritisation/resistance) as "a kind of absolute or universal standard of evaluation, with a sort of on/off quality rather than a sliding scale" (2000: 38), but without specifying how much foreignisation is needed for a translation to qualify as such. She considers the possibility that the proof of the pudding might be in the eating, so to say: that any translation that provides cultural resistance is foreignising, regardless of its actual translation choices, but claims that the criteria for cultural resistance are too vague for this to work.

The claim that a foreignising effect may be achieved by choices at several levels does not in itself seem problematic to me. It seems reasonable that choosing a text which, because of its genre or subject matter, in itself sits uneasily within the mainstream of the target culture

may have an equally strong foreignising effect as localized choices in diction.[2] Thus, I would not necessarily accept that the possibility of creating discontinuity with the target culture at different levels, and thus cause a foreignising effect by a variety of means, need create a "definition by disjuncts". However, Tymoczko's point that it is problematic to see the domestication/foreignisation opposition as a universal standard of evaluation is a strong one: it becomes more difficult when we try to characterize translations of whole texts as being domesticating or foreignising overall. Also, even without going into the problem of how to define resistance, Venuti's project seems to lose much of its significance if we end up having to define a foreignising translation by its effect (i.e. cultural resistance); even if such a definition enabled us to recognise foreignisation/resistance, we would then be no further along as to what creates this resistance: the claim that foreignisation can create resistance would then be entirely circular. Venuti does not, of course frame his definitions in this way, but there seems to be a widening of his understanding of what foreignisation can be which might put him in danger of ending up in this position.

   The problem of characterising the effect of a text as a whole may perhaps be illustrated by one of Venuti's own examples. Venuti sees his approach to translation both as a potential basis for translation practice (including his own), and as an analytical tool in relation to historical and contemporary translation texts by others. An interesting example of such an analysis is his discussion of the translation of Freud into English in the Standard Edition of his works (Venuti 2010: 75-78), (Strachey 1953-74). His starting point is Bruno Bettelheim's 1983 critique of this translation. Bettelheim points out how the translation serves to make Freud appear more formal, depersonalised and scientific in his diction than he does in the German original. Bettelheim uses the term "Fehlleistungen" translated as "parapraxis" as an example: a transparent

---

[2] To construct an example: translated into a predominantly secular/liberal culture from a conservative religious one, a graphic sermon on the eternal punishments of hell is likely to feel alienating/foreignising however its diction is translated (though if this was a marginal text-type in the source culture, it could also be seen as an *exoticising* choice: see the discussion on Shamma). A sermon on the virtues of neighbourliness would not automatically have as foreignising an effect, but it would still be possible to make foreignising choices in the translation of it.

everyday German term is replaced in English by an opaque, technical-sounding borrowed term. Bettelheim sees the translator's choice here as representing his desire to make Freud's (as Bettelheim sees it) fundamentally humanistic texts acceptable in an Anglo-American medical culture dominated by positivism. Superficially, the choices of the translators might appear to be foreignising: transparent, everyday terms are replaced with technical jargon which will not contribute to general fluency. Since this, however, is seen as an attempt to adjust the foreign text to a dominant paradigm in the target culture, he describes it as a shift which in Venuti's terms would be domesticating in relation to the intended readers: the Anglo-American psychological community and medical profession.

Venuti agrees with Bettelheim's observation of an increased "scientification" of diction in the Standard Version; he claims that the inconsistency of the diction between a highly scientific and a simple, everyday one is so obvious that it can be observed without looking at the German text itself. However, Venuti also points out that the diction in the Standard Edition translation, in spite of being made more technical and scientific, is still highly inconsistent: "parapraxis" is juxtaposed with non-technical expressions, such as "names go out of my head". He also points out that the German text itself also contains a tension between these two stylistic levels. Venuti sees this as a reflection of Freud's project being fundamentally ambiguous between a humanistic approach, which Venuti seems to link with a therapeutic[3] purpose, and a hermeneutic/descriptive scientific approach, a discontinuity brought into focus by a tension in the understanding of the human consciousness. While the changes in the level of diction of the translation might in

---

[3] We must take care how we read Venuti's use of the term "therapeutic" about Bettelheim's project. A main concern of Bettelheim's suggested adjustment of the translation is to reposition Freud's texts **away** from a professional medical sphere, in which it functions as the professional's therapeutic tool vis-à-vis the client, towards a wider and more open function of providing both the general reader and the specialist with metaphors to help them gain greater insight into their own souls. (Bettelheim would here clearly prefer "soul" to "mind".) This might be therapeutic, but not exclusively, or even primarily, in a clinical sense. That Bettelheim's project entails a repositioning means that such a conjectural retranslation would simultaneously move the text towards greater foreignisation **and** domestication, depending on the group of readers.

isolation be seen as domesticating, the fact that these remain mixed with a far more everyday level of diction means that this shift in stylistic level actually increases the tension and discontinuity which already exists in the text. This makes the translation, Venuti seems to imply, potentially foreignising rather than domesticating. A revision of the translation towards a less technical language (as suggested by Bettelheim) would, Venuti seems to imply, ease the tension in favour of a unified humanistic reading of Freud. He does not expressly characterise such a reading as domesticating, but when he speaks of Freud's texts possessing 'a fundamental discontinuity which is "resolved" in Bettelheim's humanistic representation...' (his quotes), it is difficult to read him in any other way. Perhaps more precisely, we could also say that Venuti sees the Standard Edition translation as exacerbating a tension inherent in Freud. While this tension is not immediately visible when the edition is read within the Anglo-American science-oriented tradition (and therefore not immediately foreignising), it is there as a potential is brought out by Bettelheim's alternative reading, or by his own analysis. An alternative "humanistic" translation, as suggested by Bettelheim, would not in itself have this tension, this potential for foreignisation.

We could then argue, however, that Venuti's contention is only true if we look at the text in isolation. If a "Bettelheimian" translation of Freud—as a harmonising humanistic/therapeutic reading of his works— had been introduced into a positivist, science-oriented Anglo-American psychological discourse, might it not according to Venuti's own theory have an equally foreignising effect? It might lack the internal discontinuity, but it would still be discontinuous on a macro level. In fact, while the introduction of more technical-sounding terms in the Standard Edition may create a text with greater internal discontinuity, the same process would still serve to make the text merge into the intended positivist discourse with less resistance, and might thus functionally be seen as an instance of domestication.

To this, one might object that for a version of the texts less adapted to positivism to have such an effect within a discourse, it depends on being accepted as a valid contribution to the discourse. A foreign contribution that already has great international scholarly prestige (such as Freud) might not have problems in this respect, but this would not be the case for a great majority of the foreign texts to be translated, and unless the text gains an entry into the intended discourse, it cannot have

its foreignising function. This is, I think, a valid objection; however, it highlights the problem with establishing foreignisation vs. domestication as a universal standard of evaluation of whole texts as pointed out by Tymoczko. In order to achieve a resistant effect within the target language discourse, the translator would be dependent on balancing elements of domestication and foreignisation in such a way that it is domesticated enough to be accepted into the discourse, and yet alien and foreignising enough to be reistant. Venuti clearly agrees that a balance of these elements would be required—a totally foreignising translation is, in a sense, no translation at all—but this still seems to make the assessment of the foreignising vs. domesticating effect into an assessment of the socio-political effect of the text in a certain society at a certain time. Again, Venuti would probably agree, that it is in fact the overall political effect of a translation which decides to what extent it is foreignising, but then one could with Tymoczko ask whether his concepts provide tools for performing such an analysis on such a general level, whether his criteria are clear enough.

*Problems of dichotomous systems: Mona Baker*
The problems with using dichotomous systems in translation studies is taken up by Mona Baker, as well as by Tymoczko and others. Baker (2010: 115) sees this dichotomy as too simple to describe the reality of what happens in translations. It is problematic as a description of the overall character of a translated text, since it forces one, as she sees it, to classify a rich variety of possible translator attitudes to the text as a whole as either domestication or foreignisation. Baker seems to be concerned that Venuti's generalisations will disguise the fact that the same text will contain both foreignising and domesticating elements on the same level and of the same kind (not just, as previously pointed out, foreignising and domesticating effects on different levels). Venuti can of course here argue that he is not only aware of this fact, but that he also repeatedly points out this tension, as in his discussion of the translation of Freud. He also denies that his system is a true dichotomy:

> …the terms "domestication" and "foreignization" do not establish a neat binary opposition that can simply be superimposed on "fluent" and "resistant" discursive strategies […]. The terms "domestication" and "foreignization" indicate fundamentally ethical attitudes towards foreign text and culture, ethical effects

produced by the strategy devised to translate it, whereas terms like "fluency" and "resistance" indicate fundamentally discursive features of translation strategies in relation to the reader's cognitive processing. Both sets of terms demarcate a spectrum of textual and cultural effects that depend for their description and evaluation on the relation between a translation a translation project and the hierarchical arrangement of values in the receiving situation at a particular historical moment. (Venuti 2008: 19)

I take Venuti's point here to be not only to deny that the domestication always and inevitably is the result of fluent strategies, and that foreignisation always follows resistant strategies, but also to deny their binary quality. He refers to a spectrum of effects—presumably with all degrees of transition. It is difficult, however, to see that the use of these terms avoids a grouping of the effects as a spectrum on a metaphorical axis between the paired concepts. Also, in his analyses of translations, Venuti tends to end up by giving a description of the overall effect of the translation within his two-part system, e.g. "The controversial reception of Burton's translation makes it clear that it had a foreignizing effect" (Venuti 2008: 271), or "...the Zukovskys followed Pound's example and stressed the signifier to make a foreignizing translation…" (Venuti 2008: 186). This seems inevitable in order to assess translations according to his stated goals of achieving resistant translations.

The seriousness of the problem inherent in a dichotomy would still depend on what function the terms in the dichotomy are meant to have. If the foreignisation—domestication opposition is only meant as one among many possible considerations and is mainly applied to localised translation choices, its dichotomous nature (accepting that it is indeed dichotomous) would seem much less problematic than if it is intended to be an overall and general consideration. Applied to individual translation choices as one of many possible considerations, it might still be a simplification, but a much less problematic, and perhaps even a necessary one. Again, Venuti's stance is not necessarily easy to discern. He does at times seem to ascribe to it a more limited role, as when he in the introduction to the 1991 Italian translation of *The Translator's Invisibility* describes foreignisation and domestication as "heuristic concepts…meant to promote thinking and research" rather than as dichotomous terms (quoted and discussed in Munday 2009: 148). In most of his writing, however, Venuti seems to give the concepts more weight than that implied by the idea of them as purely heuristic tools, as we see from his use of foreignisation as a criterion of good translation.

This makes it more difficult to defend as an innocuous simplification applied to a limited and localised aspect of the text.

The problem of dichotomous systems is clearly related to that of definition. While Venuti denies that the creates an absolute dichotomy of black or white effect, and while all translations may contain both foreignising and domesticating elements, the idea of a spectrum of effects still presupposes that there are recognisable and identifiable poles at opposite ends of the spectrum. However, it can also be seen as taking the criticism one step further: as well as questioning to what extent it is possible to achieve such an overall classification within his system; Baker and Tymoczko seem equally to query whether it is desirable and productive to make such a classification, even if possible. Perhaps it rather results in a simplification which hides more than it reveals? Even if we can say that the text is overall more domesticating than foreignising or vice versa, it is not certain that this gives the best and most meaningful description of the translation and its effect.

*Foreignisation and Exoticism: Tarek Shamma*
Venuti's linking of foreignisation and resistance to cultural hegemony and ethnocentrism is also a point seen as problematic. Tymoczko points out that foreignisation and domestication can both be made to serve "progressive" political and cultural aims, but also the opposite: "…any translation procedure can become a tool of cultural colonization, even foreignizing translation" (Tymoczko 2000: 35). Tarek Shamma supports this point and aims to substantiate it in his study *Translation and the Manipulation of Difference* (2009). Here, he analyses 19th century translations from Arabic into English according to the domestication—foreignisation dichotomy, while examining their likely effect as well as their actual contemporary reception in a colonial/anti-colonial perspective. His contention is that the translations he classifies as foreignising would be likely to reinforce English prejudices against the source culture: that their effect might equally well be called exoticising as foreignising. The one translator who he sees as having a "resistant" agenda and where he also sees the translations as having a potentially "resistant" effect, Wilfred Scaven Blunt and his translations of *The Celebrated Romance of the Stealing of the Mare* and *The Seven Golden Odes of Pagan Arabia*, he judges to be in fact domesticating in their

translation choices. He also sees Edward Fitzgerald's extremely popular and influential translation of Omar Khayyám's *Rúbaiyāt* as domesticating, but with a far less progressive intent and effect.

The best example of foreignising strategies he judges to be Edward Burton's translation of the *Arabian Nights*. In this context he points to two main translation strategies which he sees as having this effect: one is a literalistic translation of phrases and expressions from the Arabic, so that not just the meaning, but also the "mécanique, the manner and the matter" (Burton, quoted in Shama 2009: 65) is followed closely. He lists a number of examples, such as "I will bring thee to thy wish", "give me to know thereof", "despite the nose of thee"—in some cases with incomprehensible result (Shamma 2009: 64). In this category he also includes a use of untranslated Arabic words quite unlikely to be understood, for example "Alhamdolillah" (= thank God). The other main foreignising device Shamma sees in Burton is the use of English archaisms, such as "thou" "thy" "aught", "naught" "whilome", "tarry" etc. (Shamma 2009: 65). Shamma also points out an over-emphasis on culturally alien customs and phenomena, which Burton tends to introduce even where they are not present in the original. There is a special over-emphasis on gory details of violence and anything which might be construed as sexual—so that for example slaves become eunuchs whenever possible. Footnotes are used to add even more colourful details of both sex and violence. Whether Shamma sees this last feature as an aspect of foreignisation is not said, but it seems to be implied. The overall effect of such a translation, Shamma claims, is in fact exoticising rather than foreignising; however, his central contention is that one cannot distinguish between these effects. The translation method creates an image of the source culture which marks its differentness, but which is more likely to leave the readers with a complacent attitude of cultural superiority than make them question their own norms. He also maintains that Burton's objectives concerning ethnocentric attitudes are at best ambiguous: he may have claimed a desire to achieve better understanding of Arab culture, but one important justification for this is Britain's need to understand its Muslim colonies. Thus, he claims to demonstrate the lack of a clear connection between an overall translation strategy and the political effect of a translation.

Venuti and Shamma enter a direct discussion on the merits of Burton's translation as concerns resistance to ethnocentrism. In *The*

*Translator's Invisibility* (2008: 268-273), Venuti responds directly to Shamma's 2005 article "The Exotic Dimension of Foreignizing Strategies: Burton's Translation of the *Arabian Nights*", which presented a first version of his critique of Burton's translation. Shamma then again responds to Venuti's defense of Burton in *Translation and the Manipulation of Difference*. Venuti defends Burton's translation as a true example of foreignisation, and claims that it would indeed have had an anti-ethnocentric effect. He sees the potential for stereotype in Burton's depiction of "the sensuous East", but he claims that this is countered by the translator's arguments, both relativistic and universalistic, for a frank presentation of Eastern sensuality. Burton makes both the point that norms are relative, so we cannot apply our norms to the mores depicted in Arabic stories, and that in any case, the "indecencies" in the *Arabian Nights* tales are really no worse than what is found in the Western classics (such as Shakespeare, Sterne and Swift). This, Venuti claims, is aimed at disrupting the relative centrality of the Western canon to his readers. Another argument in defence of Burton is centered on the identity of his intended audience. Venuti points out that the translation was published by subscription and at a relatively high price, which would indicate a select and culturally sophisticated audience. Such an audience would be likely to sympathise with his heavily eroticized translation as an attack on British prudery, Venuti claims, and his translation would thus have the effect of subverting dominant target culture norms. This defence is interesting in that it emphasizes the previously highlighted connection between the effect of a translation and the discourse into which it enters. However, this defence would appear stronger if Burton's subversive translation had broken contemporary norms only concerning sexual mores; his gratuitous footnote references to, for example, grotesquely cruel methods of punishment must surely undermine the defence. Are these also meant to represent frankly avowed natural appetites as opposed to European hypocrisy? Surely not. Nor can they be seen as subverting dominant norms or creating sympathy for the culture described. Partly on this basis, Shamma sees Venuti's defense of Burton as not responding directly to Shamma's own concern with the difficulty of distinguishing between anti-ethnocentric foreignisation and ethnocentric exoticism.

It can be argued that what Venuti and Shamma agree on is no less interesting than what they disagree on. Shamma depicts Burton as a

foreignising translator and Wilfred Scaven Blunt as a domesticating one, and at least the first premise is accepted by Venuti (he does not comment on Blunt). This is interesting since, based on the examples from Burton used by Shamma, it does not seem obvious that Burton's style of translation has to be characterized as foreignising in all respects. His strategy of literalism does not necessarily correspond to Venuti's ideas of the use of the cultural "remainder" in the target culture: while his translation certainly shows where it departs from target culture norms, it does not primarily use target language minor forms to do so. The element of archaism in his translation may be seen as adhering more closely to Venuti's description of foreignisation: on this point, there is indeed a use of target language marginal forms. However, this is also the point at which Shamma's argument seems less than clear to me. Burton's archaisms are seen as a foreignising element, yet in his description of Blunt's (according to Shamma) *domesticating* translations, he describes their adjustment to a British/European chivalric style, through the use of archaizing forms. In Blunt, "girls" become "damsels", "clothes" becomes "mail-coat and armouring" (Shamma 2009: 107)—indeed, he speaks of Blunt's style as possessing "formality, and occasional archaism" (Shamma 2009: 110). If archaism is foreignising in Burton, why is it domesticating in Blunt?

The obvious defence of Venuti's concepts here (rather than of Burton, whose translation based on Shamma's examples seems indeed vulnerable to the charge of exoticism), would be that an exoticising translation differs from a truly foreignising one in that the former does not break with the target culture's norms and expectations. By presenting the source culture in terms of prejudice-confirming stereotypes of otherness, it rather puts the foreign text squarely within the frame set aside for it within the target culture mindset—an argument that can certainly be made against Burton's depiction of a sensuous and cruel east. However, it is not clear that this need be the result of foreignising translation: after all, Venuti stresses the uses of target language and target culture resources to express the otherness of the translated text. One might therefore argue that such a translation approach would in fact resist a pigeonholing of the text's otherness as exotic and simply alien. If we choose to regard Blunt's translations as foreignising rather than domesticating, their use of heroic-chivalric genre choices for Arab tales could be seen as one element that makes them so; they may be seen as

defying target language expectations and stereotypes and thus to create a text which is resistant to ethnocentric attitudes.

Such a defence of Venuti's concepts is, however, not unproblematic. The fact that it must be conducted in the face of Venuti's own assessment of Burton's translations might support the critical view that his criteria for judging whether a text is foreignising are far from clear, and perhaps also that they are difficult to make clear. Venuti's reference to Burton's intended readership is a good demonstration of his awareness of how a translation's socio-political effect is dependent on the specific audience. However, his discussion with Shamma also demonstrates how difficult it is to decide the characteristics of a specific readership, and even more so, a text's probable effect on a readership. Also, this would mean that a translation's effect as regards ethnocentricity would be impossible to pin down with any specificity; if the effect depends on the readership, the effect can never be settled, since the readership itself is and must be an open category. Even if we accept Venuti's claim that Burton's translation had a foreignising effect on its immediate and intended readership, this could still not preclude it having a very different effect on other or later readers. This is, in fact, a perspective which Venuti himself accepts: "Any significance assigned to the terms […] must be treated as culturally variable and historically contingent" (2008: 19). However, this seems to make the desired foreignising effect rather ephemeral.

There is also another aspect of the attempt at using Blunt's translation as an example of foreignisation and thus in defence of Venuti's concepts that needs to be called into question. I have argued that Blunt's use of Western chivalric conventions and lexis associated with these may serve to defy cultural expectations and resist ethnocentrism. However, this is dependent on the use of target language and culture forms which may not belong to the mainstream of the target culture, but which unambiguously and across the board belong at a high level of diction. Would it be possible to achieve a similar defiance if one, as Venuti suggests, mixes high and low from the whole range of marginal forms within the target language? The struggle between marginalized and mainstream forms in the target language (or any language) is central to Venuti's ideas. A consequence of this is the understanding that translation cannot be neutral in such a struggle: if it does not strengthen the marginal by employing forms from its repertoire,

it will inevitably strengthen the mainstream by contributing to making the marginal invisible (see pages 4-5 above). However, while Venuti's desire to use translation to strengthen the marginal in the target language and culture may be commendable, one might also ask whether he is trying to achieve too many objectives at once. When the source language and culture are themselves marginal, it may be more difficult for the translated text to gain a receptive audience in a globalized language. Is it realistic that one can achieve resistance to ethnocentrism by presenting such a text in terms of the marginal within that target culture? Even if we accept that the marginal might encompass the high, the formal and the prestigious as well as the low, colloquial and prohibited, it is not immediately obvious that such a style of translation would be able to valorise the translated texts as serious and important, and if it cannot do that, it is also not clear that it would in return serve to strengthen the marginal in the target culture. Is it a given that linking the weak with the weak will strengthen either part?

In the case of Burton's translation of the *Arabian Nights*, it can be argued that its transgression of target culture norms in its depiction of sexuality in many forms, including what would have been considered deviant ones, must be seen in combination with the canonical or quasi-canonical status of the text. This combination might conceivably have given this specific translation a valorising effect towards marginalized minority groups or minority norms in its target culture. However, it seems unlikely that this would mean it also disseminated a less ethnocentric view of the East among the majority of its readers. Blunt's translation, with its depiction of Arabic culture in chivalric terms, may perhaps have served to lessen ethnocentric stereotypes among those who read them, but as Shamma points out (see above p. 12), they achieve this in part by avoiding confrontations between source and target culture norms on other points, thus perhaps also lessening their potential for valorizing marginal groups in the target culture. This may be seen as illustrating Tymoczko's point that "…a person cannot effectively resist everything objectionable in any culture" (2006: 453); we have to choose our battles. Venuti's project might either be accused of trying to do too many things simultaneously, or, if we take translation's task of strengthening and valorizing minority voices at home as the first priority (which certainly seems to be the view reflected in Venuti's defense of

Burton), it may seem that his project can end up "doing wrong abroad to do right at home" (see above p. 4).

*Foreignisation in threatened minority languages: Cronin*

This brings us to the final point: the question of whether foreignisation may be seen as less relevant in some languages/cultures than in others. Venuti's own translation practice concerns translations from Italian into English, but he claims that his concepts have a general applicability. Critics, however, have claimed that while foreignisation may be effective as a critical strategy between major European languages, it may be more problematic when translating from more marginal languages (as Arabic must have been categorised in the 19th century) into a global one (Shamma 2009: 79). Michael Cronin, however, reverses these positions, as he rather questions the appropriateness of using foreignising strategies in translations into marginal and threatened languages: "Advocacy of non-fluent, refractory, exoticizing strategies, for example, can be seen as a bold act of cultural revolt and epistemological generosity in a major language, but for a minority language, fluent strategies may represent the progressive key to their very survival" (Cronin 2010: 250). His rationale for this claim is that he sees a danger that minor languages (presumably through translation) may become so infused with lexical and syntactic borrowings from a dominant language that they lose their identity (Cronin 2010: 251). Here, it may be claimed Venuti's emphasis on using the remainder, the marginal and marginalized forms within the target language and culture, makes him less vulnerable to this criticism. While a minority language and a minority culture may be marginal compared to its more globalized rivals, every margin has its own margin, and valorizing this margin by using elements from it to present texts from more central cultures, may arguably enrich rather than deplete the choices available within a language. If it is difficult to see that translation of a text from a marginal language into a dominant one in terms of the marginal within the target language will add prestige to the source text and the source culture, then going the opposite way, translating texts from a dominant culture into a marginal language using that which is marginal in the target language seems to hold an interesting potential. Perhaps demonstrating cultural difference and creating resistance may in

fact be more important when moving in this direction, from the dominant to the marginal culture?

I would, however, like to add that this would only be true as long as we maintain Venuti's perspective that foreignisation must use the (marginal) linguistic and cultural repertoire of the target culture. The use of linguistic/cultural material taken directly from a dominant or globalised source culture in a translation into a minor language would most likely not have such an effect: the dominant culture will often be so familiar at a superficial level that culture specific references from it will not be likely to appear as foreignising, and even less likely to create resistance.

*Conclusion*

As was pointed out in the account of the concept of foreignisation, Venuti has more than one agenda. He has in particular agendas relating both to the presentation of the foreign text and culture through translations, and to the effect of translations on the struggle between mainstream and margins in the target language and culture. It seems to me that regarding the probable efficacy of foreignisation in resisting cultural dominance, we have to make a distinction here.

Regarding the effect of foreignisation in resisting ethnocentrism and dominance in the presentation of the source culture, the problem with the stability and predictability of effect seems to me to be more serious than Venuti apparently regards it. If we have to examine the cultural and political effect of a text in a specific society at a specific time by a specific audience, this is an assessment for which it is difficult to see that Venuti's concepts give us the necessary tools. Even if we could make this assessment, and produce a text that had an anti-ethnocentric effect on the intended audience, the possibility would still remain that the overall effect of the text might be very different: if the assessment of the effect must be tied to a specific audience, there is no way of tying down the translation itself in this way, since it will always have readerships beyond the intended one. It seems easier to defend the usefulness of the terms on a localised level, as a description of individual translation choices, or even as one aspect among many to be considered at individual choices.

It could of course be argued that any analysis of translation effects, not only Venuti's approach, is subject to this instability, and that it

therefore affects all translation approaches equally. This would surely weaken the force of instability of audience and effect as an argument against a foreignising approach to translation. The first part of the argument, that all analysis of translation effects must take account of the changeable nature of its readership, is clearly true. It is, however, not clear that this affects all approaches equally: for an approach which wants to use translations as a tool for political activism, the instability and unpredictability of the effect must be a particularly serious problem, potentially threatening to undermine the project.

On the other hand, the second point referred to above, that the choice of unmarked, mainstream forms within the target language is not a neutral choice or one without consequences, seems to stand. Thus, Venuti's forceful criticism of the regime of fluency (see p. 2 above), a regime which can lead to a translated text being less distinct compared to the linguistic and cultural mainstream in the target language than the original is in its own setting, cannot simply be dismissed. One can of course disagree with the ideological premise underlying the argument, and argue that a strengthening of the mainstream within a language is not necessarily a bad thing, but it is difficult to see that one could argue for this as a neutral choice.

The pressure towards fluency, and in particular the avoidance of the marginal, applies not only to English as the dominant global language: I would claim that the effect may also be observed in Norwegian, my own far from global language, both in translation and in the reception of translated texts.[4] Not all reviewers of translated texts will go to the source language text when they find a usage that strikes them as unusual. Even if the usage might be equally unusual there, this is not always observed, nor are all reviewers equipped to assess this. Thus, translators

---

[4] It is probable, however, that the pressure towards fluency is not equally strong for all text types. It should also be added that in translation from a global to a minor language, there might be a pressure towards strict accuracy, which can to a certain extent counter the pressure towards fluency. Some readers of the translated text can - and occasionally do – read the original, and some of them will expect an accurate rendering of textual details: we can sometimes see (probably) conscious departures from textual accuracy in translation decried as mistakes caused by incompetence or ignorance. This may in some cases counter a tendency towards domesticating fluency, but it will not necessarily counter the pull of the target language mainstream.

are well aware that there is a good chance they will be assessed on the basis of their ability to fashion a smooth and fluent target language form. Even more importantly, there will of course in many cases be a commercial pressure for easy readability. The use and promotion of foreignising strategies may perhaps be a way to counter the homogenising effect in and of translated texts. The exact outcome may not always be easy to predict here either, but it may still be possible that this effect is less vulnerable, not least if texts from a dominant culture are presented through marginal forms within a minor language. In such cases, the increased visibility of the minor forms would in itself go a long way towards achieving the outcome desired, and the prestige of the dominant culture might arguably add prestige to the marginal forms. However, one might well ask to what extent it is realistic that a theoretical framework can provide resistance to the cultural and commercial pressure towards mainstream fluency.

*References*
Baker, M. 2010. "Reframing Conflict in Translation". In Baker, M. (Ed.) *Critical Readings in Translation Studies*. London & New York: Routledge. 113-129.
Bettelheim, B. 1982. *Freud and Man's Soul*. New York: Knopf.
Cronin, M. 2010. "The Cracked Looking-Glass of Servants: Translation and Minority Languages in a Global Age". In Baker, M. (ed.) *Critical Readings in Translation Studies*. London & New York: Routledge. 249-262.
Lecercle, J-J. 1990. *The Violence of Language*. London: Routledge
Munday, J. (Ed.) 2009. *The Routledge Companion to Translation Studies*. London & New York: Routledge.
Schleiermacher, F. 2007. "On the Different Methods of Translating". In Venuti, L. (Ed.) *The Translation Studies Reader* (2.ed.). London & New York: Routledge. 43-63
Shamma, T. 2009. *Translation and the Manipulation of Difference: Arabic Literature in Nineteenth-Century England*. Manchester: St. Jerome.
Strachey, J. (Ed.) *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*. London: The Hogarth Press.

Tymoczko, M. 2006 "Translation: Ethics, Ideology and Action." Massachusetts Review 47(3): 442-461.

———. 2000. "Translation and Political Engagement: Activism, Social Change and the Role of Translation in Geopolitical Shifts." *The Translator* 6(1): 23-47.

Venuti, L. 2010. "Translation as Cultural Politics: Régimes of Domestication in English". In Baker, M. (Ed.) *Critical Readings in Translation Studies*. London/New York: Routledge. 65-79.

———. 2008. *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation*. London & New York: Routledge.

———. 2007. "Translation, Community and Utopia." In Venuti, L. (Ed.) *The Translation Studies Reader* (2.ed.). London & New York: Routledge. 482-502.

———. 2004. *The Translator Studies Reader.* London & New York: Routledge.

———. 1998. *The Scandals of Translation*. London & New York: Routledge.

# Language and gender in a US reality TV show: An analysis of leadership discourse in single-sex interactions

*Chit Cheung Matthew Sung, Lancaster University*

*Abstract*
This paper examines issues relating to language, gender and leadership in the debut season of the reality TV show *The Apprentice* (USA). In particular, it looks at the ways in which two male and two female project managers 'do leadership' through discourse in single-sex interactions. The analysis shows that these project managers display leadership styles which are by and large in accordance with the gendered norms and expectations. It is found that while their leadership styles are not evaluated entirely positively, the male managers receive both positive and negative comments for using predominantly masculine speech styles and the female managers who 'do leadership' by employing a largely feminine discourse style are perceived negatively. It is also argued that the single-sex contexts of interactions can be seen as being constructed intentionally in the TV show in order to capture the gender-stereotypical speech styles of 'doing leadership'.

## 1. Introduction

In the last decade or so, there has been a growing body of language and gender research which investigated the interplay between gender and workplace communication. One of the reasons is that many workplaces constitute rich and complex sociolinguistic contexts, where communication is shaped by a wide range of sociolinguistic variables, including power, status, and gender, as well as situational and contextual factors, such as the specific organizational culture (Drew and Heritage 1992; Holmes and Stubbe 2003; Schnurr 2009). Another reason is related to the gendered connotations attached to the concept of 'workplace discourse'. Given that men have historically occupied key managerial positions in many workplaces, it has been argued that workplace norms are predominantly masculine (Baxter 2010; Kendall and Tannen 2001; Mullany 2007; Sinclair 1998). However, with women's increasing participation in the workplace over the last two decades, feminine interactional styles have led to considerable changes in modern-day workplace discourse, possibly altering the predominantly masculine communication styles (Cameron 2003; Coates 2004; Peck 2006).

This paper aims to examine issues relating to gender and leadership discourse by drawing upon interactional data from the debut season of

the popular reality TV show *The Apprentice* (USA), given the scarcity of research on the media representations of gender and workplace discourse. As Evans (2005) suggests, media representations play an important role in shaping the ways in which audiences understand and make sense of the social world. It is felt that the media can contribute to the audience's perceptions of what constitutes appropriate gendered behaviour (Gill 2006; Matheson 2005; Ross 2010). In particular, some feminist scholars are concerned with the socializing and normalizing consequences of stereotypical representations of men and women in the media (Fernandez-Villanueva et al. 2009). In view of the potential influence of the TV show on the audience's perceptions of gender and workplace communication, this paper explores the media representations of gender and leadership discourse in the 'simulated' workplace as portrayed in the TV show *The Apprentice*.

## 2. Language, gender and leadership discourse

In line with the social constructionist approach, gender is conceived of as a social construction, rather than a 'given' social category. Specifically, gender is something that we do (Zimmerman and West 1975), or something that we perform (Butler 1990). As Kendall and Tannen (2001: 556-557) put it, "gendered identities are interactionally achieved".

According to Ochs' (1992) notion of 'indexicality', gender is indirectly indexed in language, whereby discursive and linguistic choices are associated with certain stances, roles or practices, which are in turn associated with gender. As people construct their gender identity, they may draw upon discourse styles which may be indexed as 'gendered' (Holmes 2006; Schnurr 2009; Talbot 2010). For example, masculine styles of interaction are characterized by competitive, contestive and challenging ways of speaking, whereas feminine speech styles are characterized by co-operative, facilitative and smooth interaction (Holmes 2006; Schnurr 2009). Specifically, masculine speech styles are discursively realized in the production of extended speaking turns, the dominance of the speaking floor, the one-at-a-time construction of the floor, and the frequent use of interruptions (Coates 1997, 2004; Talbot 2010; Schnurr 2009). On the other hand, a feminine discourse style, which places emphasis on the relational aspects, is linguistically expressed in collaborative construction of the floor in conversation,

avoidance of confrontations, and the use of politeness strategies and hedging devices, as well as minimal responses and supportive feedback (Coates 2004; Holmes 1995; Sunderland 2004; Talbot 2010).

As mentioned earlier, the notion of leadership is closely linked to gender, given its association with masculinity. As Marra et al. (2006: 240) suggest, leadership is a "gendered concept". Since leadership positions in different workplaces have traditionally been dominated by men, masculinity is indexed indirectly via the doing of leadership (Martin Rojo and Gomez Esteban 2005; Sinclair 1998). As Hearn and Parkin (1989: 21) note, "the language of leadership often equates with the language of masculinity to include qualities such as aggression, assertiveness, abrasiveness, and competitiveness".

In tune with the social constructionist perspective, leadership is seen as a process or a performance, rather than merely as the achievements of a leader (see Baxter 2010; Holmes 2006; Holmes et al. 2003; Schnurr 2009). In particular, what is of interest to sociolinguists is the language of 'doing leadership', or leadership discourse. According to Holmes et al. (2003: 32), "'doing leadership' entails competent communicative performance which, by influencing others, results in acceptable outcomes for the organization (transactional/task-oriented goal), and which maintains harmony within the team (relational/people-oriented goal)". In other words, Holmes et al.'s (2003) definition of leadership here focuses on the communicative aspects of 'doing leadership'. In addition, the definition draws attention to both the transactional and relational aspects of doing leadership. While communicative behaviours concerned with transactional or task-oriented goals are closely linked with masculinity, verbal behaviours oriented to more relational or people-oriented goals are associated with femininity (Marra et al. 2006; Holmes 2006; Schnurr's 2009). As regards the discursive characteristics of communication associated with these differently gendered leadership behaviours, Marra et al. (2006) and Schnurr (2009) point out that whereas normatively masculine strategies of leadership are characterized by assertiveness, directness, competitiveness, display of power, dominance, individualism, and task-orientation, a normatively feminine speech style of leadership is characterized by indirectness, politeness, collaborativeness, supportiveness, nurturing, caring, egalitarianism, and relationship-orientation (see also Holmes and Stubbe 2003).

*3. Data:* The Apprentice

Data used in the study are drawn from the debut season of *The Apprentice*. Filmed in 2003, the show was broadcast on the National Broadcasting Company (NBC) from 8 January 2004 until 15 April 2004. It had an average viewership of 20.7 million people each week in the United States. It made use of "business savvy and business scenarios as the basis of competition, to pit businesspeople against each other, and to purport to be able to identify the next highly successful executive" (Kinnick and Parton 2005: 430). In its debut season, sixteen contestants compete in an elimination-style competition, vying for the top job with its $250,000 salary. During the 15 episodes of the show, they embark upon a televised, extended job interview in order to become an apprentice of Donald Trump (henceforth DT), a well-known American real estate magnate as well as host of *The Apprentice*.

In the TV show, the contestants consisting of eight men and eight women are divided into two teams, initially divided according to gender, called corporations. Each week, each team is required to select a project manager to lead them in the assigned task of the week. The two teams compete against each other every week in a business-oriented task. Every week, the winning team is rewarded spectacularly, while the losing team faces DT in the boardroom. At the end of each episode, DT makes the decision on who did the worst job in the losing team and, consequently, should be fired with immediate effect. In view of its popularity in the USA and around the world, *The Apprentice* is considered a valuable site for investigation, especially with regard to the notion of leadership. More importantly, the division of the contestants into two teams based on gender in the debut season of *The Apprentice* permits an analysis of gender and leadership discourse in single-sex interactions. And rather than presuming that gender is relevant in these interactions, the foregrounding of gender in the TV show 'warrants' the gender focus and the analysis of gendered discourse in this paper (cf. Swann 2002). It should be noted here that in Episodes 1 to 4, the contestants are divided into two teams based on their gender; in later episodes, however, the teams have a mixed gender composition.

This paper examines the ways in which two male project managers and two female project managers 'do leadership' in same-sex groups of contestants. In *The Apprentice*, these managers are engaged in acts of 'doing leadership' in single-sex teams, and their leadership discourse is

considered analyzable in the sense that it constitutes a coherent, meaningful, and typically continuous stretch of talk. Although numerous interactions in the show are potentially useful for analysis, they are piecemeal in nature (and are sometimes cut off by the insertion of particular individual interviews) and do not form a continuous stretch of interaction. As such, these interactions are not chosen for analysis.

*4. Data analysis: Two male managers' leadership styles in single-sex interactions*
*4.1 Analysis of Jason's leadership style*
I shall first examine how Jason does leadership in the men's group by drawing on a normatively masculine discursive style. In Excerpt 1 below, the men's group is meeting to discuss the plan to arrange an advertising campaign to promote jet service. Jason is chairing the meeting in which the group has to make critical decisions concerning the advertising campaign.

**EXCERPT 1**[1]
(Episode 2)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | JAS: | so you know what? |
| 2 | | what we should do is this |
| 3 | | I'll- I'll have to be the floater |
| 4 | | I'll go from back and forth okay + |
| 5 | | I think Nick + |
| 6 | | I think Bill + need to do creative okay |
| 7 | | I think you guys should come up with okay |
| 8 | | here's how we're gonna do it |
| 9 | | that's it |
| 10 | | come up with your print ads |
| 11 | | talk to who you need to talk to |
| 12 | | you're thinking corporate |
| 13 | | you're thinking young and sleek |
| 14 | | come in the //middle\ |
| 15 | TROY: | /can\\ I just interject real quick? |

---

[1] See Appendix: Transcription Conventions. Also note that italics are used for commentary provided by DT or other contestants to the programme makers during the individual behind-the-scene interviews which do not constitute a part of the interaction.

| 16 |  | these two gentlemen are our clients |
| 17 |  | we should really find out what they want to have accomplished |
| 18 | KWA: | who are our clients? |
| 19 | TROY: | William J Allard and Ken Austin |
| 20 |  | they are the ones that have employed us + to do their marketing campaign |
| 21 |  | we should find out what they want to have done |
| 22 | JAS: | honestly <u>do</u> I think we need to meet them? |
| 23 |  | I don't think we need to meet with them + |
| 24 |  | what are we seeing //them for?\ |
| 25 | KWA: | /I disagree\\with that |
| 26 | NICK: | what's the //objection (    )?\ |
| 27 | KWA: | /I think\\ you should know what your customer wants= |
| 28 | NICK: | =I'm not sure |
| 29 |  | what do you hope to gain from the meeting? |
| 30 |  | what questions would you ask them? |
| 31 | JAS: | here's what we need to do |
| 32 |  | we're doing it right now |
| 33 |  | okay + we don't have time to go and meet with them |
| 34 |  | I mean it's gonna take an hour |
| 35 |  | I think it's a waste of time |

In this excerpt, Jason is witnessed as performing a leader identity by drawing upon a number of discourse strategies indicative of a typically masculine discursive style, including so-called "bald-on-record", unmitigated directives, challenging questions, and *I*-statements. It needs to be noted, however, that the example shows a rather extreme case of using a masculine style in doing leadership.

In the excerpt, Jason first issues the statement, *what we should do is this*, to signal that he is about to announce the strategy of the advertising campaign, establishing his status as project manager (line 2). He goes on to propose the division of labour in the form of statements rather than suggestions (lines 3-9). In particular, he uses a *need*-statement to get Nick and Bill to do the creative aspects of the campaign: *I think Nick + I think Bill + need to do creative* (lines 6-7), which can be said to be typical of a masculine discourse style, despite being mitigated by the pragmatic particle *I think* (lines 6-7). He also issues his directives firmly and decisively in the form of imperatives: *come up with your print ads* (lines 10), *talk to who you need to talk to* (line 11) and *come in the middle* (line 14). Here, his way of giving instructions can be coded as

normatively masculine (Holmes 2006), even though his directives in lines 10 and 11 can be considered as evidence of empowering others, typically associated with women (see Fletcher 1999), by giving his members freedom in trying out their ideas and getting things done in their own ways. Also, by specifying his own role explicitly as *the floater* (line 3), he spells out his responsibility to oversee and supervise the whole project. In doing so, he, again, establishes his leadership position within the team by invoking his dominant and central role in the team.

It is notable that Jason's use of *okay* (lines 4, 6 and 7) does not intend to seek agreement from the members of the team, or solicit comments from the members. Rather, *okay* is used to check the understanding of the members, ensuring that every member of the team fully understands what he has said so far. This interpretation can be supported by the absence of pausing after the utterances of *okay* to invite possible comments or questions. Also, he does not use a rising intonation to possibly signal its function as a question. Rather he uses a falling intonation. It is evident that the team members share such an interpretation, as they have not given any responses after his use of *okay*, not even minimal responses such as *mm*. And, rather than using the inclusive pronoun *we* consistently which emphasizes collective responsibility and expresses solidarity, Jason chooses to use the pronouns *you* (lines 11, 12, 13) and *you guys* (line 7) to establish status differentials between him and the other members. Note that he only uses the inclusive pronoun *we* twice (in lines 2 and 8) in situations where his involvement is clearly evident.

It is also interesting to note the frequent use of the first person pronoun *I* by Jason in the meeting (lines 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 22, 23 and 35). Here, the repeated occurrence of *I*-statements could be interpreted as emphasizing his status as project manager to make executive decisions. By conveying the message that 'I am the one who is taking centre stage in the meeting', the use of *I* may also be regarded as implicitly evoking the authority bestowed upon him in giving instructions, and highlighting the status differential between him and the other members. As Peck (2006) notes, the use of the egocentric pronoun *I* is an example of strategies associated with directness. So, we can see that the repeated use of the pronoun *I* in such a way is typical of a masculine, direct discourse style.

In lines 16-17, Jason rejects Troy's proposal to meet with the clients in a direct and explicit way by producing a challenging question: *what are we seeing them for* (line 24), implying that he sees no point in meeting the clients. And by saying *here's what we need to do* (line 31), Jason not only signals his intention to return to the agenda, but also implies that his decision is final. He also orders the team to do what he proposes *right now* (line 32), making his directive all the more imposing. And rather than providing explanations for rejecting Troy's suggestions, he merely expresses his disagreement explicitly by saying *I think it's a waste of time* (line 35), albeit mitigated by the pragmatic particle *I think*. It seems that he does not think that it is necessary to justify his rejection, implying that he possesses ultimate jurisdiction regarding the entire plan of the campaign.

Here, we can see that Jason employs a conventionally masculine style in 'doing leadership', characterized by his explicit orientation to the transactional and task-oriented goals. His way of delegating specific tasks to the team members clearly shows his firm, authoritative, and decisive style of leadership. Jason issues his commands in the form of imperatives without mitigation or modification. He even signals that his words are final by saying *that's it* (line 9). And when he rejects suggestions from his team members, he does not provide any justifications. It is evident that his direct and unmitigated interactive style indexes masculinity, discursively displaying overt power as project manager.

As we shall see in Excerpt 2 below, Jason's normatively masculine leadership style is not only recognized, but also highly commended by one of his team members, which is evident in the comments made by Nick in the boardroom meeting with DT.

**EXCERPT 2**
(Episode 2)
| 1 | DT: | go ahead Nick |
| 2 | NICK: | I think Jason performed well |
| 3 | | especially the way we started off |
| 4 | | midway through |
| 5 | | he took the reins |
| 6 | | he took charge |
| 7 | | made quick decisions |
| 8 | | cos we had to get things in under certain timelines + |

| 9  |       | and I thought he performed well |
|----|-------|----------------------------------|
| 10 |       | his choices were well thought out= |
| 11 | DT:   | =are you saying that |
| 12 |       | because you don't want Jason to pick you as one of the /two?\ |
| 13 | NICK: | /not one bit\ not one bit |
| 14 |       | I thought his decisions were real sharp and well thought out |

In Excerpt 2, Jason's masculine leadership style is judged positively by Nick, who comments that Jason's decisions were *well thought out* (lines 10 and 14) and *real sharp* (line 14). In particular, Nick notes that Jason *made quick decisions cos we had to get things in under certain timelines* (lines 7-8). It seems here that a masculine leadership style is recognized and valued particularly for the efficiency it brings to the decision making process, especially under a tight schedule.

*4.2 Analysis of Sam's leadership style*

In the next excerpt below, we shall see how another male manager, Sam, does leadership by drawing upon a range of conventionally masculine discursive strategies in the men's group in Episode 3. As we shall see, the men's group is asked to decide on where to go next to get another bargain. Nick is talking to Bill on the phone who is out on the streets, and Sam is with Nick in the office.

**EXCERPT 3**
(Episode 3)

| 1  | NICK: | [*talking to Bill on the phone*] Bill it's Nick |
|----|-------|-------------------------------------------------|
| 2  |       | do you have a pen handy? + |
| 3  |       | you're gonna go to 75 + + West 47th Street |
| 4  |       | it's called All Rare Coins and the //number-\ |
| 5  | SAM:  | /oh oh oh\\ oh oh- just get him the address |
| 6  | NICK: | I'm gonna give him the phone //number\ |
| 7  | SAM:  | /I do not\\want you to give him the phone number |
| 8  |       | please don't give him the phone number |
| 9  | NICK: | [talking to Bill on the phone] the <u>coach</u> is telling me not to give you the phone number |
| 10 | BILL: | I have no idea why |
| 11 |       | he is impossible |
| 12 | BOW:  | they could quite possibly kill Sam |

| 13 | SAM: | [talking to Bill on the phone] Bill + the reason you don't need the phone number |
| 14 | | is because there's no reason to call |
| 15 | | I'm gonna get you the location |
| 16 | NICK: | just in case they get lost and the cab driver doesn't <u>know</u> Sam |
| 17 | SAM: | <u>no</u> |
| 18 | *NICK:* | *we elected Sam to be the project manager* |
| 19 | | *because we wanted him to put up or shut up* |
| 20 | | *he had had all these grandiose visions of things* |
| 21 | | *and we wanted to see if he could actually put them into action* |
| 22 | | *and get us a victory* |
| 23 | *KWA:* | *personally I'd describe his leadership style as just downright unproductive* |
| 24 | KWA: | Sam= |
| 25 | SAM: | =I'm listening |
| 26 | KWA: | gold isn't negotiable |
| 27 | | basically it's based on the spot price |
| 28 | | that's gonna be in the market at that time |
| 29 | | but it fluctuates throughout the day |
| 30 | | however I don't think it was necessarily imperative |
| 31 | | for us to drop that for 15 minutes to get there |
| 32 | | I mean it's not gonna fluctuate that much= |
| 33 | SAM: | =I don't- I don't want you to make any suggestions right now |
| 34 | | get the hell out of there |

Like Jason, Sam adopts an authoritative, conventionally masculine leadership style, characterized by the use of such discursive strategies as direct, unmitigated directives and expletives. In lines 1-4, Nick is talking to Bill on the phone, giving him instructions as to where to go next. In line 5, Sam interrupts Nick with five *oh*s before Nick can give the phone number of the shop to Bill who is at the other end of the phone. He also orders Nick to give Bill the address only, but not the phone number. Note that he issues the directive in the form of an imperative: *just get him the address* (line 5). Here, the word *just* (in line 5) does not serve as a hedge to attenuate the force of the directive, but it means that Nick should only give the address and not the phone number.

Nick then explains to Sam that he is just going to give Bill the phone number (line 6). In response, Sam issues another directive in the form of a '*want*-statement' (West 1998): *I do not want you to give him the phone number* (line 7). By using the *want*-statement, Sam reiterates the

command, telling Nick not to give Bill the phone number. He goes on to issue another directive in the form of an imperative: *please don't give him the phone number* (line 8). Despite the use of the conventional politeness marker *please*, Nick's response, *the coach is telling me not to give you the phone number* (line 9), implies that Nick interprets Bill's *want*-statement as a command, rather than a polite request.

From line 13 onwards, Sam picks up the phone and explains to Bill why he does not give Bill the phone number in an explicit and direct way: *the reason you don't need the phone number is because there's no reason to call* (lines 13-14). Here, Sam's objection to giving Bill the number is solely based upon his personal definition of the situation, and he does not justify his decision. He then reiterates the decision to give Bill the address only, not the phone number by stating *I'm gonna get you the location* (line 15). Here, he uses the personal pronoun *I* to emphasize his role as project manager who wields the power to make the final decision. In response to Sam's overt rejection, Nick explains the possible reasons why Bill might need the phone number in a mitigated manner: *just in case they get lost and the cab driver doesn't know* (line 16). And by providing the possible circumstances under which Bill might need the number, Nick is making the suggestion to Sam that he should give Bill the phone number. Notice that Nick uses the hedge *just* (line 16) and the conditional *in case* (line 16) to attenuate the force of his suggestion. However, Sam reiterates his rejection explicitly and uncompromisingly by using the direct disagreement particle *no* (line 17) without any modification. By doing so, he conveys his objection in very strong terms, and signals that his decision is final and no negotiation is possible. Again, Sam does not provide any reasons to Nick as to why he insists on his position.

Despite the fact that Kwame provides a detailed and elaborate account explaining why they do not need to get to the gold shop right away (lines 26–32), Sam issues a directive in the form of a 'want-statement', latching onto Kwame's utterance in line 32: *I don't- I don't want to you make any suggestions right now* (line 33). Again, his directive is unmitigated and aggravated, directly rejecting Kwame's suggestions. And despite Kwame's detailed proposal to do otherwise, Sam makes it clear that he does not want to listen to any more counter suggestions (line 33), which shows his authoritarian and dictatorial style of leadership.

Sam goes on to command Bill, Kwame and Bowie to get to the designated location by using a bald-on-record directive in the form of an imperative: *get the hell out of there* (line 34). Note here that by using the masculine discourse feature of the expletive *hell*, Sam not only intensifies the force of the directive, but also expresses his impatience. In doing so, Sam exhibits absolute power and authority in making decisions, and displays his firm control over how the job gets done. In sum, Excerpt 3 illustrates how Sam does leadership by adopting a normatively masculine, authoritative and dictatorial style of discourse.

Considering Sam's performance as the project manager, Kwame displays strong disapproval of his leadership style, and regards his style as *downright unproductive* (line 23), particularly for his authoritarian style of decision making and for his failure to consider and value the ideas of his team members. Similarly, Jason's masculine and authoritative leadership style is not approved by another team member Nick who comments that *we wanted him to put up or shut up* (line 19). Here, Nick again shows his disappointment with his authoritarian style of leading, and wants to see him step down as project manager or even get fired.

In what follows, I shall now turn to the performance of leadership by two female project managers in the TV show.

*5. Data analysis: Two female managers' leadership styles in single-sex interactions*

*5.1 Analysis of Katrina's leadership style*

As we shall see below, Katrina draws upon a range of discursive strategies typically associated with a feminine register in 'doing leadership'. Excerpt 4 shows a conversation between Katrina and Jessie, in which they have a disagreement over how decision making should be done in the team.

**EXCERPT 4**
(Episode 4)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | JES: | *[taken from the individual interview] but I could tell Katrina was irritated that* |
| 2 | | *maybe I went ahead and did something* |
| 3 | | *and didn't consult the group* |

| 4 | KAT: | *[taken from the individual interview] the tables downstairs weren't being effective +* |
|---|---|---|
| 5 | | *I approached Jessie and said +* |
| 6 | | *shut it down* |
| 7 | | *she took great offence to that* |

| 8 | JES: | well if you wanna change it + you're the leader |
|---|---|---|
| 9 | | so <u>you</u> tell me |
| 10 | | you're obviously getting <u>mad</u> that I'm thinking on my own |
| 11 | KAT: | no I'm not getting mad at you for thinking on your own |
| 12 | | all I'm saying is that |
| 13 | | I've been told four times that this is a bad idea |
| 14 | JES: | why are you spazzing out? |
| 15 | | are you upset because + |
| 16 | KAT: | I'm upset because you're upset= |
| 17 | JES: | =I'm not upset at anything |
| 18 | | I think you're getting frustrated |
| 19 | | because + because something isn't working right |
| 20 | | and then you're just trying to find fault |
| 21 | | so you have somebody to blame it on |

| 22 | KAT: | *[from the individual interview] I think Jessie's upset because she wasn't leading +* |
|---|---|---|
| 23 | | *and + that saddens me* |
| 24 | | *because I was more supportive when she was the leader* |

| 25 | KAT: | when all of us are trying to work as a team |
|---|---|---|
| 26 | | and I feel like one person doesn't agree with what we're doing |
| 27 | | that's what frustrated me from the beginning |
| 28 | JES: | but I think all the ideas (we came up with) were all the <u>same</u> |

| 29 | JESS: | *[from the individual interview] with the last three tasks, I knew from the very beginning* |
|---|---|---|
| 30 | | *we were going to win +* |
| 31 | | *but this one + +* |
| 32 | | *I don't know I don't know* |

In the excerpt above, Katrina is witnessed using a normatively feminine discourse style and orienting to the relational needs of her team member. In line 8, Jessie says that *if you wanna change it, you're the leader* (line 8), implying that even though she may not necessarily agree with Katrina's decision, she will not object to her decisions, given Katrina's

role as the project manager of the group. Jessie goes on to issue a direct challenge telling Katrina to give clear instructions to her: *so you tell me* (line 9), and speculates that Katrina got angry with her since she made decisions by herself without consulting Katrina: *you're obviously getting mad that I'm thinking on my own* (line 10). Interestingly, Jessie's indirectness here is indexical of masculinity, and her confrontational stance could be seen as a challenge to Katrina's leadership role.

In response to Jessie's speculation, Katrina explicitly denies Jessie's claim: *no I'm not getting mad at you for thinking on your own* (line 11). By saying that she does not get mad at Jessie, she orients to maintaining a harmonious relationship with Jessie and attempts to pay attention to her positive face needs. She then states what she thinks of Jessie's ideas: *I've been told four times that this is a bad idea* (line 13). It is noteworthy here that Katrina does not criticize Jessie directly; rather, she shifts the target of the criticism to the decision itself by saying *this is a bad idea* (line 13). And, instead of stating that it is she who thinks that Jessie's idea is bad, she says *I've been told* (line 13). By using the passive voice where the agent of the criticism may be omitted, she impersonalizes the criticism and distances herself from the negatively affective speech act. Here, we can see how Katrina attenuates the face-threatening criticisms directed at Jessie, and this could be seen as a prime example of 'doing leadership' in a conventionally feminine way.

Katrina can also be seen to display orientation to the relational goals of doing leadership by paying attention to the emotional states of Jessie. In line 14, Jessie asks Katrina why she is getting mad: *why are you spazzing out*. Note that Jessie's use of the colloquial expression *spazzing out*, originating from the word *spastic*, in describing Katrina's emotional states, may be said to carry offensive connotations. Jessie goes on to ask Katrina *are you upset because*. In line 16, Katrina replies that she is upset because Jessie is upset. Here, by recycling the same lexical items *upset* and *because* in her response (line 16), she could be said to display a certain degree of a cooperative discourse style. Moreover, by saying *I'm upset because you're upset*, she also shows her concerns about, or at least awareness of, Jessie's emotional state of being upset. In this way, she may be oriented to the relational goals here and attempts to address Jessie's distress through displaying her understanding and sympathy.

Furthermore, Katrina explicitly emphasizes the importance of the group and teamwork, which is associated with relatively feminine

leadership styles. In line 17, Jessie denies that she is upset, and goes on to speculate that Katrina is frustrated because something is not working well and she is trying to put the blame on somebody else (lines 18-21). In response, Katrina explains that she is frustrated because Jessie does not agree with what the team is doing: *when all of us are trying to work as a team and I feel like one person doesn't agree with what we're doing* (lines 25-26). Here, she uses the phrase *I feel like* (line 26) to attenuate the negative impact of her criticism, thereby making it less directly confrontational. And by emphasizing the concept of *a team* (line 25) and by using the pronouns *us* (line 25) and *we* (line 26), she lays emphasis on the importance of teamwork and plays down her own authority, thereby enacting an egalitarian and consensual mode of interaction, which is characteristic of a feminine leadership style.

Here, the excerpt demonstrates how Katrina, as project manager, pays attention to the face needs and emotional states of her team member. In so doing, she achieves the relational or people-oriented goals of 'doing leadership'. It is evident that she does not pursue an authoritative leadership style, but prefers to lead using a feminine, collaborative style. Indeed, there is little evidence that she is intent upon evoking her power or status explicitly at any point in the interaction. In the individual interview (lines 22-24), she states explicitly that when Jessie was the leader in the previous week, she was more supportive of her decisions. Again, this illustrates that Katrina sees the importance of supportiveness in the achievement of leadership, and embraces a normatively feminine and collaborative style in 'doing leadership'.

However, as can be seen in the interview commentary, Jessie expresses doubts about whether they are going to win (lines 29-32). Implicitly, she shows her disappointment with Katrina's leadership style which could be classified as normatively feminine. It can be seen here that her feminine style is not perceived positively or judged as particularly effective. Excerpt 4 illustrates that another team member, Tammy, does not show approval of Katrina's leadership style either.

**EXCERPT 5**
(Episode 4)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | TAM: | *[taken from the individual interview] it was confusing to me* |
| 2 | | *cos no one knew what was going on really* |
| 3 | | *and then when George tried to corner Katrina our project manager to see what was going on* |

| 4 | | *she really couldn't coherently articulate what the plan was* |
| 5 | | *cos she really was just flying by the seat of her pants* |

In this excerpt, Tammy remarks that Katrina has not explained the arrangements of the plan clearly and explicitly enough to the group (line 2). Further, Tammy comments that Katrina has not given much careful thought to the whole plan of the task (line 5), nor is she able to articulate the plan clearly (line 4). Here, her inability to deliver and explain the arrangements in an assertive, forceful manner is being pointed out. Overall, given Jessie and Tammy's evaluations of Katrina's leadership styles, it seems clear that her feminine style of leadership is perceived negatively and is not approved of by her team members.

*5.2 Analysis of Amy's leadership style*

Excerpt 6 shows how Amy draws upon a range of feminine discursive strategies in 'doing leadership' in the women's group in Episode 2. Amy chairs a meeting with the group, right after she has confirmed a meeting with the CEO of Marquis Jet on the phone. In this meeting, they are going to decide who will go and meet with the CEO.

**EXCERPT 6**
(Episode 2)

| 1 | AMY: | okay guys |
| 2 | | so we have an appointment today + |
| 3 | | with the CEO and the senior vice president of marketing at half past twelve |
| 4 | | here's what I recommend |
| 5 | | we send two + |
| 6 | | maybe three up there? |
| 7 | | you guys continue //brainstorming\ |
| 8 | OMA: | /I wanna\\ go with you |
| 9 | | because I wanna develop that- that |
| 10 | | I wanna make sure that I provide that research background= |
| 11 | AMY: | =I would like to recommend |
| 12 | | since we've got a local from New York + |
| 13 | | that you go ['you' here refers to Ereka] |
| 14 | | and I also think for the productivity of our group + |
| 15 | | that Omarosa you should stay here |
| 16 | | cos I think that it would be good for all of us |

| 17 | | since there's some tension |
|----|----|----|
| 18 | OMA: | *believe me* |
| 19 | | *I thought that was the most + ineffective decision that Amy could've made* |
| 20 | | *she left her team without a timeline or a plan of action* |
| 21 | | [. . .] |
| 22 | OMA: | *the other women who were sitting around waiting as well thought* |
| 23 | | *okay + we might as well get out of here too* |
| 24 | | [. . .] |
| 25 | KRI: | *we had no idea what to do* |
| 26 | | *so all we knew was +* |
| 27 | | *we better get to the airport with a camera crew* |

In this excerpt, Amy uses a relatively feminine leadership style in giving out instructions and making decisions in the group meeting. She first starts the meeting with the standard discourse marker *okay* (line 1), immediately followed by the casual, informal address term *guys* (line 1), which serves to invoke collegiality among the members of the group. In line 2, she uses the inclusive pronoun *we* (line 2) to express joint responsibility. She then declares that she is about to give her instructions to the group by phrasing her instructions as 'recommendations', rather than commands: *here's what I recommend* (line 4). By using the metadiscoursal *recommend* (line 4), she could be seen to soften the force of her instructions, possibly allowing room for negotiation among the group. And by giving instructions in such an indirect way, she enacts power in a covert, implicit manner, which is characteristic of a normatively feminine way of 'doing leadership'. In lines 5-6, she goes on to give the instruction of sending some of them to meet with the CEO. Here, she uses the hedge *maybe*, a pause (marked by +) as well as a rising intonation, all of which signal tentativeness and serve to tone down the force of her instructions, whilst paying attention to the face needs of the members. Notice also that Amy uses the inclusive pronoun *we* twice (lines 2 and 5) in the course of giving instructions, which may serve to emphasize solidarity with the members and invoke an in-group identity.

It is also notable that Amy makes use of normatively feminine strategies in rejecting a group member's ideas, a very common face-threatening act which occurs in meetings. In line 8, Omarosa expresses her desire to go with Amy to meet up with the CEO, overlapping with

Amy's utterance in line 7, and goes on to give explanations for her request in lines 9 and 10. Rather than 'doing disagreement' explicitly, Amy responds by carrying on with her 'recommendations', together with justifications and rationalizations for her decisions: *I would like to recommend* (line 11). Again, she uses the metadiscoursal *recommend* (line 11), together with the polite expression *would like* (line 11), to mitigate the illocutionary force of her instructions. Amy goes on to provide her rather elaborate explanations for her rejection in lines 12-17. It is noteworthy here that she draws particular attention to the 'group' as a whole by invoking the notion *our group* explicitly (lines 14-15). Also, she explains that *it would be good for all of us* (line 16), again orienting to the 'group' by using the collective pronoun *us*. Here, the emphasis on the group could be viewed as a means to reinforce the group's sense of identity as a closely-knit community as well as downplaying her authority in making decisions as the project manager. Note also that the pragmatic particle *I think* (lines 14 and 16) and the epistemic modal *would* (lines 11 and 16) serve as hedges, which function to further mitigate her rejection of Omarosa's request to meet with the CEO, whilst also possibly attenuating her overt enactment of power.

Also, Amy utilizes detailed and elaborate explanations to mitigate her rejection of Omarosa's request, paying attention to her member's positive face needs. As Schnurr and Chan (2005) point out, giving explanations constitutes a particularly valuable discursive strategy and can be viewed as "a strategy for mitigating the illocutionary force of negatively affective speech acts, and thus minimizing potential face-threats" (Schnurr and Chan 2005: 30). Indeed, the repeated use of the connectives *since* (lines 12 and 17) and *cos* (line 16) also provides evidence that she expends effort in justifying her decisions by providing explanations in order to gain Omarosa's compliance. Overall, the use of mitigating devices, the provision of 'recommendations' and detailed explanations, as well as an explicit orientation to the 'group' as a whole could be classified as feminine ways of 'doing leadership'. By drawing upon a range of typically feminine discursive strategies, Amy can be viewed as enacting her leadership role in a ways that is consistent with the normative expectations for her gender.

It should be noted that Amy seems to do decision making by authority which may be indexed for masculinity. However, we should also notice that the discursive strategies with which Amy uses to convey

her decisions are very much typical of a feminine speech style which pays attention to the relational goals in the interaction. In so doing, she enacts power in a covert and implicit way. And by using conventionally feminine discourse strategies, she can be seen negotiating her gender and professional identities at work. Her performance of leadership could be cited as an example of how women leaders balance their gender and professional identities in doing leadership (Holmes 2006; Marra et al. 2006). By engaging in such a balancing act discursively, women leaders can 'do femininity' and achieve their transactional leadership objectives simultaneously (cf. Schnurr 2010).

However, based on her team members' comments, Amy's leadership is cast in a rather negative light. For instance, Omaorosa criticizes Amy for making the most ineffective decision (line 19) and for not devising a timeline (line 20). Kristi also comments that the group has no idea what to do even after the meeting held by Amy (line 25). Here, these comments point to Amy's perceived inability to deliver key decisions in a clear, firm and explicit way and in creating a clear timeline, thereby resulting in the impression that she does not effectively get her message across to the group. Although it may be the failure to create a timeline, rather than Amy's feminine leadership style itself, which is the main cause of these negative perceptions, her leadership is clearly perceived as being ineffective by her team members.

## 6. Discussion

As revealed in the analysis, the two male and two female project managers are shown to largely conform to the normative gendered norms when enacting leadership. However, their leadership styles are not evaluated entirely positively. While the male managers receive both positive and negative comments for the use of the predominantly masculine speech style, the female managers do not get any praise for utilizing the feminine discourse style of leadership. In other words, we can see that the exclusive use of the masculine or the feminine speech style is not viewed as an effective or preferred means of doing leadership, and that conforming to the normative gendered speech norms in performing leadership does not necessarily guarantee positive evaluations.

What is interesting is that the predominantly masculine leadership style is not portrayed as the 'default' means of doing leadership. While the masculine leadership style is given some positive comments, it is seen as problematic and is not entirely approved. In other words, the TV show seems to challenge the appropriateness of the masculine leadership style and cast doubt on its effectiveness in doing leadership. However, while the reality TV show raises questions about the appropriateness of the masculine leadership style and challenges its status quo, it does not portray the masculine style entirely negatively, especially when compared to the representations of the feminine style of leadership. One reason may be the strong associations of leadership with masculinity (Hearn and Parkin 1989; Sinclair 1998), since the norm of the workplace is still predominately masculine (Kendall and Tannen 1997). As Martin Rojo and Gomez Esteban (2005) also note, the criteria used to measure competence in leadership continue to be associated with the notion of masculinity.

With that said, a masculine discourse style of leadership is still represented as preferable to a predominantly feminine discourse style. As the analysis shows, while the two female managers are viewed as adhering to the gendered expectations in doing leadership by employing a predominantly feminine discourse style, they are not perceived positively for their leadership ability. In particular, Katrina is depicted as displaying feminine qualities, such as emotionality, which are clearly incompatible with the commonly conceived notion of leadership. Such kinds of representations may not only denigrate the linguistic features typical of the feminine style of leadership, but also perpetuate the problematic belief that women are unable to perform leadership roles effectively. Although feminine leadership styles are now increasingly perceived as preferable by both male and female workers (Baxter 2010, 2012), the representations of gendered styles of 'doing leadership' in *The Apprentice* do not seem to carry the connotations of "different, but equal" (Case 1994: 161; see also Cameron 1995). Instead, while displays of masculinity in the workplace are still likely to result in success, displays of femininity may lead to derision and marginalization (Peck 2000).

It is also interesting to note that the single-sex interactional contexts seem to impact on the deployment of gendered styles of leadership by the project managers in *The Apprentice*. One possible explanation is that the

single-sex composition of the group can serve as a cue that signals particular gendered expectations for the project managers, thereby prompting them to employ leadership styles that accord with the gendered norms for their gender. In other words, the explicitly gendered contexts may underline the prominence of specific gendered norms and lead to an awareness of the gendered norms and conventions among members of the group, including the project managers. As Carli (2006) suggests, both men and women are likely to adjust and modify their styles of communication depending on the gender of the people with whom they are interacting, based upon the assessment of how the other people are likely to behave, and how they themselves are expected to behave. As a result, the gendered contexts may impose considerable constraints on the range of possible ways which are deemed appropriate in 'doing gender' and 'doing leadership' simultaneously.

Another related reason may be that these project managers may try to conform to the gendered expectations in order to be considered as a member of the same-sex group. Here, the concept of 'nexus of practice' may be relevant. According to Scollon (2001), a 'nexus of practice' refers to a constellation or a set of repeatable actions and practices which are recognized by a social group. In Scollon's (2001: 178) words, it is "the regular, smoothly working set of linkages and sequences among practices that can be recognized by someone else in the vague sense of 'doing the right thing'". It should also be noted that these practices are in the form of mediated actions (Scollon 2001) understood in the sense of *habitus* (Bourdieu 1990), i.e., a system of internalized, durable and transposable dispositions which generates similar practices and perceptions, but which can be adjusted to specific situations. And certain practices become tacitly recognized as the accepted ways of doing things in the habitus. While the people are rather loosely connected in the nexus of practice, there are networks of implicit practices and expectations that mark group membership (Scollon 2001). In the reality TV show, upon recognition of the single-sex group as a 'nexus of practice', the project managers can be seen to be drawing upon the scripts for acceptable forms of masculine and feminine behavior from broader society for the purpose of 'doing leadership'. Accordingly, they perform the expected ways of doing things within the single-sex group in order to signal their membership, that is, by using normatively gendered styles of leadership in the same-sex interactions. In other words, the use of normatively

gendered discourse styles by the project managers may be shaped by the overtly gendered contexts (or nexus of practice), which contribute to "the gender stereotyping and expectation[s] of 'appropriate' gender-specific behavior" (Hay 2002: 28).

Finally, it is worth noting that the gender-stereotypical representations of leadership styles in *The Apprentice* may be attributable to the gendered arrangement of the two teams at the beginning of the TV show, i.e., the division of the contestants into two groups based on gender. Clearly, such an arrangement is highly artificial, since it is rather uncommon in reality that workplaces are either made up of men or women exclusively. In other words, the explicitly gendered arrangement may be viewed as a deliberate strategy for the TV show to capture normatively gendered styles of leadership in the two single-sex groups, thereby creating an impression to the audience that men and women use differently gendered leadership styles in same-sex interactions. By claiming to reveal the 'reality' in the commercial world, the TV show may disguise the highly artificial and constructed nature of the show. As Matheson (2005: 103) points outs, the media "present us not with reality but with a selected, edited, polished version of the real". In other words, even though reality TV shows purport to reflect the 'reality', they always and necessarily reflect portions of the reality (Matheson 2005: 103). As such, the reality TV show may be produced in such a way that appeals to the audience by presenting familiar and easily recognizable gendered images in an explicit manner. It is therefore argued that these gender-stereotypical representations of leadership discourse may serve to reproduce and reinforce the discourses of 'gender differences' (Sunderland 2004) which are still prevalent in the popular culture.

*7. Conclusion*

This paper has shown that the four project managers 'do leadership' in ways that largely conform to the traditional gendered expectations in the context of single-sex interactions. While their leadership styles are not evaluated entirely positively, the male managers receive both positive and negative comments for the use of predominantly masculine speech styles and the female managers who 'do leadership' by employing a largely feminine discourse style are not perceived positively. In addition, the analysis has suggested that the single-sex composition of the groups

impacts on the enactment of differently gendered leadership styles by the project managers. It is therefore argued that the single-sex groups can be viewed as being constructed intentionally in the TV show in order to typify the gender-stereotypical speech styles of 'doing leadership'. It should be noted, however, that given the small size of the data analysis, the analysis of these managers' leadership styles should not be considered generalizable to other contestants in the show, or to other reality TV shows.

In closing, it remains to be seen whether these gender-stereotypical representations in the popular media are likely to undergo any changes towards more gender-neutral representations, given an increased awareness of gender-related issues among the general public in recent years. Further research could be carried out to investigate language and gender representations in other forms of popular media by adopting a multi-disciplinary perspective through drawing on various methodologies from various disciplines such as discourse analysis, organizational studies, psychology and sociology.

*References*

Baxter, Judith. 2012. "Women of the Corporation: A Sociolinguistic Perspective of Senior Women's Leadership Language in the UK". *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 16(1): 81-107.

———. 2010. *The Language of Female Leadership*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1977. *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Butler, Judith. 1990. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. London: Routledge.

Cameron, Deborah. 2007. "Dreaming of Genie: Language, Gender Difference and Identity on the Web". *Language in the Media*. Eds. Sally Johnson and Astrid Ensslin. London: Continuum. 234-249.

———. 2003. "Gender and Language Ideologies". *The Handbook of Language and Gender*. Eds. Janet Holmes and Miriam Meyerhoff. Oxford: Blackwell. 447-467.

———. 1995. *Verbal Hygiene*. London and New York: Routledge.

Carli, Linda L. 2006. "Gender Issues in Workplace Groups: Effects of Gender and Communication Style on Social Influence". *Gender and*

*Communication at Work*. Eds. Mary Barrett and Marilyn Davidson. Burlington: Ashgate. 69-83.

Case, Susan S. 1994. "Gender Differences in Communication and Behaviour in Organizations". *Women in Management: Current Research Issues*. Eds. Marilyn Davidson and Ronald Burke. London: P. Chapman. 144-167.

———. 1993. "Wide-Verbal-Repertoire Speech: Gender, Language, and Managerial Influence". *Women's Studies International Forum* 16(3): 271-290.

Coates, Jennifer. 2004. *Women, Men, and Language: A Sociolinguistic Account of Gender Differences in Language*. Harlow and New York: Pearson Longman.

———. 1997. "One-at-a-time: The Organization of Men's Talk". *Language and Masculinity*. Eds. Sally Johnson and Ulrike Meinhoff. Oxford: Blackwell. 107-129.

Drew, Paul and John Heritage. 1992. *Talk at Work*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Dwyer, Judith. 1993. *The Business Communication Handbook*. New York: Prentice-Hall.

Evans, Jessica. 2005. "Celebrity: What's the Media Got To Do with It?" *Understanding Media: Inside Celebrity*. Eds. Jessica Evans and David Hesmondhalgh. Maidenhead: Open University Press. 1-10.

Fernández-Villanueva, Concepción, Juan C. Revilla-Castro, Roberto Domínguez-Bilbao, Leonor Gimeno-Jiménez and Andrés Almagro. 2009. "Gender Differences in Representation of Violence on Spanish Television: Should Women Be More Violent?" *Sex Roles* 61(1/2): 85-100.

Fletcher, Joyce K. 1999. *Disappearing Acts: Gender, Power and Relational Practice at Work*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Gill, Rosalind. 2006. *Gender and the Media*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Hay, Jennifer. 2002. "Male Cheerleaders and Wanton Women: Humour Among New Zealand Friends". *Te Reo* 45: 3-36

Hearn, Jeff and Wendy Parkin. 1989. "Women, Men, and Leadership: A Critical Review of Assumptions, Practices, and Change in the Industrialized Nations". *Women in Management Worldwide*. Eds. Nancy Adler and Dafna Izraeli. London: M. E. Sharpe. 17-40.

Holmes, Janet. 2006. *Gendered Talk at Work: Constructing Gender Identity Through Workplace Discourse*. Oxford: Blackwell.

——— and Maria Stubbe. 2003. *Power and Politeness in the Workplace*. London: Pearson.

———, Stephanie Schnurr, Agnela Chan and Tina Chiles. 2003. "The Discourse of Leadership". *Te Reo* 46: 31-46.

———. 1995. *Women, Men and Politeness*. London: Longman.

Kendall, Shari and Deborah Tannen. 2001. "Discourse and Gender". *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis*. Eds. Deborah Schiffrin, Deborah Tannen and Heidi Hamilton. Malden, MA: Blackwell. 548-567.

Kinnick, Katherine N. and Sabrena R. Parton. 2005. "Workplace Communication: What *The Apprentice* Teaches About Communication Skills". *Business Communication Quarterly* 68(4): 429-456.

Maltz, Daniel and Ruth Borker. 1982. "A Cultural Approach to Male-Female Miscommunication". *Language and Social Identity*. Ed. John Gumperz. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 281-312.

Marra, Meredith, Stephanie Schnurr and Janet Holmes. 2006. "Effective Leadership in New Zealand Workplaces". *Speaking Out: The Female Voice in Public Contexts*. Ed. Judith Baxter. Basingstoke: Palgrave. 240-260.

Martin Rojo, Luisa and Concepcion Gomez Esteban. 2005. "The Gender of Power: The Female Style in Labour Organizations". *Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis*. Ed. Michelle Lazar. London: Palgrave. 61-89.

Matheson, Donald. 2005. *Media Discourses: Analysing Media Texts*. Berkshire: Open University Press.

Mullany, Louise. 2007. *Gendered Discourse in the Professional Workplace*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Ochs, Elinor. 1992. "Indexing Gender". *Rethinking Context: Language as an Interactive Phenomenon*. Eds. Alessandro Duranti and Charles Goodwin. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 335-358.

Peck, Jennifer. 2006. "Women and Promotion: The Influence of Communication Style". *Gender and Communication at Work*. Eds. Mary Barrett and Marilyn Davidson. Hampshire: Ashgate, 50-66.

———. 2000. "The Cost of Corporate Culture: Linguistic Obstacles to Gender Equity in Australian Business". *Gendered Speech in Social Context*. Ed. Janet Holmes. Wellington: Victoria University Press. 211-30.

Ross, Karen. 2010. *Gendered Media: Women, Men, and Identity Politics*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.

Schnurr, Stephanie. 2010. "Decision Made – Let's Move On: Negotiating Gender and Professional Identity in Hong Kong Workplaces". *Language in its Socio-cultural Context*. Eds. Susanne Muehleisen, Markus Bieswanger and Heiko Motschenbacher. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang. 111- 136.

———. 2009. *Leadership Discourse at Work: Interactions of Humour, Gender and Workplace Culture*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

——— and Angela Chan. 2005. "Are You the Project Manager?: How a Leader Ensures the Compliance of His Subordinates". *Proceedings of the 1st International Linguistics and Literary Studies Postgraduate Conference*. Eds. Stephanie Schnurr, Agnes Terraschke and Angela Chan. Wellington: Victoria University of Wellington. 27-37.

Scollon, Ron. 2001. "Action and Text: Towards an Integrated Understanding of the Place of Text in Social (Inter)action, Mediated Discourse Analysis and the Problem of Social Action". *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*. Eds. Ruth Wodak and Michael Meyer. London: Sage. 139-183.

Sinclair, Amanda. 1998. *Doing Leadership Differently: Gender, Power and Sexuality in a Changing Business Culture*. Melbourne: Melbourne University Press.

Sunderland, Jane. 2004. *Gendered Discourses.* London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Swann, Joan. 2002. "Yes, But Is It Gender?" *Gender Identity and Discourse Analysis*. Eds. Lia Litosseliti and Jane Sunderland. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. 43-67.

Talbot, Mary. 2010. *Language and Gender: An Introduction*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

Tannen, Deborah. 1990. *You Just Don't Understand: Women and Men in Conversation*. New York: William Morrow.

West, Candice. 1998. "Not Just Doctors' Orders: Directive-response Sequences in Patients' Visits to Women and Men Physicians". *Language and Gender: A Reader*. Ed. Jennifer Coates. Oxford: Blackwell. 328-353.

Zimmerman, Don and Candice West. 1975. "Sex Roles, Interruptions and Silences in Conversation". *Language and Sex: Differences and*

*Dominance*. Eds. Barrie Thorne and Nancy Henley. Rowley, MA: Newbury House. 105-129.

*Appendix: Transcription Conventions*

| | |
|---|---|
| <u>yes</u> | underscore indicates emphatic stress |
| [laughs] | paralinguistic features in square brackets |
| + | pause of up to one second |
| xxx // xxxxx \ xxx | |
| xxx / xxxxx \\ xxx | simultaneous speech |
| = | latching between the end of one turn to the start of the next |
| (3) | pause of specified number of seconds |
| (    ) | unintelligible word or phrase |
| (hello) | transcriber's best guess at an unclear utterance |
| ? | raising or question intonation |
| - | incomplete or cut-off utterance |
| [*comments*] | editorial comments italicized in square brackets |
| *words in italics* | commentary from behind-the-scene individual interviews |

# Commas and coordinating conjunctions: Too many rules or no rules at all?

*Tatjana Marjanović, University of Banja Luka*

*Abstract*
Although it is unclear why punctuation should be pushed to the sidelines, it generally continues to be a neglected research area in mainstream contemporary linguistics. Common sense and empirical evidence both suggest that punctuation is so much more than a stylistic device, its presence or absence creating new strata and shades of meaning. Punctuation is also a matter of some controversy, all too often employed as a symbol of confrontation between linguistic conservatives and their more permissive colleagues. An already difficult situation is made even more difficult with different sources (e.g. course and reference books, online blogs and articles, etc.) supplying contradictory information with a rigor that does not tolerate disagreement, obsessing over rules for the sake of rules themselves and disregarding the real stories behind them. Shifting focus from a rule-governed behavior and identifying a relatively limited context of punctuation, the small-scale research addresses the issue of comma usage before the coordinating conjunctions *and*, *but*, *or*, *nor*, *so*, *yet* and *for*. In addition to a sketchy overview of this complex relationship illustrative of significant differences of opinion, the paper touches upon regional and generic factors influencing comma usage before coordinating conjunctions, utilizing the massive database of the Contemporary Corpus of American English (COCA). The main idea behind the paper is to observe and account for tendencies and discrepancies by providing critical commentary on authentic examples taken from the corpora rather than seek confirmation for rules and take the prescriptive norm for granted.

## 1. Introduction

When I was thinking about writing an article about comma usage, an inner voice reminded me of Disraeli's famous quote "Little things affect little minds." Although commas are barely perceptible to most regular readers, I am not ashamed to think there must be more meaning attached to them than their size suggests. And I let this thought persist at the cost of being accused of small-mindedness. My spirits lifted when I quite randomly came across the following statements uttered by someone no one could ever call small-minded, the great Oscar Wilde:

> I was working on the proof of one of my poems all the morning, and took out a comma. In the afternoon I put it back again.

> This morning I took out a comma and this afternoon I put it back again.

> I have spent most of the day putting in a comma and the rest of the day taking it out.

The following two paragraphs added more boost to my morale:

> Lest you think I'm making much ado about nothing and that your readers don't even see such things, keep in mind that many readers read punctuation as easily as they do words. Each mark means something to them. And they *do* notice extra marks or the absence of punctuation.
> Imagine the problems if I stuck a period in the middle of sentences. where no period was necessary. You'd be confused at first. and maybe a bit irritated. Maybe you'd think. something was wrong with the printer. or that you needed to clean your glasses. But whatever the cause. you'd be repeatedly pulled from the fiction.
> <div align="right">(Hill 2011: paragraph 7-8)</div>

One thing should be made clear, though: commas will most likely never be your hobbyhorse unless you are one of those people who are genuinely passionate about language and its mysterious ways, those who are tireless in their never-ending quest for meaning and just the right structure to express it. One more thing should be clarified, too: this is not at all an attempt to glorify the rules of grammar, or to propagate their sanctity and infallibility. But it is my heartfelt desire to look for some inherent logic behind comma usage that will guide us in our choices. Hicks (2007: 63) echoes my own thoughts: 'Ideally, punctuation should be based on sound logical principles.'

Those principles may actually be our last resort, considering the amount of conflicting grammatical and stylistic advice available both online and in high-profile reference books.

## 2. Controversy surrounding comma usage

Reynolds (2011: 109) remarks that 'it is extremely hard to teach students to be good writers; it is much easier to teach them the myth of FANBOYS.' The acronym, which is actually a mnemonic, stands for the conjunctions *for*, *and*, *nor*, *but*, *or*, *yet* and *so*, and a good part of the myth pertains to the rule that these must be preceded by a comma when conjoining two independent clauses. Offering corpus-based and other evidence that the rule may not be a hard and fast law of grammar at all, Reynolds invites teachers to question the choice of material presented to

students and their reasons for presenting it. Above all, this quote brings back hope that topics such as comma usage are still of interest to literacy experts and writing class teachers.

*2.1 Commas should (not) be used with coordinating conjunctions*
*Rules for Comma Usage* instructs the reader to use a comma before a conjunction (*and, but, for, nor, yet, or, so*) to connect two <u>independent clauses</u>. The rule is followed by a simple note in the next paragraph that 'some writers will leave out the comma in a sentence with short, balanced independent clauses.' The final remark, however, puts some more emphasis on the comma: 'If there is ever any doubt, however, use the comma, as it is always correct in this situation' (paragraph 2).

I would like to contend this sweeping generalization with 'and' used as a paratactic device for expressing purpose in imperative clauses, e.g. *Go and get me some ice*. A comma would most certainly get in the way here, obscuring the intended meaning of purpose.

If a parenthetical element follows a coordinating conjunction, *Rules for Comma Usage* advises the reader not to place a comma before the parenthetical element, as in the following example:

> (a) *The Yankees didn't do so well in the early going, but frankly, everyone expects them to win the season.* (paragraph 4)

This divergence from a general rule is evidently spurred by a fear of comma overuse, which in itself is a legitimate concern, but I am not convinced that this was the right way to deal with it. The trouble with the example above is that the parenthetical element seems to be *but frankly* rather than *frankly* alone. Here come two counterexamples where the parenthetical item is either consistently set off by commas or fully integrated into the rest of the clause:

> (b) *There was no moon that night and, as a result, they took the wrong turning.* (Downing and Locke 2002: 280)
> (c) *It's an extremely simple device, but actually it's very effective.* (287)

## 2.1.1 (No) comma before an elliptical clause

Another online source, *Get It Write*, teaches that no comma is needed before a conjunction separating two clauses with two co-referential subjects, the second of which is omitted:

> *(d) Sigfried wanted to go back to school to earn a college degree but could not afford to quit his job and lose his health care benefits.* (bullet 3)

The following sentence constitutes a case of multiple ellipsis, where both the subject and auxiliary are omitted, yet the conjunction is preceded by a comma:

> *(e) The students have not only read Bentham and Mill, but written essays on both.*
> (Young 1980: 236)

Ellipsis or no ellipsis, the comma certainly does a good job here reinforcing the emphasis created by the correlative coordinators *not only/but also*.

Hill (2011) makes it very clear that a coordinating conjunction connecting independent clauses requires a comma; however, the comma becomes superfluous, even *incorrect*, if there is a co-referential subject omitted in the second clause.

It was easy to find a number of sources teeming with illustrations that show complete disregard for both of these rules. The following sentences feature the most frequent of coordinators, the ubiquitous 'and':

> *(f) John plays the piano and his sister plays the guitar.* (Leech and Svartvik 1975: 223)
> *(g) Do you live here, and travel all that way?* (Young 1980: 230)

I honestly cannot see a fault with either of these: the first sentence contains two closely related clauses merely added one to the other (thus no comma); the second, on the other hand, seems to invoke a slight disagreement in the propositions of the two clauses (hence the comma).

Kolln (1991: 160) also readily rejects the comma when what follows is a clause with subject ellipsis, which explains why the sentence below was marked with an asterisk:

> *(h) Scientists believe that the Amazon basin plays a major role in the global climate, and are worried that the destruction of its forests could lead to climatic chaos.*

I cannot help noticing the comma is actually there for a reason, marking a boundary and consequently assisting in an easier transition between a lengthy that-clause acting as object in the first clause and the onset of the second clause, all the more so because the verbs in the two clauses are different (i.e. 'believe' and 'are').

As for sentences with ellipsis at predication level, Quirk and Greenbaum (1990) offer examples both with and without the comma, depending on whether the propositions expressed in the clauses are considered to be on a par with each other or not, e.g.

> *(i) John should clean the shed and Peter mow the lawn.*
> *(j) His suggestions made John happy, but Mary angry.* (262)

However, when ellipsis affects the first clause, which is less common but nevertheless possible, there are no illustrations attesting to the possibility of comma omission, e.g.

> *(k) George will, and Bob might, take the course.* (263)

Indeed, I agree with Cayley (2011) that the comma-before-a-coordinating-conjunction-in-a-compound-sentence rule is more than welcome if there is the slightest possibility that the writer's intentions will be misunderstood or misread. In the following sentence the reader may easily be led down the garden path in assuming that 'scientific discovery and experience' form a coordinated noun phrase:

> *(l) The simulation of physical systems is a crucial part of scientific discovery **and** experience shows that conducting this simulation precisely and efficiently is essential.* (Cayley 2011: paragraph 6)

*2.2 Comma usage expectations (do not) change in different registers*
An already troublesome relationship between commas and conjunctions is made even messier by different usage expectations for different varieties of English, both generic and regional:

> The current trend in American style is toward minimal punctuation. In other words, commas are seen as speedbumps, and we don't want unnecessary obstacles to slow down our readers. Many permissible commas can be left out of sentences where they once might have been required, or at least strongly preferred.
>
> (Blue 2002: paragraph 5)

Just when I was beginning to think that I was finally getting to grips with the issue, so I would know what to tell my students, I came across the following statement: 'American English uses commas before *and*, *but* and *or* more frequently than British English' (Carter and McCarthy 2006: 842).

Worse still, in the same paragraph the reader has been casually informed—and quite contrary to the comma axiom instilled in us over and over again—that '[m]ain clauses separated by *and* or *or* or *but* are not normally separated by commas' (ibid).

When Hicks writes about the instability of rules and conventions and their susceptibility to change, he makes sure the change is reflected in his own writing: 'Punctuation practice is constantly changing. For example, sentences are shorter than they used to be so there are more full stops in text. But in general there is less punctuation' (2007: 63).

But is it possible that academic writing may differ in this respect from newspaper prose or fiction? Intuitively, fiction would appear to be the most relaxed or the least normative in its punctuation choices and allow more individual freedom to its writers.


*3. Research summary*

I decided to give these intuitive notions a reality check and run a small-scale corpus-based search to investigate how consistently coordinators and commas appeared together in the three aforementioned registers of American English. The results were representative of a sample collected from the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) (Davies, 2008-).

Entering the symbolic structure *and * [v*]* in the search box was the first procedural step, 'and' standing for the conjunction being probed, followed by a wildcard (i.e. indicating an unrestricted choice of words) and any verb, keeping the search within the realms of clausal coordination. The same procedure was repeated for every other conjunction in the list, one register at a time.

In order not to feel positively overwhelmed by scores of concordance lines, I only analyzed one hundred contexts in the entry that came out first in the frequency-based search results.[1]

A summary of the results is presented in the table below hosting a rearranged list of FANBOYS (i.e. starting with the three most prominent members) and percentages for their comma-reinforced distribution in the three registers.

*Table 1*. Distribution of clausal coordinators preceded by the comma in three registers of American English

| Comma + coordinator | Fiction/100 | Newspaper prose/100 | Academic writing/100 |
|---|---|---|---|
| AND | 85 | 87 | 72 |
| BUT | 98 | 98 | 96 |
| OR | 70 | 82 | 88 |
| NOR | 94 | 96 | 95 |
| YET | 97 | 96 | 98 |
| SO | 21 | 97 | 85 |
| FOR | 95 | N/A[2] | 86 |

*3.1 AND*

To better illustrate and discuss divergence from what emerged as a general pattern, I copied a set of four examples from the corpora for each conjunction and each register in turn, starting with 'and' in fiction.

The following sentences extracted from the sub-corpus of fiction strengthen my conviction that short clauses are more likely to be separated by commas if the writer wishes to lengthen the pause and add another layer of meaning to what is being said, i.e. use the comma for

---

[1] However, the first concordance line did not always yield the right match for the probe, in which case I was forced to look for what I needed down the list. For example, in the case of *or * [v*]* contexts for the first line revealed only the pattern 'he or she is', so I had to disregard this kind of phrasal coordination and search for the first line displaying contexts for clausal coordination. A similar problem occurred with the entry *nor * [v*]*, which resulted in a *neither/nor* phrase, and so had to be changed to *nor [v*]* to make sure the context displayed results for clausal coordination.

[2] There were too few concordance lines pertinent to the probe (i.e. only 12 out of 100 displayed results for 'for' as a clausal coordinator).

emphatic purposes (see the last two of the lot). On the other hand, commas are more likely to disappear when there is a danger of cluttering text with excessive punctuation marks, as the first two illustrations suggest.

*(1) After her mother died, her aunt had shipped a bunch of crap from the old home <u>and</u> it was all over the floor and the bed.*
*(2) We had traveled far enough that we no longer encountered pieces of the wreckage, or perhaps we had kept our place <u>and</u> it was the debris that had moved.*
*(3) I'd been there, <u>and</u> it wasn't easy.*
*(4) But this was no alien invasion story, <u>and</u> it was no Halloween prank.*

Selected examples from newspaper prose suggest that two closely related clauses may easily drop the comma before 'and'. I am also under the impression that the factor of relatedness between clauses played a greater role than that of length in sentences (5), (6) and (7). The last one illustrates a cluster of coordinated *dependent* clauses not requiring commas.

*(5) These guys have played well <u>and</u> it's a good team to coach.*
*(6) This is going to be fun <u>and</u> it's going to be good.*
*(7) It's always good to have local currency <u>and</u> it's good to have a few hundred dollars[.]*
*(8) If Chinese people like to eat yellow eels <u>and</u> it's part of their traditional diets— just like Russian people like to eat fish eggs—and those eels are farm-raised and are not an endangered species, why not?*

Contrary to all my expectations, the clausal coordinator 'and' was preceded by the comma more sparsely in academic writing than in the other two registers. It could be that general conventions which define the style of academic writing are more concerned with citation practices and presentation of ideas than they are with comma usage. Another reason for this unexpected deviation might be a diversity of publications in the sub-corpus—not everybody is as obsessed with such 'minutiae' and not everybody is a scholar working in the field of literacy and related disciplines, as will become apparent upon reading the sentences below.

*(9) This assumption has been found by this author to be extremely common <u>and</u> it is an assumption that has direct consequences for students.*
*(10) It was something that he found as a given <u>and</u> it is probably the only method by which France can be ruled for a long time to come.*

*(11) Sometimes manuscripts cannot be or are not improved so that they meet the criteria <u>and</u> they are not published.*
*(12) Communicative skills are not acquired through textbooks but in a natural activity <u>and</u> it is better taught and learned in that context.*


*3.2 BUT*

The contrastive 'but' was unwaveringly set off by commas in fiction, and factors such as the length of clauses or their semantic relatedness did not play a decisive role in this case. That said, the clauses were indeed very short in sentence (16), one of the two in which the comma was omitted.

*(13) I looked round for her, <u>but</u> it was futile.*
*(14) Her condo wasn't broiling like her grand-parents', <u>but</u> it was a close second.*
*(15) In a small town like Rose Petal, I saw him once in a while, <u>but</u> it was always in passing and we didn't speak.*
*(16) I turned to listen again <u>but</u> it was too late.*

The usage of 'but' in newspaper prose in American English proved no different, so not much additional commentary was called for. It did, though, cross my mind that at least some of the sentences below would do perfectly well without the comma preceding the contrastive coordinator.

*(17) It's serene and pleasant, <u>but</u> it's literally a dead-end town, an hour and a half from the nearest interstate highway, and eight decades removed from the last steamer service to Baltimore.*
*(18) It pains me to say it, <u>but</u> it's got to go.*
*(19) It may be a big idea, <u>but</u> it's not a good idea.*
*(20) This documentary is essential to see <u>but</u> it's also frustrating to watch, because while the stories included here are moving, they're not told in the most artful way.*

Academic writing once again—and still somewhat unexpectedly—demonstrates a slightly more relaxed attitude to comma usage. Except sentence (21), where the length of the clauses guided the writer towards the safety of comma insertion, all the others were comma-free, the last one most justifiably so since 'but' was embedded in the subject noun phrase.

*(21) Stoddard's promising clue to the nature of Lincoln's experience with Shakespeare on the Washington stage has not gone unnoticed by scholars, <u>but</u> it is one of many dots on this subject still waiting to be connected.*

*(22) A horizon is limited <u>but</u> it is open.*
*(23) To me, the memories of those tours—often tedious, sometimes violent and always exhausting—seem like yesterday <u>but</u> it is 30 years since I started my first tour.*
*(24) One possible reason that Hie has a lower incidence <u>but</u> it is more fatal than Hif could be that this serotype is less pathogenic and infects persons who are older and/or in much poorer health and who, therefore, are more likely to die.*

### 3.3 OR

Fiction scored surprisingly high when it came to the omission of commas preceding the alternative coordinator 'or'. However, the result is much less surprising if some of the choices made are examined from a pragmatic point of view, when it becomes clear that most comma-free sentences share a context of urgency leaving no place for a hesitation-induced pause. Commas reappear in circumstances which allow more time for the speaker to plan the next course of action.

*(25) Don't move <u>or</u> I'll blow your face right off.*
*(26) Hit him <u>or</u> I'll hit him for you, his father said.*
*(27) Get out now, <u>or</u> I'll have you arrested.*
*(28) Open the door, <u>or</u> I'll knock it down!*

Since newspaper prose normally entails fewer life-and-death contexts and spur-of-the-moment decisions, the alternative conjunction was more often affiliated with the comma. Here the dilemma was whether to focus on each alternative in turn, or let them all (most usually two) merge in a less emphatic flow.

*(29) Martin replied, "You can have me now, <u>or</u> you can have me later."*
*(30) You can have a genuine reformation, <u>or</u> you can have a street smart kid who's capable of manipulating the system.*
*(31) You can try to do it on your own by racing around the island in an attempt to absorb as much of the atmosphere as possible in the eight or so hours you have at each port, <u>or</u> you can hook up with a tour through an independent company.*
*(32) At many companies people say you can have this <u>or</u> you can have that, and you know it's never going to happen.*

This time academic writing was more prone than the other two registers to use a comma-reinforced conjunction. Such propensity may be due to a lengthen-the-pause effect, which is highly compatible with both

the alternative meaning of the coordinator 'or' and the argumentative nature of scholarly publications.

> *(33) This, too, may be a fairly informal process stemming from enforcement, <u>or</u> it may be more proactive and planned.*
> *(34) The content course may be one of the student's own selection, <u>or</u> it may be tied to a specific lower division course requirement.*
> *(35) The bound statue may mark a fantasy of power, <u>or</u> it may merely analogize the conditions of the artwork and the lover.*
> *(36) It may be insignificant <u>or</u> it may be that he was reluctant to assign the term to these synods because of John's use of the title.*

## *3.4 NOR*

Owing much to the process of inversion it started in the host clause, the negative conjunction 'nor' exhibited a strong preference for the comma across all three registers. Very short sentences as well as those sharing the same subject closely followed this trend, which made comma-free sentences stand out all the more. Compare and contrast the following illustrations selected from the fiction sub-corpus.

> *(37) Chambers never corrected the impression, <u>nor</u> did he encourage it.*
> *(38) So he didn't notice the way Tamia's hands clenched in her lap as they passed another car on the narrow street, <u>nor</u> did he hear the small sigh of relief that seeped past her lips.*
> *(39) Proper ladies did not discuss matters of a profitable nature <u>nor</u> did they discuss finances with anyone other than their husbands.*
> *(40) Professor Oglethorpe did not reply <u>nor</u> did he move.*

Similar reservations hold for sentence (44) below extracted from the news reporting sub-corpus, which stands in stark contrast to the remaining examples.

> *(41) None of these clients were improperly induced to retire early, <u>nor</u> is there any evidence that they were guaranteed a specific rate of return.*
> *(42) The thrust of the FBI action is not clear, <u>nor</u> is the nature of the agency's interest in those named in the subpoenas.*
> *(43) But the process is not automatic, <u>nor</u> is it necessarily required under the law.*
> *(44) Fads and disappointments are not new to the field of psychology <u>nor</u> is the need for people to get beyond them.*

In order not to sound too repetitive at this point, I will merely suggest that the comma-free 'nor' in example (45) borrowed from the academic sub-corpus might raise a few eyebrows.

*(45) This work, however, is not about beef <u>nor</u> is it a case study on postcolonial food choices in Cape Verde.*
*(46) We humans are not forever, <u>nor</u> is the time in which we find ourselves.*
*(47) But this is not the only approach, <u>nor</u> is it the best one.*
*(48) It is impossible to determine what Edna McMichael had done—if anything—to provoke this murderous desire in Warren, <u>nor</u> is it known how Ailey reacted to his declaration.*

*3.5 YET*

In complete sync with the other two registers, fiction was consistent in comma separations preceding the concessive coordinator 'yet', and it did not matter whether or not the coordinator was reinforced with 'and'. However, the brevity of the parenthesized coordinated clauses in sentence (51) made such discrepancies possible. The format of example (52), on the other hand, was so rare that it came to be viewed as a clear divergence from the norm.

*(49) Whatever happened brought with it a reason, <u>yet</u> it was not for them to judge.*
*(50) There was a slyness to his voice, a conspiratorial tone, and <u>yet</u> it was also eruptive.*
*(51) It didn't matter, he told himself—it was all real and <u>yet</u> it was not—but the question was always there as he fell asleep and woke.*
*(52) He'd been having a nightmare <u>yet</u> it was like him to wish not to be wakened from sleep.*

Sentence (56) was one of the very few examples of the concessive coordinator not accompanied by a comma in newspaper prose. Even when assisted by 'and', comma-deprived sentences could not retain that easy flow of their counterparts.

*(53) It's very difficult, <u>yet</u> it's challenging, and that's what I like.*
*(54) A dumb action movie in a summer full of dumb movies, and <u>yet</u> it's always entertaining.*
*(55) How can California be so anti-business and <u>yet</u> it's the sixth-largest economy in the world and has an unemployment rate that's below the national rate.*
*(56) Ingrid won't let me tell Ella <u>yet</u> it's not always happily ever after.*

Academic writers also felt a need to set off the concessive coordinator either with the comma or another punctuation mark, such as the dash in (59). If sentence (60) seemed to take more effort to process, it was in part due to less clearly marked boundaries between its two coordinate clauses.

*(57) It is a community, <u>yet</u> it is also a place of personal growth and development.*
*(58) For example, diabetes seems neatly confined to biology, <u>yet</u> it is disproportionately high among the poorest of Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans[.]*
*(59) That shouldn't be a necessary assurance—and <u>yet</u> it is.*
*(60) This allows a kind of understanding and insight that is neither irrational nonsense nor rationally defensible and evidenced and <u>yet</u> it is a category of knowing that is a distinguishable feature of being human[.]*

## 3.6 SO

A notably small percentage of commas preceding the coordinator 'so' in fiction may have come as a surprise, but a closer look revealed that many instances of 'so' were not coordinators at all. A common pattern emerged consisting of 'so' followed by a subject followed by a modal verb, which was closely associated with subordinate clauses of purpose dominating the sub-corpus. Clauses of purpose are not normally divided by commas, and as such are to be differentiated from the occasional clause of result appearing in the sub-corpus. Compare and contrast the first two and the last two illustrations below.

*(61) He longed to have her open her eyes <u>so</u> he could look into their amber depths.*
*(62) I couldn't shake the feeling that he'd gone back to Barb <u>so</u> he could help her raise their daughter.*
*(63) Her position offered Ash a view of her profile, <u>so</u> he could see that her delicate jaw was set while her hands were tightly clenched.*
*(64) He still had a few alcohol credits left for the month, <u>so</u> he could enjoy a couple of beers without it impacting his health insurance premium.*

While newspaper prose claimed more than a humble share of subordinate clauses, it nevertheless abounded in the good old relationship of coordination with a matching score of comma separations. Of 100 entries only two were not accompanied by a comma before the coordinator 'so', and one of them was (67) below. Unlike the two,

sentence (68) featured a subordinate clause aiming for the meaning of purpose, albeit expressed without the assistance of a modal verb.

*(65) Events are subject to change, so it's a good idea to call the venue.*
*(66) But I can't pay my bills on the part-time hours, so it's a Catch-22.*
*(67) But it should be like a raffle thing so it's unexpected.*
*(68) Dermatologic surgeons can lighten the tattoo so it's less visible[.]*

Even though it did not embrace the comma just as eagerly as newspaper prose, academic writing generally followed the trend. The initial 100 concordance lines in the academic sub-corpus constituted a mixture of the coordinating conjunction 'so', sometimes reinforced by 'and', and the subordinating conjunction 'so' in clauses of purpose. The comma may have been dropped in shorter sentences for fear of overuse and consequent text cluttering, as in (71). The loss of the comma was also found to be a matter of the writer's idiosyncrasy, e.g. (72) was one of several comma-free sentences produced by the same author.

*(69) Shipping may perhaps be the most efficient method of transportation, so it is vital that we address its impact on our environment.*
*(70) Despite such efforts to expand production, Saudi Arabia remains worried about oversupplying the market and thus depressing prices, and so it is likely to aim low in its planning for spare capacity.*
*(71) In the painting, he shifted the viewer's position so it is almost perpendicular to the rows of seats.*
*(72) Neuropathic pain is also very uncomfortable so it is worth screening Joan for any underlying depressive illness as this will inevitably increase her perception of pain.*

## 3.7 FOR

The causal coordinator 'for' was assigned a percentage in only two registers, fiction and academic writing, as newspaper prose contained an insufficient number of entries to put it on an equal footing with the other two.

Fiction writers were mostly in agreement using this literary conjunction accompanied by the comma, and the brevity of clauses was not considered a good enough reason not to introduce a comma separation. Lacking the comma, sentence (75) may have caused many a reader to backtrack—even if only for a split second—giving precedence to the chunk 'to use it for' over the conjunction itself due to the former's

high collocability rate. I dare say example (76) came very close to a stream-of-consciousness piece of prose—obviously a testament to the writer's preferences—considering the text was completely cleared of commas.

> *(73) Whoever had put it into this hole had had to work very hard, <u>for</u> it was a tight fit.*
> *(74) He left the torch behind, <u>for</u> it was no longer needed.*
> *(75) Papa himself would not have wished to use it <u>for</u> it was a crude firearm by modern standards.*
> *(76) In any case her devotion and dedication proved pivotal to the poet <u>for</u> it was said that Mosca's connections got him noticed.*

Scholars were again slightly more reluctant than fiction writers to insert a comma before the conjunction 'for'. Pondering on the choices made, I cannot help but wonder whether (79) and (80), the two comma-free sentences below, are truly ambiguous (e.g. 'pegs for' and 'possibilities for') or whether we have become conditioned through greater exposure and explicit teaching to regard some choices as more appealing than others. However, when there is something 'wrong' with a text, punctuation is seldom the only culprit; it is more often a lead to more substantial inadequacies and a tell-tale sign that other segments of writing need to be revisited, too.

> *(77) The above concepts are not reducible one to the other, <u>for</u> they are all indispensable in order to account for the complex reality of nationalism.*
> *(78) Intellectuals and students thus receive a near monopoly on speaking out, <u>for</u> they are thought to have no special interests beyond their prime responsibility of defending the moral order.*
> *(79) I have also shown that names are more than just labels or pegs <u>for</u> they are active, context-reflecting as well as context-generating.*
> *(80) You must be alert to all the pictorial possibilities <u>for</u> they are many and varied.*

## 4. Conclusion

There are obviously so many questions in want of an answer, and many more lurking behind and waiting to be asked. Is there anything that can be said with a reasonable amount of certainty? Perhaps the one thing I have learnt is that there are no actual hard and fast rules and laws governing the use of commas before coordinators in English, even though there are rules of thumb and tendencies propped on logic and

common sense. More importantly, I have learnt to give each comma (or the lack thereof) the benefit of the doubt, to approach each sentence with an open mind, to pause and ponder on its context and the writer's intentions. Finally, I have learnt to embrace the reality of not always having a ready-made answer to whether something is right or wrong, the reality of 'probably right' and 'maybe not' weighed against each other over and over again. So much hard work and thinking invested in a tiny punctuation mark? There is no doubt some will say it is not worth the effort, but hopefully many others will disagree.

*References*

Blue, Tina. (March 14, 2002). "Commas with Compound Sentences." *Dissertation Writing Tool*. Retrieved August 7, 2012 from http://grammartips.homestead.com/compoundsentences.html

Carter, Ronald and McCarthy, Michael. 2006. *Cambridge Grammar of English: Spoken and Written English Grammar and Usage*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Cayley, Rachael. (November 14, 2011). "Commas and Coordinating Conjunctions." *Explorations of Style: A Blog about Academic Writing*. Retrieved August 7, 2012 from http://explorationsofstyle. wordpress.com/2011/11/14/commas-and-coordinating-conjunctions/

Crystal, David. 2006. *The Fight for English: How Language Pundits Ate, Shot and Left*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Davies, Mark. 2008. *The Corpus of Contemporary American English: 450 Million Words, 1990-Present*. Available online at http://corpus.byu.edu/coca//.

Downing, Angela and Locke, Philip. 2002. *A University Course in English Grammar*. London and New York: Routledge.

*Get it Write*. Retrieved August 9, 2012 from http://www.getitwrite online.com/archive/020204WhenCommaBfAnd.htm

Greenbaum, Sidney and Quirk, Randolph. 1990. *A Student's Grammar of the English Language*. London: Longman.

Hicks, Wynford. 2007. *English for Journalists*. London and New York: Routledge.

Hill, Beth. (February 26, 2011). "No Comma Necessary—Coordinating Conjunctions Don't Always Need Commas." *The Editor's Blog*. Retrieved August 6, 2012 from http://theeditorsblog.net/2011/02/26/

no-comma-necessary-coordinating-conjunctions-dont-always-need-commas/

Kolln, Martha. 1991. *Rhetorical Grammar: Grammatical Choices, Rhetorical Effects*. New York: Macmillan.

Leech, Geoffrey and Svartvik, Jan. 1975. *A Communicative Grammar of English*. Harlow: Longman.

Reynolds, Brett. (2011). "The Myth of FANBOYS: Coordination, Commas, and College Composition Classes." *TESL Canada Journal*, 29(1), 104-112. Retrieved August 8, 2012 from http://www.tesl canadajournal.ca/index.php/tesl/article/viewFile/1092/911

*Rules for Comma Usage*. Retrieved August 6, 2012 from http://gram mar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/commas.htm

Truss, Lynne. 2004. *Eats, Shoots and Leaves: The Zero Tolerance Approach to Punctuation*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Young, David J. 1980. *The Structure of English Clauses*. London: Hutchinson.

# Marlowe and Company in Barnfield's *Greene's Funeralls* (1594)

*Roy Eriksen, University of Agder*

*Abstract*

The accomplished and daring but minor poet Richard Barnfield (1574-1620) was among the first poets to engage creatively with the works of Greene, Marlowe, and Shakespeare. This article argues that Sonnet 9 in Barnfield's *Greene's Funeralls* (1594) reveals not only his admiration for these literary innovators, but also his difficult manoeuvres on the fringes of the group of poetic rivals. Barnfield's often-quoted, but not fully understood "sonnet" reflects the young poet's attempts to accost his more famous contemporaries and also sheds light on the date of composition of *Doctor Faustus* (B) and the early circulation of Shakespeare's "sugred sonnets".

> Marlowe, Greene and Peele had got under the shades of a very large vine, laughing to see Nashe, that was but newly come to their college. (Dekker 1969 [1607]: 168)

These lines from Thomas Dekker's *A Knight's Conjuring* (1607) give a vivid picture of the literary relationships between his former companions in London 10-15 years earlier, one that is more convivial than what we have been led to believe. For in spite of the well-known rivalries between them, the poets are nevertheless said to belong to the same "college." One young daring, but accomplished, poet who was attracted to the group was Richard Barnfield (1574–1620), among the first to engage creatively with the poetic and dramatic works of Marlowe and Shakespeare in the 1590s. Stanley Wells reminds us in *Shakespeare and Company* that "Barnfield echoes both *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece* in poems published within a year or two of Shakespeare's" (Wells 2007: 95) and that he takes a line from Marlowe's *Edward II* (1.1. 62) and inserts it into his "The Complaint of Daphnis for the Love of Ganymede" (1594) (Wells 2007: 95). In *The Affectionate Shepherd*, too, Barnfield reveals that he was well read in *Dido, Queen of Carthage*.[1]

---

[1] More than a hundred years ago Charles Crawford observed that "it is remarkable that whole passages of *The Affectionate Shepheard* are written in

Barnfield was well tuned in to the literary fashions of his day and was like his more famous contemporary Samuel Daniel well-versed in the stylistic models proposed by Hermogenes and those who revived, propagated, and practiced his poetics.[2] Although he never rose to fame Barnfield is a sophisicated poet who like many of his better known contemporaries is steeped in Italian literary culture and today he has acquired some distinction because he appears to be an intermediary and a link between Marlowe and Shakespeare: Some of his poems were printed together with the poetry of Marlowe and Shakespeare in *The Passionate Pilgrim* (1599) and his poetry tellingly reveals knowledge about *Hero and Leander*, *Venus and Adonis*, as well as Shakespeare's "sugred sonnets." Can a poet thus strategically positioned and with first-hand knowledge of Marlowe's oeuvre also shed light in the vexed problem of the dating of Marlowe's plays? I believe so. This brief article argues that Barnfield's *Greene's Funeralls* (entered in Stationers' Register on 1 February, 1594), being evidence of his friendship with and admiration for Robert Greene, allows us to get a fuller view of Barnfield's aquaintance with other works of Marlowe, notably with *The Jew of Malta* and *Doctor Faustus*, and the role of Barnfield himself as potential mediator in the disputes among his more established elders.

Moreover, I propose that Barnfield's deliberate and repeated references to Marlowe and especially to *Doctor Faustus* prove that the scenes particular to the B Text were available to Barnfield no later than January 1594, thus undermining the current orthodoxy that the A Text is closer to Marlowe's original.[3] The play is now believed to have been penned shortly after the Tamburlaine plays. Scott McMillin and Sally-Beth MacInnis argue that "the references to Marlowe make it apparent that *Doctor Faustus* was on the stage well before *The troublesome Reign of King John* (1591)" (1998: 158).

---

seeming imitation of isolated passages of Marlowe's tragedy of *Dido*" (Crawford 1906: 1).

[2] For Barnfield's use of Hermogenes see Patterson 1970: 95 and 168. For Daniel's use of the ideas of style, see eg Patterson 1970: 73. 17, 293-95.

[3] The most representative work defending the current orthodoxy that the A-text, printed in 1604, best preserves the play as Marlowe penned it is Bevington and Rasmussen (1993).

I here wish to draw attention to a poem by Barnfield in *Greene's Funeralls*, his Sonnet 9, which is not technically a sonnet,[4] but shows him to be tuned in to literary fashions of the day. He associates Greene's poetry to painting (3) and uses the popular architectura poesis metaphor (4). In the poem he resumes Greene's critique, though in milder form, of "all that wrote upon him" (4). I quote three of the poem's five sixains in full:

> *Greene,* is the pleasing Object of an eie:
> *Greene,* pleasde the eies of all that lookt upon him.
> *Greene,* is the ground of everie Painters die:
> *Greene*, gaue the ground, to all that wrote upon him;
> Nay more the men, that so Eclipst his fame:
> Purloynde his Plumes, can they deny the same?
>
> Ah could my Muse, old Maltaes Poet passe
> (If any Muse could passe, old Maltaes Poet),[5]
> Then should his name be set in shining brasse,
> In shining brasse for all the world to show it.
> That little children, not as yet begotten
> Might royallize his fame when he is rotten.
>
> But since my Muse begins to vaile hir wings
> And flutter low vpon the lowly Earth:
> As one that sugred Sonnets, seldome sings.
> Except the sound of sadnes, more than mirth,
> To tell the worth of such a worthy man.
> Ile leave it unto those, that better can. (1–18)[6]

So far Sonnet 9 has attracted attention mainly because of the likely allusion to Shakespeare by means of the accusation of plagiarism ("Purloyned his plumes"), which seems to rehearse Greene's attack in 1592 on Shakespeare in *A Groatsworth of Wit* (Wells 2007: 66, 251). Barnfield's work was entered 1 February 1594 and it must have been

---

[4] Although the sonnet is an established form with fourteen rhymed verses arranged in Italian in blocks of eight *versus* six verses, "the word *sonet* simply means a poem" (Spiller 1992: 15). Spiller notes that if a "poem is structurally a variant of the basic sonnet, we can rest happy in calling it a sonnet, too" (4). Here, however, Barnfield's "sonnet" of five sixains is only tenuously related to the proportions of the basic sonnet.

[5] Eriksen 2007: 127-28.

[6] Klawitter (ed) 2005: 9-10.

written after the publication of Greene's pamphlet and his death in September 1592, because he is referred to rather disrespectfully as "rotten". The intervening year is also a likely period in which Shakespeare began composing and circulating his "sugred Sonnets among his friends," so the likely allusion to *The Sonnets* in Barnfield's description of "his Muse" "[a]s one that sugred Sonnets, seldome sings" (15) would also offer information about the early manuscript circulation of some of Shakespeare's sonnets in the group of *letterati*. It is most likely that Francis Meres in *Palladia Tamis* (1597) remembered Barnfield's phrase on the poet who wrote "sugred sonnets" and circulated them among members of the "college" of fellow poets. However, this glimpse into the early activities and status of Shakespeare should not prevent us from focusing on the obvious, that is, the other poet that is foregrounded in Sonnet 9: "old *Maltaes* Poet" (9. 7; 8). For Barnfield sets out a hierarchy among the poets who "wrote upon" Greene. Due to the fame of Shakespeare critics tend to focus solely on him, but Barnfield first draws attention to another and exceptional poet, possibly unsurpassable in his opinion, and moreover a poet that is associated with "old *Malta*": Christopher Marlowe. The identification of the poet and the island that he chose for the setting of one of his popular plays seem obvious: Malta, that in addition to being given a paragraph in what was a standard Latin schoolboy's text, Cicero's *In Verrem*, where it is singled out as a place of plunder, piracy and sacrilege, would also be known to Barnfield and his contemporaries through Marlowe's courageous urban comedy, *The Jew of Malta*. No other English poet or indeed European would be associated with Malta. Besides, the chiastic structuring of the verses on "old *Maltaes* Poet" and the use of *gradatio* in the ensuing two verses may possibly be interpreted as an allusion to Marlowe's compositional style (Eriksen 1996: 111-126).[7]

The identification of Marlowe in Sonnet 9 is interesting in itself, because it constitutes one of the first references on record to the play as by Marlowe, but internally in the "sonnet", it immediately follows upon Barnfield's criticism of "all the men that wrote upon" Greene. *The Jew of Malta* is not in itself singled out for attack, but another Marlowe play, *Doctor Faustus*, may have been intended. That play has been said to owe

---

[7] For Marlowe's preference for chiasmus in global speech construction, see esp. Eriksen 1987: 192-226.

something to Greene's *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* (Greg 1950: 1-2, 65). Besides, Marlowe's play had been acted not only in the late 1580s, and prior to the composition of Shakespeare's *King John*, it had also been acted in the period immediately before *Greene's Funeralls* were written. W.W. Greg stated that it could have been acted at the Theatre "any time before the summer of 1594, during one of the brief intermissions of the plague" (1950: 9) or as Fredson Bowers suggested: "during January 1593" (1973: II.125). While bearing this in mind, we note that two of Barnfield's verses in Sonnet 9—

> Then should his [Greene's] name be set in shining brasse,
> In shining brasse for all the world to show it. (9-10)

recall a passage in *Doctor Faustus* that has already been firmly connected with Marlowe's reuse of an image also found in Greene's *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*. Both instances involve the use of "brass". The passage in Greene is "Thou meanest before many daies be past,/To compass *England* with a wall of brasse." (2.203-204), which in Marlowe' version is adapted to setting in Germany, when his "spirits" are ordered to "wall all *Germany* with brasse,/And make swift *Rhine* circle faire *Wittenberge*" (115-116). The wonders performed by the magicians in Greene and Marlowe are closely enough phrased to support the claim of borrowing, and in his defence of Greene Barnfield uses it to pinpoint how Marlowe had learnt from Greene.

But Barnfield does not stop here: Before he refers more specifically to Marlowe's *Jew* and Shakespeare's *Sonnets* in lines 7-10 and 15, he draws attention to both poets in a couplet that prepares for his critique of them:

> Nay more the men, that so Eclipst his fame:
> Purloynde his Plumes, can they deny the same?

In the second of these lines the phrase "Purloynde his Plumes" quite obviously rehearses Greene's notorious attack on Shakespeare, but the first image and the rhyme seem specifically designed to pinpoint Marlowe, whom Greene had wanted to warn against the "vpstart Crow", Shakespeare. In fact, Barnfield's couplet recalls an emphatic point in the action of *Doctor Faustus*, the very end of the conflict between Faustus and the courtier Benvolio in the B-text. That conflict unfolds in the four

scenes set at or in the vicinity of the imperial court. Due to the sustained references in them to the Actaeon myth, commonly interpreted as a tale of forbidden knowledge, the conflict functions as a farcical play-within-the-play or a comic subplot patterned on Faustus's transgression in the main plot.[8] Like Faustus in his last hour to live, Benvolio is defeated and "forced into belief", Leonard Barkan notes (1980: 352). The courtier's disbelief and pride are converted into despair and submission in his "curtain" couplet:

> Sith black disgrace hath thus eclipst our fame,
> We'le rather die with grief than liue with shame.

Barnfield's allusion to these lines in his couplet ("Nay more the men, that so Eclipst his fame:/Purloynde his Plumes, can they deny the same?") becomes clear enough, if we identify what Marlowe had lifted from Greene, a passage in Greene's popular novella *Pandosto. The Triumph of Time* (1588). The context is one of moral choice, when Fawnia the shepherdess reasons with herself as follows:

> Cease then not only to say but to think to love Dorastus, and dissemble thy love, Fawnia, for better it were to die with grief than to live with shame.[9]

Benvolio's curtain line "We'le rather die with grief than liue with shame," quite obviously repeats Greene's prose at this crucial point in the novella. Then, too, the allusion is underpinned by the rhyme: fame–shame *versus* fame–same. The likelihood that the couplet coincided with the conclusion of the play's second period of uninterrupted acting in performance, i.e. before the intermission, would seem to enhance its role as a particular and memorable point of the action further.[10] On a comic or farcical level the metamorphosis of the courtier and his two companions, who also receive "brutish shapes", i.e. antlers and are thrown by devils into "a lake of mud and dirt" (IV.iii.24), prepares the spectators for

---

[8] See Barkan 1980: 317-59, and well-known versions in Alciati (1531), Whitney (1586), and the survey in Henkel and Schöne 1967; 1996: cols. 202-204.

[9] Robert Greene, *Pandosto. The Triumph of Time*, in es. Paul Salzman, *An Anthology of Elizabethan Prose Fiction*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987; 1998, p. 182.

[10] Marlowe's source is Ovid 1971: III, 138-258. The source is fully documented in Eriksen 1987: 145-49.

Faustus's desire in the final soliloquy to be "changed into a brutish beast" and "be chang'd into small water drops,/And fall into the ocean" (V.i.76–77) when he faces the devils. The comic scene obviously made an impact on contemporary audiences as well as on Shakespeare, because he referred to it in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and it inspired a similar farcical scene in *The Tempest* as also several verbal parallels suggest.[11]

There is, then, a cluster of allusions to Marlowe's work in Sonnet 9, in Barnfield's homage to Greene and record of how both Marlowe and Shakespeare had drawn on his deceased friend's work. Not only does the poem contain the first reference to Marlowe "as old Maltaes Poet" and an already noted allusion to Marlowe's borrowing from Greene in *Doctor Faustus*, it also contains a pun on the curtain couplet of the imperial sequence in the B-text, placing it and the B-text before 1 February 1594, not to say well before the Birde-Rowley "adicyons" of 1602.[12] The several references to Marlowe and *Doctor Faustus* constitute yet another piece of evidence that undermines the new orthodoxy that the A-text is based on "an authorial manuscript composed of interleaved scenes written by two dramatists" (Bevington and Rasmussen 1993: 64). The explanation offered by Bevington and Rasmussen is neat but does not square quite with the various pieces of evidence proving that significant parts the B-text, such as the fuller versions of the papal and the imperial scenes, existed prior to their shorter equivalents in the A-text, nor that certain stylistic features in scenes assumed to be by Samuel Rowley closely match that in undisputed scenes by Marlowe and also appear throughout the Marlowe canon.[13] In actual fact, material shared by the A-

---

[11] In connection with the cozening of the Host in *Merry Wives*, Bardolph explains how three Germans "Threw me off from behind one of them, in a slough of mire; and set spurs and away, like three *German* devils, three *Doctor Faustasses*" (IV.v.63-65). See "Falstaff at Midnight: The Metamorphosis of Myth," pp. 124-47. As for *The Tempest*, the punishment of the three courtiers in *Doctor Faustus* is the template for Prospero's revenge on Stephano, Trinculo, and Caliban for their attempt on Miranda, See Eriksen 1992: I. 285-305, and 1997: 130-31.

[12] Thomas Birde and Samuel Rowley were paid 4 pounds for writing additions to *Doctor Faustus* in 1602; these are apparently entirely lost. See Greg 1950: 11-12, and Bevington and Rasmussen 1993: 62

[13] See the discussion and documentation in Eriksen 1987: 193-95.

and B-texts clearly shows the A- text to be memorially derived from the B-text, as convingly demonstrated by Thomas Pettitt in "Marlowe's Texts and Oral Transmission: Towards the *Zielform*" (2006: 213-42). The evidence shows, Pettitt succinctly summarizes,

> that [the] A-version of *Doctor Faustus* reflects the impact of oral transmission (memorization and reproduction from memory) on a play whose original text, where they have material in common, is better represented by the B-text. (213)

Pettitt's thoughtful and systematic analysis thus confirms the observation that the B-text preserves Marlowe's style of speech construction better than the A-text,[14] and thus is evidence that the scenes particular to the B-text existed prior to the Birde-Rowley additions of 1602.

In this context, however, "Sonnet 9" in *Greene's Funeralls* documents Barnfield's complex relationship to the leading figures of what Dekker appropriately dubbed "their college" as well as his sustained engagement with Marlowe's works, thus corroborating existing data in support of an early date of the B-text. The allusions to and "quotes" from *Doctor Faustus* in Sonnet 9 strongly suggest that the young poet at some time at the end of 1593, and no later than January 1594, had access to or had seen a performance of a version of *Doctor Faustus* that contained the subplot involving the fate of the knight Benvolio. That subplot survives only in the version of the play printed in 1616 (the B-text), but is echoed both in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and *The Tempest*.[15] However, the nature of Barnfield's critique of Marlowe, makes it clear that Marlowe was still alive when Sonnet 9 was written ("can they deny the same"), that is the "sonnet" was written prior to May 29, 1593, when Marlowe was murdered, as it would make no sense to challenge a poet who was already dead. When all is considered, Barnfield's tribute to and defense of Greene's work is an important source for understanding the relationship between the leading dramatists and poems around 1590, while it at the same time contains conclusive evidence for an early date of the B-text of *Doctor Faustus*.

---

[14] Marlowe's characteristic style of periodic speech construction is better and more consistently preserved in the B-text, also where it shares materials with the A-text (Eriksen 1987: 220-221), a fact that corroborates the findings of Pettitt (2006: 213-42).

[15] See above at note 8.

*References*

Alciati, Andreas. 1531. *Emblematum Liber*. Augsburg.

Barkan, Leonard. 1980. "Diana and Actaeon: The Myth as Synthesis." *English Literary Renaissance* 10(3): 317-59.

Barnfield, Richard. 1990. *The Complete Poems*. Ed. George Klawitter. London and Toronto: Associated University Presses.

Bevington, David and Rasmussen, Eric (eds.). 1993. Christopher Marlowe, *Doctor Faustus. A- and B-texts (1604, 1616)*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Bowers, Fredson. 1973. *The Complete Works of Christopher Marlowe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University.

Clare, Janet and Eriksen, Roy (eds). 1997. *Contexts of Renaissance Comedy*. Oslo: Novus Press.

Crawford, Charles. "Richard Barnfield, Marlowe, and Shakespeare." *Collectanea*, Stratford-on-Avon: Shakespeare Head Press, 1906, 1st Ser., 1-16.

Dekker, Thomas. 1967. *A Knight's Conjuring*. London, Barley, 1607. Ed. E. D. Pendry. London: Edward Arnold, 1967.

Eriksen, Roy. 2008. "Friends or Foes. Marlowe and Shakespeare as Rivals in the Republic of Letters." *Borrowed Feathers. Plagiarism and the Limits of Imitation in Early Modern Europe*. Ed. Hall Bjørnstad. Oslo: Unipub. 191-200.

———. 2007. "*Insula est Melita*: Marlowe's Urban Comedy and the Poetics of Predation." *Urban Preoccupations: Mental and Material Landscapes, Early Modern and Modern Studies* Vol. 2. Ed. Per Sivefors. Pisa and Roma: Fabrizio Serra Editore. 123-42.

———. 2005. "*The Taming of a Shrew:* Composition as Induction to Authorship." *NJES* 4.2 (December): 41-61.

———. 1997. "Falstaff at Midnight: The Metamorphosis of Myth." *Contexts of Renaissance Comedy*. Eds. Janet Clare et al. 124-47.

———. 1992. "Masque Elements in Doctor Faustus and The Tempest." *The Show Within: Dramatic and Other Insets. English Renaissance Drama, 1550-1642*, I. Ed. François Laroque. 285-305.

———. 1987. *The Forme of Faustus Fortunes. A Study of the Tragedie of Doctor Faustus (1616)*. Atlantic Highlands N.J. and Oslo; Humanities Press and Solum Forlag.

Goy-Blanquet, Dominique (ed). 1996. *Shakespeare. Variations sur la lettre, le mètre et la mesure*. Paris: Société Shakespeare Francais.

Greg, W.W. 1950. *Marlowe's Doctor Faustus, 1604-1616*. Parallel Texts. Oxford: Clarendon.

Greene, Robert. [1987]1998. *Pandosto. The Triumph of Time*. In *An Anthology of Elizabethan Prose Fiction*. Ed. Paul Salzman. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Henkel, Arthur and Schöne. 1995[1967]- Albrecht. *Emblemata. Handbuch zur Sinnbildkunst des XVI. und XVII. Jahrhunderts*. Stuttgart–Weimar: Verlag Metzler.

Hopkins, Lisa. 2008. *Christopher Marlowe, Renaissance Dramatist*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Klawitter, George (ed) . 2005. *Poems of Richard Barnfield*. New York, Lincoln and Shanghai: iUniverse, Inc.

Laroque, François (ed). 1992. *The Show Within: Dramatic and Other Insets. English Renaissance Drama, 1550-1642*, 2 vols. Montpéllier: CERE.

McMillin, Scott and MacInnis, Sally-Beth. 1998. *The Queen's Men and Their Plays*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ovidius, Naso. 1971. *The Metamorphoses*. Ed. F.J. Miller. Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press and Heineman.

Patterson, Annabel M. 1970. *Hermogenes and the Renaissance. Seven Ideas of Style.* Princeton, NJ.: Princeton University Press.

Pettitt, Thomas. 2006. "Marlowe's Texts and Oral Transmission: Towards the *Zielform*." *Comparative Drama* 39(2): 213-42.

Sivefors, Per (ed). 2007. *Urban Preoccupations: Mental and Material Landscapes, Early Modern and Modern Studies* Vol. 2. Pisa and Roma: Fabrizio Serra Editore.

Wells, Stanley. 2007. *Shakespeare and Company*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Whitney, Geoffrey. 1969[1586]. *A Choice of Emblemes*. Leyden. Rpt, Menston: Scolar Press.

# Mobility, migrant mnemonics and memory citizenship: Saidiya Hartman's *Lose Your Mother*

*Pramod K. Nayar, University of Hyderabad, India*

*Abstract*

This essay, located at the intersection of memory studies and travel writing studies, examines a text in the genre of footsteps travel, Saidiya Hartman's *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route* (2007). As Hartman tries to retrace the routes slaves took when transported out of their villages in Ghana, she is performing acts of memory—and these acts are what the present essay studies. It first proposes that travel, movement and memory are intimately linked in Hartman's work. Later, it goes on to analyse memory itself as ethnic property and the problematic nature of Hartman's ethnic memory in order to argue a case for memory as multidirectional. It concludes by deploying Michael Rothberg and Yasmin Yildiz's idea of memory citizenship to read in Hartman's complicated attempts to situate herself within a particular memory of slavery.

> If the past is another country, then I am its citizen. (Hartman 17)

> No one had invited me. I was just another stranger, an academic from the States conducting research on slavery, which, in most people's eyes, made me about as indispensable as a heater in the tropics. (45)

Saidiya Hartman's *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route* (2007) is not, *contra* its title, about the Middle Passage, but rather about the places that served as the source-pool of slaves, specifically Ghana and more generally Africa. Hartman, a Professor of English at Columbia, is African American, and the author of work on subjection in African American writings.

Hartman, a little way into the narrative, declares 'dispossession was our history' (74). The statement in a sense captures her entire project, and sets the scene for the present essay. The problematic word in the declaration is 'our'. What or who constitutes this 'our'? What are its demographic parameters: Ghanaian, African, or African American? What is the shared cultural memory of slavery in Ghana and the USA? The 'our' here signals Hartman's aim, that of building a solidarity of memory between herself and Ghanaians, across space and time.

Hartman's project of retrieving the memory of slavery from Ghana is directed at acquiring a citizenship alongside the historically dispossessed and the dispossessed of history. However, this citizenship, my essay argues, is not easy to come by. Memory-citizenship in slavery's traumatic history is exclusionary, just as slavery was made possible through the exclusion of particular ethnic groups and races from the category of 'citizens' and humans. Further, Hartman's problematic project of memory retrieval is complicated by the tension her mobility engenders, between her status as an African American of Ghanaian origins journeying out to Ghana *and* her awareness of the race-situation in the USA and other parts of the world. Mobility across spaces, times and differently scaled histories of the blacks (slavery in Ghana and racism in the USA) makes Hartman's a cosmopolitan and even global memory of atrocity and slavery in what is called 'multidirectional memory'. If the memory of slavery is the ethnic property of a particular group in Ghana, Hartman's project of acquiring a citizenship within this Ghanaian memory is woven into her consciousness of *other* similarly dispossessed groups, immigrant memories and racial contexts. All memory of slavery, Hartman discovers, thus aspires to the condition of multidirectionality and cosmopolitanism. *Lose Your Mother* therefore constantly seeks to negotiate between Ghanaian cultural memories—the ethnic property of the Ghanaians—and Hartman's own cosmopolitan mobility that, in turn, seeks an insertion into this and other memories. Her memory work, the essay demonstrates, is fraught with ironies due to the complicated nature of her own mobility. My essay focuses on these tensions of memory that permeate Hartman's text.

Hartman's narrative is in the genre of footsteps travel (travellers who follow, sometimes even centuries later, in the wake of predecessor travellers) where this journey is always in conjunction with an older journey available as memory. I argue that travel and memory are constantly intertwined in Hartman, with a palpable resonance of the Middle Passage in the individual and cultural memory she brings to the surface. Travel becomes a new form of memorializing for those who are entirely footsteps travellers. I also explore the question of memory as ethnic property in Hartman's narrative. Finally, I argue that Hartman's acts of memory are acts that seek a 'memory citizenship' in problematic and complicated ways.

*Travel, Movement and Memory*

Hartman presents herself as a courier of memories, where she ferries her memories– from the USA to Ghana, and hopes to reverse this within her memory-work when she acquires a first-hand experience of the popular memories in Ghana. She also ferries her expertise, as one who has researched slavery, and therefore as a cultural insider to slavery armed with discursive though not experiential knowledge of slavery, into Ghanian spaces. This is travelling memory. Travelling memory is effected when couriers like Hartman ferry memories across spaces and borders, but also, in her case, when her well-researched and acquired (in the form of family stories) memories of earlier journeys drive her own in the footsteps genre of travel.

The very first incident narrated in the Prologue foregrounds the sustaining themes of the book, mobility and memory. Hartman writes that as soon as she disembarked from the bus at Elmina (Ghana), she heard herself being called 'Obruni'. The word means 'a stranger. A foreigner from across the sea'. Kids call her 'obruni' and Hartman is made intensely aware of herself right away: 'I imagined myself in their eyes: an alien … I was the proverbial outsider' (3). The narrative opens with the conclusion of one segment of her travel, to Ghana from the USA. Hartman underscores the sense of displacement and movement when she writes: 'My too-fast gait best suited to navigating the streets of Manhattan, my unfashionable German walking shoes' (3). The Prologue itself is titled 'The Path of Strangers'. Her arrival, at the end of a journey, makes her a stranger to the place she disembarks at. She arrives as a stranger, even though, as she notes, she comes with the baggage of individual and cultural memory of the place her ancestors had left behind and were dislocated from. (Unrelatedly yet interestingly, she is also marked out by the sheer physical energy and style of her individual mobility.)

Yet her mobility itself was driven by a need to belong to an elsewhere. It was because she felt a stranger at home in the USA that she sets out on her travel, and ends up arriving, as noted above, as a stranger: 'weary of being stateless […] want[ing] to belong somewhere' or 'at least […] a convenient explanation of why [she] felt like a stranger' (4). She invents 'fictions of origins' for herself when growing up (5). This is the memory-work, albeit founded on myths and false memories, that inspire her mobility. What Hartman does here is to explain her travels as

a physical quest for origins and a quest into a past that was rooted in the shameful contexts of slavery. Two 'conditions' and contexts of travel must be noted right away: (i) there is Hartman's travel to Ghana into her family's and cultural past and (ii) that past itself is about travel, of the slaves out of Ghana at the hands of the slave traders. Thus Hartman constantly positions her own travel as an implicit reworking, repetition and refraction of an earlier, more horrific, travel. It is in travel that she needs to find her roots. And this is where Hartman makes her first major departure from the quest-for-origins story.

As Hartman makes clear her travel is not like the more celebrated one of Alex Haley, the author of the cult work *Roots*. Hartman writes:

> unlike Alex Haley, who embraced the sprawling clans of the Juffure as his own, grafted his family into the community's genealogy, and was feted as the lost son returned, I traveled to Ghana in search of the expendable and the defeated […] I would seek the commoners, the unwilling and coerced migrants who created a culture in the hostile world of the Americas and who fashioned themselves again, making possibility out of dispossession. (7)

Hartman does not want her 'roots'. She wants rather to 'retrace the process by which lives were destroyed and slaves born' (6), an 'itinerary of destruction from the coast to the savannah' (40). It is in the routes of the slaves rather than in the communities and families in Ghana that she would, she believes, find her own identity:

> The routes traveled by strangers were as close to a mother country as I would become. Images of kin trampled underfoot and lost along the way, abandoned dwellings repossessed by the earth, and towns vanished from sight and banished from memory were all that I could ever hope to claim […] the slave route […] both an existent territory with objective coordinates and the figurative realm of an imagined past. (9)

As the narrative proceeds we see Hartman seeking out routes through which the slaves would have been forced to march, the dungeons where they were incarcerated, and the path to the ports from where they boarded the ships to the Americas for a life of slavery. Her roots are the slave routes. Her home is their mobility.

Hartman also notes another kind of travel, that of African Americans who went back to Africa, 'cross[ing] the Atlantic in droves to do something momentous—to participate in an international movement for

freedom and democracy and to build a black nation' (36). But this is not the travel Hartman is interested in. These émigrés, writes Hartman, 'had faith that the breach of the Middle Passage could be mended and orphaned children returned to their rightful homes' (39). Here Hartman conflates memory with myth, and both enmeshed within travel. The myth of reconciliation and retrieval of origins ('rightful homes') works alongside memories of the slave-past, and the hope is of undoing an older journey through a new one, for a different purpose. It is almost as though this new journey—'the return to Africa'—retraces with a difference the older, more traumatic, journey. Hartman's trip to Ghana emerges from her memories of her family's travels and her recreation of this ancient and more horrific journey means that she is a courier of memories.

Astrid Erll (2011) has proposed that such a wandering of carriers, media, contents, forms and practices of memory constitutes a transcultural memory but one that is made possible through the *travels* of memory across spaces. That is, transcultural memory is a consequence of mobile, or travelling, memory. Hartman's narrative, as I shall now demonstrate, fits right into the category of such a 'travelling memory' that eventually leads to the making of a transcultural memory.

First, Hartman is a carrier of memory. She carries family, history, the researched materials on the slave trade, photographs, etc. She participates in the shared rituals of looking at family photographs, displays the inherited habitus of the slave descendant and has both explicit and implicit knowledge of slavery. She embodies in herself these memories, and transports them to Ghana.

Second, she also carries the memories in many media formats, several of which are placed strategically throughout her book as family photographs, facsimiles of historical records, but also oral traditions and stories that Hartman recounts. Travelling memories involve the use of multiple media formats, as Hartman demonstrates. It must be noted that Hartman's inventory of media and formats draw attention to the *materiality* of memory—a theme she will return to in a different way in her narrative, as we shall see.

Third, the content of these print and other media are shared, public narratives such as anti-abolition tracts, autobiographies and histories. Hartman's 'experience' of the past is mediated through the contents of the media she is using. (The term 'experience' is used advisedly, since

Hartman is only a footsteps traveller along the slave route.) Contents of cultural memory, Erll argues, cannot exist outside individual minds, and minds must actualize them. As we shall see, one way that Hartman does this is to somatise the memory.

Fourth, mnemonic practices are what Hartman seeks in Ghana. These practices are mainly memorials and the loca lrituals of recalling the dead. She finds that roads are named after heroic moments in Ghanaian history, but there are no rituals that deify the dead. As a footsteps traveller who has come prepared with a history of slavery in her head, Hartman now seeks concrete instantiations of the past she 'knows' is there. Here the footsteps traveller approximates to the identity of the neo-colonial traveller who, in Mary Louise Pratt's reading, 'does not claim the authority to represent, but only to express recognition of what he has learnt to know is there' (2008: 228). The re-cognition of signs of slavery is what Hartman the footsteps traveller seeks: she knows the villages do carry memories of their dead ancestors, but this is not something that they are willing to share with Hartman.

Finally, mnemonic forms—symbols, icons—that enable repetition across contexts constitute an important aspect of travelling memory. Hartman hopes to track these icons across the landscape but ends up with Elmina castle with its dirt on the dungeon floor, cowrie shells (which played an important role in the barter/trade of slaves) but no icons. What icons there are, are meant to glorify particular myths of local/native heroism rather than defeat.

But what Hartman documents in her work is the repression of individual and cultural memory. In Hartman's case, she travels back to Ghana with the memories of the slave trade along the route of the slave trade (but perhaps she flew) to the place where all memories (supposedly) began. In this place—Accra and its suburbs—memories have a different role to play.

What Hartman perceives in Ghana is 'the apparition of slaves and sovereigns hover[ing] above the town' (58)—but this is a perception that nobody else seems to share. As she traverses the city of Accra she discovers the grand and grandiose names of the streets and roads with names like 'African Liberation Square'. Quickly Hartman discovers the irony of these names: 'not one taxi driver in Accra could find his way to African Liberation Square, but almost all knew the location of the US

Information Service' (24). What Hartman then does is to personalize the geography of the city. She writes:

> I began to map the city in my own terms […] my signposts were Not Independence Lane and Obruni Road and Beggar's Corner and Shitty Lane. In a month I had become indifferent to the elusive glory of the age of independence as everyone else in Accra. (24)

She admits that this view of Ghana and Accra obliterates the utopian visions and ideals of the independence struggle but she is also emphatic that her traversal of the streets of Accra and her participation in the slave past cannot imply a participation in the utopianism of certain memory-cultures.

With this Hartman disconnects herself from another kind of memory culture that is in evidence in Accra, namely, the glorification and mythification of particular moments in Ghanaian history. Hartman seeks only a particular memory culture, but one that, as she discovers, Ghana does not want to keep or practice. When she writes 'except for the castle, no visible signs of slavery remained' (49), Hartman seems to suggest that Ghana should have had, if not commemorations, at least memorials to slavery and its history. She demands a particular trajectory of racial-cultural memory but finds that she cannot, by virtue of the direction of her own mobility (an African American returning to Ghana), determine it. She demands an archive, but this archive by necessity is local, rooted and ethnically bounded.

*Memory as Ethnic Property*

<div align="right">

'Africans prefer to forget slavery'
—teacher in *Lose Your Mother* (190)

</div>

Michael Rothberg and Yasmin Yildiz propose that memory has often functioned as 'ethnic property'. If that is the case then variants of ethnicity emerge in the ways in which memories are retained, reinvented and forgotten. Hartman discovers, I propose, that memories have travelled out of Africa into the Americas with the slaves. The descendants there (in the USA) hold on to the precious cargo of these horrific memories of dispossession, while the Africans themselves wish

to forget the past. In a sense, then, Hartman's footsteps travel not only seeks to recreate the paths of the former slaves, it aims at calling the attention of the Africans to their own past. She needs to be, in other words, a reminder to the Africans of their own slave pasts. Hartman is at once only a footsteps traveller and a fellow-journey man to the Africans should they seek to retrace their historical paths. We see here a split between the function of a footsteps traveller and a fellow-journey man in Hartman's text, but one which is disallowed by the Africans because they do not wish to traverse their ancient paths with her.

Her complaint, reflected in the epigraph to this section, seems to suggest that while African Americans like herself 'haven't forgotten [their] dispossession' (87), the Africans do not wish to go down that path. Hartman is drawing a link between ethnicity and memory here, even if that memory is disavowed. Memory as ethnic property is the memory of travel but also the travels of memory between generations, and it is these travelling memories that determine their ethnicity and their sense of home.

Hartman declares that she is interested in the 'popular memory of slavery' (27). There are two ironies of memory-work in Hartman's text, both connected with this claim. The first irony occurs when she discovers that the descendants of slaves—and those who sold their fellow tribesmen and women, but also members of other tribes, into slavery—do not wish to retain this memory themselves. The entire 'retracing' of paths and retrieval of memories that Hartman embarks upon in the course of her footsteps travels is thwarted because the popular in Ghana is constituted by a deliberate cultural amnesia rather than a cultural memory (unless one argues that amnesia is also a form, albeit negative, of memorializing). The second ironic moment is when Hartman admits that African Americans retain their cultural memories of slavery. Hartman writes:

> The transience of the slave's existence still leaves its traces in how black people imagine home as well as how we speak of it. We may have forgotten our country, but we haven't forgotten our dispossession. It's why we never tire of dreaming of a place that we can call home, a place better than here, wherever here might be. It's why one hundred square blocks of Los Angeles can be destroyed in one evening. We stay there, but we don't live there. (87)

Home and its loss for Hartman has ethnic memory written into it, as we can see here, almost like a chronotope where space-time fuse in the representation and the landscape consists of points in geography across which plots, histories, stories, events and people *move*. Hartman is making the linkage between place and racial memory here, and underscores the persistent denial of home: Africans historically displaced from Africa ('our dispossession') by virtue of a forced mobility, and the loss of home in Los Angeles in the race riots. Places are made through racial memory, suggests Hartman.

Cultural memories of slavery constitute the very ethnicity of African Americans today, and inform their sense of not-belonging and of ghettoization. But what is the popular memory of slavery that Hartman seeks in Ghana? The popular memory of slavery is one that the Ghanaians try to erase and the African Americans seek to retain, treasure, reinvent, and occasionally take out and air. The 'transience' of the slave's existence that Hartman speaks of is one that the Ghanaians— the theoretical resource pool for memories—do *not* acknowledge. As a chief tells her, 'it is still difficult for us to speak of slavery. One cannot point a finger and say he or she is a slave. It is prohibited to do so' (193). Cultural memories of certain kinds do not have the language for articulation. Therefore it is the denial of cultural memory that constitutes the ethnic property of Ghanaians. The Ghanians suggest that they, and maybe they alone, have the right *not* to remember. (This also does away with the problematic issue, one raised since the Holocaust, of authentic and inauthentic memory.)

Hartman argues that this denial of history extended back into the seventeenth century when 'it prevented the enslaved from speaking of a life before servitude and it abolished their ancestry' (193). Where Hartman seeks in her travel an 'antidote to oblivion' (193) the Africans seek the routes to oblivion.

There is yet another dimension to the denial of cultural memory as ethnic property that Hartman discovers. Exploring the nature of the slave trade, she discovers that the Ghanaians had sold their own countrymen and women into slavery. One man defends their actions from over a century ago by saying 'defensively': 'we were the middlemen, but others introduced us to the trade', before adding: 'those who sold the slaves are dead or have gone away […] those who remain here, are the descendants of slaves' (188). Hartman notes how the ruling classes conquered the

area and 'subjugated the original inhabitants, who first became their slaves and then their subjects' (189). She discovers 'a raiding empire fattened by the slave trade' (190) where the 'royalists and elites, like their European counterparts, envisioned the stateless and the sovereignless as suited for slavery' (190). Suddenly acts of ethnic memory retrieval *today* realign the tribes of the *past*, of those who were sold into slavery and those who did the selling. What Hartman discovers is the complicated nature of ethnic memory. Nobody she meets wishes to revisit the past because the past is full of sordid alliances across ruling elites, the Europeans and the slave traders, and intensely divisive for today's Ghana.

This ethnic memory that Hartman seeks to retrieve is personally available to her in the form of family records and photographs, as I have noted earlier. When she moves to Ghana she seeks similar materials of entire communities and tribes of people sold into slavery. It must be noted that as Hartman moves across Ghana in search of ethnic memories she discovers that there is a great silence over this memorialization. Puzzled and frequently frustrated by this discursive veiling of ethnic memories (a process further complicated by the discursive operation of naming and renaming of places in Ghana, as seen above), Hartman then turns to material artifacts.

Hartman begins to combine material artifacts with documentary history. This fits in with Susannah Radstone's claim that 'even when (and if) memory travels, it is only ever instantiated locally, in a specific place and at a particular time' (2011: 117). In Hartman the instantiation takes very material forms.

First, I look at the materiality of memory. Hartman visits the dungeons whose floors are now covered with human waste solidified over the centuries—and never been cleaned: 'eighteen inches of dirt and waste' which she feels guilty walking over. This is a medium through which memories have sedimented over generations, and must be treated as technologies of memory. (Astrif Erll notes that memory is more than remembrance and involves bodily aspects such as habitus, (2011: 14).) But Hartman writes:

> I refused this knowledge. I blocked it out and proceeded across the dungeon as if the floor were just that and not the remnants of slaves pressed further into oblivion by the soles of my shoes. I came to this fort searching for ancestors, but in truth only base matter awaited me. (115)

The materiality of memory troubles Hartman, who is more used to dealing with texts. Indeed she confesses as much:

> I had entered the dungeon intending to do all the fine things stated in the marble plaque posted at the entrance: commemorate the dead, remember the anguish of the ancestors, and prevent such crimes against humanity from ever happening again. They were the kind of words encountered at sites of atrocity throughout the world, and, in all likelihood, men would continue to produce the occasions for such words. They were confident words, which promised justice and espoused faith in humanity…. (115-16)

She strives to 'hear the groans and cries that once echoed in the dungeon, but the space was mute' (116). Instead, what she experiences is a visceral reaction to the memories stored in the dungeons: 'my chest grew congested and my palms started sweating and I got light-headed. My skin became tight and prickly, as if there was too little of it and too much of everything else. The hollow inside my chest expanded. I could feel my torso swell…' (118). The castle's dungeons are the space of great physical suffering. Hartman's account of the space and her own physical discomfort there suggests a materiality of memory that somehow seeks to somatize the past, to record viscerally in a *present* body, the memories of a suffering from long ago. This somatization is an attempt to site, to locate the present, by a citation and instantiation of the past. It is also a crucial way of carrying the memory onward, for the contents of cultural memory exist within the individual mind, as noted earlier.

Second, in order to site the present Hartman cites the past in a clear case of what Mary Louise Pratt terms '*antecedent literarios*', or prior literary productions. In this act of citing *antecedent literarios*, the contemporary traveller 'express[es] recognition of what he has learnt to know is there' (2008: 228). This is precisely what Hartman does when she presents herself as one who knows the history of slavery ingrained in the very stones and landscape of Ghana. 'I had tried, desperately, to wrench tragedy from the landscape and had failed', writes Hartman (69). In several chapters Hartman combines a semi-archaeological mnemonics with documentary history. She traces family history, examines the material evidence in castles and dungeons (which constitute monuments to cultural memory), reads the tracts on abolition and accounts of slaves like Kwabena and Frederick Douglass (103), and of the slave girl tortured to death on a ship, and who became the subject of William Wilberforce's anti-slavery campaign. These texts constitute her

*antecedent literarios*, where she demonstrates knowledge of the slave trade, and a knowledge which she *thinks* qualifies her to perform acts of memory for the slaves. It is this *antecedent literarios* that positions the migrant as one with specific memories—memories that are not part of the mnemonic landscape of Ghana, but constitute a multidirectional memory where the contents consist of *shared* images and narratives. Hartman, who hopes for a specific trajectory of memories (as noted earlier) brings *these* memories into her study of Ghanaian culture today.

*Multidirectional memory*

It is her footsteps travel that constructs Hartman as a legitimate migrant—or so she thinks—to the archives of suffering. Her awareness of black dispossession, her memories of her own family's slave history, and her knowledge of the African American, all built on a discursive knowledge, compel her to seek an identity with Africans from Ghana. Approaching the cultural memory of slavery from an entirely different direction, as an African American whose personal history originates in Ghana (and not as a tourist of suffering-porn), she believes she is entitled to access this memory and thus build solidarities with those whose own ancestors had walked the path to the slave ships.

Migrant archives of memory, argue Rothberg and Yildiz, are multidirectional, where the migrants engage with the past and with a history and memory of which they are ostensibly not a part of. The archive of trauma is read from different vantage points, especially by those who are migrants to that archive.

In *Lose Your Mother* Hartman's lineage is complicated. Her family records reveal slave ancestors originating in Ghana and the nearby regions. Her project for Ghana is however more than a tracing of her individual lineage, as we have noted. ('Neither blood nor belonging accounted for my presence in Ghana. There were no survivors of my lineage or far-flung relatives of whom I had come in search', 7.) She wishes to trace the several routes that thousands of slaves, most anonymous and unrecorded, took out of Ghana.

Hartman makes two moves here. First, she locates slaves *as* strangers. Hartman writes:

> The most universal definition of the slave is a stranger […] Contrary to popular belief Africans did not sell their brothers and sisters into slavery. They sold

strangers: those outside the web of kin and clan relationships, non-members of the polity, foreigners and barbarians […] lawbreakers… (5).

Here Hartman redefines the very nature of slavery as a custom where those outside the pale were designated as potential slaves and sold. This constitutes a re-reading of the entire archive of slavery as a history of making-foreigners.

Second, as a late-comer to the history of slavery and as a migrant to the archives of pain, Hartman categorizes herself as a stranger: 'I was born in another country, where I also felt like an alien and which in part determined why I had come to Ghana' (4). In order to 'belong', she says, she wished to enter the past of slavery:

I wanted to engage the past […] If slavery persists as an issue in the political life of black America, it is not because of an antiquarian obsession with bygone days or the burden of a too-long memory, but because black lives are still imperiled and devalued by a racial calculus and a political arithmetic that were entrenched centuries ago. This is the afterlife of slavery […] I, too, am the afterlife of slavery.

(6)

This dual move constitutes the very structure of memorializing in Hartman's footsteps travel. Slaves were sold as strangers and left little record of their routes and roots. Hartman is a stranger to this history and hence wishes to retrace it for herself. The 'afterlife' Hartman mentions is a 'ghosting' of the slave archive.

Hartman is a migrant to Ghanaian history and its archives, and this she admits very early: 'If I had hoped to skirt the sense of being a stranger in the world by coming to Ghana, then disappointment awaited me' (17). Hartman's project is an instance of multidirectional memory where migrants to the memory project also contribute to and participate in it.

I propose that migrant memories of the kind Hartman is exploring here demands a 'biographical pact' (adapting it from Philip Lejeune's theory of an 'autobiographical pact').[1] This biographical pact, a key

---

[1] In Lejeune's theory the autobiographical narrative signs a referential pact, and it relies on at least two presuppositions: 1) the permanence of an origin, of the truth of a name, and 2) the belief in a history of the signatory's formation, defined as *ipseity*, the identification of the self with the self, all the more affirmed because it is repeated, uncovered, and recovered through a series of

component of memory work, is a memorial. The narrator of *Lose Your Mother* signs a pact to be the constant reminder and remainder that refers to a referent, slavery. It presents the observer-Hartman as a migrant to the archives of memory, but one who constantly participates in the fidelity project where slaves are remembered and memorialized. It posits the signatory of *Lose Your Mother* as an unchanging (but not un-*moved*) observing self as the monitor to the irrecoverable Other, but an Other to whom fidelity is owed.

The biographical pact of course has a tragic irony underwriting it because there are no biographies to be obtained. In a particularly poignant passage which reveals this pact Hartman writes:

> My graduate training hadn't prepared me to tell the stories of those who had left no record of their lives and whose biography consisted of the terrible things said about them or done to them […] how does one write a story about an encounter with nothing? […] In reading the annual reports of trading companies and the letters that travelled from London to Amsterdam to the trade outposts on the African coast, I searched for the traces of the destroyed. In every line item, I saw a grave [...] To read the archive is to enter a mortuary… (17)

So how does the migrant participate in a memory project when there are no readable archives? And, how does the migrant participate in a memory project when the direct recipients of this memory—as we can think of the Ghanaians in Ghana—only wish for a tangential connection to this project?

Hartman finds that her biographical pact is with other African Americans who have 'returned' to Ghana. Referred to as the 'tribe of the Middle Passage'—descendants of Middle Passage survivors (103)—the African Americans have an interesting location in Ghana. Hartman describes it thus:

> They possessed no kin, no clan, or a village home, all of the essential elements that defined belonging in the eyes of Ghanaians. The arrival of African Americans in Elmina could hardly be called a homecoming. Rather it was a continuation of a long local tradition of renting land to foreigners […] No one envisioned [them] […] as errant children who had returned or as chickens come home to roost. No one rejoiced that they were back […] African Americans were tenants rather than sons and daughters. (104)

---

events. The autobiographical pact assumes the formal obligation to remain in one's place in the narrative capture of what is unique to the author's self.

Curiously, everybody in Ghana, Hartman says, 'recognize[d] me as the daughter of slaves' (154), although none of them wants to talk about slavery: 'most refused to follow me down this dangerous path and responded with studied indifference to all my talk of slavery' (154). And here lies the catch:

> Despite the dictates of law and masters, which prohibited the discussion of a person's origins, everyone remembered the stranger in the village, everyone recalled who had been a slave and with a discerning glance just as easily identified their descendants. (155)

What Hartman is pointing to is the first contradiction in the memory of slave pasts: that there is a prohibition in Ghana, among actual descendants of slaves and slave traders, on citing from memory, not against memory itself. Approaching it as a footsteps traveller armed with enough discursive knowledge of the slave past, Hartman discovers that slave memory lies as a subtext to conversations, even as it is imprinted materially on dungeon floors and material artifacts (as we have already seen).

As a migrant to the archive she herself is free to cite from (textual) memories, but this is precisely what disqualifies her in the eyes of the Ghanaians (who perhaps see themselves as experiential insiders to the archive of memories) from entering the archive *they* built and shared. They recognize the archive exists. They also recognize that she is aware of the material memories of their slave past, but they would stand as the only legitimate archons to that archive whereas Hartman stays a stranger, outside of the archive. This is the second contradiction in the memory of slavery. The footsteps traveller arrives to revivify the memories of slavery (although, again ironically, Hartman admits that 'to read the archive is to enter a mortuary'), but ends up a weary re-tracer of footsteps that are vaguely imprinted in Ghana. Having come alone as a migrant, she had hoped to find people who would lead her through the archive. Yet, towards the end, she remains a lone stranger. The footsteps travel does not result in company when walking historical paths.[2]

---

[2] Yet, Hartman discovers, there is a way in which slave history is cited in Ghana: in the form of zombie or voodoo stories. There are accounts where slaves, through magic, have been transformed into automatons (155). The slaves themselves, of course, had to develop amnesia: 'to forget their origins and

*Conclusion: Memory Citizenship*
Hartman's narrative must be treated as one that simultaneously performs what I have called memory-work, of her own individual memory as well as a cultural memory. Cultural memory, as Marita Sturken defines it, is a

> Field of cultural negotiation through which different stories vie for a place in history […] a field of contested meanings in which [people] interact with cultural elements to produce concepts of the nation, particularly in events of trauma, where both the structures and the fractures of a culture are exposed. (1997: 1-3)

In *Lose Your Mother* memory-work is the imbrication, through mobility, of personal history with a cultural memory archive.

Hartman hopes to locate in the archive of suffering her (a) individual traumatic history, (b) memories of a family of slaves, and (c) the history of dispossession within an African context of similar memories. She seeks not identity but *identification*, a conscious and agential act of locating herself in a particular history and being recognized (i.e., identified) for her location within this history. With this she hopes to also attain/obtain a citizenship of sorts. Hartman's biographical pact with the history of every slave who left Ghana is messily merged with the autobiographical pact where she is keen on presenting herself as a more or less unchanging observer of her own life. It is her individual memory that she hopes to retro-fit into a cultural memory. This move, I have proposed, is what is denied her. Her attempts at a memory citizenship fail because Ghana does not wish to carry around a cultural memory of slavery. More importantly, as she comes to the archive as a migrant, she also travels to it with an entirely different identity: as a cosmopolitan African. Thus, her acts of memory citizenship with the Ghanaian archive of slavery do not merely *not* relocate her personal memory into the

---

accept their slave status' (156). But there is of course the commercialization of the past with tourist operations in the African continent. 'Every town or village,' writes Hartman, 'had an atrocity to promote—a mass grave, an auction block, a slave river, a massacre' (163). Hartman sees the state-sponsored attempts to remember slavery as a means of 'silencing the past' and 'curb[ing] all discussion of African slavery and its entailments' (164). She criticizes the present generations for 'want[ing] a past of which they could proud of […] They preferred to overlook the fact that the Asantehene (king of Asante) had helped to shove their ancestors on slave ships' (164). In a sense, then, Hartman is proposing a particular responsibility to memory here.

Ghanaian one; it ends up cosmopolitanizing even the African archive. To this I shall now turn.

The set of questions (drawing from Hartman's statement, 'dispossession was our history', 74) that I began with—what constitutes this 'our'? What are its demographic parameters? What is the shared cultural memory of slavery in Ghana?—constitute the attempted imbrication of the personal with the communitarian. When Mary Ellen, Hartman's friend in Accra calls herself black American rather than African American Hartman asks: 'what connection had endured after four centuries of dispossession?' (29). The burden of dispossession, however, is different for Mary Ellen and Hartman. Mary Ellen wishes to stop carrying around the burden any more, while Hartman wishes to find her citizenship precisely in this burden. Where Mary Ellen is less interested in decoding the archive of slavery, Hartman believes that resurrecting the archive for herself by performing a kind of memory work will give her a location in the past which, as she has already declared, is a 'foreign country' of which she is a citizen.

In the US, Hartman says, the '"legacy of slavery" is a way of saying that we had been treated badly for a very long time and that the nation owes us' (165). But Hartman wishes to expand the issue of slavery to beyond the blacks in America: she wishes the state to 'acknowledge that slavery was a crime against humanity' (166). This complicates the kind of memory and identification that Hartman seeks. By proposing that slavery be seen as a crime against *humanity*, whatever be the ethnic or racial identity of the victims, she is rewriting the history of slavery as a *global* history of atrocity. She states this more or less explicitly when she writes: 'my future was entangled with it [Africa], just as it was entangled with every other place on the globe where people were struggling to live and hoping to thrive' (233). (This is not substantially different from Frantz Fanon's famous and controversial declaration: 'Every time a man has contributed to the victory of the dignity of the spirit, every time a man has said no to an attempt to subjugate his fellows, I have felt solidarity with his act', (2008: 176).)

What we have here is a cosmopolitanization of atrocity memory. This is another instance of multidirectional memory where the ethnic properties of different groups contribute to a global history of atrocity and trauma even though Hartman is simultaneously trying to find *local* memory projects in Ghana into which she can fit her own personal one.

When she retreads historical paths of slavery in Ghana she cannot seem to ignore global trajectories of slavery either. Her footsteps travel in Ghana is, in effect, messy because the map she carries on this travel is a global map of suffering and slavery. That is, the cosmopolitanization complicates her avowed attempt to recall *black* slave history in Ghana, a history into which she seeks insertion and with which she claims identification. Hartman, soon after making the pronouncement about history ('dispossession was our history') writes:

> The solidarity I felt with other black people depended largely on this history, whereas in Ghana their identity as Ghanaians and as Africans depended on silencing a past in which elites sold commoners and southerners viewed northerners as disposable people and alienable goods. (74)

This solidarity she hopes to achieve through the sharing of history is a re-membering. By 'Re-membering', I want to suggest at once 'recall' but also the relocation of *members* and tribes within this history. 'Re-membering' is an instantiation of memory that, as Susannah Radstone suggests, is localized and rooted in the bodies of individuals and tribes. A re-membering is also, as Hartman discovers, a dismembering, an act of traumatic recall that she imposes on Africans who (i) do not wish to remember their slave pasts (ii) or, if they do, do not wish to share it with her.[3]

This is because memory in Africa, Hartman discovers, is divisive. It brings to the surface not a mere history of dispossession but a history of mutual exploitation, suspicion and treachery. Hartman therefore is doing two things: (i) she assumes that her being black enables her to tap into a Ghanaian history of dispossession, (ii) she assumes that there is no fracture between memories, and that memory cultures of slavery are shared. (She does speak of common myths—about Africa as 'home'— that sustains many African Americans in her chapter titled appropriately 'Afrotopia'.) 'It finally dawned on me,' writes Hartman,

> that those who stayed behind told *different* stories than the children of captives dragged across the sea. Theirs wasn't a memory of loss of captivity, but of survival

---

[3] To be fair to Hartman, she does speculate as to the nature of the Africa she and the other African Americans are seeking: 'was it the Africa of royals and great states or the Africa of disposable commoners? Which Africa was it that we claimed? There was no one Africa. There never had been' (30).

> and good fortune […] They had fashioned a narrative of liberation in which the glory of the past was the entry into a redeemed future. (232, emphasis added)

Many of the tribes wrote a 'story of slavery [that] was a narrative of victory a tale of resistance and overcoming' (233). The history here 'was a tale of fugitives and warriors, not of masters and slaves' (233).

The retrieval of a memory to which they are not direct descendants constitutes the migrant's act of 'memory citizenship'. Memory citizenship, as Rothberg and Yidliz define it, are performances of memory that are also acts of citizenship. These acts of citizenship are beyond the norms of citizenship and regardless of formal citizenship status. They define new ways of belonging. Hartman seeks to perform her citizenship in the country of slavery through acts of memory. The tension in the work is the parergons of her acts of memory: the frames in which she thinks she must perform these acts are erased, or blurred so that she is unaware of her exact citizenship status when she attempts to be less a stranger and to belong through acts of memory. These are essentially acts of memorialization and of solidarity she discovers to her horror that these don't matter anymore, if they ever did. So Hartman writes:

> In Ghana, slavery wasn't a rallying cry against the crimes of the West or the evils of white men; to the contrary, it shattered any illusions of a unanimity of sentiment in the black world and exposed the fragility and precariousness of the grand collective *we* that had yet to be actualized. (75, emphasis in original)

Migrants are told to stay away from certain memories, and then attacked for being indifferent to those memories. When Hartman seeks memories of slavery, she is admonished. The Ghanaians also see her as a 'privileged American […] required to perform regular acts of penance' (56). What to her are acts of memory in honour of the slaves, the Ghanaians see as penance!

Here Hartman also posits two kinds of re-membering and acts of memory. In the first there are the African Americans who wish to return to Ghana (or Africa) because they believe in the myths of Africa as home and returning they could 'break the chains of slavery'. Hartman, who represents a different type of returning migrant, does so 'doubting that I would ever be free of them' (41). Hartman seeks out signs of mourning, of memorialization of slavery: 'I would have preferred mourners with

disheartened faces and bowed heads and the pallor of sadness coloring the town' (50). But she does not find these signs of mourning.

We can as early as this moment discern that memory citizenship is itself schismatic. The returning myth-driven African Americans who enact national and racial identities that erase slavery from their histories and instead rehearse the glory of past Africas *versus* the re-membering of Hartman who clearly wishes to retrieve the slave past and recall the dead, to locate its members—to 'redeem the enslaved' (54)—among the bone-strewn archives. Slave families in Africa remember things differently, while footsteps travellers and migrants to the archives are excluded from the memories. The exclusion is at least partly because cosmopolitanization is *not* what is sought by Ghanaians here. Hartman remains a cosmopolitan whose memories and concerns are more global than local, more transnational than tribal or regional.

This means—and this is my thesis—memory citizenship is as exclusionary as substantive citizenship when attempted years after the historical fact of trauma. For Hartman who seeks belonging in terms of re-membering the past there is no citizenship because citizenship demands validation from a collective that is outside one's self. Citizenship is less about identity than about identification, and identification presupposes an external source or vantage point from which this identification is effected. Hartman in her travelogue has an identity—African American, *obruni*, slave descendent—but what she seeks is identification with the disempowered and the disenfranchised, and it is this that she never acquires. Identification also implies a certain *agency*, where one seeks out identification and affiliation (in this case of Hartman's with the other descendants of slave in Ghana). Hartman's memory work is an act of agency through which she hopes to establish the identification, but which does not obtain for her the affiliation she seeks.

In this case Ghana's historical record serves only as a façade in whose presence Hartman's re-membering is performed. It is an archive whose archons have abdicated, and which Hartman hopes she could be the archon of. As a migrant to the memory of slavery, she is given access to the archive, such as it is, but never acquires the power or authority of the archon. The archive defeats her, and acts of memory do not facilitate a citizenship.

It is therefore particularly interesting to see that Hartman ends not with memory but with a dream:

> The legacy that I chose to claim was articulated in the ongoing struggle to escape, stand down, and defeat slavery in all of its myriad forms. It was the fugitive's legacy […] It wasn't the dream of a White House, even if it was in Harlem, but of a free territory. It was a dream of autonomy rather than nationhood. It was a dream of an elsewhere, with all its promises and dangers, where the stateless might, at last, thrive. (234)

Hartman's mnemonic narrative ends on a note of irony, where knowledge from memory is not possible any more. But this does not mean that her memory citizenship is denied totally. Rather, we need to see memory citizenship as constituted within her shift toward a globalization and cosmopolitanization of atrocity memory ('autonomy rather than nationhood' as she puts it in the above quote), of moving beyond a history of slavery. Her 'mnemonic itineraries' as Astrid Erll calls them (2011: 14) take her to Ghana, but do not end there. It is in the perpetual, globalized and transcultural nature of mnemonic practices that Hartman discovers a citizenship.

*References*
Erll, Astrid. 2011. "Whither Memory Studies." *Parallax* 17.4: 4-18.
Fanon, Frantz. 2008. *Black Skin, White Masks*. Tr. Charles Lam Markmann. 1956. London: Pluto.
Hartman, Saidiya. 2011. *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route*. 2007. New Delhi: Navayana.
Pratt, Mary Louise. 2008. *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*. New York and London: Routledge. 2nd ed.
Radstone, Susannah. 2011. "What Place is This? Transcultural Memory and the Locations of Memory Studies." *Parallax* 17.4: 109-123.
Rothberg, Michael and Yasmin Yildiz. 2011. "Memory Citizenship: Migrant Archives of Holocaust Remembrance in Contemporary Germany." *Parallax* 17.4: 32-48.
Sturken, Marita. 1997. *Tangled Memories: The Vietnam War, the AIDS Epidemic, and the Politics of Remembering*. Berkeley, CA: U of California P.

# Writing war: Owen, Spender, poetic forms and concerns for a world in turmoil

*Esther Sánchez-Pardo, Complutense University of Madrid*

*Abstract*
There is a significant shift in the literary treatment of war between the trench poets and the subsequent generation of British poets, an understandable one given their very different experience and investment in the war itself. This paper discusses a selection of poems from Wilfred Owen's (1893–1918) and from Stephen Spender's (1909–1995) *oeuvres* as products of their different historical moments in order to reflect upon crucial transformations in poetic forms—especially the elegy—and concerns in the interwar period, a time open to the violent and chaotic experiences that a turbulent history was producing.

Key Words: War poetry, Wilfred Owen, Stephen Spender, Great War poets, 1930s generation, elegy

The relationship between poetry and its audience is directly implicated in what is one of the most important questions raised by the generation of the Great War poets: how might poetry provide an adequate response to the tremendous trauma of the war and the loss of so many lives? The responsibility to find a way to represent that experience was certainly one of their foremost concerns, dictating such formal considerations as diction, tone, imagery, and poetic form. More radically, many of them believed that this responsibility impacted, not only upon their own work, but upon the entire field of poetry in their contention that English poetry was not yet fit to speak of the war.[1] Up to the Great War, the primary function of war poetry was to record a self-authorizing history—that is, to narrate the events of battle so that they serve as their own historical justification. In such writing, war is represented as the guarantor of history and history as the fulfilment of war's promise.

---

[1] We can certainly identify a generation of war poets—usually called trench poets—who addressed the devastation and suffering of the war out of their own experience in which we should include Rupert Brooke (1887-1915), Siegfried Sassoon (1886-1967), Julian Grenfell (1888-1915), Herbert Read (1893-1968) and Robert Graves (1895-1985).

Instead, the poetry of the 1930s and 1940s navigates a different relationship to history, making its way through a course that has permanently been ravaged by devastation and trauma. This poetry emphasizes an experiential understanding of history over a comprehensive one; rather than record the outcome of important battles, they present their experience of the war as overwhelming and difficult to comprehend cognitively, much less see it from an objective viewpoint situated somewhere outside of the unfolding of events. Poets like Wystan H. Auden, Stephen Spender and Louis MacNeice saw their own writing as continuing to make English poetry respond in an ethically coherent way both to the soldier's and the civilian's experience. From early on in their careers, they recognized that the trauma of war would, through the writing of the war poets, leave its mark upon literature just as it had left its mark upon those who lived through it.

In this paper I would like to argue that writing can mourn, or at least perform a work of mourning in its capacity to represent social, cultural and political histories of traumatic loss. My focus will be on how the specific nature of the language of poetry devoted to war by poets Wilfred Owen (1893-1918) and Stephen Spender's (1909-1995) poems— especially their elegies about the Great War and its aftermath respectively–, undergoes important transformations. Both Owen and Spender share a similar attempt at exploring the possibilities of an ethics of aesthetic representation, which takes into account the simultaneous necessity and seeming impossibility of artistic expression in relation to loss and disaster. Owen's poetry, much read by Spender, addresses both thematically and formally many of the aspects that Spender will take up in his first published volumes.[2] Spender, in his turn, will act as some sort of transitional figure between the poets of the 1930s and those of the 1940s. Whereas the latter responded against the political commitment of the 1930s, and further rejected strict adherence to all social and literary tenets, they used a variety of themes and motifs coincident with those of the previous generation to convey a belief that European civilization was destined to collapse.

---

[2] Spender's acclaimed long poem Vienna (1934) opens with a quotation from Wilfred Owen's "Strange Meeting" as epigraph; "They will be swift with swiftness of the tigress. None will break ranks, though nations trek from progress" (*Vienna* 7).

*Tragedy, Elegy, War*

No poetic description of the Apocalypse could compare with the war itself, which seemed the physical embodiment of every scene of annihilation. Many of the poets who were most aware of the situation on the frontline were clearly interested in arousing a similar emotional experience through their writing; feelings of pity, in particular, are associated with their poetry by both the poets and their critics. Owen's oft-quoted Preface to his *Collected Poems* states this most explicitly. Nor is the pity the only emotional response elicited by the poetry; it also evokes horror (which is closely related to the fear that Aristotle argues tragic poetry evokes), disgust, anger, pride and compassion. Thus the poetry fulfils the cathartic function of tragedy—it arouses and forces the reader to confront feelings of pity and horror. The term catharsis is usually understood to mean the "purgation" of strong emotions through their expression. Certainly a great deal of the war poetry fits this definition. A secondary, more archaic definition of catharsis is the "concentration"—as opposed to the purgation—of emotion. The cathartic effect of such a work of art would be to communicate and intensify a strong emotional response in the reader. We find this kind of cathartic effect in Owen's writing.

The first generation of war poets were able to convey powerfully a sense of the tragic dimensions of the Great War as well as a sense of their own suffering Nevertheless their writing failed to fulfil one of the social functions of war poetry—to commemorate and memorialize the war dead. They refused to offer consolation in their poetry, because they rejected the traditional cultural narratives that were invoked in order to make the mass destruction of war meaningful or acceptable. Instead their writing insisted upon a deeply ambivalent attitude towards the war.

In his book on the war poets, *Taking it like a Man* (1993), Adrian Caesar discusses the importance placed upon war experience and personal suffering in the poetry of the World War I soldiers.[3] Caesar points out the ambivalence of the trench poets towards the suffering that war entails, arguing that their work neither can be read as simply condemning war nor as celebrating it. I agree with Caesar that Owen and his contemporaries cannot be read as simply condemning the war, but I

---

[3] Caesar's book provides readings of both the life and the writings of Rupert Brooke, Siegfried Sassoon, Wilfred Owen, and Robert Graves.

would argue that for them, the destructiveness of modern warfare was too excessive, it rendered futile all attempts to make it appear meaningful. What the poems failed to do, therefore, was perform the didactic function of glorifying death in war as a heroic act of patriotism. And in doing so, they underlined a loss and a heroism far more tragic and far more fitting to the modern condition.

Not surprisingly, many readings of the war poets tend to hinge on the critic's own attitude towards the overtly political content of many of the poems. Those who believe that art should remain apolitical tend to dismiss the work of poets like Owen as propaganda. William Butler Yeats's disdain for the war poets is repeated throughout the early criticism of their work. Yeats dismissed their work—Owen's in particular—with his proclamation that "passive suffering is not a theme for poetry. In all the great tragedies, tragedy is a joy to the man who dies… If war is necessary, or necessary in our time and place, it is best to forget its suffering" (1937: xxiv-xxv).[4] At issue in the midst of what came to be matter for debate is the question of what is required for poetry to be considered tragic. From Yeats onward, critiques of this poetic generation have centred on the issue of poetic form, arguing that they failed to represent the Great War adequately because their writing did not move beyond the lyric form, which was unable to contain or express the full experience of war. The precedence given to the personal suffering of the soldiers was seen as a direct effect of the lyric form. In effect, Yeats argued that these poets' theme of passive suffering was not proper to poetry because passive suffering was not tragic. But the Aristotelian notion of tragedy does not rest upon an active form of suffering—a heroic self-sacrifice–, rather the emphasis in classical drama is upon the representation of suffering itself, and the cathartic response it evokes in the audience. At this point, the question is not, "Why did their writing fail to attain the level of tragedy?" Their poetry discloses the newfound conviction that their prior belief in abstract concepts such as heroism and

---

[4] In his Introduction to *The Oxford Book of Modern Verse*, Yeats explains that he substitutes Herbert Read's *The End of a War* for the work that he finds more representative of the trench poets as a whole. He does, nevertheless, include a few poems written by other soldiers. They are Siegfried Sassoon's "On Passing the new Menin Gate" (written after the war), Julian Grenfell's "Into Battle" and Edmund Blunden's "Report on Experience". The most notable exclusion from the Anthology is Wilfred Owen.

patriotism—concepts for which, up to the war, literature had been a major means of representation—was one of the irrecoverable losses of the war.

Later critics tend to privilege the political relevance of the poetry, arguing that the chief importance of their writing is its anti-war sentiment.[5] Not surprisingly, the more sympathetic critics of the war poets tend to identify with their anti-war sentiments, and therefore tend to privilege the writing of Owen, Sassoon, and Rosenberg among others. In most readings, politics and aesthetics are seen as opposing forces in the poetry: the medium of poetry is somehow in conflict with the anti-war message the poets strive to articulate. Bernard Bergonzi evades addressing the issue of how war politics informs the poetics of the soldiers who wrote during the war by treating form and content as distinct critical issues (Bergonzi 1965: 53). Ultimately, however, the critical response to the war poets neither can nor should be reduced to a replication of the strict opposition Yeats draws between art and propaganda. Indeed, most of these readings complicate the distinctions drawn between the two categories. Jon Silkin, for example, sees the war poets as working within a long literary heritage of artists who saw their writing as a forum for invoking political change. Significantly, Silkin compares the political advocacy of the war poets to that of romantic writers such as Coleridge and Wordsworth (Silkin 1972: 1-17). There are also formal reasons for drawing such a comparison—both groups of writers privilege the lyric form in their poetry. Silkin suggests that these romantic writers offered the soldiers a literary tradition which validated both their attention to individual experience and their insistence on the political efficacy of poetry.

Far from being an unsuitable form for representing the experience of war, the lyrical elegy, insofar as it serves to commemorate and memorialize a loss, seems an entirely appropriate form to turn to in order to represent the tragic loss of life in war. The elegy traditionally deals with themes of loss and death, mourning and consolation. Thus it makes

---

[5] Four critics who make their privileging of the anti-war poetry explicit are: Robert Giddings. *The War Poets* (1990); Arthur E. Lane. *An Adequate Response* (1972); George Parfitt, *English Poetry of the First World War* (1990), and Jon Silkin's *Out of Battle* (1972). Caesar shares these critics anti-war sentiment; however, he faults the war poets for what he sees as their inability to articulate a clear and unambiguous critique of war. See *Taking it like a Man* (1993).

sense to find that in elegiac war poetry more emphasis is placed upon coming to terms with one's pain and suffering than upon the heroic actions of the soldiers. This is not to say that the fighting was never represented in conventionally heroic terms. Many poems, such as John McCrae's "In Flanders Fields" see the war dead as demanding that others take up their cause. Nevertheless, because the poems are elegiac, the rhetorical emphasis is placed upon the power of heroism and warfare to compensate for a tragic loss rather than upon the heroism of warfare itself. The poetry thus better serves as a way to mourn those who died in war and to help the soldiers to face their own deaths than it serves as a justification of war. In each of their comprehensive studies on the English elegy, Jahan Ramazani (1994), Peter M. Sacks (1985) and Eric Smith (1977) discuss the form as a work of mourning. Smith argues that the elegy's power to console after the loss of a loved one lies in the power of poetry to incorporate and immortalize the one who was lost (Smith 9-15).

Sacks claims that not only does the elegy address the concept of mourning thematically, but the poetry itself should be read as an attempt to work through the loss of a loved one: "Each elegy is regarded therefore, as a work, both in the commonly accepted meaning of a product and in the more dynamic sense of the working through of an impulse or experience—the sense that underlies Freud's phrase 'the work of mourning'". Thus, Sacks reads the elegy as performative; it is a symbolic action which enacts the rituals of mourning. In other words, the elegy is the restaging of a private grief in a public realm in order to heal it. The performative aspect of the elegy has important implications for the work of poets writing about the war and their critical reception because it helps to explain, in part, the difficulty which their writing imposes upon the reader. Sacks's model is based upon the process of "normal" or "proper" mourning, which Freud holds in opposition to "melancholic" mourning, in "Mourning and Melancholia" (1915: 239). Sacks argues that the process of mourning exhibited in the elegy parallels the Oedipal resolution; the elegiac mourner comes to accept the loss of his love insofar as he is able to transform his sexual desire for the lost love into his artistic creation of the poem itself: "The movement from loss to consolation thus requires a deflection of desire" from a sexual impulse to "the creation of a trope both for the lost object and for the original character of the desire itself" (7). Sacks's overt sexualisation of

desire comes from the fact that his analysis of the elegy follows a traditional model of sublimation: a thwarted sexual desire is transformed into the impulse to create an artwork in which the desire can be fulfilled. The war poets do not fit comfortably into this model. Sacks's model sexualizes the lost object to a greater degree than we find in the war poets. Moreover, in their writing the process of mourning remains incomplete and the consolation which poetry offers is rejected as inadequate. They refused to turn away from, because they were unable to, the traumatic experiences which spurred their writing, their work is best characterized by what Ramazani calls "melancholic" mourning; it is "unresolved, violent, and ambivalent" (4). Ramazani argues that modern elegists display all the signs of melancholia, not the "normative" stages of mourning which Sacks allies with a successful Oedipal resolution. He lists the signs of their melancholic ambivalence towards their loss: "their fierce resistance to solace, their intense criticism and selfcriticism…[T]hey attack the dead and themselves, their own work and tradition; and they refuse such orthodox consolations as the rebirth of the dead in nature, in God, or in poetry itself" (4). The war poets are criticized for precisely these issues in their writing.

What Ramazani says of Wilfred Owen's writing can be extended to other poets of his generation as well: "Critics often treat the elegy as a therapeutic device: working through grief, creating an aesthetic substitute for loss, the elegist masters or at least manages pain. Many of Owen's elegies do not fit this therapeutic model. Their task is to maintain a certain amount of suffering not to effect a cure, they produce not a yield of pleasure but an aggravation of pain" (86). Ramazani characterizes this insistence on suffering as the manifestation of Owen's masochism, overtly sexualizing what he has lost. I find it problematic to argue that his masochism was a tendency already present not something that developed out of their war experience. Ramazani writes, "Although we are accustomed to thinking of Owen as writing melancholic elegies entirely in response to the brute facts of war, we might also think of him as writing such elegies partly in response to his own masochism—a masochism in search of such painful facts as those provided by the war" (84-85). To argue that Owen's masochism was a sentiment in search of an appropriate experience seriously diminishes the political impact of his writing. By sexualizing Owen's desires, Ramazani disguises and distorts the impact which the trauma of the war had on him. We see the

masochism of Owen as deriving most directly from a reaction-formation against the brutalizing effects of war. In his writing he replicates the sadomasochistic structure of the war itself.

From the turning point of the Battle of the Somme onwards, the war poets refused to represent the tragedy of the war in the traditional language of heroic poetry. To a large extent the reason behind the dissatisfaction that Yeats and others felt with their work was their refusal to provide a sense of consolation for the losses they had suffered. As I argued before, because their writing insisted upon a deeply ambivalent attitude towards the war, it failed to fulfil one of the social functions of war poetry—to commemorate and memorialize the war dead. Moreover, this refusal constituted a demand upon the public that they too should not reconcile themselves to what had happened. Thus their work haunted the margins of modernism, like the bodies of soldiers that stubbornly refused to remain buried and the trenches that left deep scars upon the landscape, standing as a reminder that the traumatic wounds of World War I could not be healed by Armistice. Their writing eschews the memorializing function of war poetry in order to fulfil another, more radical, coming to terms with the losses of the war.

*Owen, Mourning Loss*

The work of the war poets was a sustained attempt to make sense of the experience of modern war by associating it with a long-standing poetic tradition—mainly the lyric and pastoral elegy—and it showed the inability of poetry to account for the shattering experience of modern warfare within a traditional framework.

For Wilfred Owen, the poetic effect of his writing hinged upon the emotional effect it produced in his reader. "The Poetry", he says in his "Preface" to his *Poems*, "is in the pity" (1964: 31). "Pity" is a key term for Owen. He identified the power of his writing with its cathartic function, its ability to distil overwhelming emotions down to their essence. Owen sought out the point at which those feelings threaten to become unbearable in an attempt to confront a truth which is buried in that experience. Thus the cathartic effect of his poems is found in the reader's response to the sight of massacred bodies, which hold his attention even as he wants to turn away in disgust. As Owen presents it, the sight both horrifies readers and demands their pity. Although the

soldiers who die in the poem are not presented as heroes, their death must strike the reader as tragic. These poems demand it. Bringing horror and pity together into one single image that takes hold of the reader's psyche with the same force that it possessed the speaker's, Owen's poems refigure traditional conceptions of tragedy.

For Owen, the profound knowledge of death that war had taught him took the form of pity. In his case, his emotional response to those traumatic events best articulated the knowledge he had gained from that experience. War is tragic because it creates in us feelings of pity and horror that become so intense they are unbearable. In his poetry, Owen tried to concentrate the affect, so that his writing could convey the emotional intensity of war. One of the strengths of Owen's writing is that, in concentrating the affect, he lost none of the complexity of its emotional resonances. As Jahan Ramazani has observed, in Owen's poetry, pity appears to be a reaction-formation against the writer's own guilt (1994: 81-82).

We can see these sorts of feelings in the poetry of his contemporaries (Sassoon, Brooke, Grenfell). As it was the case with many of them, whatever part of Owen's guilt one wants to attribute to "understandable" reasons—being unable to save somebody's life, accusations of cowardice, abandoning his men in battle, his nervous breakdown—such reasons cannot fully account for his guilt, nor are they necessary to explain the guilt. Owen is guilty because he has survived. To a certain extent, Owen projects his guilt on to the reader, although projection is not quite the right term, since it implies both that the reader is entirely innocent and that the writer is unaware that he himself is the source of guilt. The primary audience that Owen had in mind when he wrote, the civilians and soldiers of his own era, of historical necessity shared in, at least to some degree, Owen's sense of guilt about the war. As for his own guilt, Owen wrote about it too self-consciously to be unaware of his own feelings. Moreover, Owen's accusations of guilt do not arise out of a desire to charge the reader so much as they are meant to call on him, demanding that he take responsibility for recognizing his own complicity in the horrors the poet records.

Along this line, his poem "Mental Cases" clearly aims to inform people about the intensity of the anguish suffered by the victims of shell shock. The poem, engaging explicitly mental illness as otherness, elicits the reader's pity with its Dantesque depiction of mental illness and ends

with a pointed accusation of both the reader's and the speaker's unwitting complicity in the suffering of others.

> These are men whose minds the Dead have ravished.
> Memory fingers in their hair of murders,
> Multitudinous murders they once witnessed.
> Wading sloughs of flesh these helpless wander,
> Treading blood from lungs that had loved laughter.
> Always they must see these things and hear them… (1964: 69)

His description of shell shock endows the insane with an oracular quality. Mute witnesses to their own traumas, they relive the war continuously. In Owen's highly mythical description of war neurosis, the dead torment the insane like Furies, punishing them for what they have witnessed. They are haunted by those they have killed and those they have seen killed alike. Unassuagable guilt lies deep in the heart of the madman, just as in the heart of the witness. What's more, this guilt is highly communicable, easily transmitted from the speechless insane to the speaker who witness their suffering, and to the reader who acts as witness to the witness. Hence, in the final lines, Owen employs the first person plural, explicitly including himself as well as the reader in his accusations. The insane are "Snatching after us who smote them, brother, / Pawing us who dealt them war and madness". Owen's survivor's guilt manifests itself in these lines. Having escaped sharing in their fate, Owen could not avoid, in his own mind, sharing the responsibility for their suffering.

Despite the fact that the speaker maintains a strict distance from the stricken figures he portrays, this description of shell shock is spoken not by an outside observer, it comes from inside the experience. Owen writes of shell-shock and insanity with all the sympathy and disgust that might be expected of one who, for a short time, found himself among their number. Consider again the lines above. There is no suggestion of cowardice in these lines. Moreover, Owen's highly aestheticized language confers a poetic dignity on their state that counters his earlier description of their looks: "Drooping tongues from jaws that slob their relish, / Baring teeth that leer like skulls' teeth wicked". Significantly, Owen's depiction of the faces of the insane recalls the face of the man who haunts him in his well-known elegy "Dulce et Decorum Est". His "hanging face" becomes their "drooping tongues", and the blood that

came "gargling forth" from his mouth is echoed in their slobbery jaws. "Dulce et Decorum Est" tells us that Owen himself is the one who "Tread…[in] blood from lungs that had loved laughter" as he followed behind the dying soldier who spat up blood from his "froth-corrupted lungs" (1964: 55). In essence, Owen has reproduced his own nightmare in both the faces of the insane and the terrors that torment them— reminders that his own mind once was ravished by the dead. In his testimony to the suffering of others, Owen transforms his own trauma into art which could speak of his pain to others. In so doing, Owen is able, in Robert J. Lifton's words to perform as so many trauma survivors and their witnesses and we should be aware that, "carrying through the witness is a way of transmuting pain and guilt into responsibility, and carrying through that responsibility has enormous therapeutic value" (Caruth 1995: 138).

But, as it has been pointed out, the responsibility for carrying through the witness has to be shared by both readers and writers (Caruth 1995). Unfortunately, Owen's contemporaries had a great deal of difficulty hearing his call for responsibility. Owen himself seems to have recognized this difficulty, but, unlike others, he did not despair of ever being heard. His writing acknowledges the inability to witness the trauma of the war in his own time, and therefore invokes a future generation of readers who will be able to act as witness to his testimony.

The reasons behind the failure of his contemporary audience to respond to the soldiers' testimonies are to be found in the traumatic nature of the events they witnessed. Furthermore, in his discussion of Holocaust testimonies, Dori Laub argues that the events of the Holocaust made it impossible to act as witness to what was happening as it historically occurred (Felman and Laub 1992: 73-92, esp. 80-84). The historical gap between the event and its witnessing lead to an inevitable gap between those attempts to testify to what was occurring and their reception. We find a similar phenomenon operating in the critical response to the war poets. Owen seemed to have understood this. He was aware that his contemporary readers would bring to their reading a desire for conciliation and healing that his elegies failed to provide. That is why, as we said above, in his "Preface" he warns, "Yet these elegies are

not to this generation, / This is in no sense consolatory".[6] In the following line, however, he reaches out hopefully, "They may be to the next". He saw that his testimony would have to speak to later generations if it could not reach his own. That is why in these lines, Owen posits a future reader who will act as a witness to his suffering. Through the space of his poetry, Owen was able to call into being an imaginary reader who would act as his witness. This was not merely an imaginative act. Poetry has the capacity to open up a space for the reader, allowing the reader to become, belatedly the witness to the poet's testimony.

In his "Preface", Owen states, "This book is not about heroes" (1920: 3) not because the men who died in the war were not heroic, but because "English Poetry is not yet fit to speak of them". Given his devastating experiences, it is not surprising that Owen shrinks from calling the war heroic. The concept of heroism had become, for Owen, poisoned by the war, just as the concepts of patriotism, duty, honour had been emptied out of meaning. But the "hero" would have a particular sting for Owen. Everyone who died was called a hero, and every time that word was evoked, it was meant to recall not the specific actions of the individual soldier, but the heroism of the war itself. Death is ideologically inscribed in war—you do not just die, you die for the cause—and it is through such terms as "heroism"—and the gap between the terminology and the experiential reality—that the ideology of war becomes inscribed. In other words, it was the war which conferred the title of hero onto those who died. Owen's poetry resists reproducing the kinds of heroic images which feed both into and upon the war, and instead tries to create another kind of heroism which could do justice to those who have died. So often death in war appeared as horrific, not heroic, as Owen shows us in "Dulce et Decorum Est". In the poem, there is nothing heroic in the soldier's actions that lead to his death, nor does his death bring any strategic gain to either side; and because of—not despite—these reasons, the soldier's death is tragic. Just as the truth that the soldier's death revealed provided, for Owen, the only possible consolation for his loss, the only heroism displayed in the poem is the speaker's will to endure in the face of the unbearable truth that, if he dies in that war, he will die believing his death to be both gruesome and futile. In Owen's testimonial

---

[6] In the Blunden version, these lines read, "Yet these elegies are to this generation in no sense consolatory" (Owen 1964: 31). The Blunden version is more direct and less threatening than Sassoon's (Owen 1920: 3).

vision, the heroism of the fallen soldiers of World War I is the kind of heroism that befits the tragedy of war. Owen was himself killed, in fact, on November 4, 1918, a week before Armistice. His battalion was under fire while they were trying to build a bridge across the Sambre Canal. He had been encouraging his men and helping them to lay down duckboards when he was killed. His death did not serve any useful purpose. It was routine, not heroic, in any traditional sense. Like Julian Grenfell (1888-1915), whose poem "Into Battle" seemed to augur his own death as well as to serve as the poet's most fitting memorial, Owen's death seems both brutally ironic and uncannily in keeping with his own poetic vision of the tragic war hero.

*Poems* (1920), edited by Siegfried Sassoon, established Owen as a war poet before public interest in the war had diminished in the 1920s. One decade later, *The Poems of Wilfred Owen* (1931), edited by Edmund Blunden, aroused much more critical attention, especially that of W.H. Auden and the poets in his circle, Stephen Spender, C. Day Lewis, Christopher Isherwood, and Louis MacNeice. Blunden thought that Auden and his group were influenced primarily by three poets: Gerard Manley Hopkins, T.S. Eliot, and Wilfred Owen. The Auden group saw in Owen's poetry the incisiveness of political protest against injustice, but their interest in Owen was less in the content of his poems than in his mastery of poetic forms and technique. Though they were moved by the experiences described in Owen's best poems and empathized with his abhorrence of war, they were struck with his untimely death in military action just as he had begun to realize fully his potential.

### Spender and poetry in transition

Although much of the poetry of the thirties exhibits part of the same subject matter as that of its predecessors, it has been argued that "[I]t may throw more emphasis on the threat or the anxiety from which it is recoiling than on the subject matter in which it has found relief; and sympathies for victims are sometimes expressed more strongly in the efforts made to resist sinister memories of social and political outrages than they would have been in direct statements of responsibility" (Weatherhead 1975: 85). One mood that most frequently appears in the poetry as the decade grows darker comes in response to the anticipated or already experienced loss from war or any kind of violence. In a British

culture that packaged war as glorious in the aftermath of the Great War, Spender meditates upon the futility of war and the devastating effects it does have on the most vulnerable.

His poetry is defined by the events of that period in history Auden called in "September 1, 1939" a "low dishonest decade" (Auden 1940: 98). Politics in the thirties was dominated by Nazism and Marxism. Spender was born to an upper class English family yet his sympathy for the poor and his desire for a more just distribution of wealth caused him to lean towards socialist ideals. He longed for a fairer world, one that is classless and free of poverty. Like other poets of that era, the Spanish Civil War caught his imagination and so in February of 1937 he moved to Madrid to witness the war first hand as a journalist. The romantic beliefs he had about the socialists fighting against Franco were soon shattered as he saw the horrors of war for himself. He soon became disillusioned by the tremendous loss of innocent lives and he came to believe that nothing could justify the massacre of young men that was taking place all in the name of politics. In John Lehmann's view, writing on "The Influence of Spain" in 1939, the value of Spender's earlier Civil War poems was that "they struck an independent, anti-heroic note" in many ways representative of those "who felt that the adjustment of original enthusiasm to the realities of modern warfare and modern political struggle was a much more complex and painful process that was generally admitted, while their loyalty to the anti-fascist cause never wavered" (Lehmann 1939: 20).

"Thoughts during an Air Raid" is a key poem originally published in *The Still Centre* (1939) that opens and sets the pattern for most of the poems about the Spanish Civil war in Part III of his 1955 *Collected Poems*. In Tim Kellman's view, the poem is "a kind of proleptic elegy for himself, [and] attempts to imagine his own death from the outside, as seen by others, as impersonally as he must view other people's deaths" (2007: 254). Kellman points out that the poem's depersonalizing of selfhood is reinforced in the 1955 version by the substitution for the repeated 'I' of the poem's earlier version in *The Still Centre* (1939), of the impersonal pronoun "one." "Of course," the original poem opens, "the entire effort is to put myself/ Outside the ordinary range / Of what are called statistics. A hundred are killed / In the outer suburbs. Well,

well I carry on" (1939: 45).[7] In this poem, the quiet voice of the civilian is wondering which of the planes droning towards his city contains the makings of his death. The poetic persona, lying in a hotel bed in a foreign city wonders if "a bomb should dive /its nose right through this bed" (1939: 45). Reasonably frightened, he tries to maintain sanity when confronted by the thought of imminent death. He generalizes his experiences into the terror most humans have at the thought of their own ending, but "horror is postponed/ For everyone until it settles on him" (1939: 45). Solipsism is, after all, a defence against the anonymity of death. In a world populated by self-absorbed, unsupportive individuals where "no one suffer[s]/ For his neighbour. The horror is postponed / For everyone until it settles on him." (1939: 45), reifying the human into a series of names on a list, the names of faceless casualties that will remain haunting our memory.

Spender's discussion of the role of bombs during the war is a sensitive subject for many because of the great devastation and the death of many civilians on the ground. In his work, he allows us to meditate upon the very different views of the bombing raids, ranging from atrocities pure and simple to one of the decisive elements in Allied victory. The poet does not shy away from discussing the morality and ethics of the bombers' missions, since bombing can be both a dreadful duty and the object of memorialization; both horror and glory.

Along this line, in an extended image of great beauty, "Air Raid across the Bay at Plymouth"—included in Spender's *Collected Poems* (1955)—shows the sky glimmering in careful watch for an upcoming attack: "Above the whispering sea/ And waiting rocks of black coast,/ Across the bay, the searchlight beams / Swing and swing black across the sky// Their ends fuse in a cone of light/ Held for a bright instant up/ Until they break away again/ Smashing that image like a cup" (1985: 122). Once again, as in previous occasions—as in "The war God," first poem in part II "Ironies of War" in *Ruins and Visions—*, Spender invokes the "god of war" reigning supreme over his dominions, the entire world being at the mercy of his will. As John Sutherland has written, "Spender was fascinated with the paradoxical beauty of the destruction of England (an England which, in his wild days of youth, he had wanted destroyed)"

---

[7] The *Collected Poems* version reads, "Of course, the entire effort is to put oneself/ Outside the ordinary range/ Of what are called statistics. A hundred are killed/ In the outer suburbs. Well, well one carries on." (1985: 36).

(2004: 270). In many of his poems, especially those dealing with the Spanish Civil War and the Second World War, he contrasts war and destruction to the beauty of untouched landscapes by using striking images to depict those landscapes as potential antidotes to war. "Air Raid…" must have been written between the time of the first air raid on Plymouth which was on Saturday, July 6th, 1940 and the period of heavy bombing known as the "Plymouth Blitz" which was in March and April 1941. Spender's anti-war, anti-technology and patriotic feelings towards England are depicted using vivid imagery. The aeroplane, described as "Delicate aluminium girders" (stanza 2) built by man as testimony to man's ingenuity drops bombs and destroys the God-made beauty of the landscape.

Among Spender's remarkable poems, "War Photograph," published in *The New Statesman* in June 1937, can be read as a dramatic monologue of a wounded soldier upon the moment of dying. The poem alludes to Robert Capa's famous 1936 Spanish Civil War shot, "Death of a Loyalist Soldier, Cerro Muriano, September 5, 1936," showing a Republican soldier at the moment of absorbing a bullet and falling. The instant that "lurks/ With its metal fang planned for my heart/ When the finger tugs and the clock strikes" (1939: 62) is both the trigger of the gun that kills him and the lens of the camera that "shoots" this death. The place "where inch and instant cross" is the exact time and place of death and also "the flat and severed second on which time looks" of the photograph itself which will remain unchanged throughout the coming years, "As faithful to the vanished moment's violence / As love fixed to one day in vain." (1939: 62). Publishing the shot, *Life* magazine justified it as a necessary witnessing, and in the text accompanying the image wrote that "Dead men have indeed died in vain if live men refuse to look at them" (in Morris 1946: 63). The poem witnesses not the atrocity itself but the act of witness, the vision of death mediated through the lens of the camera: "My corpse be covered with the snows' December / And roots push through skin's silent drum / When the years and fields forget, but the whitened bones remember" (1939: 63). The soldier's only surviving "corpse [is] a photograph taken by fate" (1939: 62).

Most touching among Spender's "Ironies of War" series in his next volume *Ruins and Visions* (1942) are the poems in which the poet grieves for the men he has known dying as airmen in defence of their country. In his notebook he composed many variant drafts of the elegy

"To Poets and Airmen". The printed version of the poem is dedicated "To Michael Jones in his life, and now in his memory" (1942: 32). Spender explains this dedication in his autobiography *World within World*:

> Michael Jones [was] killed in an accident while training with me during one of the worst nights of the Blitz. He went out into the East End of London during the heavy bombing and returning with shiny eyes described the streets full of glass like heaped-up ice, the fires making a great sunset beyond the silhouette of St Paul's, the East End houses collapse like playing cards. If I tried to commemorate some of these men in poems, it was exactly because poetry was what I had in common with them and it was this that they came to me for. It is right to say that the service they required of my generation was that we should create. (2004: 293)

As John Sutherland, Spender's biographer, has remarked, "Jones was one of the 'few'—young warriors with Hermes' 'Iron wings tied' to their 'Greek heads' (one of the many lines lost in the poem's rewritings)" (2004: 293).

"To Poets and Airmen" is representative of the persistence of idealization, empathetic identification and mourning in the language of the elegy and in Spender's own tribute to his friend and fellow poet. In the first stanza, the poet addresses the airmen who require "a bullet's eye of courage / To fly through this age" (1942: 32) and in the hazardous battle of Britain. In Spender's admonition to remember, and then to forget, this elegy commemorates those young men who served as soldiers but were first and foremost poets.

> And yet, before you throw away your childhood,
> With the lambs pasturing in flaxen hair,
> To plunge into this iron war,
> Remember for a flash the wild good
> Drunkenness where
> You abandoned future care,
>
> And then forget. Become what
> Things require. The expletive word.
> The all-night-long screeching metal bird.
> And all of time shut down in one shot
> Of night, by a gun uttered. (32-33)

Spender performs a splendid metapoetic exercise when with staccato rhythm, urges poets and airmen to become "The expletive word./ (The

all-night-long screeching metal bird.)" (1942: 33). In this elegy, Spender sees war as inevitable and mourns the deceased pilots. Moving in the direction of the early Apocalyptic movement,[8] Spender uses resources in myth (the above mentioned allusion to Hermes, the Greek messenger of the gods and guide to the underworld[9]) and innovative imagery—f.ex. in relation to the military, technology and the machines for war—which contribute in important ways to his compelling rhetoric and depurated style.

In the final poem in this section, "June 1940", the desire for peace reaches a crescendo in the most despair-filled month of the war for the British, when the army was driven from Dunkirk and France fell. In the poem, two old men, perhaps veterans of World War I herald "Our minds must harden" (1942: 41). The poem parodies their patriotism and the attitude that in the end "of course, we shall win" (1942: 42). It was brave of Spender to have published "June 1940" in wartime, for its message is that "victory and defeat, both the same, / Hollow masks worn by shame." (1942: 42-43). At this point, Spender had given up supporting any system or ideology with his poetry, because all systems resort to

---

[8] Poet and critic Herbert Read (1893–1968) was the leader of the Apocalyptic movement. Henry Treece, in his 1946 book *How I See Apocalypse,* enumerated the qualities of Apocalyptic Movement writings: "In my definition, the writer who senses the chaos, the turbulence, the laughter and the tears, the order and the peace of the world in its entirety, is an Apocalyptic writer. His utterance will be prophetic, for he is observing things which less sensitive men may have not yet come to notice; and as his words are prophetic, they will tend to be incantatory, and so musical. At times, even, that music may take control, and lead the writer from recording his vision almost to creating another voice. So, momentarily, he will kiss the edge of God's robe" (Treece 1946: 37). Some of the most common themes in the poetry of the Apocalyptic Movement—life vs. death, the individual vs. history, experience and fragmentation—were influenced by Surrealism and Romanticism, and their motifs were mostly mythological and prophetic.

[9] Hermes was also the patron of boundaries and of the travellers who cross them, of shepherds and cowherds, of orators and wit, of literature and poets, and of commerce in general. His symbols include among others the winged sandals, the winged hat, and the caduceus. Spender acutely alludes to Hermes in many of his capacities: "The paper brows are winged and helmeted, / The blind ankles bound to a white road..." (Stanza 2: 32); and goes on to write about a foregone childhood, "with the lambs pasturing in flaxen hair" (Stanza 3: 32).

repression and barbarism and use their impassioned advocates to slay the innocent, making war on life itself.

The last section in *Ruins and Visions*, is entitled "Visions" and grows from the ruins that have preceded it, it seeks for reparation and sorts out the world's aggressive responses. Along a more personal path, Spender embarks upon an individual quest for identity. He wrote subsequently of this part of the book that it reflected a tendency on the poetry of that period, shared by the works of other poets to turn inward and make an exercise in introspection. He argued that the poems in this last section were "in search of universal experience through subjective contemplation" (Spender 1946: 34).

Finally, in *Ruins and Visions*, there is the ruined world and the visionary. In Spender's next book, *The Edge of Being* (1949),[10] the last stanza of his last poem "Time in our Time" reads: "Oh save me in this day, when Now / Is a towering pillar of dust which sucks / The ruin of a world into its column" (56). Once again, with echoes of Wilfred Owen's "Strange Meeting", his poem "Rejoice in the Abyss", goes back to the oppressive atmosphere of violent confrontation and the poet is instructed after an air raid to rejoice in the abyss and accept emptiness: "Unless your minds accept the emptiness /As the centre of your building and your love, (…) / All human aims are stupefied denial…" (31). Here Spender records his response to the nightly bombing of London in nightmarish photographic terms. The poet shows the stress of war as an equivalent of the war, confusion and disarray of the original Apocalypse: the smashing of houses and buildings as an equivalent for the opening of tombs, living people crossing over into death and dead people crossing the other way and speaking the words of the poem. The scenery is one of dead people and ruins, the social order has collapsed and the individual feels under the pressure of History. This imagery of devastation in the midst of an empty world is new and it can be read as an epochal sign. It is certainly part of a wider *Zeitgeist* that seeks to make sense out of the chaos and uncertainty of a world in turmoil.

As it was the case with Wilfred Owen and with the early poems of Spender, there is neither simply mourning nor consolation. War is revisited as analogous to the fallen condition of man in the original

---

[10] Spender published his seventh volume *Poems of Dedication* in 1947, a book where the personal takes over, and war on politics almost disappears.

Apocalypse, with a landscape of ruins as backdrop for the end of History. In the poetry of the following decade, one discovers a mood of personal resignation to the aggression and cruelty of modern life, and a note of scepticism undermining any metaphysical guarantee. The lesson of the two World Wars seems to have discouraged allegiance to large impersonal dogmas.

In my view, both Owen's poetry during the Great War and Spender's, long after the effects of the war were visible in British society, reproduce the overwhelming emotional undercurrents of anxiety and pain that the country attempted to hold at bay. Rage and pain do come surging to the surface in their poems suggesting that the emotional extremes suffered by both generations had a delayed impact upon society at large. While we might infer that cultural traumas do not affect all members of society equally, both poets seem to suggest that, while their consequences can be delayed and even transferred into other areas, their impact ultimately remains undiminished. In this sense, Owen and Spender's anxiety-driven poetry suggests that the process of substitution (from trauma to acceptance of object loss), supplanting fright with anxiety, has been played out but to no avail.

Owen and Spender, the war poets and the poets of the 1930s and 1940s, are engaged in mourning loss and working through its consequences as a continuous process without end. The implications this might have in the domain of the social, in the wider domain of poetry, and in the sphere of cultural production remain yet to be further explored.

*References*
Auden, W. H. 1940. *Another Time*. N.Y.: Random House.
Bergonzi, Bernard. 1965. *Heroes' Twilight*. London: Constable.
Caruth, Cathy, ed. 1995. *Trauma. Explorations in Memory*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP.

Felman, Shoshana and Dori Laub. 1992. *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Philosophy, Literature and Psychoanalysis*. New York: Routledge.

Freud, Sigmund. 1953-74. *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*. Ed and Trans. J. Strachey et al. London: Hogarth.

———. 1915. *Mourning and Melancholia*. S.E. XIV.

Kellman, Tim, ed. 2007. *The Oxford Handbook of British and Irish War Poetry*. Oxford: O.U.P.

Lehmann, John. 1939. "The Influence of Spain". *New Writing in England*. N.Y.: Critics Group Press.

McCrae, John. 2008. *In Flanders Fields, and Other Poems.* Champaign, IL: Jungle Books.

Morris, John G. 1946. *Photographers Ran the War*. N.Y.: Popular Photography.

Owen, Wilfred. 1964. *The Collected Poems of Wilfred Owen.* Ed. Edmund Blunden. New York: New Directions.

———. 1920. *Poems by Wilfred Owen*. Ed. Siegfried Sassoon. London: Chatto & Windus.

Ramazani, Jahan. 1994. *Poetry of Mourning: The Modern Elegy from Hardy to Heaney*. Chicago: Chicago UP.

Sacks, Peter M. 1985. *The English Elegy: Studies in the Genre from Spenser to Yeats*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP.

Silkin, John. 1972. *Out of Battle: The Poetry of the Great War*. Oxford: Oxford UP.

Smith, Peter. 1977. *By Mourning Tongues: Studies in the English Elegy*. Woodbridge: Boydell.

Spender, Stephen. 1939. *The Still Centre*. London: Faber & Faber.

———. 1942. *Ruins and Visions: Poems 1934-42*. New York: Random.

———. 1946. *Poetry since 1939*. London: Longman.

———. 1949. *The Edge of Being*. London: Faber & Faber.

———. 1951. *World within World.* London: Faber & Faber.

———. 1955. *Collected Poems 1928-1953*. London: Faber & Faber.

———. 2004. *New Collected Poems*. Ed. Michael Brett. London: Faber & Faber.

Sutherland, John. 2004. *Stephen Spender: The Authorized Biography*. London: Penguin.

Treece, Henry. 1946. *How I See Apocalypse.* London: Lindsay Drummond.

Weatherhead, A. Kingsley. 1975. *Stephen Spender and the Thirties.* Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell UP.

Yeats, William B. 1937. *The Oxford Book of Modern Verse 1892-1935.* New York: Oxford UP.

# Review

Furiassi, Cristiano, Virginia Pulcini and Félix Rodríguez González (eds.). 2012. *The Anglicization of European Lexis*. Amsterdam / Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

This volume contains fifteen papers devoted to the description of English influence on the lexis of European languages, and covers English influence on Armenian, Danish, French, German, Italian, Norwegian, Polish, Serbian and Spanish with some cross-linguistic comparisons. The papers are mainly corpus-based and, as the editors point out (2012: 1), do not engage in critical discussions of attitudes towards Anglicisms and the dominance of Anglophone culture.

The editors' introduction provides a lucid overview of English influence in general and lexical borrowings in particular. The findings of the papers are set against a background where English is on the verge of becoming a second language rather than a foreign language in some European countries, and English being used as a lingua franca in higher education, business and international politics. The term Anglicisms adopted for the phenomena studied in the volume covers all kinds of lexical influence from English: from the most obvious cases of direct unadapted loans (*T-shirt*), to adapted loans (Danish *strejke* from *strike*) and false Anglicisms (i.e., loans "made up of English lexical elements but unknown or used with a conspicuously different meaning in English" (2012: 7), such as German *Handy* for *mobile phone*) to loan translations (Italian *carta di credito* for *credit card*) and semantic loans (Norwegian *het* for *hot* ('trendy')). In the introductory chapter the editors do a fine job of combining these categories with questions related to borrowed phraseology and the level of integration of Anglicisms.

The book is divided into three sections. Section I addresses more general issues of classifying, counting and analyzing Anglicisms in different languages.

To begin with, MacKenzie discusses the relationship between proficiency in English and types of borrowing. He predicts that increasing proficiency in English in continental Europe will lead to fewer false Anglicisms and more abstract nouns and adjectives being borrowed. The strength of the paper lies in the discussion of individual examples

(such as *fair* (*play*)) rather than in the coherent description of overall trends.

The aim of the following paper by Winter-Froemel & Onysko is to devise a pragmatic distinction between types of Anglicisms. They propose a distinction based on whether the concept already exists in the language (in this case German) (*Kids* for *Kinder*) or not (*Software*). Anglicisms which already have a semantic equivalent in the recipient language tend to express additional pragmatic meanings, as for instance *Deal* instead of *Geschäft* indicates a dubious deal. The findings from the corpus study show that through increasing frequencies, Anglicisms can become the default expression, such as *Baby*, which in many contexts has replaced *Kleinkind* and *Säugling*. The paper combines quantitative corpus data with detailed analyses of individual examples in a particularly fruitful manner.

In perhaps the most methodologically ambitious paper Callies, Onysko & Ogiermann investigate gender variation in English loanwords in German. The study includes both a large-scale investigation of newspaper corpora from Germany, Austria and Switzerland, and an experimental study comparing speakers from across the German-speaking area. Results show that variation is greater with nouns that do not have semantic or morpho-phonological schemas to base their gender selection on, or that do not have straightforward German equivalents. Furthermore, there is more variation among informants than in the corpus data, and southern German informants generally produce more variation than northern ones, in spite of the fact that the Austrian and Swiss corpus data contain less variation. Because of these differences, the authors conclude that "certain phenomena of language use call for the consideration of different types of linguistic data" (2012: 87). This paper is impressive in its scope and its findings, and calls for similar investigations in other languages.

Graedler's paper in turn raises a number of important methodological issues regarding the study of Anglicisms in Norwegian. She clearly illustrates the problems of comparing different studies based on different materials, methods and definitions. For instance, should fully integrated Anglicisms such as *jobbe* (from *job*) be included or not, is *fit for fight* to be counted as one item or three, and is *plateshop* ('record shop') the same lexeme as *record shop*? Graedler shows convincingly that

differences in definitions can lead to wildly different results, and therefore suggests that future studies should have a joint basis.

Andersen reports on the development of semi-automatic methods for Anglicism retrieval in Norwegian. The tools developed retrieve Anglicisms from a newspaper monitor corpus partly based on chargrams (sequences of n characters) typically found in English, but not in Norwegian words (e.g., *ect*, *row*). The results show that any tool used to identify Anglicism candidates must be combined with the linguistic knowledge of the researchers.

The paper by Prćić presents the problems of compiling a dictionary of Anglicisms in Serbian called *Du yu speak anglosrpski?* and also evaluates the pros and cons of this dictionary. The words included had to belong to everyday vocabulary, they had to be integrated into the system of Serbian at least to some extent, they should not have existed in Serbian for more than 30 years, and they should be more frequent than the minimum threshold set by the compilers. Prćić concludes that the corpus on which the dictionary was based should have been bigger and more varied in order to take into account more kinds of styles and registers. He also concludes that the compilers have failed in their prescriptive aim to encourage a "more responsible attitude towards an uncritical and erratic use of recent Anglicisms" (2012: 134), because the general Serbian public are indifferent to the (over-)use of such words.

Galstyan completes Section I by discussing the levels of adaptation of Anglicisms in Armenian. This study, which is mainly based on introspection, covers a wide range of phenomena from phonetic integration to grammar and semantics. Some loanwords have acquired new meanings (such as the Armenian equivalent of *bikini* which also refers to 'all kinds of women's underwear consisting of two pieces'). The author claims that this is the case for only few items, but unfortunately, no statistics are provided.

Section II deals with English-induced phraseology, i.e. English influence on multi-word units in other languages. Loan translations are usually not recognized by non-linguists as the result of English influence, and such influence also appears to have been largely overlooked by linguists. The papers in this section show that the sheer volume of English loan translations in other languages is astounding, and in view of this, it is surprising how little attention has been devoted to this area.

Because these articles cover new ground, they are also among the most interesting in the volume.

Gottlieb investigates English influence on Danish phraseology. This is done against the backdrop of the status of English in Denmark, where 86% of the population claim to speak it, universities and corporations encourage the use of English and young people have a positive attitude towards English loans. A strength of this paper is that the author not only considers 'handpicked' items (*det faktum at* (*the fact that*); *have sex* (*have sex*)), but also includes types randomly selected from a dictionary (*varm kartoffel* (*hot potato*)). It turns out that almost all of these have increased their shares in comparison to their native Danish competitors (e.g., *slutte op bag/om* for *bakke op*) in the last few decades. Interestingly, average shares for the randomly selected multi-word units were higher than those for the handpicked ones. This finding leads the author to the conclusion that a corpus-linguistic approach is crucial in such investigations, because people usually notice conspicuous uses of language while less marked elements tend to go unnoticed.

The paper by Martí Solano covers loan translations and semantic borrowings in the French press. The study centres on a selection of phrases classified as Anglicisms in the *Dictionnaire des expressions et locutions*, and also on some not included in that dictionary. The results show that many calques (e.g., *plafond de verre* (*glass ceiling*); *effet domino* (*domino effect*)) have only recently been incorporated into the French language and are increasing in use. The author discusses the level of integration of the loans as reflected in their overall frequencies, explanations added in the text and typographical markers.

In a similar study of recent Anglicisms in Spanish, Oncins-Martínez looks at typical loan translations (*techo de cristal* for *glass ceiling*) but also at semantic Anglicisms (e.g., *icono* adopting new meanings due to English influence ('small sign or picture on a computer screen')). It is perhaps most striking to see how English is also affecting the meanings of words and phrases in other languages. The corpora used allow the author to compare usage in European and American Spanish.

In the next article, Fiedler discusses English phraseological units in German, covering both direct loans and loan translations. Some direct loans occur in German texts (e.g., *an apple a day keeps the doctor away*), but the main part of the article deals with loan translations. Some of these are used to organize discourse (*in einer/der Nussschale* (*in a nutshell*);

*das Ding ist* (*the thing is*)), while others, such as the old favourite *gläserne Decke/Glasdecke* (*glass ceiling*), denote new cultural phenomena. Fiedler's corpus material shows that translated phraseological units vary in form over time, as seen with *gläserne Decke/Glasdecke*. The author discusses three criteria that can be used to prove Anglo-American origin: (1) use in English-speaking contexts (e.g., *der Elefant im Raum* (*the elephant in the room*) in connection with the American election), (2) explicit metacommunicative signals of the origin, and (3) variability in form. The last criterion is slightly puzzling, however, since many non-loan idioms also (initially) display a degree of variation. This is nevertheless a solid study providing new insights into the adoption of a wide range of English phenomena into German.

The section concludes with Rozumko's paper on English influence on Polish proverbs. This corpus-based investigation shows not only how pervasive the English language is, but also how pervasive Anglo-American cultural patterns are. The author proposes that English proverbs relating to empirical science (e.g., *Facts speak for themselves*) can be taken as a sign that the English "culture of facts" is beginning to affect traditional Polish ways of thinking.

The volume is concluded by three articles in Section III on Anglicisms in specialized discourse. First of all, Bergh & Ohlander present findings from a cross-linguistic survey of English direct loans in football lexis. The study is based on 25 terms considered to be central to football (e.g., *kick-off*, *tackle*) and their occurrence in 16 European languages. Rather than basing their study on corpora, as most authors in the volume, the authors collect their data from a dictionary, namely Görlach's *A Dictionary of European Anglicisms*. Judging from this material, there are considerable differences in the likelihood of languages borrowing English football terminology. Relying solely on a dictionary rather than combining this with corpora and informants has its disadvantages. Finnish ends up at the bottom of the list of languages borrowing football words in this study, but a search on Finland's largest football discussion forum Futisforum2 gives up to twenty (rather than six) terms borrowed directly or used in slightly modified forms. This suggests that a corpus-based follow-up study is needed.

According to Bergh & Ohlander's paper, Germanic languages such as Norwegian and Dutch are most likely to borrow English football terminology directly. The authors nevertheless show convincingly how

the individual histories of the different languages have influenced the propensity to borrow English terms directly, which leads to considerable variation within language families. Some of the terms occur in (almost) all the 16 languages investigated, while others are much rarer. Terms denoting central football notions like *corner*, *dribble* and *offside* are among the most common direct loans. A part of the explanation proposed is that some of these terms are difficult to translate and define.

Gaudio's paper looks at economics-related Anglicisms in the Italian version of the *Official Journal of the European Union*. The terms in this study were selected through a process of keywords extraction, and from the keywords, 80 terms from the area of economics (e.g., *business angels* ('private investors in early-stage businesses')) were singled out. Needless to say, a method based on automatically retrieved types has its advantages over lists of words compiled solely on the base of intuition. The words and multi-word units thus identified were classified into three stages of incorporation: (1) items which occur only very rarely, (2) semi-incorporated Anglicisms which are either accompanied by or alternate with a translation, and (3) fully incorporated Anglicisms which are hardly ever translated. Gaudio's case studies of specific items reveal individual differences in usage patterns.

Finally, Fusari presents corpus findings on Anglicisms and false Anglicisms in Italian newspapers. The terms relate to economics and aviation in connection with Alitalia's bailout. Although some of these terms occur with translation couplets in the same texts (e.g., *outsourcing* and *esternalizzazione*), one of the key findings is that many specialized terms are left without definitions, or are given incomplete or vague definitions. This relates both to true Anglicisms and false Anglicisms (e.g., *bad company* for *bad assets*). Fusari notes that it is difficult to determine whether these practices of using Anglicisms are caused by bias in newspaper reporting or whether they are due to largely unconscious processes.

*The Anglicization of European Lexis* constitutes a significant contribution to the study of the growing influence of English on other European languages. Its main strength lies in its description of the phenomena and in some of the methods used rather than in theoretical innovation. Reading the studies devoted to loan translations was particularly rewarding since they chart territory that is relatively unexplored. A weakness in some cases is that the selection of the items

investigated is based on criteria that are not entirely transparent. However, this is probably due to the exploratory nature of many papers, and only calls for further studies to be carried out on more lexical items in a wider range of languages. This collection of papers will undoubtedly serve as inspiration for further investigations.


*Magnus Levin*
Linnaeus University