

# ZAA

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Herausgegeben von / Edited by

Bernd Engler (Tübingen)  
Brigitte Georgi-Findlay (Dresden)  
Thomas Herbst (Erlangen-Nürnberg)  
Ekkehard König (Berlin)  
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**Verantwortlich für den redaktionellen Inhalt / Responsible for the text section:**

Prof. Dr. Bernd Engler (Tübingen), Prof. Dr. Brigitte Georgi-Findlay (Dresden), Prof. Dr. Thomas Herbst (Erlangen-Nürnberg), Prof. Dr. Ekkehard König (Berlin), Prof. Dr. Barbara Korte (Freiburg i.Br.), Prof. Dr. Gesa Mackenthun (Rostock), Prof. Dr. Christoph Reinhardt (Tübingen), Prof. Dr. Günter Walch (Berlin).

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Prof. Dr. Bernd Engler Englisches Seminar Universität Tübingen Wilhelmstraße 50 D-72074 Tübingen zaa@uni-tuebingen.de	Prof. Dr. Barbara Korte Englisches Seminar Universität Freiburg Rempartstraße 15 D-79085 Freiburg zaa@anglistik.uni-freiburg.de	Prof. Dr. Thomas Herbst Institut für Anglistik/Amerikanistik Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg Bismarckstraße 1 D-91054 Erlangen therbst@phil.uni-erlangen.de

**Redaktionsassistenten / Assistant Editors:**

Katja Bay, Dr. Lars Eckstein, Nora Filipp, Katrin Götz, Dr. Stefanie Lethbridge, Jonas Takors

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## Gesamtinhaltsverzeichnis

55 (2007)

### Artikel und kleinere Beiträge

RÜDIGER HEINZE / JOCHEN PETZOLD Introduction: The Disappearance of Utopia? .....	1
DUNJA M. MOHR Transgressive Utopian Dystopias: The Postmodern Reappearance of Utopia in the Disguise of Dystopia .....	5
SÄMI LUDWIG Utopian Moments in the Novels of Chang-rae Lee .....	25
CHRISTOPH RIBBAT Utopia, Nevada: Las Vegas and American Nonfiction .....	37
RÜDIGER HEINZE / JOCHEN PETZOLD No More Room in Hell: Utopian Moments in the Dystopia of 28 Days Later .....	53
MICHAEL GREEN The Future in the Post: Utopia and the Fiction of the New South Africa .....	69
RÜDIGER HEINZE / JOCHEN PETZOLD The Disappearance of Utopia? An Interview with Ernest Callenbach on the Role and Function of Utopian Thought in Contemporary Society .....	87
TOBIAS DÖRING Fictions of Translation: The Celts, the Canon and the Question of World Literature .....	107
KURT MÜLLER The 'Search for Order' and the Crisis of Masculinity: The Naturalist American Novel and the Cultural Anxieties of the 'Strenuous Age' .....	123

BETTINA BOECKER “Zuspruch inmitten Sinnlosigkeit”: Zur Rezeption T.S. Eliots im Deutschland der Nachkriegszeit .....	139
CORINA ANGHEL CRISU “Tell Nannan I Walked”: Reconstructing Manhood in Ernest J. Gaines’s <i>A Lesson before Dying</i> .....	155
TILMAN HÖSS Kapital, Feld, Habitus und sozialer Raum: Pierre Bourdieu für Anglisten .....	173
THOMAS HERBST / KATRIN GÖTZ-VOTTELER Introduction: The Mystery of Collocation .....	211
FRANZ-JOSEF HAUSMANN Die Kollokationen im Rahmen der Phraseologie – Systematische und historische Darstellung .....	217
DIRK SIEPMANN Collocations and Examples: Their Relationship and Treatment in a New Corpus-based Learner’s Dictionary .....	235
DIANA LEA Making a Collocations Dictionary .....	261
GAËTANELLE GILQUIN To Err is Not All: What Corpus and Elicitation Can Reveal about the Use of Collocations by Learners .....	273
GÖRAN KJELLMER <i>A couple hours</i> – On Non-occurrence of <i>of</i> after Partitive English Nouns .....	293
HANS-JÖRG SCHMID Non-compositionality and Emergent Meaning of Lexico-grammatical Chunks: A Corpus Study of Noun Phrases with Sentential Complements as Constructions .....	313
GERD BAYER Traveling Urban Utopias and the Birth of Suburbia .....	361
DANIEL LEA “Parenthesis” and the Unreliable Author in Julian Barnes’s <i>A History of the World in 10 ½ Chapters</i> .....	379

JÜRGEN JOACHIMSTHALER “the spaces between the columns”: Die Text-Räume und Raum-Texte des Samuel R. Delany .....	395
BRUNO ARICH-GERZ Cato Jaramillo’s (Un-)“True Story” of Holocaust Survival .....	417
ELLIOTT BERGMAN A Glimpse at Dylan through Biermann .....	431
<b>Buchbesprechungen</b>	
Stephan Kohl, ed. Anglistik: Research Paradigms and Institutional Policies 1930-2000. Ulf Morgenstern. Anglistik an der Universität Leipzig: Das Englische Seminar in Kaiserreich, Weimarer Republik und Drittem Reich 1891-1945. (Barbara Korte) .....	93
Hertel, Ralf. Sense Perception in the British Novel of the 1980s and 1990s. Rippl, Gabriele. Beschreibungs-Kunst: Zur intermediären Poetik angloamerikanischer Kontexte (1880 – 2000). (Nicola Glaubitz) .....	95
Hans-Peter Wagner. A History of British, Irish and American Literature. (Helge Nowak) .....	97
Dagmar Krause. Timothy Findley’s Novels between Ethics and Postmodernism. (Martin Kuester) .....	99
Matthias N. Lorenz, ed. Narrative des Entsetzens: Künstlerische, mediale und intellektuelle Deutungen des 11. September 2001. (Sabine Sielke) .....	100
Conrad Solloch. Performing Conquista: Kulturelle Inszenierungen Mexikos in europäischen und U.S.-amerikanischen Medien im 20. Jahrhundert. (Frank Obenland) .....	101
Terry Eagleton. The English Novel: An Introduction. (Barbara Simpson) .....	191
Arno Löffler and Eberhard Späth, eds. Geschichte der englischen Kurzgeschichte. Sabine Buchholz. Narrative Innovationen in der modernistischen britischen Short Story. (Michael Meyer) .....	192
Eva Müller-Zetzelmann and Margarete Rubik, eds. Theory into Poetry: New Approaches to the Lyric. (Jochen Petzold) .....	195

Jana Gohrisch. Bürgerliche Gefühlsdispositionen in der englischen Prosa des 19. Jahrhunderts. ( <i>Stephan Kohl</i> ) .....	196
Heather Worthington. The Rise of the Detective in Early Nineteenth-Century Popular Fiction. ( <i>Tobias Döring</i> ) .....	198
George Butte. I Know that You Know that I Know: Narrating Subjects from <i>Moll Flanders</i> to <i>Marnie</i> . ( <i>Eckart Voigts-Virchow</i> ) .....	199
Roger Ebbatson. An Imaginary England: Nation, Landscape and Literature, 1840-1920. ( <i>Marie-Luise Egbert</i> ) .....	200
Dunja M. Mohr. Worlds Apart? Dualism and Transgression in Contemporary Female Dystopias. ( <i>Rüdiger Heinze</i> ) .....	202
Susanne Rohr. Die Wahrheit der Täuschung: Wirklichkeitskonstitution im amerikanischen Roman 1889-1989. ( <i>Jutta Zimmermann</i> ) .....	203
Tamar Jeffers McDonald. Romantic Comedy: Boy Meets Girl Meets Genre. ( <i>Jörn Glasenapp</i> ) .....	206
Gabriele Pisarz-Ramírez. MexAmerica: Genealogien und Analysen postnationaler Diskurse in der kulturellen Produktion von Chicanos/as. ( <i>Marc Prieve</i> ) .....	207
Battistella, Edwin L. Bad Language. Are some words better than others? ( <i>Katrin Götz-Votteler</i> ) .....	341
Baker, Paul, Andrew Hardie and Tony McEnery. A Glossary of Corpus Linguistics. Cruse, Alan. A Glossary of Semantics and Pragmatics. Davies, Alan. A Glossary of Applied Linguistics. Leech, Geoffrey. A Glossary of English Grammar. ( <i>Nadja Nesselhauf</i> ) .....	343
Mair, Christian and Reinhard Heuberger, eds., in collaboration with Josef Wallsmannsberger. Corpora and the History of English. Papers Dedicated to Manfred Markus on the Occasion of his Sixty-fifth Birthday. ( <i>Edgar W. Schneider</i> ) .....	347
Skandera, Paul. Phraseology and Culture in English. ( <i>Katrin Götz-Votteler</i> ) .....	349
van Gelderen, Elly. A History of the English Language. ( <i>Edgar W. Schneider</i> ) .....	353
Sinclair, John and Anna Mauranen. Linear Unit Grammar. Integrating Speech and Writing. ( <i>Thomas Herbst</i> ) .....	356

Peter Erlebach, Bernhard Reitz, Thomas Michael Stein. Geschichte der englischen Literatur. ( <i>Anna-M. Horatschek</i> ) .....	441
Andrew Gurr. The Shakespeare Company, 1594-1642. ( <i>Clare Smout</i> ) .....	442
Allan Conrad Christensen. Nineteenth-Century Narratives of Contagion: "Our feverish Contact." ( <i>Christa Jansohn</i> ) .....	444
Kerry Powell, ed. The Cambridge Companion to Victorian and Edwardian Theatre. ( <i>Kerstin Fest</i> ) .....	445
Jan Marsh, ed. Black Victorians: Black People in British Art 1800-1900. Paul Gilroy. After Empire: Melancholia or Convivial Culture? ( <i>Eva Ulrike Pirker</i> ) .....	446
Richard Brown, ed. Joyce, "Penelope" and the Body. ( <i>Wolfgang Wicht</i> ) .....	449
Matthew Dennis. Red, White, and Blue Letter Days: An American Calendar. ( <i>Manfred Kopp</i> ) .....	450
Heike Paul. Kulturkontakt und Racial Presences: Afro-Amerikaner und die deutsche Amerika-Literatur, 1815-1914. ( <i>Klaus Ensslen</i> ) .....	451
Prem Poddar and David Johnson, eds. A Historical Companion to Postcolonial Literatures in English. ( <i>Erik Peeters</i> ) .....	453
Horst Trossbach. Von <i>Kruger's Alp</i> nach <i>Darkest England</i> : Christopher Hopes satirische Romane. ( <i>Erhard Reckwitz</i> ) .....	454
Randi Gunzenhäuser. Automaten – Roboter – Cyborgs: Körperkonzepte im Wandel. ( <i>Oliver Lindner</i> ) .....	456
Claus-Ulrich Viol. Jukebooks: Contemporary British Fiction, Popular Music, and Cultural Value. Pascal Ohlmann. "How shall we find the concord of this discord?": Musik und Harmonie in Shakespeares Romanzen und in zeitgenössischen Texten. ( <i>Sarah Fekadu</i> ) .....	458

RÜDIGER HEINZE / JOCHEN PETZOLD

## Introduction: The Disappearance of Utopia?

There seem to be about as many heralds to the end of utopia among the many postmodern obituaries as there are heralds insisting that utopia is quite alive. This is hardly surprising, since the opposition is a false one. Utopia is only dead, and rightly so, if understood in the classical (and modern) sense of a blueprint for perfection. The totalitarian regimes of the twentieth century – both in their left-wing and right-wing manifestations – have claimed to possess such a blueprint and have – luckily – failed. It is this kind of utopia that Fredric Jameson attacks when pointing out that utopian thinking “lies not in helping us to imagine a better future but rather in demonstrating our utter incapacity to imagine such a future.”<sup>1</sup> However, humans continue to dream about ‘possible worlds’ that are somehow better than the world they live in, without necessarily aspiring towards ultimate perfection. In this sense, as less than holistic, transgressive visions of what has previously been unimaginable, unimagined and ‘impossible,’ contemporary utopian thinking abounds, both in political theory and in literary and critical discourse: the *International Bibliography of the Social Sciences* lists 1.724 entries for ‘utopia’ or ‘utopian’ since the late 1960s, 533 of which appeared during the last five years; the *MLA* lists 4.446 entries, 738 of which appeared after 2001. Obviously, utopia is still a concept that appeals to political thinkers, literary authors and critics alike.

Not surprisingly, then, the neo-conservative disputes in the U.S. over the world-wide installation of democratic political systems, the debates in the European Union about ideals of multicultural societies (e.g. the integration of ethnic minorities in the UK, the entry of Turkey into the EU) and the limits of tolerance and recognition (in legal terms), the ecological initiatives to counter global climate change, as well as the belligerent confrontations over the effects of globalization, all share the same questions that have been asked for thousands of years: What is the ideal or, less ambitiously, at least a better form of social order? How can humans live together harmoniously? What other political systems could exist beside the one we live in? How could life be different? How could it be better? It is ironic that these questions should often enough be denounced as ‘utopian’ in the predominant colloquial sense – as “unrealistic” (*Collins COBUILD*) or “impossibly or extravagantly ideal” (*OED*) and hence ‘too good to come true,’

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<sup>1</sup> Fredric Jameson, “The Politics of Utopia,” *New Left Review* 25 (January/February 2004): 35-54; 46.

when the critical impetus of utopian thinking is just that: ‘imagining the impossible’ so that the allegedly impossible can no longer be conveniently relegated to the invisible, voiceless and inconceivable.

Literature, and later film, has traditionally provided a medium for trying out answers to those questions in the form of utopian and dystopian fictions, either in vitriolic reaction to or in prescient anticipation of a given cultural context (in a wide sense of the term). Consistently, the multifarious problems that contemporary societies and nation states face in an ever more rapidly and drastically changing world offer a ripe occasion for a discussion of the role and function of utopian concepts in contemporary literature, film and cultures. However, those contemporary literary traces of utopian thought are often not immediately recognizable. This is a heritage of the generic blurring, i.e. the dissolution and fragmentation of the classical utopia, that has become increasingly visible since the 1970s – against the backdrop of social, political and cultural movements and the upheavals they caused. Thus, utopian thought often appears in unlikely places. Indeed, many of the essays collected here find utopian moments in predominantly dystopian narratives and contexts.

Dunja Mohr’s contribution, “Transgressive Utopian Dystopias,” provides an excellent starting point for this special issue, since she provides a brief overview of the genre’s transmutations between utopia, dystopia and science fiction that has taken place over the last decades. Mohr suggests that a new subgenre has developed in recent years, particularly within feminist writing, which she calls “transgressive utopian dystopias” because these texts “incorporate within the dystopian narrative continuous utopian undercurrents” and “criticize, undermine, and transgress the established binary logic of dystopia.” Her concept of the ‘transgressive utopian dystopia’ is then applied to the analysis of Szuy McKee Charnas’s *Holdfast* tetralogy (1974-1999) and to Margaret Atwood’s recent *Oryx and Crake* (2003).

Sämi Ludwig finds utopian moments in “representations of a flawed world,” specifically in three novels by Chang-rae Lee. He suggests that these flawed worlds are where we have to look for utopian visions after the “apocalyptic experience of the twentieth century [that] has made straightforward utopia impossible.” In Lee’s novels, Ludwig argues, “utopian aspects mainly manifest themselves in the private realm; there mutual understanding is possible because the generation of new intended meanings is possible.” However, their implementation outside the family realm remains difficult “because minorities (in his case mainly Korean Americans) remain excluded from the public realm of a policing syntax that imposes petrified old patterns of binary competition upon them.” Despite this, Ludwig sees a “pragmatist vision of survival and even optimism” in Lee’s novels, based on “the family as the American nucleus of development and agency, combining both traditional ‘family values’ and Asian notions of filiality.” The essay thus deftly interweaves utopian visions and immigrant experience.

In his essay, Christoph Ribbat goes back to what is arguably the most notorious contemporary architectural nexus of utopian and dystopian visions: Las Vegas. He sheds new light on “the utopian function of the city in American aesthetics” by discussing its representation in American non-fiction and “the dystopian energies

of those literary texts positioned in the tradition of the New Journalism.” The essay argues that “Southern Nevada, though frequently considered as a post-modern cityscape of simulacra, has in fact always been reflected and shaped by a strong realist tradition” and offers “an ambiguous template” not only of “visions of crassness” but, as a “unique laboratory of America’s urban future,” also of “republican dreams.” In other words: (Dys/U)topia, Nevada.

In light of the fact that zombies are the walking dead and usually signify the end of civilization, the topic of our discussion in “No More Room in Hell: Utopian Moments in the Dystopia of *28 Days Later*” may seem an odd choice. However, zombies, like utopia itself, can function as a means to comment on or criticize present society; the creation of zombies in *28 Days Later* is linked to an utopian ideal, the elimination of rage; and the film can be read as a quest for a utopian space in a pastoral setting and for a society ordered by family structures. And while both goals seem to be reached at the end, this ‘utopia’ is far from stable. Thus, the film is discussed as a self-referential mixture of genres that combines dystopia with apocalypse, utopia with the pastoral, and that ironically undercuts all its generic statements.

While most essays in this issue look for traces of utopian thought, or for small utopian spaces, in the most unlikely places, Michael Green’s paper, “The Future in the Post: Utopia in the Fiction of the New South Africa,” both is and is not an exception. He introduces the literature of a country which many would say has undergone a transformation since the 1990s that seemed ‘utopian’ (i.e. ‘impossible’) for decades: Addressing the question what future lies beyond the apparent closure of the ‘new’ South Africa, Green draws on Jameson and Anderson to scrutinize the connections of the utopian and the national and its traces in the ‘utopian mode’ of the literature that imagined a state of ‘post-apartheid.’ However, with apartheid officially gone, Utopia (in its strong sense) has not appeared, and the text Green primarily focuses on, Phaswane Mpe’s *Welcome to Our Hillbrow*, again is no obvious example of the utopian.

The volume closes with an interview with Ernest Callenbach. Thirty years after the first publication of his *Ecotopia*, he assesses and maintains the validity of his vision for contemporary society. Offering an initially depressing tally when asserting that “we have in many areas backslid from where we were 30 years ago,” he also sees “the intellectual and scientific and technological potential for rapid and massive change.” However, he maintains that, since the political potential is lacking, it will be precisely those aspects of contemporary society most distant and/or adverse to his utopian vision that will eventually “anger so many people that it will generate the basic political strength to have significant effects” and bring about change. “In the long run, it is Ecotopia Or Bust:” utopias may once more arise out of dystopian contexts, though not without struggles and victims.

Thus the collection ends on a positive note, as far as the possibility and importance of utopian thought is concerned. And while all essays would agree that there is no blueprint for *the* perfect society to be had, that does not disqualify all those who discover utopian visions in the most unlikely environments.

DUNJA M. MOHR

## Transgressive Utopian Dystopias: The Postmodern Reappearance of Utopia in the Disguise of Dystopia<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** With utopia's heyday of the second half of the 19th century long gone with only a momentary flare up as feminist utopia in the 1970s, utopian literature seems to remain in limbo. Indeed, many critics have agreed upon a diminished belief in a potentially better world if not upon the disappearance of utopian literature and the impossibility of utopian thought altogether. Yet utopia is very much alive: it has reappeared in the disguise of novels, initially set as dystopias, predominantly in the contemporary feminist dystopias of the past twenty to thirty years. These 'transgressive utopian dystopias' resist neat categorizations of utopia/dystopia; rather, they present utopian strategies as integral part of the dystopian narrative. While the described dystopian societies are riven by manifold dualisms, the suggested utopian impulses aim at their transgression. These utopian strategies can be single glimpses of hope, as Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake* (2003) illustrates, or contain the very downfall or subversion of dystopia *and* the actual process of building utopia, as in Suzy McKee Charnas's *Holdfast* tetralogy (1974-1999).

### 1. Postmodern Obituaries: The Death of Utopia

The age of postmodernism has, as Chris Ferns so aptly claims, poured out an unprecedented list of obituaries, proclaiming the “[d]eath of the Novel, and of the Author, but also the End of Ideology, and even – in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet bloc – the End of History” (Ferns 1999, 1).<sup>2</sup> To this postmodern list of obituaries we can add Francis Fukuyama's sepulchral claim that this is an age devoid of imaginative hope and speculation, an age that “cannot picture [...] a world that is *essentially* different from the present one, and at the same time better” (Fukuyama 1992, 46) and Russell Jacoby's provocative study *The End of Utopia* (1999), gravely announcing that the “utopian spirit – a sense that the future could

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<sup>1</sup> This article is based on my book *Worlds Apart? Dualism and Transgression in Contemporary Female Dystopias* (2005) and on a paper, “The Rag Ends of Language’: The Poetic Discourse of Survival in Atwood's Future Visions,” presented at the 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the Modern Language Association in Philadelphia in 2004.

<sup>2</sup> Postmodernism, too, has been added: “Postmodernism is dead, finally killed off, after years of sickness as a result of mortal injuries sustained on 11th September 2001” (Baggini 2002, 10).

transcend the present – has vanished” (Jacoby 1999, xi). It seems that at the end of the 20th century and at the beginning of the 21st century utopia is extinct.

Getting back at radical notions, above all at feminism, postcolonialism, and postmodernism, Jacoby smugly notes a general “collapsing [of] intellectual visions and ambitions” (Jacoby 1999, xii) and concludes that the “belief that the future could fundamentally surpass the present [...] is stone dead. Few envision the future as anything but a replica of today [...] There are no alternatives. This is the wisdom of our times, an age of political exhaustion and retreat” (Jacoby 1999, xi-xii). Inasmuch as Jacoby addresses literary utopia understood as the *universal blueprint of perfection*, his charge seems very much justified. In his eagerness to debunk utopia, Jacoby, however, gazes exclusively at classical and modern utopian texts, and completely disregards contemporary literary dystopias, where a disguised literary utopia is very much alive and kicking. Considering that in the 1970s there was a short period in which literary utopia blossomed in the form of feminist utopias, it is perhaps not surprising that the contemporary literary utopia can be found predominantly in feminist dystopian texts.

## 2. In Search of Utopia: The Hybridization of Genres

The ongoing postmodern dissolution of narrative boundaries and the cross-fertilization of genres have strongly influenced the genre of science fiction (sf) in particular, sf being the umbrella term under which utopia, dystopia, speculative fiction, fabulation, science fiction, and the like are often interchangeably lumped together.<sup>3</sup> Generally speaking, due to the heterogeneous nature of this particular literature, utopia and sf are probably two of the least and most defined terms in genre history. As the grand doyen of sf, Isaac Asimov, writes, “Science Fiction is an undefined term in the sense that there is no generally agreed upon definition of it. To be sure, there are probably hundreds of individual definitions, but that is as bad as none at all” (Asimov 1953, 158).<sup>4</sup> Arguments have raged over what exactly sf is and what it is not; generic demarcations are disagreed upon at large and become increasingly confusing and, indeed, rather irrelevant as contemporary utopian, dystopian, and science fiction converge, intersect, and ultimately implode these very generic distinctions, just as sf originally emerged from a cross-fertilization of, among others, Gothic and scientific romances, fantastic literature, travelogues, the tall tale, and adventure/voyage stories. Many literary works are therefore listed under various labels, depending on the critic’s approach and use of definitions, but also because a definite and unambiguous classification is unattainable. It is almost impossible to agree upon and probably not even desirable to construct rigid defining categories in postmodern times of increasingly murky generic boundaries and crossovers. There are, however, a

<sup>3</sup> The contemporary use of sf as an inclusive genre name can subsume fantasy, fairy-tale, folk-tale, myth, alternate history, and utopia/dystopia.

<sup>4</sup> Gary K. Wolfe lists a vast number of sf definitions in the encyclopedic *Critical Terms for Science Fiction and Fantasy* (1986).

number of important distinguishing features common to utopia/dystopia and sf, and to sf and fantasy.<sup>5</sup> Yet, despite the numerous differences, a shared concern with the future, nourished by a discontent with social realities and technological progress, and joint narrative strategies, such as defamiliarization, extrapolation, and alternate societies, forge a generic interrelationship between sf, utopia, and dystopia. Thus, over the past twenty-five years utopia, dystopia, and sf have undergone a generic fluidity and a thematic dialogue, so that classifications such as dystopia/utopia or sf are indeed in many cases obsolete, whereas until recently, the distinction between the two traditional antagonists utopia and dystopia has been maintained.<sup>6</sup>

In particular, feminist texts – sometimes situated in a sf frame – hybridize utopia and dystopia, and present them as interactive hemispheres rather than distinct poles, contesting the standard (classical) reading of utopia and dystopia as two discrete literary subgenres and exposing the artificiality of such rigid classifications. These utopian/dystopian texts not only negotiate the continuum between utopia and anti-utopia, to paraphrase Tom Moylan (cf. 2000, xiii), but, and this is what I want to stress, constitute a dystopian-utopian continuum. In other words, these texts interweave utopian and dystopian narrative strands.<sup>7</sup> And this is where utopia went undercover: as utopian strategies contained in contemporary, predominantly feminist dystopias. Tom Moylan argues similarly when he identifies the ‘critical dystopia’ as the new literary motor of utopian agency, providing “a space for a new form of political opposition, one fundamentally based in difference and multiplicity” (Moylan 2000, 190).

### 3. From Classical Utopia / Dystopia to the new Transgressive Utopian Dystopia

Various critics, including Angelika Bammer (1991), Raffaella Baccolini (2000), and Tom Moylan (1986, 2000), have noted a shift in form and narrative content in the predominantly feminist utopian literature of the 1970s. Moylan asserts

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<sup>5</sup> In very general terms, utopia and dystopia foreground socio-political issues and strive to move the reader to a more critical awareness, and to compare unfavourably his or her own society to the future society (in the case of utopia) or to recognize tendencies in contemporary society that might lead, if continued, to the very dystopia s/he just read about. Utopian and dystopian literature thus desires a consciousness raising, if not the readers’ active engagement in bringing on change. In contrast, science fiction at its best aims to impart an understanding of science with the means of aesthetic interpretation; yet, very often, science fiction novels cum space operas ravel in escapism and western style stories of (cow)boys gone rampant in outer space.

<sup>6</sup> These generic hybridizations often include sf, myth, quest, adventure tale, fantasy, fairy-tale, and satire. The postmodern novels mix discourses, fact and fiction, and feminist, transgressive utopian dystopias in particular use multigenerational cluster characters and single characters; societal and individualized narrative voices; and create a polyphony of alternating voices and multiple perspectives.

<sup>7</sup> In his introduction to *Scraps of the Untainted Sky* (2000), Moylan also once uses the term ‘utopian dystopia,’ not to emphasize a successful and continuous utopian subtext, but merely to denote the insertion of *oppositional* strategies within these new dystopias.

that these ‘critical utopias,’ (e.g. by Joanna Russ, Marge Piercy, Ursula Le Guin, and Samuel Delaney) refrain from the classical utopian notion of perfection and stasis, and “reject utopia as a blueprint while preserving it as a dream” (Moylan 1986, 10), a dream of a better but not of an ideal and fixed society. In contrast to classical utopias, Moylan argues, feminist critical utopias thus remain ambiguous. Similarly, Bammer claims that contemporary feminist utopian texts preserve a ‘partial vision’ of utopia. Significantly, Bammer’s ‘partial visions’ or Moylan’s ‘critical utopias’ no longer implement the state as the superior principle of order, but stress taking *individual action*. This change in content is also reflected in a changed narrative form that – compared to classical utopias – accentuates character development, non-linear narratives, and multiperspectivism. According to Moylan, these texts, focusing on self-criticism, the element of process, and the very construction of a utopia that is never attained, “dwell on the conflict between the originary world and the utopian society opposed to it so that the process of social change is more directly articulated” (Moylan 1986, 11). In contrast, classical utopia obscures its very origin and revels in the very *absence* of historical progress and process. With a less fixed, non-normative content, the feminist utopian texts of the 1970s and onwards do not present a finished ‘product,’ but rather the exploration of the very construction of an alternative and improved societal vision. Such a notion of “imperfection within utopian society itself” (Moylan 1986, 11) creates a dynamic interaction between fictional present and future and, therefore, allows a mode of diversity, difference, and a multiplicity of perspectives.

This essentially postmodern view of utopia as a pluralistic society that values heterogeneity, diversity, and difference intersects with what Michel Foucault has called ‘heterotopia.’<sup>8</sup> Potentially, heterotopian space as a destabilizer of the present can also be read as a transgressive concept that “preserves the utopian impulse, releasing it from the traditional utopian genre” (Moylan 1986, 161). In contrast to the imaginary realm of utopia, Foucault situates heterotopia in reality as “counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites [...] are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted. Places of this kind are outside of all places [...] I shall call them, by way of contrast to utopias, heterotopias” (Foucault 1986, 24).<sup>9</sup> Unlike utopias that reside in the spatial and temporal no-place or fictional elsewhere, heterotopias then exist in the real realm of society, a position that reflects Foucault’s critical view of utopia and his

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<sup>8</sup> Reappropriated by postmodern narrative strategies, heterotopia as an aesthetic principle celebrates, in Gianni Vattimo’s terminology, the liberatory function of differences, multiplicity, and heterogeneity, and embodies a carnival of utopian visions that refrain from metanarratives.

<sup>9</sup> On the intersections of heterotopia and utopia, see also the articles anthologized in Tobin Siebers (1994), especially Judith N. Shklar’s essay “What is the Use of Utopia?” (40-56) that explores the emergence of the postmodern heterotopia of disorder and of individual subjectivity from the classical utopia of order and collectivism, and links heterotopia to the philosophy of the Frankfurt School, reformulating utopian desire on the grounds of diversity and multiplicity.

insistence on replacing utopian dreaming with real experiences and experiments lived in the here and now.

So, where has utopia gone? Can we only glimpse its remnants in heterotopia? The ‘critical utopias’ Moylan and Bammer refer to seem to have dwindled since the 1970s. Is utopia indeed dead, as Jacoby has proclaimed? In search of literary utopia in the 1980s and 1990s we have to look somewhere else and, indeed, we do find a new type of utopia. It has gone widely unnoticed. This undercover utopia can be detected where we would least expect it: snuggled into the narrative of its ‘ugly’ sibling, dystopia.

Strictly speaking, the classical dystopia has often (if not always) contained a utopian, but a defeated, utopian core: the protagonist’s rebellion against the totalitarian system. With the inevitable defeat of the rebel, however, classical dystopias depict the reinstatement of a totalitarian order and preclude any notion of progress. The utopian subtext of contemporary feminist dystopias can be found precisely in this gap between the narrated dystopian present and the anticipated *realization* of a potential utopian future that classical dystopia evades. Sarah Lefanu has recognized this as a “hidden utopian streak” (Lefanu 1989, 75) and Raffaella Baccolini has identified this gap as the “utopian core [...] a locus of hope” (Baccolini 2000, 13). These postmodern dystopias initially present a dystopian world, and then move on to a point of transition where we catch glimpses of the historical processes that lead from dystopia to utopia. However, in contrast to a classical utopian narrative and like the ‘critical utopias,’ they resist narrative closure (perfection). Without ever narrating or exactly defining utopia, these new feminist dystopias map not a single path but rather several motions and changes that may lead to a potentially better future.

According to Baccolini this utopian element is contained in the aforementioned generic crossovers<sup>10</sup> and in the ambiguous ending. In analogy to Moylan’s earlier term of ‘critical utopias,’ both Baccolini and Lyman Tower Sargent classify these dystopias as ‘critical dystopias.’<sup>11</sup> Instead I argue that the utopian subtext is interwoven as a *continuous* narrative strand within the dystopian narrative while the collapse of generic boundaries essentially produces hybridized ‘utopian dystopias’ (rather than just a ‘critical dystopia’).

The terminologies of heterotopia, critical utopia, and critical dystopia predominantly focus on the shift from static to dynamic, from the universal blueprint to plurality and diversity, and do not address what is potentially the greatest utopian shift in contemporary utopia and dystopia: that of a destabilization, a

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<sup>10</sup> Cf. the “use, re-vision, and appropriation of generic fiction that constitutes [...] an opening for utopian elements” (Baccolini 2000, 13).

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Lyman Tower Sargent (1994, 7). While Baccolini affirms critical dystopias as a new genre, neither Moylan (2000) – who in turn takes up Sargent’s term and, apart from providing a critical survey of the literary history of and recapping the academic criticism of utopia/dystopia/sf, discusses at length Kim Stanley Robinson’s *Gold Coast* (1988), Octavia Butler’s *Parable of the Sower* (1993), and Piercy’s *He, She and It* (1991) as examples of critical dystopias – nor Sargent consider critical dystopias (nor critical utopias for that matter) as a distinct new subgenre.

subversion, and ultimately a transgression of binary categories. In her study *Contemporary Feminist Utopianism* (1996), the British political scientist Lucy Sargisson has identified such a radical shift towards transgression primarily in select feminist, postmodern, and political theories, and in feminist utopianism.<sup>12</sup> She argues that utopian spaces no longer present perfection and an ideal, but emphasize constant change, renegotiation, imperfection, and process. According to her, transgression criticizes and displaces meaning “constructed by a complex and hierarchical system of binary opposition” (Sargisson 1996, 4) and suggests an alternative approach that values difference and multiplicity.

Taking Sargisson’s findings as a starting point, I argue that these texts form the new subgenre of feminist ‘transgressive utopian dystopias.’ I suggest calling these hybrid texts transgressive utopian dystopias for two reasons. First, they incorporate within the dystopian narrative continuous utopian undercurrents. Second, these utopian strategies criticize, undermine, and transgress the established binary logic of dystopia. These ‘dystopias’ refuse a logic of sameness, dissolve hierarchized binary oppositions, and embrace difference, multiplicity, and diversity. Transgressive utopian dystopian texts discard the polarization of static dystopia and of static utopia, of thesis and antithesis, and thus never arrive at a definite synthesis that comprises the classical utopian notion of a blueprint for perfection. In the logic of transgression, thesis and antithesis do not exist; transgressive utopian dystopias are neither, and in a movement of fluidity they describe the interplay and incorporate both.

Transgression<sup>13</sup> subverts meanings derived from binarism – in the language of binary logic, meaning is referential and to define the dominant term requires a subordinate *other* – and emerges from the interstices of feminist, postmodern, and poststructuralist discourses. Particularly feminism’s move towards an understanding of equality *not* as sameness within the ‘equality versus difference’ debate in the 1990s, which has repositioned difference as a relational concept. For Elisabeth Grosz, difference valued as “*pure difference...difference in itself, difference with no identity*” (Grosz 1990, 340) does not imply inferiority, lack, and deviance from a norm of sameness, but can be valued as difference in terms of desirable diversity. This notion of equality *and* difference as being interrelated serves as the pivotal issue from whence the prevailing binary logic can be transgressed. This (feminist) view of difference implies a flux of appreciation and connection,

<sup>12</sup> Sargisson favours the less restrictive term ‘utopianism’ over utopia that, she notes, verges on cultural imperialism because it exclusively reduces utopian moments to the form of the literary genre. Sargisson follows a trajectory that delineates utopian moments not as a definite oppositional movement but rather as an opening of utopian spaces in a variety of theories – here she finds feminist, postmodern, and poststructuralist theories particularly useful – and as a literary practice: “‘Utopianism’, then, the umbrella term, concerns the propensity or phenomenon, and under this umbrella I place utopian thought, utopian theory and utopias [...] eutopias, dystopias and utopian satire” (Sargisson 1996, 2). Sargisson sets out to explore and assess existing content-, form-, and function-based approaches to utopia(nism) and arrives at a broad understanding of utopia(nism) as ‘social dreaming’ and desire.

<sup>13</sup> Sargisson associates ‘transcendence’ with a privileging of the mind over the body, and thus finds ‘transgression’ the more appropriate term.

and a plurality of choices. Such a move, as Sargisson states, “transgress[es] the binary position of either/or and say[s] both, neither and more [...] and either/or is no longer a meaningful position” (Sargisson 1996, 95). It might explain why *feminist* texts in particular have embraced transgressive moves.

The poststructuralist and postmodernist theories of Jean-François Lyotard, Jacques Derrida, and Emmanuel Levinas also present potentially liberating approaches to difference, because they focus on dissimilarity as a welcome incommensurability.<sup>14</sup> In Sargisson’s reading, Derrida’s deconstructivism and Hélène Cixous’s theory of libidinal femininity are profoundly transgressive discourses. Just as deconstruction tries to “expose and transform the text” (Sargisson 1996, 101), utopia(nism) aims at disclosing and transforming the present via extrapolation and defamiliarization. Where deconstruction defers meaning, transgressive utopia(nism) embodies “the endless displacement [...] of the possible;” as neither approach offers “the final interpretative word” (Sargisson 1996, 103), both thus resist logocentrism, the handing out of the (monolithic) truth. Both describe an open-ended process by inviting continuous change, and are thus profoundly resistant to closure.

Sargisson never succinctly defines transgression; yet this absence of a definition is perhaps consistent with the elusive nature of a concept that strives to abolish the fixed and the static. This is the closest she gets to defining transgression:

[Transgression offers] new conceptual spaces from which to reapproach the world in a non-dualistic way that is not driven by the desire to possess [...] the profit does not consist in the possession of truth, but rather in the opening of further alternatives and possibilities [...] [in] diverse conceptual shifts [...] [that] transgress dominant and restrictive ways of construing the world. This, then is, utopianism of process. (Sargisson 1996, 168)

Transgression, then, is a phenomenon that can be discovered in a variety of theories. It details fluid moments of suspended binary logic, when distinctions between either/or are nullified. Transgression, however, must not be misunderstood as the dissolution of binary order to produce a permanent unity; rather, transgression contests the notions of unambiguity and authenticity. It is a dynamic process of ‘neither and more,’ signifying multiple and previously unconceptualized possibilities beyond our persistent binary structuring. It is a phenomenon of overlaps, of slippage, of the interdependence of relational concepts taken out of and diluting the hierarchizing binary order and the limiting principle of dualistic choice. In summary, transgression occurs as hybridity, as transculturation, as the

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<sup>14</sup> Briefly put, the “silencing of a ‘player’ in a language game [...] The inability to articulate one’s cause in the same idiom or language creates a *différend*” (Sargisson 1996, 69). Lyotard’s *différend* connotes the unarticulated difference between two speakers, whereas Derrida’s *différance* addresses the very construction of language itself; and Levinas suggests with *alterity* the acceptance and celebration of the existence of the other not as referent but as independent from the self.

gift that does not take, as deconstructivism, and *différance*, and allows a particularly feminist oppositional position that is grounded in equality *and* difference.

#### 4. Transgressive Utopian Dystopias

This utopian activity of transgression in its various forms – perhaps best captured in the image of borderwalking, of the borderwalker who recognizes but learns to disrespect boundaries and, thus changed, acquires a nomadic consciousness of polylogous perspectives – can be approximated in the imaginary realm of speculative fiction in particular. There are many feminist dystopias, published in the last thirty years, that incorporate transgressive utopian moves on various levels. There are, for instance, Angela Carter's *Heroes and Villains* (1969) and her *Passion of New Eve* (1977), Joanna Russ's *The Female Man* (1975), Marge Piercy's *Woman on the Edge of Time* (1976) and her *He, She and It* (1991), Suzette Haden Elgin's *Native Tongue* trilogy (*Native Tongue* [1984], *The Judas Rose* [1987], and *Earthsong* [1994]), Suzy McKee Charnas's *Holdfast* tetralogy (*Walk to the End of the World* [1974], *Motherlines* [1978], *The Furies* [1994], and *The Conqueror's Child* [1999]), and Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985) and her *Oryx and Crake* (2003). The thematic concerns of these 'dystopias' involve transgressions of subject/object, male/female, human/animal and human/alien or human/non-human, master/slave, nature/nurture, nature/culture, mind/body, sanity/madness, self/other, literacy/orality, codes/stereotypes, the relation between myth/history with regard to the (im)possibility of a representation of reality and truth(s). The texts reject "a determinist, teleological link between past, present and future" (Sargisson 1996, 225) and offer multiple or heterogeneous alternative views rather than the possession of *one* reality and *a* future.

A transgressive impetus clearly is not a simple matter of 'inverted dualisms equals utopia' or a tagged on utopian impulse. Even if a writer creates a distinctly utopian society transgressive of binary logic, however, this does not necessarily result in a successful narrative representation of such a utopian impulse. Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Left Hand of Darkness* (1969) describes such an example of how very tricky is the actual narrative representation of the envisioned transgression of bipolarity. On the content level, *The Left Hand of Darkness* invalidates dualistic human categorization into woman or man, but fails to do so narratively. On the planet Winter, peopled by sexually altered human offspring, Gethenians alternate between sexually inactive periods of androgyny and 'kemmer,' an oestrus period during which a Gethenian develops through hormonal secretion into a sexually active female or male, depending on whether female or male hormonal dominance develops during that particular oestrus period. Gethenians have no control whatsoever over this process. Although an intriguing thought experiment on eliminating gender and dualism, Le Guin, however, fails to address

adequately this transgressive change in sex and sexuality on the narrative level.<sup>15</sup> This failure is partly due to the use of the generic pronoun 'he,' but more importantly to Le Guin's failure of "showing the 'female' component of the Gethenian characters in action" (Le Guin 1979, 168), as Le Guin herself has admitted.

While Marge Piercy's *He, She and It* or Joanna Russ's *The Female Man*, for instance, clearly position utopian strands alongside their dystopian narratives on both the content and the narrative level, other works, such as Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* and her *Oryx and Crake* – the former often conventionally classified as a classical feminist dystopia – contain a utopian potential less obvious on the content level. Here, a utopian core is predominantly hidden within the protagonists' narrations and their use of language. On the other hand, Suzy McKee Charnas's *Holdfast* series and Suzette Haden Elgin's *Native Tongue* trilogy – both canonized feminist dystopian novels written over a long span of time (25 and 20 years) – demonstrate exceptionally well the development of a utopian subtext within a narrative that starts out as a dystopian text on the content and the narrative level.

American sf and fantasy writer Suzy McKee Charnas looks at the inter-relating categories of gender, race, and class, and presents us with a harsh (eco)feminist comment on extreme dualism, hierarchical patriarchy/matriarchy, and colonialism.<sup>16</sup> Within feminist sf, the *Holdfast* series is unique in that it not only reflects twenty-five years of feminist theorizing,<sup>17</sup> but, unusual for the 1970s, also voices in the first book, *Walk to the End of the World* (1974), post-colonial concerns, a topic revisited especially by the fourth and last book, *The Conqueror's Child* (1999). The dystopian society Charnas creates in *Walk* is riven along well-known binarisms that she simultaneously undermines from the start by re-mixing some stereotypical bipolar equivalencies, such as homosexuality and white men. *Walk* is set in a post-holocaust environment; the 'Wasting,' caused by white men's abuse of science and nature, which is conveniently blamed on women, people of colour, and rebellious youth, all subsumed under the umbrella term 'unmen.' The surviving white males (re)build a patriarchal society,

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<sup>15</sup> Readers and critics have repeatedly pointed this out and Le Guin has noted herself: "the Gethenians seem like men, instead of menwomen" (Le Guin 1979, 168), although she clearly perceives her central character Estraven "as man and woman, familiar and different, alien and utterly human" (Le Guin 1979, 168).

<sup>16</sup> *Walk to the End of the World* and *Motherlines* won the Retrospective James Tiptree Jr. Award in 1996, *The Furies* was short-listed in 1994 for the annual literary James Tiptree Jr. Memorial Award, awarded to the best sf novel exploring gender-bending and expanding gender roles in new ways, which *The Conqueror's Child* then received in 1999.

<sup>17</sup> Charnas has defined feminism as the challenge "to treat women as full-fledged human beings" (Charnas 1988, 157), and claimed favouring "an economic model" of feminism as money is the "primary standard of value [in Western culture]," therefore "a feminist is someone who insists on equitable income policies and their enforcement" (Mohr 1999, 10). The fact that the social structure, the cultural and sexual practices of the Grassland fictionally implement feminist political theorizings induced Gwyneth Jones to the sarcastic comment that the series reads like a "transliteration of feminist theory" (Jones 1999, 185).

the Holdfast, divided along age and gender lines, where the surviving ‘fems’ (a cruel pun on females and feminists) are used as breeders and slaves. Sexual intercourse serves only reproductive purposes, as the Holdfasters practice inter-generational homosexuality. This dystopian content is mirrored on the narrative level: the larger part of *Walk* is a linear narration from successive limited male perspectives, whereas female characters are physically and textually absent. The mostly silent female protagonist Alldera appears only in the last part of the novel. Only after having been raped by two of the male characters, Alldera breaks her narrative silence and speaks “words, her only weapon” (W 166) and thus acquires the status of a narrative “I,” “the equalizing name for the self” (W 166), claiming subjectivity, humanity, and narrative space.

The second book, *Motherlines*, excludes all male voices and shifts to a female focus, depicting two all-female societies. The Riding Women’s alternative all-female potential utopia and the escaped Free Fems’ matriarchal dystopia. The Riding Women of multiracial descent, modelled on Amazons,<sup>18</sup> living on the cultural margin in the uncharted desert (the ‘Grasslands’), a geographical metaphor for their ‘otherness,’ take in the pregnant Alldera, symbolically the bearer of a hopeful future. In contrast to the Free Fems’ hierarchical and abusive society, their culture is structured by non-possessiveness, communality, cooperation, and tribal kinship. While the Riding Women reproduce parthenogenetically (designed in pre-holocaust laboratories) and ‘sharemother’ their offspring, the Free Fems face their own extinction if they do not return to the Holdfast and mate, one way or another, with men. Remarkably, *Motherlines* thus envisions hybridity long before Homi Bhabha analyzed these issues, and, with the Amazonian culture of the Riding Women, *Motherlines* anticipates Donna Haraway’s transgressive concept of the cyborg, if not in the technical sense of the human/machine fusion, then as a merging of human/animal, since the Riding Women mate with horses to trigger parthenogenesis.

Most explicitly in *The Furies* – which abandons the utopian Grasslands and fully returns to dystopia – Charnas investigates the raging war of the sexes and the slow and grim process of change leading from dystopia towards an emerging potential utopia transgressive of bipolarities.<sup>19</sup> Alldera leads the Free Fems in their victorious return to the Holdfast, where they build a New Holdfast, yet with merely reversed roles of victimization. A large part of the plot revolves around

<sup>18</sup> Both Donna Haraway and Ania Loomba criticize the potentially supportive function of the Greek Amazon (cf. Haraway 1991, 180) and the alien, “deviant femininity” (Loomba 1998, 154) of the subaltern, non-European, Amazonian woman. Yet Charnas re-appropriates and challenges the gender stereotype embodied in the Greek Amazon myth of mutilated and androgynous femininity. The virtually re-membered Amazonian Riding Women with two breasts represent female agency, desire and volition as *positive* features of the *other* woman. Unlike the Amazons of Greek myth, Charnas’s Riding Women do not legitimize the status quo, but subvert it. Their femininity, independent of generic man, questions and their existence destabilizes rather than fixes the essentialist universal of male/female.

<sup>19</sup> This description of a literal war between the sexes is quite unusual and remains as yet extraordinary for the genre, although Monique Wittig’s *Les Guérillères* and Sally Gearhart’s *The Wanderground: Stories of the Hill Women* also include to some extent the war of the sexes.

the remaining question of progeny: how can the sexual act be imagined without violence? It is this necessity of a factual working through anger and pain, the experience of oppression and victimization as well as mastery, that allows the release of rejuvenating energy and a final catharsis. Alldera's re-encounter with one of the young men, Eykar, who raped her, leads to a mutually painful but hopeful process of recognizing their shared humanity, despite all the disparities dividing them. Their attempts at reconciliation without negating their shared dystopian past and present form a utopian nucleus within dystopia. As Alldera remarks: "We aging warriors [...] of both sexes, are more alike than not" (CC 208).

As the sole character present in all four novels, Alldera emerges as the unifying narrative link (a role her daughter, Sorrel, inherits). She becomes our utopian guide travelling "not through time [...] but between histories and identities" (Bartkowski 1989, 96), and between societies. In the last book, *The Conqueror's Child*, Sorrel inherits Alldera's narrative role, but she – having grown up as a free woman among the Riding Women – is the guide from utopia who gives us a tour of dystopia.

In *The Conqueror's Child*, the New Holdfasters struggle with their liberty and how to resist the corruption of power. Sorrel arrives with a male child that she initially passes off as a female 'bloodchild' (i.e. her own child), another symbol of a potentially better future. This cross-dressing signals the most pressing question of *The Conqueror's Child* – essential to a healing process – of how to bridge the chasm between the sexes and the generations, despite the atrocities committed on both sides. In other words, how can (wo)men rehumanize themselves? At the conclusion of the series, Alldera and the 'utopian' Riding Women have vanished, leaving the plains and their history as a gift to the New Holdfasters. The imagining and building of the future now becomes the responsibility of both sexes, in league with the other races represented by various other populations and the hybrid cultures evolving around the New Holdfast.

Exploring the pathology of our society's sexism and racism taken to extremes, and alternately inflicted by both sexes, Charnas even-handedly criticizes masculine and feminine domination, and the colonial attitudes of the Western world. The series thus oscillates between the possibilities of a (re)formation of dystopia and a negotiation of a transgressive utopia that we, however, never witness. The *Holdfast* series moves from the feminist dystopia of *Walk* to the almost pastoral separatism of *Motherlines*, to a masculinist dystopia and establishment of a neo-colonial system in *The Furies*, and finally arrives at a potentially utopian reconciliation of the two sexes and the races in *The Conqueror's Child*. Unlike many feminist dystopias and utopias, Charnas does not stop at describing the outcome of patriarchy, or at focusing on women's struggle towards full humanity, but returns to consider men from a different angle. With *The Conqueror's Child*, in many ways a revisiting and rewriting of the previous books, Charnas comes full circle and formulates perhaps one of the most important remaining gender questions: How can men undo their past deeds? How can men recreate masculinity to

acquire full human subject status? In this sense, the last book of the saga envisions the dystopian destroyers of the world of *Walk* as co-builders of the utopian future.

Charnas does not suggest specific utopian projects; instead, all societal and personal aspects take part in the transformation of society. According to Charnas, the far too often monopolized and monolithic past, in its various manifestations of history, religion, and myth, must be counterbalanced and replaced by multiple perspectives, allowing previously muted groups and the subaltern voices to be heard.<sup>20</sup> External oppression will be eternally inflicted if internal programming does not change. The Western concept of relationships, based on master/slave binaries, needs to be restructured according to principles of non-possessiveness and non-violence. Charnas also stresses the necessity to shift from biological to psychological ties, to move from the destruction of the nuclear family to families of affinity, and to separate possession and progeny, i.e. to let go of genetic parent-child relations and to turn to generational progeny. The absence of fathering and stereotypical masculinity that contributed in particular to destructive patterns of bonding is met by new roles of masculinity and shareparenting, modelled on the Riding Women's sharemothering. Only the experience of both roles, of being victim and oppressor, slave and master, breaks up the dualism that previously permeated all aspects of Holdfast life. This individual experience that transcends the double bind of being master *or* slave, man *or* woman and the recognition of the coexistence of two or more modes of being, leads to the societal disruption of cluster oppositions.

The potentially utopian society of the Riding Women serves as an inspiring alternate model and contrasting experience, yet it is not an alternative to be unquestioningly transferred to human society. The Grassland society represents less a model for emulation than a stimulus for transculturation. Charnas advocates the experience of borderwalking, of slipping in and out of different societies and cultures, of transgressing binaries of self/other, male/female, master/slave, human/animal, sanity/madness: "The books attempt to show that if you can reach across some of those lines then you can reclaim that energy [needed to retain boundaries] as social and personal resource" (Mohr 2005b, 283). This energy, otherwise used to maintain stasis, can then be used for the dynamic process of borderwalking. The acquired double vision and the marginalization that turns into hybridity furthers the cultural, sexual, and ethnic transmissions essential for the making of a postpatriarchal, multicultural, and multi-ethnic society, imagining the fulfilment of human potential and new ways of utopian coexistence within the ruins of dystopia.

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<sup>20</sup> Originally used for military officers below the captain status, the term 'subaltern,' as used by Spivak and other postcolonial critics, is "shorthand for any oppressed person" (Loomba 1998, 51), but denotes specifically the double oppression of native women under colonialism and patriarchy. With *The Conqueror's Child* Charnas moves from one patriarchal society in *Walk* to a plurality of five societies including various other ethnic populations, particularly the Pooltown people. With the story of Sallali – an oppressed non-white Pooltown woman – and her children Charnas gives narrative space to the previously silenced 'subalterns' of dystopia.

While the first two books thus juxtapose dystopia and utopia, the third and fourth sequels emerge as utopian-dystopian hybrids, as the New Holdfasters struggle with dystopian relapses and the reluctant realization that the building of utopia involves both sexes. In this respect, the single-sexed Grassland society cannot function at all as a desirable utopian model for the Holdfasters. Rather, the Grassland is a parallel world, a contrasting but imperfect society with its own brutalities. There is no perfection, not even in the Grassland utopia. Not at all a real alternative to be unquestioningly adopted, the Grassland serves predominantly as a foil, an inspiration for the New Holdfasters. The Riding Women's return to nowhere, to textual and physical absence at the end of *The Conqueror's Child*, indicates the negation of any ideal. Figuratively and literally, there *is* no utopia, no place to (re)turn to and no ideal to be achieved, *but* to go indeed by one's own imagination. The alternative Grassland society is thus *not* the utopian allegory of human society. Yet it is essential to the forging of the New Holdfast that the Riding Women's model of the transgressive single-sex interaction can be adjusted for the needs of a dual-sex human society. Quite appropriately, the Riding Women then disappear into what they verged on from the beginning: the realm of myth.

In contrast to Charnas, Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake* parodies, on the one hand, the artificiality of *constructing* any utopian society at all, and particularly one devoid of (erotic) desire and the arts – such a society she considers to be doomed for failure – and, on the other hand, she describes a twofold dystopia: the dystopian society of the past before the apocalypse struck, and the post-apocalyptic primal world of the present.

Set in the United States of the 21st century, *Oryx and Crake* describes in flashbacks this progressively dysfunctional society, worshipping and misusing bioengineering and genetic splicing, segregated into the privileged rich, gated corporate compounds and the unruly, poor 'pleeblands' that supposedly caused this cataclysm. The dystopian society, however – now wiped out by an engineered genetic pandemic – in which the two male protagonists, the (word) artist Snowman (formerly Jimmy) and his nerdy childhood friend, the mad scientist Crake (formerly Glenn), grew up, remains sketchy. To see the world in gaps – as much as this is a typical Atwoodian narrative device – is also due to the fact that Jimmy and Crake could only access the world through the filters of television and the Internet. The narrator Jimmy believes himself to be the last human survivor in this post-apocalyptic world otherwise peopled by the bioengineered posthuman 'Crakers' (amongst whom Jimmy now lives), named after their god-creator Crake, a postmodern Frankenstein and the mastermind who carefully planned the destruction of civilization and humanity as we know it, turning "the whole world [...] [into] one vast uncontrolled experiment" (OC 267). Literally rewriting the human genetic code, he designed the society of the Crakers, intending them as the perfect version of 'humans,' as a posthuman 'utopia' to

wipe out humanity and with it the human historic cycle of dystopias.<sup>21</sup> For this purpose, Crake created the Crakers as a posthuman race devoid of every feature that he considered destructive: religion, art, violence, and sexual possessiveness. Mocking Intelligent Design, genetic engineering, and old utopian images, Atwood presents the Crakers as polyandrous herbivores with specific breeding seasons. Yet we only catch glimpses of this new society, Atwood never shows how utopia (if ever Crake really intended one) is or could be built. Instead, since the Crakers begin to develop the very characteristics that Crake wanted to get rid of (apart from violence), Atwood seems to imply that (erotic) desire and creativity in particular are indeed irrepressible and necessary basics for any society and, indeed, the yardstick by which they are judged: “When any civilization is dust and ashes,” he [Jimmy] said, ‘art is all that’s left over. Images, words, music. Imaginative structures. Meaning – human meaning, that is – is defined by them” (OC 197).

Besides addressing the obvious issue of art (in the guise of Jimmy who brings the ‘gospel’ of art, mythology, and stories to the Crakers) contra science (personified by Crake, virtually the God of sciences) – whether a (utopian) society evolves (art) or can be constructed (science) – Atwood once again turns our attention towards language’s role in identity construction and its memory function as a cultural archive.<sup>22</sup> In *Oryx and Crake*, language is thus restorative as well as creative, it provides the means by which Snowman remembers ‘Jimmy,’ his history, by which he teaches and relates to the Crakers; keeps his sanity in the form of remembered human contact and communication; and allows him to probe the (old and new) dimensions of words. Language empowers Jimmy/Snowman in his ordeal of and hope for survival. As Atwood has repeatedly stressed in almost all her prose fiction and in many poems: “[a] word after a word after a word is power” (*True Stories*, 64), or, in other words, “[p]owerlessness and silence go together” (Atwood 1984, 396). For Atwood language then causes reality, it restores the past and a potential future as anchors of thought for Jimmy, and it helps to create a whole new reality and new meaning for the Crakers. In *Oryx and Crake*, narration, story-telling, and a valorization of the multiplicity of language and words not only constitute forms of survivalist defiance, but also hope for the persistence of creativity.

In *Oryx and Crake*, utopian glimpses are thus contained in the very possession of words, of language itself as a keeper and bearer of utopia.<sup>23</sup> For the

<sup>21</sup> Jimmy pits a long list of great art and scientific achievements against the history of human atrocities: “Homer [...] Paradise Lost. Mozart’s music. Shakespeare [...] Polio vaccine. [...] The Crusades. [...] The witch burnings. [...] Hitler. Hiroshima. Mao. Pol Pot. [...] Saddam Hussein” (OC 91).

<sup>22</sup> Interestingly, it is Crake who wakes up at night screaming, “[t]here were no words” (OC 255), unable to remember his unspeakable dreams, and eventually dies; while Jimmy, the keeper of memory, survives. Jimmy’s argument that in the end art is all that is left of a civilization seems to be proven true. Indeed, art can exist without science, Atwood seems to suggest, but not vice versa.

<sup>23</sup> From the very beginning of Atwood’s writing career, survival and thus the clinging to the hope for a better future, its literary representation in terms of poetic storytelling, and a

narrator and postmodern anti-hero Snowman/Jimmy in *Oryx and Crake*, poetic discourse and the remnants of language to which he clings offer redemption and the means for (psychological) survival and hope. Jimmy's narrative present consists of flashbacks to the past and his (sometimes nostalgic) memories thereof, his accounts of present happenings, and an uneasy anticipation of a potential future. Storytelling thus becomes a libratory narrative strategy that constitutes the means for survival and of hope for Jimmy in his isolation as the 'last man' on earth and, therefore, on the one hand, the remembrance of a (better?) time and, on the other hand, the hope for a better world. Here, not the actual building of a utopian society but the narrative strategy as such provides the novel with a distinctly utopian subtext. Storytelling, the invention of an imagined reader and Jimmy's function as a cultural and linguistic repository as well as that of a ventriloquist of (remembered) voices – for example, his remembrance of voices and words, and thus his self-conscious attempts at rescuing the richness of language from an otherwise potentially monologic (for a lack of human interlocutors) and, therefore, almost silent post-apocalyptic dystopian world – become the utopian glimpses that Atwood offers.<sup>24</sup>

As much as Jimmy is Crake's chess figure in the cruel game "Extincathon," Jimmy also is an accomplice in the very destruction he describes and a major perpetrator of the Crakers' psychological evolution.<sup>25</sup> While Crake, the scientist, becomes the Craker's God, he has ordered Jimmy, the artist, to explain the world to them, to be Crake's prophet. Struggling with this legacy of Crake, Snowman, however, not only spreads the 'Gospel according to Crake,' but becomes their storyteller, making up a mythology. Jimmy becomes the point of reference as much for the Crakers as for the readers. Stories are in fact Jimmy's currency that he literally trades for food: "A story is what they want, in exchange for every slaughtered fish" (OC 117-118).<sup>26</sup> Here, storytelling does indeed become synonymous with survival.<sup>27</sup>

Story-trading is, however, a one-way communication. Unsurprisingly, the post-apocalyptic castaway, Jimmy, desperately desires "to hear a human voice

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valorization of (poetic) language have been recurrent major topics. In *Survival*, her seminal study of Canadian literary themes, Atwood claims survival as the "central symbol for Canada" (Atwood 1972, 32). Although set in the States, her two dystopian novels, *The Handmaid's Tale* and *Oryx and Crake*, are thus ultimately very Canadian novels in that the protagonists' main concern is survival. Both protagonists, Offred/June and Snowman/Jimmy, can perhaps be seen as disguised *Canadian* heroes whose objective is not conventional heroism but "hanging on, staying alive" in a rampant post-apocalyptic wilderness in Jimmy's case; and in a social wilderness in Offred's case, where survival means an "awful experience [...] that killed everyone else" (Atwood 1972, 33).

<sup>24</sup> For an in-depth discussion of the transgressive utopian aspects in *The Handmaid's Tale*, see Mohr (2005a).

<sup>25</sup> Jimmy wrote the very slogans that tempted people into buying the BlyssPluss pill which spread the pandemic virus.

<sup>26</sup> For the vegetarian Crakers, humans are synonymous with carnivorous monsters, "a separate order of being" (OC 116).

<sup>27</sup> Similarly, Oryx trades her sex services for lessons in English, literacy, and stories: "He taught me to read [...] To speak English, and to read English words" (OC 166).

[...] like his own” (OC 11). In order to preserve his sanity despite being almost completely isolated, he needs to imagine a narrative ‘you,’ an alter ego of the past, that allows the transgression of his solipsism and implodes the divide between the past and the present. He thus replaces the lack of an actual *other* with remembered voices, various versions of the same event, anything that provides perspectives other than his own. Hence Jimmy’s mind is filled with a cacophony of voices, memories, and stories. Repeatedly his-story is interrupted or commented on by slogans, formulaic phrases, sayings, redundant everyday idioms of the past that have lost their meaning if ever they had one. The voices of his mother, his father, of a child, of school teachers, textbooks, self-help manuals, encyclopedias, cartoon characters and literary voices pop up. While the narrator Jimmy serves as a palimpsest that is re-inscribed with layers of quotes and memories,<sup>28</sup> the Crakers in contrast are a tabula rasa on which he inscribes knowledge, language, and meaning – “These people were like blank pages, he could write whatever he wanted on them” (OC 407) – although he and the Crakers neither share a collective memory nor a truly common language, particularly since the Crakers are of a low intelligence, and have a limited vocabulary and no notion of signs and signifiers besides their close environment.

For Jimmy, this notion of a potential ‘you’ grants the hope for survival, a time *after* his ordeal. Although for this postmodern Robinson Crusoe stranded among a “collective ‘Friday’” (Ingersoll 2004, 163), “any reader he can possibly imagine is in the past” (OC 45-46), Jimmy imagines an *other*, other survivors, “Suppose there are others. He wills them into being, these possible remnants who might have survived in isolated pockets” (OC 260). His imaginative insistence upon survival is eventually validated when he hears over an old CB radio another human voice. Although it speaks in a different language, Jimmy is elated: “There are more possibilities now” (OC 322). What remains an acoustic abstraction at first becomes even more real at the end of the novel, when other human survivors appear on Jimmy’s shore and indicate the survival of humanity.

Just as these surreal voices of the past echoing in his mind that turn into reality broaden his and our perspective, Jimmy’s unfixed narrative, juxtaposing different versions of what has happened, allows an interpretative variety by giving us various approximations of events, because language can only approximate events and emotions. For instance, Jimmy is very much aware that there exist at least three stories about the elusive Oryx, a former child prostitute: her own, Crake’s, and Jimmy’s story (cf. OC 133). From these story fragments he “piece[s] her together” (OC 132), but he knows that he will never approximate anything near a notion of her ‘true’ self.

Because Jimmy cannot share a collective memory with the Crakers, he rehearses not only voices from the past but also old words that give him a sense of connection and comfort. It is the ‘artist as a throwback’s’ gift to have the “rag

<sup>28</sup> He also repeatedly censors himself: “Some tart he once bought. Revision, professional sex-skills expert” (OC 12), a reference to our helpless politically correct sanitization of language, a glossing over, without changing the practices or realities to which we refer.

ends of language [...] floating in his head: *mephitic, metronome, mastitis, metatarsal, maudlin*" (OC 175).<sup>29</sup> To "[h]ang on to the [...] odd words, the old words, the rare ones" (OC 78) is a crucial necessity of survival for Jimmy, because "[w]hen they're gone out of his head, these words, they'll be gone, everywhere, forever. As if they had never been" (OC 78) and, analogous, as if he, Jimmy, had never been. As long as he remembers words, as long as he narrates, he exists. Yet the dissolution of memory – "There are a lot of blank spaces [...] where memory used to be" (OC 5) – and even worse, the threatening loss of language always loom over Jimmy:

From nowhere, a word appears: *Mesozoic*. He can see the word, he can hear the word, but he can't reach the word. He can't attach anything to it. This is happening too much lately, this dissolution of meaning, the entries on his cherished wordlists drifting off into space. (OC 43)

Already as a student Jimmy habitually strung word lists together (much as his literary Atwoodian predecessor Offred did in *The Handmaid's Tale*) to defy his society's utilitarian thinking: "He'd developed a strangely tender feeling towards such words, as if they were children abandoned in the woods and it was his duty to rescue them" (OC 230). Now, it serves his need to ward off the loss of words and meanings and, symbolically, of civilization altogether. To whisper words calms him, as language is the tiny thread that keeps him sane.

While "words of a precision and suggestiveness" (OC 230), words of the arts, are considered useless in Jimmy's former society and fade out of the active vocabulary, in the world of the Crakers words that refer to things, machines, and cultural practices long gone have turned into signs and signifiers devoid of any meaning at all. Yet communication without a minimum of shared references is doomed to fail. If language is a heterogeneous process rather than a fixed structure or system, where "*all* meaning is contextual" and "isolated words or general syntactical structures have no meaning until we provide a context for them" (Moi 1995, 157), a changed context can change the constructed meaning of language. Like the vanished signifiers, Jimmy is incomprehensible to the Crakers. "Toast is me. I am toast" (OC 113), Jimmy muses after a failed attempt to explain the concept of 'toast' to the Crakers. Unsurprisingly, "[t]o them his name [Snowman] is just two syllables" (OC 7), a signifier signifying nothing, since the Crakers know neither snow nor a snowman. Hence the miscommunication between Jimmy and the Crakers stems exactly from this lack of shared words and cultural context. Yet, although the Crakers do not "go in for fancy language" (OC 406) and do not share Jimmy's cultural and linguistic context, they are eager for stories and mythological contexts.

One of the last images of the Crakers indicates their first steps towards art and symbolic thinking: they circle around a "scarecrowlike effigy" (OC 418) intoning a word that sounds like "*Amen*" (OC 419) to the boom of a makeshift percussion group. In an effort to bring Snowman safely home from his forages,

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<sup>29</sup> Cf. "Valance. Norn. Serendipity. Pibroch. Lubricious" (OC 78).

they “made a picture of” (OC 419) him, an effigy. The Crakers’ developing religious cult points at Crake’s failure to eliminate religion, dreams, music, and the arts from this new species. Subversely, Jimmy has told the Crakers creation myths and tartly comments:

Symbolic thinking of any kind would signal downfall, in Crake’s view. Next they’d be inventing idols, and funerals, and grave goods, and the afterlife, and sin, and Linear B, and kings, and then slavery and war. (OC 419-420)

History proves to be cyclical: eventually, the Crakers will reinstate a Symbolic Order, poetic language will develop and it will probably only be a matter of time till the Crakers will develop from their sense of a collective self (they always speak as ‘we’) to individualism. In short, the posthumans evolve into humans.

Moving on a different intellectual level, the Crakers point towards a pretty mindless utopian future, whereas the last representative of the human race – “*I’m your ancestor*” (OC 123) Jimmy says – represents the articulate but dystopian past. Similarly, Jimmy’s nickname ‘the abominable Snowman’ points, on the one hand, towards the transitory existence of his, of any species, “Maybe that’s the real him, the last *Homo sapiens* – a white illusion of a man, here today, gone tomorrow, so easily shoved over, left to melt in the sun” (OC 263), and, on the other hand, towards the uncomfortably close resemblance between humans and post-humans: “Snowman [...] apelike man or manlike ape” (OC 8). The image of the Abominable Snowman “existing and not existing, flickering at the edges of blizzards, [...] known only through rumours and through its backward-pointing footprints” (OC 8), of a state of liminality points at the two possibilities Snowman and the Crakers face. Either the posthumans will eventually follow the humans’ way of destruction, or they, and perhaps any surviving humans with them, will invent a better future.

Both the Crakers as a constructed species and a designed society, and Jimmy are then essentially transgressive figures of liminality, “neither here nor there, betwixt and between all fixed points of classification” (Turner 1974, 232), living in a world to which they are strangers. Both are in a state of suspension: the Crakers are still an evolving species, drinking words and meaning from Jimmy’s lips, and as his two names indicate, Jimmy mentally lives in Snowman’s past or contemplates the future.

The ambiguous opening quote of ‘backward-pointing footprints’ also links up with the novel’s end. Like another re-invention of Robinson Crusoe, Snowman discovers footprints in the sand of “[s]everal different sizes” (OC 431) and leaves his own alongside, “a signature of a kind” (OC 431). As much as it is unclear into what kind of society the Crakers will develop, the potential contact between human survivors remains equally indeterminate: “What would they do? Scream and run? Attack? Open their arms with joy and brotherly love?” (OC 431). Will they relive history, as Snowman’s “rehearsing of the future” (OC 425) indicates? How might other humans react to the posthumans? Will they see the Crakers as “freakish, or savage, or non-human and a threat” (OC 425)? Snowman contemplates the cliché options he has: react with violence or offer peace, sharing

the treasures he does not possess. Once again the trading of stories could ensure survival: "But no, he has nothing to trade with them, nor they with him. Nothing except themselves. They could listen to him, they could hear his tale, he could hear theirs" (OC 432). Mutual understanding, the exchange of the verbal coin, seems the most likely, the third option, the one that could be the first step towards a different kind of human contact. However, an ambiguous future awaits Jimmy, as he decides to step into the "blank face" of "zero hour" (OC 433), where another, the same old, or a new history begins. Like isolated words, Jimmy steps out of his (dystopian) texts into new, potentially utopian textual or imaginary structures that have the meaning we as readers provide for them.

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## SÄMI LUDWIG

## Utopian Moments in the Novels of Chang-rae Lee

**Abstract:** Utopias in the traditional sense are hard to find in contemporary literature. Still we do find utopian moments in many of the representations of a flawed world. In Chang-rae Lee's three novels *Native Speaker*, *A Gesture Life*, and *Aloft* utopian aspects mainly manifest themselves in the private realm; there mutual understanding is possible because the generation of new intended meanings is possible. An expansion of such discursive regeneration as a Christian model of mutual support, however, remains difficult in the wider society because minorities (in his case mainly Korean Americans) remain excluded from the public realm of a policing syntax that imposes petrified old patterns of binary competition upon them. Nevertheless, there are incidents of modest progress, i.e., there is a pragmatist vision of survival and even optimism in Lee's work that focuses, particularly in his last novel, on the family as the American nucleus of development and agency, combining both traditional 'family values' and Asian notions of filiality. Thus ultimately Lee's vision of a good future remains a quintessentially American one.

... *family* is the 'it' [...] the all-purpose F-word  
for our times, *really all we got*, ...  
(*Aloft* 307, original italics)

## 1. Introduction

There are no more classical utopias, only stories about a better life. If we look at the literature of the twentieth century, we may find dystopias, to be sure, but no longer the visionary constructions influenced by political science that have defined the genre in the past, from its origin in Thomas More up to the late nineteenth century work of Edward Bellamy, William Dean Howells and William Morris.<sup>1</sup> Aspects of utopia can still be found in social experience as it is presented in different media that tell stories about groups. These do, however, consistently take place in a context of postmodern distancing. Thus we have Bill Cosby's wonderful TV family, groups of friends in *Seinfeld*, *Friends*, and other High School soap operas. We also find tales about successful teams in sports, platoon solidarity, and often detectives who succeed at finding the guilty criminal in C.S.I.-type series (*Crime Scene Investigation*). The solidarity in the latter examples is, however, often achieved at the cost of oppositionalism, i.e., of a 'we'

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<sup>1</sup> An exception may be found in the realm of feminist utopias, as Dunja Mohr's contribution to this volume convincingly suggests.

set against a criminalized ‘other.’ It is a utopia of justice against evil based on scapegoating and smacks of religious notions of retribution.

A further site of utopia can still be found in the sentimental innocence of children’s books: but the farms they portray no longer exist – these petting zoo-like environments have long yielded to industrial agrobusiness. Youngsters also indulge in fantasy communities about dinosaurs and dragons and enjoy the new kind of medievalism of *Dinotopia* or *Eragon*. Again, however, the pastoral moments are interlaced with antagonism as a major ingredient in these visions: there is an emphasis on threat and fighting. Particularly in the United States, religion might also be considered a major vehicle of utopian thought for the people concerned. For them, this isn’t merely a matter of ‘fiction,’ however, but one of ‘revelation’<sup>2</sup> – and therefore not really a place to look for an ‘as if’ exploration of alternatives by means of a Burkean mode of language as ‘symbolic action.’ In a sense, all representation (and especially fiction) has utopian qualities. But religion is a realm of possibility that sees itself in terms of an ontology of ‘truth’ and is therefore radically opposed to novelistic explorations and hence, in crucial ways, gospel writing is a radically different ‘genre.’<sup>3</sup> Moreover, the apocalyptic experience of the twentieth century has made straightforward utopia impossible. After Auschwitz and Hiroshima, serious utopia will sound naïve.

What is left, though, are utopian moments that interlace many tales, even those that are often far from optimistic. Such positive moments can only exist as part of a mixed genre that has lost its innocence, not unlike tragicomedy. Hence in this paper I want to find utopian situations in the work of Chang-rae Lee and try to figure out how we can put them in certain meaningful categories. I will first present examples from his three novels and then discuss them in an attempt at evaluation.

## 2. Native Speaker

At first sight *Native Speaker* seems to ignore even the utopian elements mentioned above. It is an Oedipal detective story about ethnic betrayal, paralleled by the marriage crisis of a Korean-WASP couple. Henry Park, a typical member of model minority, spies on other Asian Americans for a private investigation organization called Glimmer & Company: “Each of us engaged our own kind, more or less. Foreign workers, immigrants, first-generationals, neo-Americans” (16). We have here the rather anti-utopian element of betrayal. Moreover, the motivation of this enterprise is difficult to characterize: “We pledged allegiance to no government. We weren’t ourselves political creatures. We weren’t patriots. Even less,

<sup>2</sup> Reinhard Bonnke’s Florida-based ministry *Christ for All Nations* may serve as one example among many of such inspirational texts that involve healing, miracles, and even, literally, salvation.

<sup>3</sup> This author has been struck by the fact that Swiss and German TV stations broadcast *Lord of the Rings* on Easter (2006) – it is difficult to figure out what to think of the cultural significance of this mixing of genres.

heroes. We systematically overassessed risk, made it a bad word. Guns spooked us" (15). It is hard to pin down the source of agency behind this group.

The focus of Lee's narrative is on American language and pinpoints the public discourse of assimilation, of worn-out configurations: "It's still a black-and-white world," observes Henry (181). And his interlocutor, John Kwang, calls "minority politics [...] an old syntax" (183). This public discourse sets the patterns of conflict that appropriate people's behavior: "They are every shape and color but they still share this talk, and this is the other tongue they have learned, this must be the special language" (316). The crowd is controlled by a grammar of division and spite.

Surprisingly, we do find two major utopian strands within this framework of scapegoating: The first strand involves John Kwang, a young and dynamic Korean councilman from Queens who wants to become mayor of New York City. He stands for hope, for the possibility of a new multiethnic redeemer and is modeled on both John Kennedy and Jesus Christ. Like Kennedy, he is young, dynamic, a media darling with a vision, and a womanizer. We find him in a bathrobe monogrammed "JK" (276). He has a son called "John Jr." (34). Later his boys "stand like soldiers before him" (252) – a pose reminding us of the famous photo of John Kennedy Jr. at the president's funeral.

Moreover, we read about "the kind of light that emanated from him" (125). The "subtle pressure of his grip [...] meant that you were the faintest brother to him" (129). These are elements of a Christ-like characterization: "The mood in the office was messianic" (133). Kwang is a Messiah with a tragic flaw. Because of his hubris he falls, is rejected by the mass and has to run the gauntlet of the mob in a veritable *via dolorosa* scene: "They are calling him every ugly Asian name I have ever heard." We read that "[h]e is already in another world. [...] He is willing to suffer" (317). And later: "People are grabbing his shoulders, his hair. His bandage is torn from his head. Everyone is shouting" (318). This is the fate of a Christian martyr.

At the same time he is a genuine Asian. Henry notices "Kwang's Confucian training at work, his secular religion of pure hierarchy, his belief that everyone is at once a noble and a servant and then just a man" (137). This means that "you simply bow down before those who would honor you. You honor them back" (138). The Korean candidate stands for values of patriarchal responsibility; the notion of taking care of the family is associated with a political program: "But can you really make a family of thousands? One that will last? [...] you make them into a part of you. You remember every one of their names" (302). Asian memorization is crucial in this effort to turn society into a family and give its discourse a center; it is a strategy against the American tendency to forget and end up in the same old worn-out patterns ("syntax"): "John Kwang was a devotee of memory," which is for him "like a serious craft or martial art" (165). Thus he insists: "In past times, a person's education was a matter of what he could remember. It still is in Korea and Japan. [...] Americans like to believe this is a great failing of Asia" (166). Not only does Kwang keep an electronic data bank

of his campaign donors, he also memorizes their names! He combines traditional patriarchy with Christian caring.

Knowing whom you owe is connected with a traditional Korean institution, the *ggeb*: “He models our program on the *ggeb*. A Korean money club” (260). This is his ethnic minority’s banking system: “Everything is in private, we deal like family” (261). We read that “the *ggeb* was his one enduring vanity, a system paternal” (310). It translates Kwang’s ethics into economics. His Asian Christianity stands for a new kind of solidarity and a new way of redistributing wealth. This system is holistic and inclusive rather than divisive and competitive. It foregrounds a sociology of family that rivals the predominant one of capitalism.

A second strand of utopian imagery in *Native Speaker* is associated with Mitt, the son of Henry and his white wife Lelia (a language therapist). Mitt adjusts to his multicultural environment like a glove. He feels comfortable everywhere and speaks all the accents – we read about Mitt’s “wholly untroubled” speech: “Mitt was beginning to appreciate the differences in the three of us; he could mimic the finest gradations in our English and Korean, those notes [...] rich with disparate melodies” (223). The young boy provides a third step of cultural encounter and stands for a possible cultural synthesis, for a utopian new generation. The narrator writes about his “hope that he would grow up with a singular sense of his world, a life univocal, which might have offered him the authority and confidence that his broad half-yellow face could not” (249). Mitt quickly befriends the other boys in the suburban white neighborhood: “By the last summer Mitt was thick with them all” (97). But things get too “thick” when he is killed playing dog-pile and literally choked to death underneath the big Caucasian neighborhood boys. This is a highly symbolic act in which they take away his breath, the source of his speech.<sup>4</sup> The pressure of the mass, of the majority, takes the wind out of his voice.

The failures of both strands, Kwang and Mitt, indicate that we get only utopian moments, only flashes of Christian kinship, of society as an extended family, and of the natural multilingualism of youth in *Native Speaker*. Yet the book ends on a reconciliation between husband and wife, which is initialized by their eating “lamb stew.” Significantly, the “rich, pungent meat of the lamb was an offering passing between us. Somehow the tastes held an inner logic” (199). The novel ends in Lelia’s speech studio, where they teach EFL to Laotian boys. Ouboume and Bouhoame are compared to Romulus and Remus: “Ancient Rome was the first true Babel. New York City must be the second” (220). Henry becomes his wife’s assistant, playing his “role as the Speech Monster. I play it well” (323).<sup>5</sup> Rather than teaching a common language, Lelia “wants to

<sup>4</sup> I owe this observation to my Mulhouse graduate student Lei Stark.

<sup>5</sup> In a book riddled with intertextuality, this statement can be read as a commentary on the last sentence in Maxine Hong Kingston’s *Woman Warrior* about the “Eighteen Stanzas for a Barbarian Reed Pipe”: “It translated well” (209). Lee opts for pragmatic communication skills instead of translation.

offer up a pale white woman horsing with the language to show them it's fine to mess it all up" (324). Thus she encourages them:

Everybody, she says, has been a good citizen. She will say the name, quickly write on the sticker, and then have me press it to each of their chests as they leave. It is a line of quiet faces. I take them down in my head. Now, she calls out each one as best as she can, taking care of every last pitch and accent, and I hear her speaking a dozen lovely and native languages, calling all the difficult names of who we are. (324)

This is a very rich quote: we find political implications in which she tries to give the children – all of whom about the age and weight of their son Mitt – self-confidence and recognition ('good citizens'); at the same time it is an adamic scene (naming) of a new world-making on a personal level. Yet Lee's 'each one teach one'-model is not one of grammatical imposition but rather implies an inversion of roles between white teacher and immigrant students in which Lelia learns how to pronounce the "difficult names" of "a dozen lovely and native languages."<sup>6</sup> This 'native speaker' model of language originates in the individual. Rather than fusion or linguistic appropriation, this is a mode of dialogue and human interaction beyond the discourse of public ideology.

### 3. A Gesture Life

Lee's second book is the story of a retired Japanese American good neighbor, the neo-American Franklin Hata. We enter an uneasy suburban pastoral with a dragging, slow beginning – the reading is almost boring. 'Doc' Hata is a man of conformity who always wants to do the proper thing, but problems soon catch up with him: we learn that his adopted Korean daughter has left him and that the nice people to whom he sold his medical supply store are going bankrupt. But this is trivial compared to the shocking flashbacks to the Pacific war, when Hata still was Jiro Kurohata, a medical aid in the Imperial Army responsible for the Korean 'comfort women' in a military camp. Obviously, there is a skeleton in the closet of this 'badly run' suburban affluence in Bedley Run. Moreover, we learn that our Japanese I-narrator is himself an adopted child of Korean ancestry.

Most surprisingly, we do find utopian moments in this very unlikely environment. First, there is Hata's love affair with one of the Korean girls in the camp. K, or Kkutaeh (183), is a well-educated young woman who was sent into prostitution by her father to protect her younger brother from Japanese conscription. Born "in a noble, scholarly house," she is the young Jiro's superior (257). We find scenes of intimacy between them which range from their sharing rice balls with sesame seeds sprinkled over them (242) to having intercourse in the examination room.

Their secret communion takes place in a Romeo & Juliet-type of context; the public incompatibility of prisoner and warden is overcome in darkness:

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<sup>6</sup> ... possibly an oblique reference to "the dozens," the highly pragmatic discourse of the black ghetto named after the rejects of the auction block.

But it was really only toward dusk and evening that first day, when she was willing to talk to me, that I lost myself. I brought her some rice and after finishing she didn't simply turn away and dwell in a corner until it was time for me to go. The daylight grew weak and dim and was almost gone, the exam room we were in becoming nearly dark. (243)

In the “warm cast” of the “oil lamp” they create their own private reality: “I felt suddenly illicit in her presence, as though we'd slipped out of sight of our chaperons and found ourselves in a darkened, private park somewhere” (246).<sup>7</sup> The hermetic darkness makes a new language possible:

Earlier she had wanted to speak in the darkness, [...] every part of us in the shadows. I could finally understand what she was wishing for. I believe it was so she couldn't see my uniform or the shine of my boots or even my face; I realized that she was trying to pretend we were other people, somewhere else, with the most ordinary reasons for keeping such furtive company, just our whispering voices apparent to the night air. (252)

When sight is turned off, she can't see his military boots and they can play normalcy in the examination room.

Curiously, at the center of Japanese war crimes we find references to Western culture when he tells her that he has “enjoyed some modern novels, too, especially several French and German, which I have found to be passionate and distinctly dark, in turn” (248). The two lovers have illusive dreams of reading *Madame Bovary* together, “the figure of a woman in a small French provincial town that was her world, and prison” (249). K argues: “Since I was a little girl, I always wanted to live a completely different life, even if it might be a hard one. I was sure I wasn't meant to belong to mine. Maybe you can describe the stories to me ...” (249). In short, their escapism consists of “our pretending to be other people, like figures in a Western novel” (263). These references already seem to prefigure Hata's later move to the United States.

The status of their discourse in the camp is of course highly ambivalent. He has more illusions about it than she does: “We were just talking, I know, but sometimes that's enough to make everything seem real” (256). Even though Kkutaeh lets him make love to her, she is realistic about their hopeless situation: “You're a decent man, Jiro, more decent than you even know, so please. You can pretend, if you wish, and I'll pretend with you, as much as I am able. But I ask you please no more than that” (258). Their “untoward region of stasis” (293) is a hermetic *locus amoenus* all the time surrounded by “the surreally distant war” (295), by rape, executions, war atrocities. Their private utopia is doomed because they are feeding themselves “to the all-consuming engine of war” (299).

A second utopian incident can be found in Franklin Hata's later affair with a neighborhood widow in the United States. Like Lelia in *Native Speaker*, Mary

<sup>7</sup> In this imagery we can find more allusions to Kingston's *Woman Warrior*, e.g., to the scene when, hiding with the quiet girl in the school basement, little Maxine discovers her own brutality (172-81).

Burns stands for the good white woman.<sup>8</sup> When she leads him to a kind of love bower in the underbrush near the cemetery where her husband is buried, the imagery echoes his first affair. They walk on a path “no wider than a deer trail, the ever-thickening underbrush tugging at our trouser cuffs” (311) and enter a “small opening within a thicket” (314). Again there is a hermetic secrecy about their behavior: “It would have been scandalous in town had someone caught us” (314). The contrast of private intimacy vs. public law is transferred from the Pacific war to the affluent US neighborhood. Unfortunately, she gets a nosebleed at the crucial moment (312) and their affair is never consummated: “I am almost sure she wanted me to make love to her” (315). The blood, which may stand for the violence of real penetration somehow interferes. It marks a phallic inversion that scares Hata. The Christian blood (*agape*?) cancels the ‘nose’ of the semen (*eros*?). Ultimately they go different ways and Hata only learns about Mary’s death years later, from the newspaper. Lee’s hesitant protagonist is a master of the ‘perhaps’ whose life of gestures stands for Prufrockian (“trouser cuffs”) missed opportunities.<sup>9</sup>

A tentative commitment may be provided in a third, possibly utopian moment, which is less passionate and concerns the reconciliation of the old Hata with his adopted daughter Sunny and her little black-Korean son Thomas, who have moved back to the less affluent neighboring town called Ebbington. Unlike Mitt, this young boy survives: Hata later saves Thomas from drowning (323). Still the name signifies doubt rather than optimism. Moreover, Sunny’s new family cooperation is beyond illusions: “We’re here, aren’t we? Whatever has happened” (336). Their new relationship is not based on ideals but on the pragmatic reality of facts as the only possible starting point for the future.

#### 4. Aloft

Lee’s most recent novel describes the decline of an affluent entrepreneurial Italian American family from the perspective of the former head of the company, now in early retirement. His account is interlaced with a hilarious use of post-structuralist terminology he has picked up from his daughter who is a university professor. As always, Lee provides some hefty sex to counteract stereotypes and prove that Asian Americans got balls (the Italian American narrator has a Korean American wife). But at the center of the novel is the bankruptcy of the family business of the Bataglias, significantly renamed “Battle Brothers” in America.

In this tale, utopian moments may be experienced on long vacations, which Jerome Battle nowadays organizes, working part-time for a travel agency, or when he is “aloft,” flying his plane Donnie along the American East Coast. There is an autistic element about these moments of happiness when you keep at distance

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<sup>8</sup> There may again be Christian imagery involved in this naming – the ultimate female and holy fire.

<sup>9</sup> I find here clear allusions to T.S. Eliot (religion, sex, sense of indecision).

from the world. This is implied when he later describes the new selfishness as typified by “A Solo Flyer,” and his son-in-law Paul, another Asian American supporting character in the book, comments on this imagery as follows: “They think they can go anywhere and do anything, as if none of their actions had any bearing except on themselves, like they are in their own mini-biosphere, all needs self-providing, everything self-contained, setting it up like God would do himself” (281). This is an argument against solipsism and implies a criticism of hermetic visions of human happiness as such. Moreover, what goes up must come down – you cannot withdraw from reality. Significantly, Jerome Battle gets into a storm with his pregnant daughter and realizes in a big landing scene that, yes, reality is on the ground. This is “the moment of payback for my years of exclusively fair-weather flying” (327). He has learned his lesson: “I’ll go solo no more, no more” (328). Following this logic, the last chapter starts with the statement “Life stays thick and busy on the ground” (330). Clearly, this incident involves reorientation – no man is an island.

The utopia they are heading to after the bankruptcy is that Battle’s son and daughter and their respective families move in – they even rescue the grandfather from his exile in the nursing home and bring him back. Chang-rae Lee plays it Italian and interbreeds the *la famiglia* culture of the more established European immigrants with Asian filiality. We get a kind of fusion of Eastern and Western American immigration culture – one character calls family “the all-purpose F-word for our times, *really all we got ...*” (307). They all bunk up in Jerome’s old house, even live in the basement:

You could say we’ve all had to come around in the last few weeks, dealing with one another’s daily (and especially nightly) functions and manners and habits and quirks, which in themselves, of course, are thoroughly inconsequential, and one hopes not half as telling of our characters as our capacities for tolerance and change. (331)

As always, utopia is a bit soppy and sentimental, but there is a consistency in the sense that, as in Lee’s other novels, change for the good can only originate in the private realm.

## 5. Discussion

If we look at Chang-rae Lee as a successful author who is fairly representative of contemporary literature in the United States, what are we to think of his treatment of utopian issues? In a forthcoming article on private and public negotiations in *Native Speaker* I emphasize the cognitive dimension in Lee’s vision: the only way to understand the reality we experience is through language and the only way to change our understanding of reality and our roles in it is through language renewal, through a changing of the terms. This is why the helper (and loving wife) is a language therapist – her race is secondary. The new language to be created will, hopefully, start new kinds of relationships in the private realm that

can later permeate society at large and contribute to a Whitmanesque “Brooklyn Ferry”-type of utopia.<sup>10</sup> I claim in my article that language renewal is a cognitive issue because the bottleneck of information processing is in the individual mind, where we find the only possible origin of intentional change.

Such a contrast of a hostile public environment and a hidden private utopia can also be found in Lee’s second novel *A Gesture Life*, in the two private love bowers, one with K, the Korean comfort woman in the medical station of the Imperial Army, and the other in Hata’s excursion from the graveyard with Mary Burns. In a writer whose prose thrives on intertextual allusions, these scenes must be seen as, consciously or unconsciously, modeled on Hawthorne’s famous forest scene in *The Scarlet Letter*. Such a reference is also implied in Hata’s identification with a black flag: “Hata is, literally, ‘flag,’ and a ‘black flag,’ or *kurohata*, is the banner a village would raise by its gate in olden times to warn of a contagion within” (224). The flag is the token of the outcast. Instead of the adultery of the woman of the scarlet letter we have the couple of the black flag. At one point Franklin Hata even has a vision of K “loosely enrobed in a black silken flag,” as a “spectral body or ghost” (286). What are we to think of this spectral evidence?

The problem with such a reading is that it puts us back on square one – the utopian moment in Lee turns into a mere echo confirming the well-known pattern of a repressive Puritan society and its means of enforcing conformity, a bulwark of conceptual and military force that crushes the utopian love passion cropping up in hidden places. We have a repetition of Hawthorne, who has already found out that the public discursive hegemony crushes human beings and turns them into merely gesturing allegorical types (Chillingworth turns from a healer into a Faustian devil; Hester into a hermeneutic riddle). And Hata becomes what Eliot would call a “hollow man.”

Leila’s analysis in *Native Speaker* actually makes a very similar point, when the white wife gives her Korean American husband a list with all the racist stereotypes into which he has grown: “The day my wife left she gave me a list of who I was” (1). This identity on paper comprises “illegal alien,” “emotional alien,” “Yellow peril: neo-American,” “stranger,” “follower,” “traitor,” “spy,” and finally, “False speaker of language” (5). Henry understands that the list is not “a cheap parting shot” but provides the parts of “terse communiqués from her moments of despair” (5). It initializes his search for a truer identity. The danger signaled here is that we internalize the hegemonic public discourse and become a part of it, thus practically giving up our humanity, our cognitive privilege of private reality construction.

An important aspect of these configurations is, of course, the issue of power, i.e., the limitation of private speech acts. As J.L. Austin convincingly argues, certain things we can only ‘do’ with words if we are authorized to do them. Lee’s insistence on the private-public distinction and his consistent placing of utopian

<sup>10</sup> Lee cites Whitman in the epigraph to the novel and he also offers a ferry scene when Harry and Leila go out to Staten Island (223).

moments in a private realm that is surrounded by a hostile public realm connects the language issue with concerns about power. The result of these juxtapositions is a vague analysis that language is a crucial issue in the negotiation of change; it puts speech act theory in a specific cultural context. Lee definitely acknowledges the hegemony of a dominant public discourse: the postmodern forces are recognized, but they are not presented as ontological. Power is, significantly, not treated within an absolute and determinist top-down framework. Lee's approach is a realist one based on a cognitive epistemology rooted in history and behavior rather than in semiology and language grammatology.

In that sense, his utopian dimension is a pragmatist one motivated by the recognition that, ultimately, you cannot and must not give in to defeat. In order to assert your humanity you have to believe in a positive outcome of your actions and 'keep on keeping on' as the proverb goes. As Jenny Thomas observes, "pragmatists are accused of viewing the world through rose-coloured glasses" (1995 178). I think that the best way to understand this optimism and the utopian/pragmatist connection is to refer to America's first cognitive psychologist, William James, the inventor of American pragmatism, and his famous concept of the 'will to believe,' also title of an eponymous essay and his second book on pragmatism. James's 'will' to believe is actually a 'necessity' to believe, or rather, an argument that if we make an effort, we will *maybe* fail, but if we do not make an effort (because we believe in determinism), we will *certainly* fail: "Indeed we *may* wait if we will, – I hope you do not think that I am denying that, – but if we do so we do so at our peril as much as if we believed. In either case, we *act*, taking our life in our hands" (30, original italics). James's biographer Ralph Barton Perry quotes James's diary entry after his personal crisis in 1870, "My first act of free will shall be to believe in free will," emphasizing its epistemological significance: "James felt his old doubts to be dispelled by a new and revolutionary insight" (1996 121). What James did was to "believe *by* an act of will *in* the efficacy of will" (1996 122, original italics). Utopia, seen from this angle, is a pragmatist imperative rather than a flirt with illusionism; as a function of the future it is an integral aspect of human cognitive operations.

The preferred locus of agency in Lee seems to be the 'family,' which is his third utopian key word after 'language' and 'privacy.' Thus what is left in *Aloft* is the family: the Italian *famiglia* of the Battaglias fuses with Korean filiality in the new multicultural American family of close blood relations (remember that John Kwang's public family project in *Native Speaker* failed). This is a crucial development: once Lee moves from the Asian family model to the Italian American one, he somehow gets in-step with the whole much-quoted bag of conservative to reactionary American 'family values' – and thus may ultimately endorse the status quo of American social organization rather than challenge it.

Such an emphasis on the nuclear family is somehow not a force of dissent; it is not subversive but affirms preexisting American public beliefs. Part of this notion of American 'family values' is of course that you are not a socialist follower of the group but buy into Protestant individualism and Republican

capitalism. You choose to build your own dynasty of grandchildren with Roman numerals after their names (at least for the boys), who follow their private utopias, go to private schools, choose their private and voluntary affiliations and houses of worship, have their private businesses, use private banking, and so on ...

All of this is very far from the construction of a utopian society in the comprehensive sense or even a new form of the state (political utopia) – as we had it in the classical nineteenth-century reform movements, Progressivism, the New Deal, or visions of a Great Society. Lee's utopian moments give us a troubled sense of American multiculturalism. They privatize the hope for a better life, thus turning him into a very American writer. Still, the question remains at what price this integration is achieved.

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CHRISTOPH RIBBAT

## Utopia, Nevada: Las Vegas and American Nonfiction

**Abstract:** This essay examines Las Vegas nonfiction by paying particular attention to the utopian function of the city in American aesthetics and to the dystopian energies of those literary texts positioned in the tradition of the New Journalism. It argues that Southern Nevada, though frequently considered as a postmodern cityscape of simulacra, has in fact always been reflected and shaped by a strong realist tradition. Some of the most important authors of literary nonfiction have written about Las Vegas: among them Hunter S. Thompson, Tom Wolfe, Joan Didion, and David Foster Wallace. In addition numerous works have appeared in recent years exploring the city from a host of architectural, urbanist, and historical perspectives. Visiting writers were interested chiefly in the city's wealth of opportunities for meticulous observation and representation of the body (the essay explores the figure of the showgirl as a case in point). As the essay outlines this interest has not abated in the early 21st century. But the general nature of Vegas writing has changed from prose informed by the mercurial language of the New Journalism to works interested in larger, more complex and academic representations of this new American metropolis.

### 1. Allegories of Clark County

In Utopia, as in Las Vegas, a somewhat relaxed dress code applies.<sup>1</sup> “No value is set on the fineness of thread,” Thomas More imagined in 1516, “a man is content with a single cape, lasting generally for two years” (1965, 135). Reporting from Las Vegas almost half a millennium later, journalist Marc Cooper observes “herds of shorts-clad schleppers” wearing “fanny-packs around their waists” (2004, 27). Like Las Vegas, with its rich tradition running from Liberace to Siegfried and Roy, Utopia is “very fond of fools” (193). And just as Utopia was turned into an island by a fifteen-mile “excavation” ordered by its conqueror Utopus (113), the new metropolis in Southern Nevada’s Clark County has also completely transformed its environment, turning untouched desert into suburban and exurban sprawl.

But the differences outnumber the similarities – by far. Gambling, Las Vegas’ reason for being, is a practice explicitly condemned by the Utopians. “Dice and

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<sup>1</sup> The author would like to thank Markus Hartmann (Hatje Cantz, Stuttgart) for sending him off to Nevada. For an inspiring recent essay from a European perspective and comments on the city’s utopian aspects see French philosopher Bruce Bégout’s *Zéropolis: L’Expérience de Las Vegas* (2002). This essay will pay relatively little attention to postmodernist debates of Las Vegas’ spatial and architectural specificities; for astute reflections on these subjects see Klein (2004).

that kind of foolish and ruinous game they are not acquainted with," More states (129). The "mob of mortals" might cherish such entertainments. Utopians "positively hold them to have nothing to do with true pleasure" (171). There is no "wine shop, no alehouse, no brothel anywhere, no opportunity for corruption" (147). Commodities "are distributed evenly among all" in Utopia (147), "everything belongs to everybody" (239), and the people "are firmly joined together by good will" (199). Contemporary observations of Las Vegas emphasize quite in contrast that America's fastest growing metropolitan functions with an almost complete disregard for commonality, public space, and the public good. On the lists of social ills Nevada in 2004 ranked 50th of the states of the union in suicide among the elderly, 49th in high school completion, 47th in teenage drug abuse. It was 46th in homicides, 44th in teenage suicide, 43rd in child abuse (Murphy 2004, n.pag.). Neither the "fresh and pure water" described by More in the city of Amaurotum, Utopia, nor its "gentle and pleasant river" (119) have counterparts in Clark County. Las Vegas is North America's first "arid metropolis" (Rothman and Davis 2002, 9). To Mike Davis the city symbolizes "the fanatical persistence of an environmentally and socially bankrupt system of human settlement" (2002, 91). The historian, moonlighting as prophet, finds Vegas "headed for some kind of eschatological crackup" (101).

Dystopia, Nevada? Many accounts suggest nothing else. The dazzling population growth of the Las Vegas Valley (from a population of 8,000 in 1940 to more than 1.5 million at the end of 1999 [Rothman 2003, 3; Land & Land 2004, xviii]) is mirrored by a similar explosion of Las Vegas histories, essays, urbanist texts, cultural criticism, autobiographical writings, and investigative journalism. Along the lines of Davis' gloomy visions various nonfictional texts treat the city as an allegorical territory of all things going wrong in contemporary America. But things aren't always this clear cut. Utopian and dystopian elements mix in reportage from Southern Nevada – and most texts make claims as to Las Vegas' significance as a unique laboratory of America's urban future. One of the very first nonfiction books on Las Vegas, Ed Reid's 1961 *City without Clocks*, depicts the city in one and the same short paragraph as a "display of fireworks that never goes out in the night sky on a Fourth of July that never ends" and a "gigantic television set with 20 channels, all of them broadcasting full-color spectacles at the same time" (17). The two symbols form an ambiguous template of the republican dreams and the visions of crassness that illuminate Las Vegas prose.

Some of the most prominent authors of nonfiction and literary journalism have written extensively about Southern Nevada: including Tom Wolfe, Hunter S. Thompson, Joan Didion, John Gregory Dunne, Michael Herr, and David Foster Wallace.<sup>2</sup> Yet a brief survey of Las Vegas nonfiction as a whole may best begin

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<sup>2</sup> Though central terms and interests of nonfiction are discussed below, there is no space here for a meticulous discussion of such categories as "creative nonfiction," "literary nonfiction," and "literary journalism". John C. Hartsock presents a useful account of the problems involved in historicizing and defining what he convincingly calls "literary journalism" (2000, 3-20). For

with one of the most recent monographs on the city, Hal Rothman's 2003 *Neon Metropolis: How Las Vegas Started the Twenty-First Century*. Rothman, a historian, reads the new metropolis as "one of the pillars of the postindustrial, post-modern future." He treats the city as "the latest in American dream capitals" (2003, xxvii), a model of the future of America in economic, cultural, and urbanist terms. There is some ambivalence in Rothman's study whether a Nevadaization of America should be hoped for or feared. But the author is sure that what's sprawling over Clark County needs to be understood as a showcase of the American future. Las Vegas, Rothman states, "anticipated the transformation of American culture" understood chiefly as a culture of radical individualism (323). Las Vegas, Rothman's readers could surmise, is a most paradoxical space: neoliberal utopia.

Earlier traces of this idea can be found in Vegas studies focusing almost exclusively on aesthetics. Works such as Venturi/Brown/Izenour's 1972 essay *Learning from Las Vegas* and Alan Hess' *Viva Las Vegas: After-Hours Architecture* (1993) have praised the city as a utopian territory in the field of architecture and design. These accounts read the city as the place that will make Americans understand how their vernacular culture should find expression in postmodern urban space. "Las Vegas's values are not questioned here," the authors of *Learning from Las Vegas* concede; "morality" is not an issue. And yet, Venturi, Brown, and Izenour do develop political visions. Their study imagines architects "learning from popular culture," using irony to develop "architecture for a pluralist society" (1972, 161). In this society, the authors hope, architects would draw their inspiration from the "decorated shed on Route 66" (105). *Learning from Las Vegas* projects Los Angeles as "our Rome", Las Vegas as "our Florence" and the neon sign of the Flamingo Casino, Las Vegas, as the "model to shock our sensibilities toward a new architecture" (161).

At the other end of the spectrum, in much less optimistic terms, investigative journalists Sally Denton and Roger Morris have treated Las Vegas as a key place to study the links between commerce, politics, and the underworld. *The Money and the Power: The Making of Las Vegas and Its Hold on America* continues a tradition begun by Ovid DeMaris and Ed Reid. Their 1963 study, *The Green Felt Jungle*, had first revealed Las Vegas' "slimy underside" (Rothman 2001, 629), the intricate connections between organized crime and the casino industry. In *The Money and the Power* the history of Las Vegas reads as the transformation of a "remote oasis of legal vice" to a "criminal city-state" growing "as a colony, then clearinghouse, then international center of a pervasive and swelling American corruption" (Denton and Morris 2002, 11).

Covering more neutral ground, finally, two recent anthologies have focused on discovering the 'real' Las Vegas. David Littlejohn's collection *The Real Las Vegas: Life Beyond the Strip* and Hal Rothman and Mike Davis' *The Grit beneath the Glitter: Tales from the Real Las Vegas* both emphasize the city's transfor-

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central programmatic texts see Wolfe's introduction to *The New Journalism*, Kramer/Sims, and Robert Boynton's introduction to his anthology of writer's interviews.

mation from mere tourist resort into mid-sized metropolis. Insisting on the ‘real’ Las Vegas comes as a counter-reaction to the more speculative work associated with what Davis/Rothman call the “journalists’ trick of the quick visit” (2002, 5). The new observers of the city, the authors of the ‘real Las Vegas,’ are not content with the surface effects. They call for immersion, depth, and accuracy.

It is highly interesting that Las Vegas, long considered the unspoiled habitat of postmodern simulacra, has now produced its own realist literary tradition. Southern Nevada wants a Dreiser, not a Baudrillard. And literary nonfiction, the genre explored here, ranks as the prose form most intimately associated with realism – “drilling down,” as it is expected to do, “into the bedrock of ordinary experience” (Boynton 2005, xv). It only seems far-fetched to treat the Vegas texts at hand in the framework of naturally fictional utopian writing. Any text advertising its own factuality – a central feature of contemporary nonfiction – makes a perfect object for studying its fictionality (Campbell 2002, 263). It is especially behind the reports from the ‘real Las Vegas’ that various fictional and imagined cities appear most clearly: some sunny, some dark. This essay thus follows M. Keith Booker’s suggestion of a much more open analysis of dystopian or utopian writing, an approach questioning fixed and stable genres. Booker speaks of dystopian or utopian “impulses” or “energies” in literary texts. If in utopian literature these impulses feed into the search for the perfect society, dystopian writing positions itself in opposition to this quest, using, in Booker’s words, “defamiliarization” as its “principal literary strategy” (1994, 3).

In the case of a city constantly described as unfamiliar, strange, and disconnected from reality, even the most hard-nosed nonfiction texts are closely linked to and informed by utopian and dystopian perspectives on the unfamiliar. Exceptionalism shapes Las Vegas writing. Nonfiction from Southern Nevada frequently implies that what it describes a) exist nowhere else in America and b) will be extremely significant in America’s future. The territory thus produces a textual mixture familiar to students of New England’s early intellectual history: literary representations combine nonfictional accounts of the land and evocations of its potential in larger American allegories. (Reid’s *City without Clocks* taps into Colonial American discourse when it sketches a picture of a place “where savage Indians once camped, where the desert hides secrets that hold the fate of many a man” [1961, 10]). Reading *Of Plymouth Plantation* Myra Jehlen notes that the ‘newness’ of the New World to William Bradford lies in “being the site for the emergence of the Pilgrims as a new people” (1994, 91). Accounts of Las Vegas, in a quite similar fashion, present the image of a new city in order to unfold theories of new Americans, new mentalities, and new ways of defining the self.

Most of the texts studied in this essay from the material of the real ambitiously reach for larger meanings. They link everyday observations to such concepts as the model city and the city of darkness. This kind of moral bent, combined with the representational strategies of literary journalism, has led some critics to describe nonfiction per se as a utopian genre. Mark Kramer claims that there is something “intrinsically political” and “strongly democratic” about creative nonfiction and

its “pluralistic, pro-individual, anti-cant, and anti-elite” qualities (1995, 34). Robert Boynton states in a similar argument that contemporary nonfiction writers are prone to view their protagonists not as “exotic tribes, but as people whose problems are symptomatic of the dilemmas that vex America” (2005, xv). Seen in this context Las Vegas appears as a perfect case study of the republic’s fate in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, portrayed in inherently ‘democratic’ literary nonfiction. Both city and literary text are read as highly allegorical and indicative of the future of the nation and, consequently, the future of American utopian promise.

## 2. Dystopian Vegas: The New Journalism

At first Vegas-as-fireworks registers as the dominant metaphor in Tom Wolfe’s essay “Las Vegas (What?) Las Vegas (Can’t hear you! Too noisy) Las Vegas!!!,” the opening chapter in Wolfe’s early collection *The Kandy-Kolored Tangerine-Flake Streamline Baby* (1965). The essay treats the city’s neon spectaculars as dazzling indices of indigenous American creativity. “I call Las Vegas the Versailles of America,” (xv) Wolfe declares, viewing the casinos and their display signs as “the new landmarks of America” disconnected from any form of “art history tradition of the design schools of the Eastern universities” (xvi). But the utopian vision of aesthetic democracy doesn’t last too long. The essay moves on to the other travellers attracted by the signs. These individuals, mostly aged tourists, are not exactly received in a Whitmanesque embrace. Instead Wolfe describes their “fleshy, humped-over shape,” their torsos “hunched up into fat little loaves supported by bony, atrophied leg stems sticking up into their hummocky hips” (1965, 19).

In these passages – quite disconnected from his contemplations of Vegas architecture – Wolfe keeps an enormous distance, portraying the human body in the terms and spirit of bourgeois abhorrence. They reflect what the journalist describes as one of the central goals of his particular reportage in the introduction to *Kandy-Kolored Tangerine-Flake Streamline Baby*. In his introduction Wolfe praises those unknown Americans ignored or insulted by the “educated classes,” yet “creating new styles all the time and changing the life of the whole country in ways that nobody even seems to bother to record, much less analyze” (xiv). As the Vegas essay opens his collection devoted to a new form of cultural and stylistic analysis, Wolfe treats Southern Nevada as a key territory in what he defines as a radically new American culture. He seems to have found the ‘good place’ of aesthetic regeneration – Utopia. And yet the concept falls apart as soon as some actual human beings appear, tourists living, as Wolfe depicts it, at the moment “before the tissue deteriorates and the wires of the cerebral cortex hang in the skull like a clump of dried seaweed” (18).

Numerous literary explorations followed Wolfe’s in the 1960s and 1970s. They rarely employ a similarly medical language, but they are often just as dark and pessimistic as the most misanthropic passages in Wolfe’s piece. Both Joan

Didion's essay "Marrying Absurd" – part of Didion's 1968 collection *Slouching towards Bethlehem* – and John Gregory Dunne's 1974 *Vegas: Memoir of a Dark Season* improvise in an alienated mood, sounding out the crassness of Las Vegas with an injured aesthetic sensibility. With accelerated intensity Hunter S. Thompson's 1971 *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* veers Vegas prose off into drug-crazed paranoia. (Looking at a neon sign outside his hotel window, Dr. Gonzo sees "some kind of electric snake... coming straight at us" – "Shoot it", his attorney replies [1998, 27].) David Foster Wallace's 2005 essay "Big Red Son," an account of the "Adult Video news" award ceremonies held in the city, could be read as a companion piece to Thompson's, chronicling the frenzied world of hard-core pornography and Las Vegas as its nexus.

"You want the parfait or the mousse, the mousse is the soft stuff," John Gregory Dunne quotes a Vegas waiter (1995, 63), one of a host of instances in which random observations by the visiting intellectual help construct a more elaborate portrait of the city's perceived tastelessness. Joan Didion's miniature "Marrying Absurd" makes a similar point. Didion observes events at some of the Las Vegas wedding businesses. "One bride out, another in," she relates, "and again the sign goes up on the chapel door: ONE MOMENT PLEASE – WEDDING" (1993, 164). Watching a wedding party progress in a restaurant on the strip Didion sketches how a pregnant bride, the groom, and family members are sipping pink champagne, having shrimp cocktails, a steak special, and again pink champagne, until the bride sobs: "It was just as nice [...] as I hoped and dreamed it would be." Didion, the observer, does not hesitate to comment on what she perceives as the utter superficiality and tackiness of this moment of happiness. (Using ironic capitalization the text explains: "She had meant of course that it had been Sincere. It had been Dignified" [164].) Didion x-rays the wedding party as cultural critic, treating the pregnant girl as one of many "Las Vegas brides in the detachable modified trains, for whom the sexual revolution was a newspaper phrase, quite without meaning" (165). *Pars pro toto* the party at the casino table illuminates – in Didion's view – Las Vegas' exiled position from America's vibrant culture of change: a city in a cultural and political straightjacket.

As Joyce Carol Oates puts it in her essay *On Mike Tyson*, the "men and women of all ages, races, types" working the Las Vegas slot machines seem "as hopefully attentive to their machines as writers and academicians are to their word processors" (1994, 162). It is a rare case of viewing the gamblers and the writers through the same lens. Usually the quick prose survey produced by literary journalists will portray Southern Nevada as the American territory where the distance between intellectuals and 'civilians' seems largest. Writers are lost in this city. But they are not at all lost in the way flâneurs are lost in Paris. In 19th century and modernist urban fiction the chaos of the city offers "multifarious stimuli," as Robert Alter puts it, creating the mind of the "new urban man" and subsequently literary texts grappling with the fragmented, the confused, the fantastic (2005, 20-21). Stimuli of late 20th century Las Vegas induce helpless tiredness rather than creative excitement. Not even the darker drama of postwar

American urban fiction develops here – the coming to terms with a city marked by violence, division, and decline. As Elizabeth Wheeler observes containment culture frequently gets uncontained in city writing of the postwar years (2001, 265). Yet in Las Vegas intellectuals see only stasis, no flux.

Whether dealing with the neon-lit entertainment of the postwar decades or with the elaborately themed environments of late 20th century Las Vegas, writers of nonfiction are prone to emphasize the city's crass commercialism, the brutality of the casino environment, the sense of irreality pervading the cityscape, and the perceived stupidity of the figure taken as the typical tourist. "This is the Sixth Reich," Hunter S. Thompson quips about Vegas casino Circus-Circus. The entertainment complex provides an idea, in Thompson's words, of "what the whole hep world would be doing on Saturday night if the Nazis had won the war" (1998, 46). Decades later David Foster Wallace introduces readers to his depiction of the Las Vegas "International Consumer Electronics Show" with similar hyperbole: "Imagine that the apocalypse took the form of a cocktail party" (2006, 11). From understated depictions of tastelessness to the wild, paranoid, and apocalyptic, Las Vegas literary journalism triggers wildly different forms of representation. What they have in common are Vegas visions of a bleak American future looming behind the mountains.

To historians Hal Rothman and Mike Davis the authors of these dystopian accounts resemble reconstruction age carpetbaggers. Vegas outsiders, Rothman and Davis argue, "have often mistaken malleability for gullibility or lack of sophistication, for guile and venality" (2002, 14). To what the authors call the "self-proclaimed hip intellectuals and grandstanding writers," the city becomes a projection screen for their own "neuroses, their fears and needs" (13). In the eyes of the two historians these observers "see evil because they're predisposed to see evil, not because it's necessarily there" (14). In a review essay titled "Las Vegas and the American Psyche" Rothman attacks the figure of the visiting writers even more aggressively. Most writers, after spending "thirty minutes" and talking "with a handful of people who claimed to be in the know" would comment on the "degradation of American deviance" (2001, 628). Their "arrogance," Rothman states, "was and is palpable, the lists of claimants endless" (628). He sees "neomoralist posturing" (639) in Las Vegas nonfiction, texts consciously playing to "the preconceptions of a public that had a little box into which to cram Las Vegas" (629).

The fact that travelling writers categorize cities and use them as projections screens for their own psyche is, of course, nothing new and not a specific quality of Las Vegas writing. As Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs point out the traveller's tale is as old as fiction itself (2002, 2). And the conjunctions between city and writing are naturally intimate and impossible to ignore. E.B. White, in his classic essay "Here Is New York," likens Manhattan to a poem "whose full meaning will always remain elusive" (1999, 153-4). That statement in itself, however, is a form of boosterism. There is nothing inherently odd about rhetorical 'little boxes' into

which cities are crammed in writing. Literary texts, fictional or nonfictional, categorize, reflect, and shape urban space and Las Vegas is not an exception.

Postmodernism, in fact, may be the most interesting "little box" Las Vegas has been crammed into. A tight connection exists between the rise of postmodern Las Vegas and the rise of literary nonfiction. Marianne DeKoven has made this linkage explicit, reading it against the background of late-20th century utopian narratives. To DeKoven Las Vegas ranks as a "key location" of postmodern American culture, the territory America moved into after "mov[ing] on from the sixties." The "utopian desire," so prevalent in the counterculture, according to DeKoven was "transmuted into, or grafted onto, the utopian aspects of Las Vegas." Instead of "modernity's agenda of anticapitalist social and cultural transformation," an ideology of cultural egalitarianism now prevailed, with Las Vegas as a perfect embodiment (2004, 92). Like Las Vegas, DeKoven argues, the New Journalism of such writers as Thompson, Didion, and Wolfe was a product of postmodernity. Writers positioned themselves as democratic and egalitarian, "no more authoritative than the readers." Like fictional postmodern texts the new literary nonfiction emphasized self-consciousness and irony. It reflected the "locatedness of the subject" and so it seemed as if the postmodern writer qualified for the role of the natural Las Vegan, feeling quite at home in the vernacular world of neon as one of many gamblers and fortune-seekers, just another hunter for the spectacular in post-60s America.

And yet, DeKoven points out, a sense of alienation remained. A central underlying conflict still separated the writer's self from Vegas. There is a 'true story' in Hunter S. Thompson's narrative, for instance: the meticulous recording of the horrible. The ironic narrative and the ironic cityscape don't just produce textual effects, but also, as DeKoven argues, something "profound and tragic" (2004, 92). The city's purpose is clear: money is all that matters. The intellectual, however, stops to think and gaze at the larger picture, the larger utopian narratives of the American West or the promise of the American Sixties. In *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* Thompson imagines climbing a steep hill in Southern Nevada, looking west, and being able to see how the utopian San Francisco movement of the mid-1960s failed. "We had all the momentum," he remembers, "we were riding the crest of a high and beautiful wave" (1998, 68). Vegas functions as a vantage point from which to perceive historic failure. With "the right kind of eyes," he notes, "you can almost see [...] that place where the wave finally broke and rolled back" (68).

### 3. The Showgirl's Point of Origin

The sort of political and historic consciousness developed in Thompson's travelogue needs to be read against the background of an almost old-fashioned relationship to the real. The New Journalism, though a product of the first vibrant decades of postmodernism, "still believe[d] in both truth and authenticity" (DeKoven 2004, 92). This separated authors like Wolfe, Didion, Dunne, and Thompson from observers celebrating Vegas as an aesthetic utopia. Venturi/Brown/Izenour may have

been happy with the city's signs, learning from them to advance the postmodern architectural project. Along similar lines Las Vegas-based art critic Dave Hickey emphasizes his preference for "the honest fakery of the neon" over the "fake honesty of the sunset" (1997, 52). In contrast New Journalists cultivated a predilection for honesty, unfaked.

It's not an overstatement to argue that Las Vegas was invented by realist writers just as much as by neon designers and theme park architects. The city, often considered a postmodernist's paradise, also exists as a realist's utopia: a 'good place' offering a wealth of opportunities for social studies, vibrant depiction, and, most importantly, meticulous observation, an element central to the writing process in literary nonfiction. The "eye of the writer" is defined as an "omnipresent lens" by a historian of literary journalism, a tool flexible enough to "[refocus] in an instant to take us beneath the surface and into the psyche" (Kerrane 1998, 20). Lounsberry names "[d]ocumentable subject matter chosen from the real world" (1990, xiii) as a characteristic feature of literary nonfiction. Mark Kramer describes literary journalism as a "union of detailed fact, narratives and intimate voice" (1995, 33). Nonfiction literature "couples cold fact and personal event" in Kramer's account, which culminates in the axiomatic final sentence: "Truth is in the details of real lives" (34).

Said details of real lives often seem identical to the details of real bodies – in Vegas nonfiction and elsewhere. As Prendergast argues in a study of 19th century French realism, issues relating to the body, to sexuality, and gender are more than just 'themes' of realist writing. They "connect with basic presuppositions," he states, they "furnish constitutive categories." The typical setup of a realist text would include "a male looker" and, as "one of the privileged objects of vision," the "body of a woman" (Prendergast 1995, 5). Informed by Barthesian and Foucauldian readings Prendergast regards realism as involved with the "knowledge regimes across the body." Not accidentally did the modern discourses of sexuality and realism emerge concomitantly. The body "houses a mystery, an enigma wrapped around an essence" (7). What's "fuelling and exceeding the will to truth and knowledge" (7), then, is material directly related to sexuality, gender, the body. The woman's body becomes the central object of observation and speculation, the central image that structures both 19th century French realism and, indeed, late 20th century Las Vegas nonfiction.

Ed Reid's *City without Clocks* can be cited as the earliest example of this Vegas perspective. In a chapter titled "Girls – Girls – Girls" Reid analyzes the Vegas showgirl as a 'species.' The showgirl, Reid states, "is always in Vegas. She emerges from the cocoon as a basic type and can evolve into almost anything her intelligence directs" (167). It is the ignorance of the city that provides that freedom, however: the fact that "Las Vegas couldn't care less." The most central questions are "never asked nor answered" here, Reid points out and then moves on to ask them: "What is the point of origin of a showgirl? Where does she come from? How does she evolve?" (167).

Reid's questions obviously call for more than the observation of visual effects. They express the desire for the larger story, the filled-out background, in short: the epic treatment of the city. But it takes a while for Reid's queries to be answered. Tom Wolfe's essay, for instance, makes it a point to ignore all questions about origins, evolutions, personal histories. What the author records does not open entryways to biographies or portraits. All images, scenes, and reflections only serve to reinforce and improvise on the great Vegas surface spectacular (including the titillating bodies of dancers and waitresses and the withered bodies of aged tourists as carefully selected counterpoints). There is no larger story 'behind' Wolfe's reflections on "Las Vegas buttocks décolletage" and the way "bikini-style shorts" cut across rather than cupping "the round fatty masses of the buttocks" (1965, 9). Closely observing the bodies of waitresses, showgirls, and dancers in Wolfe's Vegas aesthetics identifies the outsider as outsider and, possibly, as a figure possessing a literary sensitivity. "I stare," Wolfe states, "but I am new here" (9). His staring leads the observer not to a point of origin but to a terminus, located in the classic institution of the late 19th century realist gaze: the psychiatric ward. Here, in a Vegas hospital, appropriately the last place Wolfe observes on his journey, the territory turns most reminiscent of a dystopian fantasy. A "big brunette just keeps rolling her decal eyes," (26) Wolfe notes as the woman patient is pressing herself to a wall, an "old babe is rocking herself back and forth" and "putting one hand out in front from time to time and pulling it in toward her bosom" (27) (to the reporter a pathological ritual re-enacting the pulling of the lever of a slot machine). But, again, there is no story behind and around the body – the body *is* story and observation is all it takes.

In Michael Ventura's 1980 Las Vegas piece "The Odds on Anything," the writer directs his gaze at waitresses in off-Strip restaurants: "bitterly etched tallish women in their fifties and sixties with great bone-structure and coiffed dyed hair [...], beauties from the days of bomb blasts, wisecrackers with hard, tired eyes" (1995, 172). He describes the writer's reflex to these impressions as the sense that "you're dying to ask their stories, you know each one has a story [...]" (172). Whereas for Ventura this is not much more than a notion, early 21st century Las Vegas nonfiction finally makes the move from observation to history, from the surfaces to the points of origin. The legacy of New Journalism can still be felt – but now Vegas prose carries the much heavier load of an actual city waiting to be explored. Aesthetics have become less important as Las Vegas has taken on the role of a middle-class utopia for hundreds of thousands of migrants who turned the city into a full-blown metropolis over the course of just a few decades. Early 21st century works such as Cooper's *The Last Honest Place in America* or Davis/Rothmans' *The Grit Beneath the Glitter: Tales from the Real Las Vegas* in their very titles reflect this transformation, claiming authenticity and honesty as both their own key virtues and as characteristic features of the city itself.

The heroes and heroines look familiar, however. In *The Last Honest Place in America* Marc Cooper makes a striptease dancer one of the most important protagonists of his Las Vegas story. As in Wolfe's text full visual access is essential.

Cooper's reportage introduces the reader to the "Déjà Vu" strip club, the mirrored disco ball rotating on the ceiling, the audience, and finally to the dancer known as Colette and her striptease routine. The writer, of course, uncovers the secret the audience will never learn about. By and by Cooper reveals "Colette's" true identity, her real name, her work organizing a labor movement of Las Vegas strippers (the Las Vegas Dancers Alliance), and, finally, the history of her sex change operation and her previous work as a male machinist for the Boeing Corporation, Seattle. But what Cooper's book finally discusses aren't strip clubs, nor Colette's routines, but the new social and cultural realities of Las Vegas in a post-9/11 America.

With a similar agenda *New York Times* reporter Sarah Kershaw focuses on the life of a dancer known as Trixie in a journalistic portrait under the headline: "Trixie: A Life as a Live! Nude! Girl! Has a Few Strings Attached." Like Cooper's text Kershaw's article, part of a series of Las Vegas reports titled "American Dreamers," gradually reveals a true identity: "Trixie is her stage name," Kershaw relates, then presents the stripper's name she tells "customers who demand to know her real name before they lay down a tip," and finally announces the real 'real name' of this particular dancer, a "small-town Midwesterner [...] who stands 6-foot-3 in her 7 ½ inch heels with a fake blond ponytail, fake eyelashes, fake green eyes, a fake tan, and fake breasts" (Kershaw 2004, n.pag.). Trixie's body may be artificial. But Kershaw's report uses all the key elements of the realist portrait, providing life story ("[s]he was a tomboy growing up"), lively dialogue, and details of the craft ("Trixie is [...] the house supplier of 'anti-lick', spray-on deodorant that lets customers find out the hard way that tongues are not welcome on skin" [2004, n.pag.]).

Writing the body of the stripper still functions as both effect and symbol of straightforward realism. In contemporary Las Vegas prose such observations appear as elements of more panoramic social and cultural analyses of a 'real' American city – a city shaped and portrayed not as a theme park, nor in New Journalist prose fireworks, but in the much less mercurial language of realism with a social agenda. Sociologist Kathryn Hausbeck reflects this transformation in a 2002 essay. The author first tests the allegorical: "Las Vegas is a city clothed in its lights," she writes, "beneath these sheaths is the fleshy seduction of the body of the city." Her text then feminizes Las Vegas, "its underbelly fattened by the coffers of gambling," the "moist breath warmed by the heat of desire and fanned by a burgeoning sex industry" (2002, 337). But then Hausbeck takes a step back to examine the metaphoric construction of Las Vegas as both capitalist utopia and exposed woman. She relates autobiographical episodes of being taken for a prostitute by passers-by. And she points at the "short metaphorical distance" between woman's sexuality described as dark, uncontainable, excessive, and the "seductive allure of Las Vegas." Hausbeck explores these visions in the context of her own political agenda. "Here is my Vegas dream," she states, "that with a little rereading, the fantasy world of gritty and glitter-clad girls that is Sin City can and give way to a more deft analysis of Las Vegas as a city of women, full of

potential and the possibility of a more diverse, equal and enlightened model of gender and female sexuality” (346).

Such concepts couldn't be farther removed from Wolfe's new journalist utopia of unlimited visual access. In the early 21st century, Las Vegas, still a woman, has turned into a feminist; the roaming journalist observer into an academic sociologist imagining a city of women where gender, sex, and the commodification of the body are carefully and collectively reframed.

#### 4. Naked City

Jean Baudrillard once voiced that any consideration of critical or moral nuances would not do justice to Las Vegas or to America as a whole. “[V]ous en effacerez l'originalité,” Baudrillard envisioned, “qui vient justement de défier le jugement et d'opérer une confusion prodigieuse des effets” (2000, 147-8). For many years writers seem to have been content with preserving said originality and uniqueness by indeed leaving aside the nuances, by not questioning the effects. Las Vegas and its bodies were components of a largely aesthetic utopian concept, shaped by populist American aesthetics and desires. To the New Journalist, whether writing of darkness or of light, the city with its multiple performances granted every opportunity to observe, record, and caricature American individuals in this thoroughly indigenous American environment. A utopia for the writer, yet written about in dystopic terms, Las Vegas offered unlimited access.

In contemporary writing much has changed. The moral and political nuances have entered Las Vegas discourse. And Baudrillard's assumption seems correct: Vegas exceptionalism appears to be waning. From a collage of meditations on the spectacular the discourse on the city has turned into a forum of voices interested first and foremost in Clark County as real political space. Utopian and dystopian tropes are still active, yet tied into much more down-to-earth debates. And the genre of the showgirl essay has moved on from Wolfe's excited reflections of “buttocks décolletage” to Hausbeck's utopian city of women and to Las Vegas intellectual Libby Lumpkin's reflections on the showgirl revue in the framework of postmodern feminism, objectification, and spectacular sexuality. The Vegas revue, Lumpkin argues, should be ranked less as “the voyeur's smorgasbord than a public ritual of courtship in which the female is on more than equal footing with the male” (1999, 76).

The transformation brings to mind More's depiction of Utopia's mating rite. In the second book of *Utopia* Thomas More describes a custom in “choosing mates” that “seemed to us very foolish and extremely ridiculous.” Before marriage a woman “is shown naked to the suitor by a worthy and respectable matron.” The suitor in turn “is presented naked before the maiden by a discreet man.” Utopians, More explains, marvelled at “the remarkable folly” of other nations to choose a partner simply by looking at the face (“hardly a single handbreadth of her”). More presents this examination of the whole body as a wise custom, as “such foul deformity may be hidden” beneath the suitor's or maiden's clothes (189).

The implicit normalist brutality of More's phrase may be hard to take. His lines hurt less if they are read as a metaphoric depiction of the liaisons between writers and the Southern Nevadan cityscape. Reporting from "Las Vegas, the exceptional place" the New Journalists, in spite of all their observational feats, may have examined only "a single handbreadth of her." What's in full view today, after the flowering of Las Vegas nonfiction, is just another naked city – "foul deformat[ies]" and all.

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RÜDIGER HEINZE / JOCHEN PETZOLD

## No More Room in Hell: Utopian Moments in the Dystopia of *28 Days Later*

**Abstract:** Focusing on the zombie-film *28 Days Later* (Danny Boyle) may at first sight seem an odd choice in the context of utopian writing, but links to utopia can in fact be drawn on various levels. Zombies, like utopia itself, can function as a means to comment on or criticize present society; the creation of zombies in *28 Days Later* is linked to an utopian ideal, the elimination of rage; and the film can be read as a quest for a utopian space in a pastoral setting. Thus, the film is discussed as a self-referential mixture of genres that combines dystopia with apocalypse, utopia with the pastoral, and that ironically undercuts all its generic statements.

### 1. No More Room In Hell

Imagine waking up in a hospital bed and discovering that the city you are in (London) has been evacuated, that you are apparently the only human being left behind, possibly the last one who is still alive. Entering a church, you find yourself attacked by what seems to be a priest and then hunted by a pack of men and women in a “state of murderous rage.”<sup>1</sup> This nightmare happens to Jim, the protagonist of the film *28 Days Later*, written by Alex Garland and directed by Danny Boyle.

Since the film is not very widely known, a brief summary seems justified. After the attack, Jim is rescued by Selena and Mark who fill the mental blank left by his four weeks in coma: A virus of pure rage has escaped from a laboratory, turning all those infected into extremely violent and blood-thirsty zombies.<sup>2</sup> Those who come into contact with their infected blood immediately turn into zombies themselves, and the virus has virtually wiped out all of Britain (it remains unclear if it has also spread to the European continent or even further). After a number of adventures – during which Mark is killed – Jim and Selena meet Frank and his teenage daughter Hannah, who hold out in their flat in a high-rise building. The four decide to leave London and move to Manchester where, according to an automated radio broadcast, there is a group of survivors under the protection of the military. When they finally get there, Frank becomes infected and is quickly killed by the soldiers – who turn out to be a threat as dangerous as the zombies. However, Jim, Selena and Hannah manage to escape and the film ends on a happy note of imminent rescue.

<sup>1</sup> Quote taken from the back-cover of the DVD.

<sup>2</sup> The validity of this classification should become apparent in the course of our argument.

At first sight it may seem paradoxical to discuss a zombie-film like *28 Days Later* in the context of utopian writing, since zombies are the ultimate nightmare, the ultimate horror. In fact, if utopia is about the ideal society, zombies are utopia's other, their victory would lead to the annihilation of humanity and hence to the end of all society. Thus, the film depicts a vision that would move 'beyond' dystopia, into the realm of apocalypse – without the Christian hope of a day of judgment and the coming of a New Jerusalem. However, this is not the full story of *28 Days Later*. The film utilizes a utopian idea as its starting point, and it produces what could be termed 'utopian moments' throughout its narrative.<sup>3</sup> In this paper we will argue that *28 Days Later* is an ambiguous mixture of various genres, a mixture that combines the dystopian with the apocalyptic, the utopian with the pastoral, and that the film constantly uses irony to undercut its positions. It is a dystopia of chaos and possible annihilation brought on by human hubris – thus following the pattern of social criticism that has always been part of utopian writing (and the genre of zombie films). At the same time, the film can be read as a quest for both a utopian space in a pastoral setting, a space that adheres to the aesthetics of Wordsworthian romanticism, and for a society ordered by family structures. And while both goals seem to be reached at the end, this 'utopia' is far from stable.

## 2. A Utopian Impulse: The Elimination Of Rage

One important structural link that connects *28 Days Later* to the tradition of utopian writing is the initial idea to make man as a species more peaceful. The film actually starts with a scene in which laboratory monkeys are shown videos depicting human violence. The idea behind this is to create a rage virus which could then be studied to find a cure for human rage. Violent behaviour is thus linked to the discourse of diseases and their treatment.

Significantly in our present context, the issues of violence and sickness have often been topics of utopian literature and thought. As Susan Sontag points out, "[e]pidemic diseases were a common figure for social disorder" in the sixteenth century and, more generally, "[i]llnesses have always been used as metaphors to enliven charges that a society was corrupt or unjust" (Sontag 1978, 58, 72; see also Morris 1994, 153, for a similar argument). In Plato's *Republic*, for example, sickness is linked to indolence and a bad lifestyle; hence the 'good' citizens would "not need doctors at all, except in emergencies," whereas "those with a poor physical constitution will be allowed to die" (Plato 1993, 111 [410b, 410a]).<sup>4</sup> Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516), on the other hand, does not link disease to individual misconduct, and More's utopian vision is noteworthy – amongst many other things –

<sup>3</sup> Considering Danny Boyle's filmography (among his previous films are *Trainspotting*, *A Life Less Ordinary* and *The Beach*), this should not be entirely surprising, as utopian elements can be found in all of his films to differing degrees.

<sup>4</sup> As Leonidas Donskis points out, Plato "is not a utopian in the modern sense of the term" (Donskis 1991, 47; original quote in italics), however, his *Republic* is clearly an important landmark in the history of thinking about a better (or even perfect) society.

for the humane and caring treatment it reserves for sick people. Frank Dietz maintains that “the classical utopia emphasized a correspondence between the healing of the individual through medicine and the possible cure of society’s ills through the acceptance of utopian values” (Dietz 1990, 116), and thus the eradication of all serious diseases and the failings of old age can be read as utopian features of Aldous Huxley’s predominantly dystopian *Brave New World* (1932).

However, even in these visions there is no cure without its side effects: More’s Utopians practice ‘voluntary’ euthanasia in cases beyond the help of their medicine. In the nineteenth century, Samuel Butler brought the ideal of beauty and health to a satirical extreme by making sickness a serious crime in *Erewhon* (1872), punishable by forced labour or even death. Thus, he applies the Darwinian principles of selection to society and imagines how an ‘ideal’ people could be created (or bred). Half a century and many scientific breakthroughs later, in Huxley’s *Brave New World* physical well-being is bought at the price of genetic engineering and prenatal conditioning – clear marks of dystopia if we follow Dietz’s claim that classical dystopias present “the scientifically controlled society as perverted and unnatural” (Dietz 1990, 125). The motive of genetic engineering and society’s demand for health and happiness is picked up again at the beginning of the twenty-first century, in Margaret Atwood’s *Oryx and Crake* (2003), where it indirectly leads to the destruction of humanity – another ‘side effect’ that turns out to be fatal (see also Dunja Mohr’s essay in this volume). Thus, while healing individuals or societies is a utopian ideal, it also features prominently – in its perverted form – in dystopias.

The idea of a more peaceful society also has a long tradition in utopian literature: In *Utopia*, the “slaughtering of livestock and cleaning of carcasses are done by slaves” because the Utopians “think it tends to destroy one’s natural feelings of humanity” (More 2003, 61). However, by having slaves do the dirty work the problem is only pushed to the side, and More’s narrator remains silent on the question how the slaves are subdued and controlled. A similar pattern of eliminating violence by ‘outsourcing’ it to people outside the utopian society characterizes the Utopians’s attitude towards the organized violence of war. While the Utopians are said to “absolutely loathe” fighting (90), they are capable of it – but again they prefer to employ mercenaries to wage their wars for them. In H.G. Wells’s *The Time Machine* (1895), this ‘externalisation’ of violent behaviour is taken to an extreme: humanity develops into two separate species (along the lines of class divisions), one of which, the Eloi, are characterized by their beauty and “graceful gentleness” (Wells 2002, 26), while the more aggressive Morlocks use the Eloi as a source of food. In Huxley’s *Brave New World*, people are conditioned to like the role they have to fulfil in society and the wonder-drug ‘soma’ takes care of any dissatisfaction that might remain, so that social stability is bought at the price of individuality and free will.

Thus, even in more traditional utopias, the ‘treatment’ of both illness and violence is frequently linked to negative ‘side effects’.<sup>5</sup> The actual plan for curing vio-

<sup>5</sup> The question what would constitute a ‘negative side effect’ is, of course, culturally determined and likely to change radically over time. For example, there is no indication that More sees

lence is not outlined in *28 Days Later*, but the process of exposing the monkeys to continuous representations of excessive violence is clearly reminiscent of the “Ludovico technique” practiced on Alex in Anthony Burgess’s *A Clockwork Orange* (1962) – yet another vision of a future society in which the elimination of violence is achieved by dubious means. Interestingly, it is not science alone that brings about the destruction of society in *28 Days Later*. In an ironic twist, the Pandora’s box is unlocked by animal-rights activists who come to free the laboratory animals. Thus ‘mad-scientists’ and ‘do-gooders’ combine to create a reversal of what Mephistopheles claims for himself in Goethe’s *Faust*: They are “Teil von jener Kraft, [/] die stets das *Gute* will und stets das *Böse* schafft.”<sup>6</sup>

### 3. The End of History: The Dead Will Walk the Earth

What is created is indeed a monster, and it is a monster with a long history. The idea of the dead returning from the netherworld to haunt or even devour the living is a pervasive and perennial staple of mythologies, folklore and epics. For example the *Gilgamesh* epic contains the following passage in which Ishtar complains to her father Anu after Gilgamesh has rejected her marriage proposal:

If you do not give me the Bull of Heaven,  
I will knock down the Gates of the Netherworld,  
I will smash the door posts, and leave the doors flat down,  
and will let the dead go up to eat the living!  
And the dead will outnumber the living! (Tablet VI)

In this regard, the zombie is only one manifestation of the paradigmatic *Wiedergänger*, even if its recorded etymology dates back only to 1819.<sup>7</sup> Ghosts, vampires and the likes are equally undead, prey on the living, and may transform them into their kind by killing them. Neither in *28 Days Later* nor in its marketing is there an express reference to zombies. If the film is immediately recognizable and categorizable as a zombie film, it is because the figure of the zombie has, over the course of the 20th century, become a potent cultural image and icon, so that few hints and allusions are needed to identify it.<sup>8</sup> The trailer for *28 Days Later* never shows or makes mention of any monsters, yet in one shot lasting less than one second

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the fact that Utopians use slaves as negative, and, early in the 21st century, the public debate on whether genetic engineering is to be seen as ‘god’ or ‘bad’ is far from being unanimously decided.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Goethe (1988, 47; l. 1335-6), italics added. In the original quote, the words in italics, ‘good’ and ‘evil,’ are reversed, so that Mephistopheles describes himself as “A part of that force which, always willing evil, always produces good” (Goethe 1984, 36).

<sup>7</sup> The *Oxford English Dictionary* dates the first written instance of the word 1819 as the name of a snake deity in voodoo cults. The first entry for the more common meaning of a ghost or phantom is dated 1872. However, as the concept comes from a variety of voodoo cults of the West Indies and Haiti, one can safely assume that the term is significantly older than the written records of the *OED* give witness to.

<sup>8</sup> Another indication that the zombie has widely entered the popular imagination are its parodies, e.g. *Shaun of the Dead* (2004).

towards the very end of the trailer's 1:29 minutes one sees a dark figure rushing towards the camera with a 'devouring' sound that is sufficiently typifying. Adding to this the poster in blood red, dominated by strangely orange, staring eyes, the film's genre affiliation becomes almost definitive:



The zombie is, in many respects, a paradigmatic monster: it meets almost all of the criteria that Rosemary Jackson (1981), Jeffrey Cohen (1996) or Paul Goetsch (2005) list to define the monster and the monstrous. Deprived of all thought and emotion it is driven only by the instinctive urge to feed on human flesh. As a true *monstrum*, the zombie is a sign of warning and revelation, it reveals what is left of humanity once divested of the humane: *homo homini lupus*. At the same time, it is a “Harbinger of Category Crisis” and resides at the “Gates of Difference” (cultural, racial, sexual, political) (Cohen 1996, 7), because it also reveals that *homo homini lupus*, Thomas Hobbes’ famous characterization of human nature in *Leviathan*, is not marginal but central to humanity.<sup>9</sup> The zom-

bie crosses the border between dead and alive, human and other; since it invariably arises from within humanity and society, it is a child of that society (Cohen 1996, 20). While its corporeality is important, as monsters only exist in so far as they are apprehensible (Goetsch 2005, 559), it nevertheless constantly “pushes towards [...] nonsignification” (Jackson 1981, 41) because it never is what it appears to be: as the still recognizable but transformed individual it no longer is the individual it used to be, despite outward appearance.

Yet the particularity of the zombie distinguishes it from other monsters such as vampires or werewolves and has persistently resisted the humanization and romanticization that the latter have frequently undergone in popular fiction and film. The vampires of Anne Rice (*Interview With a Vampire*) and Francis Ford Coppola (*Dracula*) form exclusive aristocratic coteries where transforming the victims is not so much an act of killing than of seduction, and the werewolves of Mike Nichols (*Wolf*) and Len Wiseman (*Underworld*) are testosterone breathing paragons of masculine prowess clearly meant as targets for admiration rather than abomination. Zombies, however, have gained neither in grace nor virtue: they still are the mindless, relentlessly driven flesh eaters that they have been ever since George Romero’s *Night of the Living Dead* in 1968. Consistently, and noteworthy in the context of utopia, they represent the other of utopia much more so than the majority of other monsters, as they bring about a perpetual apocalypse rather than a dys-

<sup>9</sup> Hobbes in turn took the phrase from the Roman poet Plautus.

topia. They do not form a community, much less a society; there is no code of ethics, there is no progress, no change, no redemption. They are the walking dead, the end of civilization, symbolizing the foil of any idealistic notion of an end to history. This is of course highly ironic, as the zombies in the films often are a by-effect of civilization, a consequence of technology paired with human hubris about progress.

The zombies that we see in *28 Days Later* have become the prevailing ones in popular culture, but the etymologically antecedent understanding is that of a soulless human corpse revived by Voodoo witchcraft in order to have control over a mindless instrument and slave-worker. This is the kind of zombie that Zora Neale Hurston writes about after an anthropological excursion to Haiti in her 1938 *Tell My Horse* (Hurston 456-74) and that Victor Halperin and later Jacques Tourneur first made accessible to a wider audience in their films *White Zombie* (1932) and *I Walked with a Zombie* (1943).<sup>10</sup> Given the cultural-historical context of the American occupation of Haiti (1915-1934) and the conceptual and iconic persuasiveness of the soulless corpse controlled by other forces and exploited as a slave worker, it cannot surprise that critics have commented on this kind of zombie in the context of (post-)colonialism and slavery, racism, miscegenation and hybridity as well as global economy (Aizenberg 1999; Comaroff 2002; Sidorsky 2002).

It is George Romero's *Night of the Living Dead* (1968) and the sequel *Dawn of the Dead* (1978) that first show zombies as human flesh devouring monsters and that start the popular subgenre that has been so successful in the last decades in creating and re-creating the iconic and symbolic popular imagery of the zombie up to *28 Days Later*. If we follow the assumption that monsters are an "embodiment of a certain cultural moment" (Cohen 1996, 4) and have to be referenced to the society out of which they arise in order for their function at a particular cultural juncture to be understood (Goetsch 2005, 556), it is certainly no coincidence that the figure of a mindless, all-consuming anthropophagous human corpse first appears at the high point of the Vietnam war and far-reaching changes in the social, political and cultural structure of American society. The film critic Robin Wood reads horror as the return of the repressed and as the essential genre for negotiating the variable relation between normality and the other (Wood 2003, 71). In this reading, zombie children that eat their parents are a caustic comment on inherently corrupt and radically changing models and notions of family (*Night*); hordes of zombies that flock to a shopping mall as their natural habitat because it is the one aspect that used to be important in their lives (as one of the protagonists puts it) are the extreme but logical consequence of the imperative of consumer capitalism: consume, literally everything (*Dawn*). Film of course constitutes the ideal medium for the heretofore unseen drastic rendering of violence and gore (the return of the medially repressed violence of the Vietnam war) and for emphasizing the iconicity of the zombies: as they have lost all marks of their individuality and consciousness

<sup>10</sup> Although it cannot be definitively ascertained, one might argue that the appearance of the zombie figure in the American cultural imagination in the 1930s is linked to the U.S.A.'s occupation of Haiti from 1915 through 1934.

they stand less for their former human self than for the nominal concept of the zombie per se (*Dawn* 00:55:11):



*28 Days Later* is a continuation and alternation of this concept. In portraying humans that, once infected with the epidemic blood and under ostentatious agony, transform into monomaniacal beings that kill and eat other humans without deliberation, the film clearly places itself in the tradition of the zombie film. In many other respects, *28 Days Later* differs significantly. First of all, one cannot be sure that those infected really die before they turn into zombies; neither are they 'undead' in the typical sense for they seem to starve to death after some time. If one takes up the assumption that they are the victims of an epidemic rather than truly 'undead,' killing them amounts to euthanasia. Second, the zombies are fast. Contrary to the lurching and stumbling Romero kind that could easily be evaded and whose awkwardness was the source of parody and humor, the contemporary variety appears to be on speed.<sup>11</sup> While the inefficacy and clumsiness of the precursors seems to be the suitable bodily representation of thought- and mindlessness, the drastically accelerated corporeality of the *28 Days Later* zombies gives witness to single- rather than absent-mindedness – as displayed in the following screenshot, showing an infected soldier rushing towards Jim, his attack stopped at the last moment by the chain around his neck (01:09:05).



<sup>11</sup> This change is true for most contemporary zombie films, for example *Doom* (2005), *Resident Evil* (2002) or the remake of *Dawn of the Dead* (2004).

This is the fitting consequence of the most significant difference: as pointed out in the beginning, the zombies in *28 Days Later* are the result of a utopian vision, the elimination of rage. The virus that causes the epidemic is based on the belief that, as the hapless laboratory assistant in the beginning tries to explain, “in order to cure, you must first understand” (0:03:43). It is the vision of utopia that gives rise to the apocalypse. The epidemic evidently reduces its victims to one impulse only: rage. In this regard, *28 Days Later* is at once less cynical because there is a utopian vision behind the scenario and more cynical for the same reason. Recalling the postulation from above that monsters are an “embodiment of a certain cultural moment” (Cohen 1996, 4), and adding to this the fact that the infected monkeys in the laboratory are exposed to videos of riots, civil war and *military* violence, *28 Days Later* seems to suggest that war and its contemporary manifestations cause the soul- and mindlessness that will potentially bring an end to humanity.

This reading seems especially justified in light of another rather unusual aspect of the film. The projection of an absolute evil, an assumed threat, is conventionally used as a reason for one’s own reaction to establish a similarly dystopian regime, resonating Nietzsche’s famous dictum that those fighting monsters may well turn into monsters as well. The ideology behind the common phrase that ‘extraordinary circumstances require extraordinary measures’ is another staple of dystopian literature; Orwell’s Big Brother vindicates a totalitarian system by maintaining a permanent *Ausnahmestand*. A similar proposition founds the basis for the military interlude in *28 Days Later*. The appearance of military in itself is nothing unusual in the genre. On the contrary, it is a common topos in many zombie films, and it should not astound that the arrival of the military seldom leads to any good. Either the military is involved in the creation of the zombies through bio-technological experiments in the first place (*Resident Evil*), or it messes up the situation even further when coming to the rescue by inadvertently killing survivors or creating more zombies (*Night of the Living Dead* 1990). The specific interlude here, however, is unique in that it offers another utopian/dystopian comment within the film.

The refuge that the army has set up on the outskirts of Manchester is the last signpost of civilization and at first seems to signify hope of redemption and safety. This is already ironic considering that the utopian attempt to improve civilization by eliminating rage would, if successful, render the military redundant. Now, after the attempt has failed, the military is what is left of civilization. And this, too, quickly turns sour. For a short while after the arrival of Frank, Selena and Hannah at the military camp, the zombies disappear as a threat. But soon the military is revealed as a substitute threat: Since there are no women on the compound, the officer leading the soldiers has devised a plan to rape Selena and Hannah in order to secure the survival of humanity. It turns out that the radio signal was a bait to attract survivors, preferably female. The large country house with the walled garden may at first sight look like a utopian space, but there is no safe haven here. Fittingly for an excoriation of humanity, the dawn of a new civilization, the reinstallation of a future would be founded on an act of atrocity and murder. In effect, the ‘mindless’ obedience to a chain of command and the submission to a

survive-at-all-costs ideology liken the military to the zombies: here, both are soulless and, as Weber called it, 'total' systems with an absence of morality. The older figure of the zombie as puppet resurfaces here and in a way, the soldiers are even worse because theirs is an act of willful violence. This link between soldiers and zombies is corroborated by the filmic technique: when the protagonist frees his friends, it is too dark for the viewer to tell the difference between zombies and soldiers. The shaky camera movement formerly reserved for the perspective of the zombies now dominates throughout. In another ironic twist, Jim fights evil with evil by turning loose the zombie that the soldiers had kept chained in order to learn about its life span (echoing the initial "in order to cure, you must first understand") and who now turns the soldiers into zombies one by one. It is noteworthy that Jim, after having escaped attempted execution by the soldiers and running half naked through the forest in order to save his friends from harm, is also filmed in a manner previously reserved for the zombies. The repeated film-technical blurring of the visual boundary between humans and zombies corresponds to the idea that the zombies, while clearly not human anymore, nevertheless are what they are because they are driven by distilled *human* rage.

#### 4. *28 Days Later* Between Utopia and the Pastoral

As we have seen, the utopian idea of eliminating rage is turned on its head in *28 Days Later*, when the film depicts both the complete breakdown of society in the metaphor of the violent zombie, and a dystopian 'solution' of an equally violent military dictatorship. However, as we will argue in this section, the film also provides utopian moments, more precisely: it combines the imagery and motives of both the utopian and the pastoral traditions as a kind of antidote to the negative visions of an end of society, but only to undercut them at the same time.

Many critics see the relationship between utopia and the pastoral as a clearly defined opposition. For example, Franziska Sick maintains that utopia is directed towards the future, while the pastoral evokes Arcadia and is directed towards the past (cf. Sick 2002, 133). Echoing Northrop Frye, Françoise Lavocat argues that Arcadia "is by definition located in the countryside" while Utopia "is urban" (qtd. in Klein 1999, 164). However, while Frye does declare that "Arcadia [...] puts an emphasis on the integration of man with his physical environment" whereas "utopia is a city, and it expresses rather the human ascendancy over nature, the domination of the environment by abstract and conceptual mental pattern" (Frye 1970, 126), he also emphasizes links between utopia and the pastoral, particularly the relative simplicity of society (cf. Frye 1970, 125-6). Holger Klein (1999, 173) also sees "simplicity" as a common theme in both modes of writing; Klein as well as Sick point out that both the utopian and the pastoral can be seen as 'possible worlds' that offer criticism of and possibly even alternatives to existing realities. And Warren Wooden detects "a common set of assumptions concerning the nature of man and society" at the basis of both traditions, namely "a growing humanistic

dissatisfaction with the corruptions of the civilized world and a longing for a simple, rational, and humane style of life" (Wooden 1979, 36).

At least the claim that utopias are always urban is clearly an oversimplification. Although *Utopia's* landscape is structured by "fifty-four splendid big towns" (More 2003, 50), More's text depicts an agrarian society in which the people have to live in the country for parts of their lives. And even as late as 1872, Butler's *Erewhon*, to the extent that it can be read as a utopia at all, describes an 'ideal' society that deliberately turned back the clock of technological progress and is perceived to be "some five or six hundred years behind Europe in their inventions," evoking myths of the Golden Age, Arcadia and Paradise (Butler 1985, 75).<sup>12</sup> This connection between a quasi-natural environment – particularly in the form of gardens – and utopian thought is especially strong in the Renaissance. John Dixon Hunt traces two contradictory strands of utopian gardens: one is "natural, even wild" and "recalls the pristine openness of Eden," the other "is architectural" and "is controlled by the ultimate satisfactions of the City of God" (Hunt 1987, 137). Thus one refers back to the beginning of time, one points ahead to the end of it. While this seems to echo Sick's distinction between Arcadia and utopia, it is important to note that in the Renaissance the City of God can also be represented by a garden.

Thus, utopia is not necessarily urban. According to Robert Baker, it is H.G. Wells and his utopian visions that clearly mark the break from the earlier pattern of utopian writing:

The earlier romantic utopia as conceived by poets like Coleridge and Wordsworth that stressed self-sufficient organic communities, oriented toward nature, manual labor, and small-scale production, had been displaced by the exhilarating promises of modern technology and scientific innovation. (Baker 1990, 26)

The exhilaration becomes obvious, for example, in the descriptions of architecture and particularly the 'moving ways' in Wells's *When the Sleeper Wakes: A Story of the Years to Come* (1899) and it is also present in Huxley's *Brave New World* some 30 years later. In both novels the countryside is virtually depopulated and marked as a space excluded from technological progress. At the same time, the dystopian potential of urban spaces also becomes apparent, particularly in Wells's text. The beautiful city is literally built on top of a level that is squalid and overcrowded, where the workers have to work and live (an image already used in *The Time Machine*). This dystopian potential is brought to an extreme in the shabbiness and dirt of Orwell's *1984* (1949) – with the additional features of continual surveillance and the danger from erratic bombardment. The novel does provide a brief interlude of natural beauty – and sexual fulfilment – in the countryside, but flight from the city is not an option. In *28 Days Later*, as we will see, flight from the city becomes a necessity. And, as we will argue, this flight from the city can be read as a quest for a pastoral utopia that follows the ideas and ideals of Wordsworth's Romanticism.

<sup>12</sup> The novel is no classical utopia, but primarily a satire of Victorian society. However, the "extreme beauty" (Butler 1985, 71) of the Erewhonians hints at an 'ideal' society, and their limited technology echoes the simplicity of utopia and pastoral (cf. Klein 1999, 173).

While the usual dystopian city as depicted by Wells or Orwell is overcrowded, the London 28 days after the release of the rage-virus is apparently devoid of people. When Jim awakes from his coma, he takes a walk through the empty streets of London in which the film manages to create an intense atmosphere of both estrangement and foreboding (00:09:04).



During his walk, Jim crosses Westminster Bridge, and the camera pans to take in some of the deserted cityscape, a view of the city that is reminiscent of Wordsworth's famous poem "Composed upon Westminster Bridge" (Wordsworth 2000). In this poem, Wordsworth attempts the impossible or at least paradoxical: the integration of city and nature. London is personified and described as "fair" (l.1) as a sight "touching in its majesty" (l.3). However, this is only possible in the morning, before the city has 'awoken' to the bustle of the working day. In *28 Days*, the scene does not take place in the early morning, but London is more "silent" (l.5), the air more "smokeless" (l.8) than it could ever have been imagined in Wordsworth's London of 1802. The camera takes in London's "towers, domes, theatres, and temples" (l.6), silent as in the poem, but the image does not so much create the sense of the houses being "asleep" (l.13), but of death. In the film, the intense atmosphere – and particularly the sense of imminent danger – is heightened by the soundtrack (by John Murphy): the music ever so slowly increasing both in volume and in speed, until Jim touches a deserted car and the car-alarm creates a first climax that makes Jim, and the audience, jump (cf. 0:11:28).

If the alarm was meant as a warning, Jim does not understand the sign. Neither can he read the writing on the church-wall as he enters a church full of corpses: "The end is extremely fucking nigh" (0:13:20) – the crude revelation of a probable future: 'apocalypse' in both its senses. In fact, the horror is just about to begin when Jim meets the zombies for the first time and has to be rescued by Selena and Mark. Soon afterwards, Jim and Selena meet Frank and his daughter Hannah who still live in their flat in a high-rise building. Their flat can briefly function as a save haven, but the city is not the beautiful part of nature envisioned by Wordsworth. Rather, it marks the complete collapse of civilization and the space of war that pits 'us' (the humans) against 'them' (the zombies) in a Manichaeic dichotomy. Furthermore, with the breakdown of public infrastructure, particularly the water supply, the city becomes a hostile environment that threatens survival. The four

protagonists cannot stay in London, and when they hear the radio-broadcast mentioned above, in which a soldier talks of a community of survivors and claims to have found a solution to the problem, they decide to leave the town in Frank's battered taxi. From then on, the film utilizes yet another traditional literary motif: the journey or quest, its goal the safety of military protection. As we have already shown, this protection turns out to be a threat almost as dangerous as the zombies – and a dystopian vision of a military dictatorship. However, against this overt dystopian plot, the film can also be read as a quest for the utopia of a harmonious patchwork family in a natural, or pastoral, environment – a quest that is both superficially successful and ironically undercut at the same time.

This subtext first becomes apparent during the trip to Manchester, when the group stops at the ruins of an abbey (00:51:11).



After the excitement of the flight out of London, this scene provides a short reprieve and an opportunity for a typical English past time: the Sunday picnic – complete with blanket on the grass. The rich green of the lawn forms a strong colour contrast to the yellows and reds of the city, and the music – slightly reminiscent of medieval sacred chants and well suited for the acoustics of a large church hall – adds significantly to the peaceful atmosphere of a *locus amoenus*. Again, the imagery provides echoes of the aesthetics of the Romantics: the ruins of an abbey surrounded by a landscape garden. Incidentally, the ruins are not those of Tintern Abbey, immortalized by Wordsworth's "Lines written above Tintern Abbey," which would be far out of the way when travelling from London to Manchester. Nonetheless, the setting does evoke images of England's past and of nature that are typical of Romantic poetry and painting. At the same time, however, the utopian moment is ironically undercut by the fact that the picnic consists exclusively of tinned or 'radiated' (cf. 0:46:05) food, since all fresh food in supermarkets has long gone rotten; and despite the relative safety of the abbey, far from centres of habitation, Selena, Jim and Hannah can only sleep with the help of Valium.

Despite these ironic overtones, the scene also provides the basis for the statement the film makes about the ordering of society – which will again be subverted: A group of horses gallops past on a field across the river, and Frank notes that the four horses look "like a family" (0:51:50). Shortly afterwards, Jim and Selena are shown to move closer together and Selena comments on the family ties between

Frank and Hannah, admitting that “staying alive isn’t as good as it gets” (0:53:15) – a sentiment she had expressed earlier (and which is to be falsified in the military camp, where staying alive loses all attraction). Interestingly, many dystopias from the twentieth or twenty-first centuries depict societies in which the family unit has either ceased to exist or does no longer provide security and stability. For example, in *Brave New World* artificial ‘birth’ and genetic engineering has taken the place of parentage, in *1984* personal bonding is discouraged and the children are indoctrinated to spy on their parents, and family life has all but disappeared in Atwood’s novels *The Handmaid’s Tale* and *Oryx and Crake*.

Thus, set against the reversal of civilization symbolized by the zombies, and the dystopia of Major West’s dictatorship, this brief moment of rest may be seen to represent a utopian moment that offers the nuclear family as an ideal ordering principle. As has become apparent, the military camp does not offer a place for family structures. And if we read *28 Days Later* as a quest for a romantic utopia, it also becomes clear why the survivors have to leave the manor house: it represents not the aesthetic of the Romantics, but of the eighteenth century. At the end of the film, Jim, Selena and Hannah have arrived at a simple farm house near a lake in a beautiful valley – the ‘simple life’ Warren Wooden sees at the basis of both utopian and pastoral writing. Again, this setting is reminiscent of much of Wordsworth’s poetry, and while it is not specifically mentioned in the film, it is fitting that the ending was in fact filmed in the Lake District,<sup>13</sup> where Wordsworth spent much of his life and where he wrote much of his poetry. However, the utopian moment is again undercut: While the three survivors may at first sight look like a typical family, they are at best a post-modern patchwork family that is only possible because of various deaths. In fact, the film seems orchestrated to create this patchwork family with an ‘adopted’ daughter, since both Mark (Selena’s first partner and possible rival to Jim) and Frank (Hannah’s real father) are killed. And when Hannah first sees Frank kiss Selena, she thinks he is biting her (as a zombie would) and hits him over the head with an empty bottle (cf. 1:38:53), ironically subverting the notion of both love and of a ‘normal’ family.

Nonetheless, the positive, quasi-utopian quality of the ending also seems to be emphasized by the quality of the film itself: while all previous scenes of *28 Days Later* were shot on digital video, using ‘normal,’ consumer-type cameras, the ending was produced on 35mm film<sup>14</sup> which provides far superior sharpness, much finer grain and wider range of contrast. Thus the ending provides the visual equivalent to waking out of a nightmare, and the soundtrack moves from an echo of the abbey-scene to fuller orchestration and rising enthusiasm – before the eerie theme sets in for the credits, underscoring the fragility of the ‘utopian’ ending.

<sup>13</sup> Information provided in the audio commentary of Danny Boyle and Alex Garland included on the DVD of *28 Days Later*.

<sup>14</sup> Audio commentary on the DVD.

## 5. Conclusion

In the double-edged reading we propose here, the three survivors of *28 Days Later* seem at first sight to have united to form a patchwork family, and to have moved from the impossibility of recreating Wordsworth's romantic vision of London to a typically Wordsworthian setting in the Lake District. However, the film is no ecotopia of self-sufficient survival in a natural environment. At no point in the film do we see the city-dwellers start an agricultural production that could support them, they live off the remains of the lost civilization. And they clearly do not want to remain in the farmhouse; they actively work towards rescue, sewing large letters spelling HELLO out of bed sheets and curtains to attract the attention of a military plane that has obviously passed the area before. Significantly, when the plane approaches the letter 'O' remains undecipherable for a brief moment, so that the sign can at first be mistaken to spell 'HELL' (1:43:14).<sup>15</sup>

An ending consistent with the conventions established by the majority of zombie films would either see the last survivors bombed or the plane crash. Again, the film shows itself as highly ambiguous and viciously cynical, constantly oscillating between utopia and dystopia. For *one*, if rage is indeed eliminated, this was achieved at slightly higher cost than intended: by eliminating most of humanity. With humanity gone, there would be no rage, but, the film seems to suggest, there is no humanity without rage. *Two*, not only are the last survivors found and supposedly rescued by a piece of technology and remnant of civilization, but by a piece of military technology to boot: a jet fighter, a weapon of war.<sup>16</sup> Interestingly, an alternative ending of the film has the male protagonist killed, only the two women survive. With them alone, there would be no future for humanity.

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<sup>15</sup> "HELL" spelled in large white capitals also appears very briefly during the dreamlike sequence that hints at how Selena saves Jim's life after he had been shot by Major West (cf. 1:40:42).

<sup>16</sup> Our colleague Wolfgang Hochbruck has alerted us to the fact that the plane is in fact an unarmed training craft, but to the untrained eye the impression is clearly that of a 'normal' warplane.

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MICHAEL GREEN

## The Future in the Post: Utopia and the Fiction of the New South Africa

**Abstract:** Post-apartheid South Africa, having recently come into its own in terms of the Utopian national vision that has driven and informed its history, is in danger of assuming this to be the end of its history, with only a better delivery of that static vision being in question. This paper considers the utopian as a vital element in oppositional and revolutionary strategies. It then looks at the important role the future, deployed in a utopian mode, took on in anti-apartheid texts during the darkest period of the liberation struggle, and asks if we can identify a similar impulse in texts that take as their subject some of the less satisfactory aspects of the post-apartheid condition. Focusing on Phaswane Mpe's *Welcome to Our Hillbrow*, one of the texts regularly presented as representative of new South African nation, the paper examines post apartheid fiction's particular avoidance of a nationalised sense of the political. It then places this against the question of the national in relation to the utopian, and argues that the nation is useful to us as an idea if it is always beyond us, always calling the present into question.

I must be the only one writing about nationalism who doesn't think it ugly. If you think about researchers such as Gellner and Hobsbawm, they have quite a hostile attitude to nationalism. I actually think that nationalism can be an attractive ideology. I like its Utopian elements.

(Benedict Anderson, Interview, University of Oslo, 2005)

### 1. (Post)-Apartheid and the Future

Twelve years into the new South Africa, contestation between and even within all levels of party politics turns on the issue of *delivery*. Delivery – be it in terms of services, employment, health, housing, land, water, education or any number of other issues – is the one line of critique that can be directed meaningfully at the overwhelming political dominance of the African National Congress (ANC). The party is virtually synonymous with the ideals enshrined in the new nation's Constitution, a Constitution widely recognised as one of the most progressive in the world. The ideals themselves are incontestable, and their achievement through a high-profile but remarkable unbloody liberation struggle is regularly represent-

ed as exemplary.<sup>1</sup> With liberation achieved, however, the ideals that were once the promise of the future are now enshrined in the present; no longer invoking the openness of the speculative, they govern what is to come on terms receding rapidly into the past. And so the urgency of the struggle for future deliverance is replaced by calls for patience as the new state attempts to deliver on promises in principle now achieved.

In this lies the fundamental and apparently all-too obvious shift between the modes and moods of anti- and post-apartheid discourses. Re-reading the cultural text of South Africa against this shift brings us up, at times, against some of its less obvious implications. Take for example the exemplary future-orientation of the joint statement of the three accused in the “Delmas” treason trial: “We view the present trial as an interim affair”, stated Patrick ‘Terror’ Lekota, Popo Molefe, and Moss Chikane in 1983, going on to say,

Somewhere in the future lies a date when black and white South Africans will take a second look at these moments of our history. They will evaluate afresh the events now in contention and our role in them. And since the privilege will belong to them, they will pass final judgement. We are convinced that theirs will be contrary to the present one. They will vindicate us.<sup>2</sup>

In principle, post-apartheid South Africa is now thoroughly re-situated within the time of that “second look”; the citizens of the future have not only vindicated the accused but found the very structures within which the trial was staged guilty in the “final judgement” that is their privilege. But even as we celebrate the prophetic defiance of Lekota, Molefe, and Chikane having come into its own, elements of their statement take on a worrying note. Translated into the present, it is the once predictive force of the word “final” that becomes particularly problematic. In its new context, it suggests that the radical gambol on the future that defined and propelled the years of struggle has ended – that the history of the struggle, in terms not very far from those of Francis Fukuyama’s thesis on the collapse of Soviet Communism and the triumph of liberal capitalism, has resulted in the “end of [South African] History.” The tendency to run world- and South African history together in this way has been encouraged by the fact that South Africa’s democratic breakthrough coincided historically with the highpoint of international neo-liberalism. It has been all too easy to see the country’s negotiated transition blending in with the apparent opening up of a homogeneous global free market. Certainly parties with more radical social and economic agendas than those adopted by the ANC since liberation are taking

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<sup>1</sup> Although this is by no means unproblematic; see Leon de Kock’s “South Africa in the Global Imaginary” (2001). Citing a colloquium on the theme of “Living Difference: Towards a Society of Communities” held at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg in 1998 where a number of eminent international guests expressed dismay at the cautionary or disillusioned attitude of the South African speakers to their “miraculous new nation,” de Kock notes that “it is imperative for others that South Africans succeed at the democratic, multiracial miracle that they (the non-South Africans) have yet to see realized in their own countries” (2001, 289).

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in *The Weekly Mail*, 9 December to 15 December, 1988, 3.

some time to find their feet on this new terrain, and there is as yet no real sense of a political horizon beyond the ANC.

In what way, then, does the post of post-apartheid maintain within itself the promise of a post of its own? Odd though this may appear, given the sense of closure inherent in current conceptions of the South Africa nation-state, it is useful to stage this question in terms of the national.

## 2. Utopia and the Nation

Formed well after the period of ‘classical’ nationalism associated with the Americas, Europe, and Russia, significantly later too than the versions of anticolonial nationalism criticized by Simon Gikandi (1992) and others for their continuing dependence upon the colonial episteme, South Africa is a nation conscious of being constructed beyond the essentialisms of ethnicity, religion, language – even geography and history – long considered the basis of national formations. In this respect it recognizes implicitly in many of its state principles and governmental structures its “imagined” status, along lines not far divorced from those invoked by Benedict Anderson (1991 [1983]) in his famous formulation.

One result of this is that South Africa has had to pose more consciously than most the question with which Anderson closes his often quite critical reworking of the concept of the “imagined community”, *The Spectre of Comparisons*. The final chapter in this work is entitled “The Goodness of Nations,” and after citing a series of examples that illustrate why “no matter what crimes a nation’s government commits and its passing citizenry endorses,” the proposition remains, “My Country is Ultimately Good.” Anderson closes this book with the question, “In these straitened millennial times, can such Goodness be profitably discarded?” (1998, 368).

He has addressed this question in a number of ways since (not least in the interview from which the epigraph to this paper is taken), indicating that it remains an area of ongoing fascination for him. Admitting that “The Goodness of the Nation was a new and remarkable idea, since it appeared in the face of plenty of contrary evidence” (2001), Anderson traces one element of its logic to the centrality of the future in the construct of the nation. “The Nation was the first historical polity for which the Future was an essential foundation,” he writes in one version of this argument (2001). “Moving onward through Walter Benjamin’s ‘empty, homogeneous time’,” he continues,

it was not headed for the Day of Judgment, and it knew it had no place in Heaven or in Hell. So it thought, and continues to think, about future Frenchmen and future Americans, who in their uncountable numbers stand lining up in Limbo for their entrance onto the national territory. These ghostly French and Americans, innocent of any crimes, frivolities, and other sins, are those before whom presently living citizens are morally arraigned, and to whose standards of virtue they are asked to do obeisance. They are understood as the guarantee that no matter how appalling the behavior and morals of “actually existing” French and Americans, We The People in the transcendent sense, and in the sense of Rousseau’s General Will, is always Good. (Anderson 2001)

Here is the essence of the Utopian element Anderson cites in defence of his view that “nationalism can be an attractive ideology.” That he means this not as some kind of wishful thinking, but in its strong sense as a version of critique, is clear in the lines that follow: “One might even go so far as to wonder,” he goes on, “whether this exalted Goodness does not generally *require* a lot of worry and dissatisfaction about the present condition of the nation” (Anderson 2001).

Such a view carries us into territory long inhabited by Fredric Jameson, and recently re-stressed in his latest book. The second half of *Archaeologies of the Future* (2005) brings together Jameson’s major writings on Utopia, reminding us that throughout his career Jameson has associated the form with a progressive politics. This was compellingly set out as early as 1971 in *Marxism and Form*. In this book, Jameson is concerned with hermeneutics as “a political discipline,” one which “provides the means for maintaining contact with the very sources of revolutionary energy during a stagnant time, of preserving the concept of freedom itself, underground, during geological ages of repression. Indeed,” he continues, “it is the concept of freedom which [...] proves to be the privileged instrument of a political hermeneutic.” In this sense, freedom is “best understood as an interpretive device rather than a philosophical essence or idea. For wherever the concept of freedom is once more understood, it always comes as the awakening of dissatisfaction in the midst of all” (1971, 84). Jameson goes on to identify overtly freedom in this sense with the Utopian idea, which “keeps alive the possibility of a world qualitatively distinct from this one and takes the form of a stubborn negation of all that is” (1971, 111).

The modalities of anti-apartheid thought were quite clear in this regard: one of the greatest fears expressed by writers during the darkest periods of oppression was the loss of a sense of the future. In his notebook entry for 26 December 1968, Athol Fugard wrote: “How do I align myself with a future, a possibility, in which I believe but of which I have no clear image? A failure of imagination” (quoted in 1981 [1974], xxv). By 1980 he was writing, “Today’s future barely includes tomorrow. At times I see the situation deteriorating still further, to the point where even the thought of a tomorrow will be a luxury” (1981 [1974], xxv).

At much the same time as Fugard declared himself to be “trying to live and work in preparation for that eventuality” (1981 [1974], xxv), Mongane Serote was taking up again *To Every Birth Its Blood*, a text that had been stale-mated by the pre-1976 context but was revitalised by the student uprising of that year. Crucially, however, it is Serote’s projection of his narrative into the historical future that carried the novel through to completion in 1981, making it thoroughly Utopian in Jameson’s sense of using the future as a “stubborn negation” of the present.

The future in *To Every Birth Its Blood* becomes an essential element in an oppositional technique, a strategy of protest rather than prediction, and the forward-looking impulse that carried Serote’s once-deadlocked 1970s text into completion found a real purchase amongst other novels of the early to mid-1980s. I have argued in *Novel Histories: Past, Present, and Future in South African*

*Fiction* that South African fiction of this period throws up a significant number of what I have come to call “future histories” (Green 1997). These works seek to comment upon the past and present by projecting the implications of the past and the present forward in time. In this they reverse the standard techniques of historical fiction, but remain directly related to them. They use the future in much the same way as the historical novel uses the past, producing a deep engagement with another time whilst retaining a serious commitment to their particular and specific historical conditions.

It is such a vital relation to the present that Dominic Baker-Smith makes central to distinguishing between the utopian and other future-oriented modes. “At the centre of all utopian writing is a concern with the mediating process between ideal forms and the inadequate provisions of experience,” he writes.

Whether it is utopia or dystopia that we are considering, the separation from fantasy is absolute: both imply a reference back to the world of concrete acts and familiar experience which fantasy excludes. The central feature of utopian writing is the effort to reconcile ideal possibilities with the recalcitrance of the known. Even in the case of dystopian writing it is that emphasis on the obstinate features of a known world which suggests desirable alternatives. (Baker-Smith 1987, 8)

It is in such a utopian strategy that “future histories” find their generative principal. As we read in Sasha’s scattered notes on utopia in Gordimer’s *A Sport of Nature* (another text from the 1980s in which the narrative is carried through into an imagined future liberation),

the dynamic of real change is always utopian. The original impulse may get modified – even messed up – in the result, but it always has to be there no matter how far from utopia that result may be.

Utopia is unattainable; without aiming for it – taking a chance! – you can never even hope to fall far short of it.

...Without utopia – the idea of utopia – there’s a failure of the imagination – and that’s a failure to know how to go on living... (217-218)

...or writing. *A Sport of Nature* enacts literally Jameson’s view that “all plot may be seen as a movement toward Utopia, in its basic working through to some ultimate resolution of the basic tensions” (1971, 146); in this sense “the very time of the work may itself stand as a figure of Utopian development: ‘Every great work of art, above and beyond its manifest content, is carried out according to a latency of the page to come, or in other words, in the light of the content of a future which has not yet come into being, and indeed of some ultimate resolution as yet unknown’” (1971:149; Jameson is quoting Ernst Bloch). For Jameson, such a perspective

may serve as an object lesson in some of the ways available to a Marxist hermeneutic to restore a genuine political dimension to the disparate texts preserved in the book of our culture: not by some facile symbolic or allegorical interpretation, but by reading the very content and the formal impulse of the texts themselves as figures – whether of psychic wholeness, of freedom, or of the drive towards Utopian transfiguration – of the irrepressible revolutionary wish. (1971, 159)

It is very much in something like this sense that Schoeman's *Na die Geliefde Land*,<sup>3</sup> Coetzee's *Life and Times of Michael K*, Gordimer's *July's People*, and Hope's *Kruger's Alp* – along with a plethora of non-fictional political and economic analyses – join *To Every Birth Its Blood* and *A Sport of Nature* in trying imaginatively to go beyond the 'interregnum' of the apparently dead-locked struggle. In each case, the use of the utopian mode (or for that matter the formally identical dystopian mode) is not so much predictive as pre-emptive. Whether inspirational or admonitory, these texts are explicitly interventionist, at the very least affirming the ability of the imagination to concretise itself in the face of enormous suppression.

Not unsurprisingly, in the anti-apartheid mode at least, such a strategy easily took on national dimensions. Whilst this may not apply in every case in the globalized context of the new millennium, South Africa is not entirely isolated in being an appropriate case for seeing something of the prophetic in Jameson's claim, made in 1981,

that a Left which cannot grasp the immense Utopian appeal of nationalism (any more than it can grasp that of religion or of fascism) can scarcely hope to "reappropriate" such collective energies and must effectively doom itself to political impotence. (1981, 298)

Aligning the appeal of nationalism with that of fascism and religion is a clear indication of Jameson's sense of the multivalency of all these terms and the differences they may take on in the specificities of various contexts, but his point has a particular force in the 'new South Africa.' Translated into Anderson's terms, appeals to the "Goodness" of the new nation are a common mode for attempting to deal with many of the more intransigent features plaguing its coming into being in line with the ideals of its Constitution. This is possibly the predominant way in which the utopian has been translated from oppositional and revolutionary modes into those of nation-building in the South African context, and I would like to read this shift against a novel intimately concerned with one of the literal and symbolic centres of both the utopian ideals and threatening realities of a united post-apartheid South Africa, Phaswane Mpe's *Welcome to Our Hillbrow*.

### 3. The Fiction of the New Nation

Hillbrow is an inner city area that has been described as being to Johannesburg what the East End was once to London. Relatively early in its history, it took its character from the successive waves of European immigrants who settled there, at least until they were able to improve their economic circumstances enough to move. Even before the scrapping of influx control, this dense area of high-rise flats and residential hotels located on the periphery of the comparatively liberalising influence of the University of the Witwatersrand had begun to attract a

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<sup>3</sup> Tellingly, this novel has recently been filmed as something of a comment on the 'new' South Africa.

new kind of immigrant. Large numbers of 'illegal' city-dwellers seeking to escape their enforced location in the areas prescribed by apartheid found in the counter-culture atmosphere the area had begun to develop during the 1970s and 80s a kind of refuge, particularly because it encouraged the rapid loosening up of all sorts of official control.

By the 1990s Hillbrow was considered either a sophisticated melting pot of culture, class, and ethnicity or a decaying cityscape of violent crime, drugs, prostitution, and AIDS. In this it embodies the best and the worst of contemporary South Africa, but the real test of its significance for the new nation is the high proportion of African migrants – primarily Zimbabweans, Mozambicans, Nigerians, and Malawians – making up its population. Victims of official intolerance and popular rejection, they are stereotypically accused of taking what little work there is from South Africans and held responsible for most of the social ills that plague the area. The threatened and marginal status of many living in Hillbrow makes the area a perfect breeding ground for xenophobia of the worst sort.<sup>4</sup> The capacity for the new South African nation to demonstrate its inclusiveness, particularly when it comes to 'aliens' from states that supported the present power-holders when they were underground or in exile and provided bases for their operatives in the armed struggle, is in crucial ways the measure of its highest ideals, and in this respect Hillbrow is the ultimate testing ground for the utopian hopes of the nation.<sup>5</sup>

"Welcome to our literature" is the headline of one of the major reviews<sup>6</sup> received by *Welcome to Our Hillbrow*, and the carry over of the collective possessive from a "locality of just over one square kilometre, according to official records" (Mpe 2001, 1) to the entire nation is not as hyperbolic as it may at first seem. Published in 2001, this novel now earns Mpe a regular emblematic place in recent accounts of post-apartheid literature. In articles such as Rachel L. Swarns' "South Africa's Black Writers Explore a Free Society's Tensions," published in no less an organ than the *New York Times* (24 June 24, 2002), Mpe joins Zakes Mda and K Sello Duiker as part of what has now become something of a regular triumvirate forming the kernel of a new canon for the new nation.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> In a recent survey, 62% of new immigrants "said they had been assaulted by local residents merely for being foreign," and policing statistics established that "foreign nationals were more likely to have been the victims of crime than were locals in every category polled" (Leggett 2002).

<sup>5</sup> An excellent article on the make-up and attitudes of Johannesburg's migrant communities is Abdoumalik Simone's "Going South: African Immigrants in Johannesburg" (2000).

<sup>6</sup> Laurice Taitz, *Sunday Times* Lifestyle Feature, 16 September 2001.

<sup>7</sup> Swarns actually opens her article with Mpe: "The small crowd cheers as Phaswane Mpe reads from his new novel in a quiet corner of the decaying neighborhood of Hillbrow," she writes, going on to say that "(h)e finds inspiration on these shabby streets, amid the crush of hustlers and aspiring students, the graffiti and barbed wire. Here, the new South Africa dazzles and disorients, offering young blacks previously unimaginable opportunities even as AIDS and crime threaten to shatter their dreams. Whites and racial tensions are almost invisible in this community and in Mr. Mpe's well-regarded novel, *Welcome to Our Hillbrow*" (Swarns 2002).

The criteria for the post-apartheid canon are clear. In terms of content, no concentration on race and little mention of apartheid – instead, engage with one or more of AIDS, crime, xenophobia, homosexuality, returning exiles, urbanization, new forms of dispossession, and identity displacement. In terms of style, take as much latitude from the standard realism associated with struggle literature as possible – association with ‘magic realism’ is acceptable, as long as it is made clear that this is drawn from African tale-telling traditions rather than any particular international influence.

It goes without saying that the novels identified as representative post-apartheid works are uniformly written in English. To use any one of the indigenous languages would risk being identified with the years of apartheid-inspired social (and linguistic) engineering aimed at creating stereotypes of racial and ethnic separateness. English signals alignment with the avowed nation-building, antitribalist strategy of the new government, and also makes it possible, of course, to gain for the novel something of the international acclaim garnered by the miracle of the new nation.

I slip into caricature here not out of any necessary disrespect for many of the works embodying these elements, but because of the all too easy way in which the novels that exemplify them can be taken up in superficial nation-building exercises. In *The Spectre of Comparisons*, Benedict Anderson corrects an “unstated assumption” in *Imagined Communities* that “the deep original affinity between nation-ness and the novel meant that they would always be adequate for one another” (1998, 334). “In the second half of this century,” he goes on to say, “the affinities have become visibly strained”; changes in the novel form and in the formalised production of the nation through ministries of information and culture, “handled by specialized state functionaries, advertisers, and the like,” mean that “nations with states – nation-states – have less and less need of the novel” (1998, 335). When “specialized state functionaries” do have a use for the novel, it is, these days, more likely to inspire doubts about the form rather than an appreciation for its national significance. *Welcome to Our Hillbrow*’s thorough immersion in the new canonical criteria has, for example, amongst other honours like being shortlisted for national literary awards, earned Mpe a place on “South Africa’s Official Internet Gateway.” Here he is to be found amidst Advice for Foreigners, Investing in South Africa, Smart Travel Tips, Fauna and Flora, Geography and Climate, Sport, and History and Heritage, listed by the International Marketing Council of South Africa as one of the “many writers worth checking out” who represent South Africa’s efforts to find “a new national – and hybrid – identity” (Thale, 2001).

It is in such comments that we find Mpe’s novel explicitly linked to the utopian ideals associated almost as a reflex with ‘the new South Africa.’ And yet *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* begins with as damning an image of the destructiveness of effusive nationalism as one could wish to find. “If you were still alive, Refentše, child of Tiragalong, you would be glad that Bafana Bafana lost to France in the 1998 Soccer World Cup fiasco” (1), says the narrator at the opening of his

address to his ironically-named protagonist (Refentše is Sepedi for “we have won”) that makes up the bulk of the novel. The narrator goes on to contrast the comparative peace of walking through Hillbrow in the wake of that loss with the South African national team’s victory over Ivory Coast in 1995, when the residents of Hillbrow in their jubilation hurled bottles from high-rise windows and one of the many wildly racing cars threw a seven year-old child into the air. “Her mid-air screams still ring in your memory,” the narrator rather pointedly reminds Refentše, who has committed suicide by throwing himself from the twentieth floor of a Hillbrow building; “when she hit the concrete pavements of Hillbrow, her screams died with her” (2).

Nothing of the utopian clings to such an image, nor of goodness. I would argue however that *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* asks us to judge this violent image – along with a litany of other ills infecting contemporary South Africa – against an implicit sense of the utopian and ‘the good’ as they are associated with both the nation in general (in Anderson’s sense) and South Africa in particular. An incident drawn from the fervour generated by a national sport is as good a place as any to begin the playing off of ideal against reality in this regard. In a recent oral address on the theme of “the Goodness of Nations” presented in South Africa,<sup>8</sup> Anderson gave force to his recently published observation that “his view of nationalism had become drier”<sup>9</sup> by adding sportsmen and women to his list of examples of the ways in which the citizenry were shown the ideal nation; the constant depictions of their health and beauty illustrate, he said, how the hope of the country depends upon concealing actual suffering. Given the enormous status of sport in defining contemporary national identity, he could easily have added that it is perhaps only proper that the novel today should recognise its own displacement as a vehicle for the national when touching on anything to do with a game of such – and the word here must be used in its most conventional sense in the discourse of nationalism – epic proportions. Certainly the relatively new South African government went out of its way to frame its hosting of the Soccer World Cup in this way: the state-owned broadcasting medium saturated its coverage with the new national doctrine and its symbols, from the wide display of the new national colours and footage of famous moments in South African history to videoed slogans such as “To be South African is to believe in miracles” and “For this united nation, no challenge has been too great” (Fjeld 2000, 395). Such education in a common national heritage is not needed by the residents of Hillbrow, however, and the death of the child that opens Mpe’s novel only briefly interrupts their singing of the unofficial national sporting anthem; after a few calls of “Kill the bastard!” hurled at the driver who is already long gone, Sho-

<sup>8</sup> This address was given at several South African universities, but the one at which I was present was that given at the University of KwaZulu-Natal on 21 September 2006.

<sup>9</sup> This is in his response to Marc Redfield’s contribution in *Grounds of Comparison*, where Anderson says, “over twenty years my view of nationalism has become drier. The chapters on ‘Replica, Aura, and Late Nationalist Imaginings’ and ‘The Goodness of Nations’ in *The Spectre of Comparisons* are thus written in a sardonic style mostly foreign to *Imagined Communities*” (2003, 233).

sholozha is taken up again, “drowning the choking sobs of the deceased child’s mother” (2).

It is this scene that presages the introduction of the novel’s titular refrain, heard initially from a passer by. Although the opening section of the novel – entitled “Hillbrow: The Map” – is made up of following Refentše on his first walk through the area’s streets from down town to the university, in the space of the work’s mere 124 pages, the recurring catchphrase “Welcome to our...” rapidly expands beyond the Hillbrow of the novel’s title to subsume all the locations included in the narrative, from the protagonist’s home village of Tiragalong to Alexandra to the greater Johannesburg to Oxford to England. The expansion continues until all literal location is left behind and we are welcomed to “our All” (104), “to the World of our Humanity” (113) and ultimately, in the concluding words of the novel, “to our Heaven” (124). The one location to which we are never welcomed in the novel, it should be noted, is South Africa.

The infinitely extendable, and it is correct in this context to say quite precisely, the universalising dimensions of the novel’s refrain are generated by what appears to be a desire on Mpe’s part to counter Kevin Lynch’s description of the city as (in Fredric Jameson’s summary), “above all a place in which people are unable to map (in their minds) either their own positions or the urban totality in which they find themselves” (Jameson 1991, 89). The insistent mapping of Hillbrow that dominates the first section of *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* is an almost compulsive attempt on the part of the narrator to site his protagonist in the city. It is almost as if Mpe has taken to heart Jameson’s reminder that new forms of political art need to “regain a capacity to act and struggle [...] at present neutralized by our spatial as well as social confusion” (1991, 91). Jameson insists, however, that such new forms will have to do this while at one and the same time holding “to the truth of postmodernism,” and in this respect it is an open question as to whether the novel’s attempts at situating itself are finally overwhelmed by a post-modern or – one could say and without too-exaggerated a conflation – a post-apartheid ethos.

For the narrative enacts both posts as it takes on the literal dimensions of the map in clinging to its spatial surfaces and resisting temporal depth. True to its canonical requirements, the few glimpses into South African history that *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* allows us are simply phantasmagoric snatches – “stuff that would be called surrealism or magic realism or some other strange realism were it simply told or written as a piece of fiction” (19), as the novel’s narrator puts it after a brief and at best impressionistic attempt at catching a sense of the past in his attack on the accurately rendered xenophobic present. History in Mpe’s narrative has very little purchase on the present, as little perhaps as geography in its ability to situate its narrator or its characters on national – as opposed to local – terms. Where then, in any serious sense, may we locate a claim for the novel to be representative of the new nation?

#### 4. Addressing Utopia: the Second Person

We can approach this question through the formal orientation of *Welcome to Our Hillbrow*. Instead of the overdetermined insistence on the third person mode of bearing witness or the first person of confession (not of course mutually exclusive in overt formal terms) so characteristic of anti-apartheid literature, the novel employs, for nearly the full length of its narrative, the second person. In making this point, I do not mean to essentialise the formal mode of person, but rather bring out the ways in which Mpe's particular concentration upon the second person serves to underscore the often strange interplay of utopianism and critique that informs the novel's overtly post-apartheid status.

In *Welcome to Our Hillbrow*, an unspecified narrator addresses the bulk of the novel to the dead Refentše ("If you were still alive, Refentše, child of Tiragalong" [1]), who has killed himself after his lover's betrayal and the frustration of his literary hopes, and the final section to the dying Refilwe ("Now you can sigh with resignation, child of our Hillbrow and Triragalong and Oxford, as you think of your imminent entry into heaven" [122]), a friend of Refentše's who has developed full-blown AIDS. Refentše has by the time of his death moved from Hillbrow-initiate to University of the Witwatersrand academic and published short story writer, whilst Refilwe, after following a similar trajectory from Tiragalong to Johannesburg, first finds employment in a publishing house and then takes up her studies again in the MA programme in Publishing and Media Studies at Oxford Brookes University. We may note in passing that the experiences of both Refilwe and Refentše are based closely on Mpe's life experience, but the important point about the two protagonists is that they are both tied to literary ambitions that are cut short. In effect, the story told in *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* is generated by the conceit of the account of the death of the two protagonists producing the works of fiction they themselves are unable to complete.

Refentše and Refilwe certainly function as the subjects of the second person address which produces this effect, but the novel shares with many other second person texts the particularly problematic question of where the narrator is to be found. Certainly no locatable "I" appears in the novel, making the implied first person of the narrator entirely a reflex of the second-person mode of address. As such, the "you" encompasses the narrator as well as the protagonists/narratees. The fact that the very vehicle of that address, the novel *Welcome to Our Hillbrow*, completes its protagonists' frustrated creative ambitions, demonstrates that the second person in this case is a form of split address through which the author lets us overhear his address to himself as a fictionalised subject. While the use of the second person is conventionally taken as an invitation to projection aimed at drawing the reader into the text, the effect in *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* draws attention instead to the rhetorical split itself, to the distance between narrator and protagonist or, if you will, given the autobiographical note introduced above, implied authorial experience and expressed fictional experience. The failure, upon

the part of Refentše, to write his novel is constantly brought up against the fact of the very novel one is reading.

The achieved fact of the novel lies then in a space beyond the physical specificities of its narrative. I say “space,” but if we are to use this term it must be in the special sense reserved for the utopian: in line with the etymological root of the word, the place from which the narrative is generated and where it finds its conclusion is “no-where” – nowhere, that is, in everything but a theological way in this novel, for the only location we can apply to the otherwise absent narrator is at first sight a thoroughly metaphysical one: “Now you can sigh with resignation, child of our Hillbrow and Tiragalong and Oxford,” he says to the dying Refentše, “as you think of your imminent entry into Heaven” (122).

Heaven, we have already noted, has appeared throughout the novel as the outermost horizon of the locations to which the narrator welcomes the subjects of his address. As such, it seems to reinforce the novel’s distancing itself from the national, for the nation, as we have seen in Anderson’s formulation, has no such dimension. “[T]he nation, no matter how grandly conceived, is intrahistorical: it has no place reserved for it in Heaven or Hell”, he writes (1998, 360). It is for this reason that so much of his argument for the Goodness of Nations turns on “The Unborn,” the citizens of a determinedly terrestrial future. It is they who impose obligations upon us to behave well in the present; as national citizens, we must “rise to the expectations of the future”:

It is, after all, in the name of the Unborn that we are asked to work hard, pay our taxes, and make other substantial sacrifices – in order to preserve heritages, reduce national debts, protect environments, defend frontiers, and, if needs be, give our lives for unborn descendants to not one of whom can we give a guaranteed personal name. (Anderson 1998, 362)

In order to exert this Utopian pull upon us, however, they must share nothing of our “messy and often dirty [everyday personal lives]: lies, evasions, cruelty, treachery, laziness, greed, frivolity, and the rest of anyone’s long list” (Anderson 2003, 240-1). “The tense here is,” says Anderson, “so to speak, the Future Perfect” (1998, 362). The Unborn “have no social lineaments at all, except for their [nationality]; and it is exactly this monochrome purity that guarantees their Goodness, and that allows them to impose on us obligations that we might resent accepting from a large number of [the] actually alive” (1998, 362).

The people of the future in *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* – in the sense of those who live on after the protagonists – display none of these features. Towards the conclusion of the novel, Heaven is shown to have a distinctly worldly character. As the narrator explains to the dying Refentše, “Heaven is the world of our continuing existence.” This, he says, is

located in the memory and consciousness of those who lived with us and after us. It is the archive that those we left behind keep visiting and revisiting; digging this out, suppressing or burying that. Continually reconfiguring the stories of our lives, as if they alone hold the real true version. Just as you, Refilwe, tried to reconfigure the story of Refentše; just as Tiragalong now is going to do the same with you. Heaven

can also be Hell, depending on the nature of our continuing existence in the memories and consciousness of the living. (124)

Heaven – or is it Hell? – has nothing of the utopian about it in *Welcome to Our Hillbrow*. Neither utopian nor dystopian, it is simply business as usual, with rumour and gossip continuing there the destructive effects – which include ostracism, suicide, and necklacing – that the novel devotes much time to tracing in the earthly lives of its protagonists. Gossip is particularly powerful in the rural community that the main characters leave when they journey to Hillbrow, but it follows them in a deeply damaging pattern of prejudice and superstition – especially whenever this has anything to do with foreigners and AIDS. As such, the future in *Welcome to Our Hillbrow*, rather than serving as a basis for “the Goodness of Nations,” feeds into the much more ambiguous “biography of nations” with which Anderson closes *Imagined Communities*: This is the final section of a chapter entitled “Memory and Forgetting,” and Anderson tells us there that “All profound changes in consciousness, by their very nature, bring with them characteristic amnesias. Out of such oblivions, in specific historical circumstances, spring narratives” (1991 [1983], 204). “As with modern persons, so it is with nations,” he continues. “Awareness of being imbedded in secular, serial time, with all its implications of continuity, yet ‘forgetting’ the experience of this continuity ... engenders the need for a narrative of ‘identity’” (1991 [1983], 205); the main narrative purpose of such remembering/forgetting is to establish that identity “as ‘our own’” (1991 [1983], 206).

This is a dubious advantage for Refilwe who, as the narrator tells her as death closes in, will become just “one more sad example of the dangers of love gone wild” which Tiragalong will use “in future [to] admonish its children” (123). Her identity as it lives on after her death is thus hardly “her own” in an individual sense, and serves no basis at all for a national one.

“[W]hat the reality of Heaven is,” says the narrator in *Welcome to Our Hillbrow*, “what makes it accessible, is that it exists in the imagination of those who commemorate our worldly life. Who, through the stories they tell of us, continue to celebrate our existence even after we have passed from this Earth” (123-4). This brings us to the second category that Anderson invests with the power to give the category of the national its Utopian dimension: the Dead.

It is specifically the “National Dead” – those who have died in war for the nation – who have this status, and so it might seem entirely out of place to consider them in the context of *Welcome to Our Hillbrow*. And yet Anderson’s argument in this regard does have some bearing on the larger context in which we are considering this novel. “It is remarkable,” writes Anderson of a memorial to the dead of four very different American wars,

that the monument treats all these dead as absolutely equivalent; it makes not the slightest difference whether they met their ends on a glorious or shameful battlefield. The sacrifice of their lives is thus radically separated from historical Right or Wrong. This separation is elegantly achieved by positioning them as sacrificial victims. National Death has, so too speak, paid their bills and cleared their moral books. (1998, 363)

Much may be said about the absence of the national as a significant dimension of the ever-widening context of *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* by comparing this American monument to the Freedom Park's Wall of Remembrance scheduled to be unveiled on Reconciliation Day in Pretoria in 2006. This will bear the names of 75.000 struggle heroes, including the names of 2.106 Cuban soldiers who died in combat in Angola. Not included on it, however, will be the names of the South African Defence Force members "who died while fighting to protect the security of the country", as the *Independent* newspaper would have it. Whatever the justness of this decision, it is not hard to imagine the pain and sense of rejection it will occasion for a significant number of people whose only possible affiliation as citizens is with South Africa. When Anderson comments that "the national dead and the national unborn [...] mirror each other, and provide the best sureties of the ineradicable Goodness of the nation" (1998: 364), it is on the assumption that both the inclusivity and exclusivity of the nation is a matter more settled than it is in the current form of South Africa, whether it is as defined in relation to citizens from neighbouring African states or the nature of a just war as defined by the Geneva convention.<sup>10</sup>

## 5. A Post for the Posts

Does the use of the second person in *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* not generate a national vision in its fictional project because the conditions for such a vision are not yet in place? More importantly for the subject of this paper, why is it that a novel so regularly cited as representative of the new nation fails to call up a utopian vision with which to confront the demonstrable lack in the material conditions for such a nation? Where in *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* is the sense of a post for the current limits of the post-apartheid nation, some indication of what it would mean to take the national beyond being defined by its past. During the struggle years, South Africa was regularly referred to by those striving for liberation as pre-Azania; what would be the pre- for post-apartheid South Africa? Well, that is the business of the Utopian in its strong form, as we saw in the literature of the anti-apartheid period.

We can push this question as it applies to *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* a last significant step further. Arguing against Fredric Jameson's proposal that "All third-world texts are necessarily [...] national allegories" (1986, 69), Aijaz Ahmad points out that the "allegorising" of individual experience – which he sees as associated with "the whole history of realism in the European novel" – does not necessarily involve the category of "the nation" (1992, 110). His point that the allegorising effect could invoke many other kinds of "collectivity" is one that we need to bring to our consideration of Mpe's novel, primarily because the work is

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<sup>10</sup> "Freedom Park Deputy CEO Peggie Photolo said the Geneva Convention clearly outlined what a just war was and stated the just causes for a war." *The Independent* on Saturday, 30 September 2006, 3.

such a vivid manifestation of the non-national collectivities of post-apartheid society.

This, I think, has significance for the missing national dimension in the ever-widening embrace of the “Welcome” of its title. The issues that *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* focuses on so passionately – “euphemism, xenophobia, prejudice, and AIDS” (59) – have, for the most part, been taken up by the left-leaning, community-based social movements that present possibly the most energetic protest against the dominance of the profit motive and the unfettered market and corporate power that characterise so much of the current political terrain in the new South Africa. Independent of the government, if not necessarily anti-ANC (although some do see themselves as ideological opponents of the post-1994 South African state), movements like the Treatment Action Campaign, the National Association of People Living with HIV/AIDS, the Education Rights Project, and the Concerned Citizens Forum, quite specifically try to give ordinary people a voice and some control over their daily lives without calling upon a nationalised sense of the political. If we are to read *Welcome to Our Hillbrow* seriously in terms of an attempt to “regain a capacity to act and struggle” in the post-nationalist political world of post-apartheid, then it is for some sort of alignment with these social movements that we could most profitably look. To the degree that the novel employs a utopian method of critique then, this slips from a national to issue-based interventions.

In itself, this is a potentially powerful shift in a strategy of critique. But in the case of *Welcome to Our Hillbrow*, the separation of the utopian from the national is not entirely convincing or effective. The universalising trope running throughout the novel, in which an infinitely expanding perspective becomes a globalized norm against which distorted local values may be measured, tends to flip the novel over into a moral – even moralizing – rather than a political agenda. The split address of the second person, in which narrator and narratee are meant to represent in combination a self completed in the aesthetic act and mapped into a meaningful totality of city, nation, and novel does not, finally, pass through a sufficiently politicised space to achieve this. The doubling up of the lyrical through the second person ends in an elegiac mode – none of the novel’s characters survive Hillbrow or the issues Mpe raises – rather than in the kind of specifically directed engagement we find in the specific aims of the most militant and engaged social movements or, for that matter, in Anderson and Jameson’s more general sense of the strategic value of the Utopian.

*Welcome to Our Hillbrow*’s status as a novel representative of ‘the new South Africa’ is thus revealing with regard to both the strengths and weaknesses of this belated national category. And Mpe’s work of fiction is telling when it comes to exposing just how limited the utopian force is of a national formulation thrown about with a particularly superficial utopian effusiveness. As a ‘post-apartheid’ work it is by no means alone in registering how far the new nation has fallen short of its ideals, and yet we may still be able to leave the last word on the national and the utopian to Anderson. Responding to Partha Chatterjee’s criticisms

of his work, Anderson says, "He is probably right in saying that what he terms my defence of classical nationalism is utopian, but I disagree that this nationalism is irrelevant. I think it is precisely this utopianism, the utopia of an endlessly receding horizon 'over the rainbow', that makes it relevant" (2003, 240). In examining the shape of the national in the discourses of post-apartheid, we must remember with Anderson that it is not to be measured in its achieved form: "The nation in effect offers a receding ethical horizon" (2003, 241).

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RÜDIGER HEINZE / JOCHEN PETZOLD

## The Disappearance of Utopia? An Interview with Ernest Callenbach on the Role and Function of Utopian Thought in Contemporary Society

Ernest Callenbach is the author of *Ecotopia*, one of the most influential and best known utopian novels of the second half of the twentieth century. As one of the first “incomplete” and –by implication– dynamic utopian visions (what Tom Moylan calls “critical utopias”) it is premised on a biocentric societal system and world view. The interview was conducted in the summer of 2006.

*In light of the political, social, religious and economic developments around the world in the last decade (e.g. ‘new’ smaller-scale guerilla and civil wars with their propensity to ethnic ‘cleansing’, the ‘war’ on terror, rising religious and political fundamentalism on all sides, the devastating imbalance between rich and poor countries as well as the imbalance between rich and poor within countries) the meaning of utopia as ‘no place’ seems to predominate; it has become hard –some critics even claim questionable– to envision a ‘good place’ that could conceivably come true. It does not help that most utopian fiction after your *Ecotopia* seems to be what Ursula LeGuin in the subtitle to her *The Dispossessed* has famously called “ambiguous”. What would you say is the currency and necessity of utopian thought and fiction today?*

Utopian thought and fiction has always arisen in times when ‘old paradigms’ are breaking down, and new information and new ideas have begun to appear. This process is increasingly visible in contemporary globalized consumer capitalism. Like revolutionary thinking and action generally, it probably happens more when something new is in prospect than at the depths of confusion and collapse. So I look forward to a new birth of utopianism as we stumble through the 21st century, and the old models seem less and less relevant. We will see, I imagine, more ‘partial’ utopias, of which *Ecotopia* could be considered a primarily ecological one; others might focus on social issues, gender issues (like Starhawk’s *Fifth Sacred Thing*), cultural issues, political issues.

It doesn’t matter whether utopias ‘come true.’ Neither do vast plans of any kind – globalization was supposed to produce universal prosperity, WW2 was supposed to end wars, the New Deal was supposed to end poverty in the US,

etc. Utopias function to raise the question of what general direction we want to move in: the details of an utopian vision are not items on a score-card. Also it is important to remember that feeling and emotions are critical. Aside from its ecological content, *Ecotopia* moves those readers who find it ‘feels like home.’

*Technology, especially where it serves humanity and not vice versa, as one of your characters in Ecotopia puts it, has significantly developed and improved in the areas you describe: solar cells and other alternative sustainable sources of energy have become much more efficient, there is, though yet on a small scale, a notable increase of hybrid and electric cars and low energy houses. Yet despite this and the growing awareness of the nearing exhaustion of fossil energy resources, there seems to be little evidence that the new technology is seriously implemented. Would you say the world, and especially the U.S., today still are where you predicted them to be in your novel thirty years ago? Put more bluntly: thirty years after the publication of your novel, have we gotten any closer, anywhere, to the ideals you outlined?*

Actually, we have in many areas backslid from where we were 30 years ago: most countries (including the terrain of *Ecotopia*) are more car-dominated, more petroleum-dependent, more net-negative-energy-agricultural, more debilitated ecologically, etc. The difference is that it is now very widely understood that (a) what we are doing is not sustainable, and (b) alternate technologies are readily available--more developed than they were in 1975. So there is the intellectual and scientific and technological potential for rapid and massive change. What is lacking is the *political* potential. And since, in the institutions of somewhat-democratic capitalism, change only happens when huge forces come to bear on power-holding groups, it is likely that only continued impoverishment of middle classes (a process advancing rapidly under the Bush regime, but which globalization is bringing to Europe too) will finally anger so many people that it will generate the basic political strength to have significant effects. In the US, we are seeing a turn toward public financing of election campaigns (Maine, Arizona, and now Connecticut have all adopted Clean Elections systems, and the California lower house has recently voted for it too) which should serve to break corporate control of our legislatures and make future change easier. Meanwhile, ordinary people learn valuable lessons. If gasoline prices rise sharply, people think about buses and bicycles. If they get fat or sick, they may reconsider their diets. If there is a crime in their neighborhood, they may band together with their neighbors. If their air or water are polluted, they put pressure on regulators and officials.

*Sustainable development has to take into consideration the issue of population growth. In Morus's Utopia, overpopulation is prevented by emigration and colonization; in Huxley's Brave New World, population control is implemented on a world-wide level; in Atwood's Oryx and Crake, Crake sees humanity as a species incapable of controlling its growth and decides to replace it with a new one. In Ecotopia, population growth is not controlled, it seems to fall into a sustainable*

*pattern more or less automatically – is this a vision you would still put forward, or would you say that active measures of population control will be a necessary feature of an ideal society?*

In general, the Ecotopian non-“control” approach to population is strongly borne out by the recent history of most industrial countries: native populations are declining in Japan, many Western European countries, Quebec, etc. (The US population is rising quite sharply, but predominantly through immigration.) Even in Asia, many countries are experiencing sharp drops in growth rates – not yet absolute drops, however. (In Africa, tragically, populations are dropping because of disease and starvation.) So I think the Ecotopian vision is sound. An odd phenomenon makes this less comforting in the US: authoritarian, fundamentalist families have more children than enlightened, democratic-minded ones (those in which wives have more power, probably) so we can anticipate, along with other processes of imperial decay, a slow trend toward authoritarianism. Mexican immigrant families are an exception, it appears. I don’t know whether this factor operates in Europe – whether immigrant families are more rightwing.

*Discussion during the symposium has frequently centered on the positive depiction of fairly ‘traditional’ families as ‘utopian spaces’ in an environment seen as chaotic and threatening. In your outline of the stable-state, sustainable society of Ecotopia you markedly stress the importance of a re-conceptualized, more expansive notion of family that goes against traditional concepts. Would you still describe this as the ideal microstructure for a utopian society?*

My ideas about family and other social structures were and remain quite anthropological – trying to imagine what structures really suit humans, considering our long species history. Expanded families have been the pattern through most of human history, so I imagine that they will return somehow, under the pressures of the dissolution of most other supportive institutions by the “cash nexus”--that ultimate corrosive identified by Karl Marx. In a bizarre way, our challenge here is to reinvent a way of life as supportive of each other as a ‘primitive’ Stone Age village. Or the poor Appalachian village that I grew up in!

*Ecotopia is also based on an extensive public space and sphere, and distinct ethnic communities that are organized somewhere along the lines of ‘equal but mostly, and voluntarily, separate.’ What importance would you give these aspects today, thirty years later? Do you think contemporary American society has changed to the degree that you would re-formulate these ideas were you to write about them now?*

Human beings are a very local species, even though now our technologies enable us to move over great distances. We identify with our places, and with the familiar people in them, so I think our neighborhoods and communities will always display uniformities – of race, class, linguistic practices, etc. What has changed

in America since 1975 is that we now have a slightly larger and much more visible black upper-middle class (who often prefer to live in white suburbs), that employment and education discrimination has been considerably reduced, and that white people in general, partly via TV, now have at least some idea of how black people live. Racism is not dead, of course, but in some 'blue' areas there is more intermarriage (especially among working people who meet their other-race spouses on the job), mixed children are not stigmatized, and cultures get mixed up. These developments are welcome in my eyes, of course. But whether, looking at the future of American society, we could expect anything like full integration still seems doubtful, especially as social stratification becomes more marked and poverty impacts blacks and Hispanics differentially. In some ways we are moving, not in an equalitarian-though-separate Ecotopian direction, but toward the Alphas and Betas of Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*.

Taking the world as a whole, pressures toward 'devolution' are probably stronger than in 1975. Catalans, Scots and Welsh, Bretons, Quebecois, Basques, and the various former Soviet republics are not the only separatist stories. It seems probable that North America will evolve along lines traced by Joel Garreau in his *Nine Nations of North America*. A strong separatist movement is currently appearing in the state of Vermont (which some Vermonters call "Ecotopia East"). In a paradoxical way, economic globalization promotes cultural nationalism: as people everywhere find themselves drinking Coke or eating McDonald burgers, they also seem to prize their own individual cultural traits and strive to preserve them against international anonymity.

*Natural resources like oil and gas or important base metals like iron and copper are finite, but the 'older' industrial nations are still based on their rapid consumption. Competition for these resources is even heightened by the advent of newly industrialized nations with vast populations. Do you see this as a source of anxiety for wars being waged because of dwindling resources, or do you think the natural limits of resources will eventually force us to rethink our approach to growth, progress and technology and thus bring us closer to the society you describe?*

As far as materials are concerned, we will sooner or later be driven into a system of total recycling (metals, glass, plastics, paper, etc.) Already there is a vast trade in recyclable materials between China/India and the US. The price differential between virgin materials and recycled ones is dwindling, so I don't see much possibility for international quarrels there.

On the energy and water fronts, however, it is quite a different situation. Because of the domination of US life and politics by the oil industry, a transition to renewables will be slow (too slow to avert many disruptions, I think). Even if nuclear is exploited again, thanks to its greenhouse-gas innocence, and our vehicles become considerably more efficient, we will not be able to fill the gap we will face after Peak Oil. But American experience in trying to gain control of Iraq oil has been so unsuccessful that I suspect we will not undertake further

outright wars over oil. It must be kept in mind that some people believe the Iraq war was partly for the purpose of keeping Iraq oil OFF the market (and certainly to prevent it being traded in euros) – in which case it has been quite successful, as well as immensely profitable to large US corporations.

The Israeli-Palestinian war is actually the first modern war that is basically for the control of water; most of the West Bank settlements are situated on wells, and Israel proper derives 30 % of its water from Palestinian areas. Unfortunately, we can expect many more wars over water in the developing world. Here in California, with our wet North and dry south, we will have exacerbated conflict over water which could conceivably have some striking consequences politically as global heating produces more coastal rainfall and less inland precipitation (dividing the state?). Ecotopia is luckily a well-watered bioregion!

In the long run, it is Ecotopia Or Bust: either we develop a renewable-energy society with universal recycling of materials, or we will face chaos. Water in advanced places like California is already being used much more sparingly (and large amounts are actually re-used); natural purification technologies exist that can treat even sewage water for re-use. Subsidy policies are being reconsidered, so that huge agricultural water use does not destroy salmon fisheries and dry out lands used by waterfowl, etc.

*After the last elections, the U.S. have repeatedly been called a 'fifty-fifty' nation: the ideological split in national politics also seems to lead to a political regionalization. What do you think are the consequences of this trend for the possibility of a regional politics in the utopian sense, or more precisely: in the way you depict in your novel(s)?*

The red-blue split is easy to over-emphasize, but it is real, and probably growing. Nonetheless, the coastal blue states will remain richer, more progressive, more dynamic, and more attractive than the inland red states or the South. Through national taxation, they heavily subsidize the more backward red states--a situation that, because of the peculiarities of the American political system (with the Senate having two members even from tiny states) cannot be directly remedied. However, I would imagine that, somewhat as Joel Garreau imagined, there will be relatively liberal regions (Ecotopia, New England and New York, perhaps Florida) which will in time have quite advanced Ecotopian arrangements. Already, under Bush, we have state governments (even some Republican-led ones) that are fiercely angry at the federal government over environmental and social issues. So here too we see a kind of localization in self-defense. And if the rightists succeed in their ostensible aim of weakening the federal government (after they have looted it), local governments will step in to do what needs to be done.

*Everybody's utopia is someone else's dystopia: the current government of the U.S. officially advocates its foreign politics as aimed at spreading the peace and democracy of a liberal society modeled on itself, echoing tenets of Hegel and what*

*Charles Krauthammer in a recent debate with Francis Fukuyama has called “democratic idealism”, as opposed to the “democratic realism” he himself proposes. What role do this distinctly utopian aim and utopian thought in general play in current American politics?*

I get very impatient with debates on this level: almost everything that is said is hypocritical or lunatic. People who think the US has such a splendid record of democracy to sell to the world, either as idealism or realism, simply do not know the brutal realities of American history. The vocabulary is misused to the extent that it is utterly pointless to argue in such terms. In fact, what American power is used for has almost nothing to do with peace or democracy, although to be sure it possesses a brutal kind of ‘realism.’ As far as real American democracy goes, as Gandhi said when asked what he thought about Western Civilization, ‘It would be good idea.’ The origins of American political thought are now so lost in the mists of time that a president (and not only this one) can act more like an emperor than somebody operating in the Constitution's system of checks and balances. We are in a very perilous period now; the Supreme Court is probably captured by the right for the next 20 years, and if Congress does not reassert itself, its role in our society will be diminished perhaps beyond repair. (And the likelihood of the Democrats recapturing even the House is tiny, unless there is a giant anti-Bush revolt in the Republican Party – not that the Democrats would necessarily be an effective opposition even if they succeeded.) So discussions of future rebirth of democracy, Ecotopian or otherwise, seem moot at the present. Nonetheless, history is always more chaotic and surprising than we expect. If post-Peak Oil produces a serious recession, and if the Bush regime remains as incompetent as it has proved so far, something dramatic may happen. I just hope that things don't go in a fascist direction – always a possibility when a superficially liberal middle class is economically threatened and politically frightened. And the one thing the Busheviks are good at it scaring people.

## Die Autoren dieses Heftes

- Dr. Nicola Glaubitz, Fachbereich 3, Universität Siegen, Adolf-Reichwein-Str. 3, 57068 Siegen
- Prof. Michael Green, English Studies, University of KwaZulu-Natal, King George V Avenue, Durban 4041, South Africa
- Dr. Rüdiger Heinze, Englisch Seminar, Universität Freiburg, Rempartstr. 15, 79085 Freiburg
- Prof. Dr. Barbara Korte, Englisch Seminar, Universität Freiburg, Rempartstr. 15, 79098 Freiburg
- Prof. Dr. Martin Kuester, Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, Universität Marburg, 35032 Marburg
- Prof. Dr. Sämi Ludwig, Lettres Langues et Sciences Humaines, Université de Haute-Alsace, 10 rue des Frères Lumière, 68093 Mulhouse Cedex, France
- Dr. Dunja Mohr, Anglistische Literaturwissenschaft, Universität Erfurt, Nordhäuser Str. 63, 99089 Erfurt
- PD Dr. Helge Nowak, Department für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, Universität München, Schellingstr. 3, 80799 München
- Frank Obenland, Department of English and Linguistics, American Studies, Universität Mainz, 55099 Mainz
- Dr. Jochen Petzold, Englisch Seminar, Universität Freiburg, Rempartstr. 15, 79085 Freiburg
- Prof. Dr. Christoph Ribbat, Institut für Anglistik/Amerikanistik, Universität Paderborn, Warburger Straße 100, 33098 Paderborn
- Prof. Dr. Sabine Sielke, Englisch Seminar / NAP, Universität Bonn, Regina-Pacis-Weg 5, 53113 Bonn

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## Buchbesprechungen

Stephan Kohl, ed. **Anglistik: Research Paradigms and Institutional Policies 1930-2000**. Trier: WVT, 2005. 468pp. € 42.50. ISBN 3-88476-769-0.

Ulf Morgenstern. **Anglistik an der Universität Leipzig: Das Englische Seminar in Kaiserreich, Weimarer Republik und Drittem Reich 1891-1945**. Beiträge zur Leipziger Universitäts- und Wissenschaftsgeschichte. Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2006. 187pp. € 19.80. ISBN 3-374-02356-8.

Most contributions to Stephan Kohl's volume originate in papers delivered during annual conferences of the German association of Anglicists (*Anglistenverband*) between 2001 and 2003, and – unwittingly? – the volume reflects the association's tradition in that the bulk of its articles refer to literary studies. Linguistics are represented with four contributions only, and the aspect of teacher education and the didactics of English is also still marginalised – unless one chooses to interpret the placement of Friederike Klippel's survey at the very end as a position of prominence and an implicit acknowledgement of the area's significance for and within English Studies at university. After all, one can easily agree with Klippel's logic that, “[i]f teachers are prepared well through their studies at university to integrate cultural aspects, elements of foreign language literacy and language awareness into the teaching of English from elementary level upwards, then Eng-

lish Studies will benefit from motivated and well-prepared students, who in turn may become ambassadors for English language and cultures in the professions” (443).

As might be expected, a considerable number of papers – 8 of a total of 21 – address the situation of Anglistics in the ‘Third Reich,’ and four of these stand out for both expertise and readability: Frank-Rutger Hausmann, a professor of Romance Studies but here writing as an expert on the state of the humanities in this dark period of German history, delineates a collective biography of *Anglisten* under the Nazis; Ruth Freifrau von Ledebur and Werner Habicht discuss the contemporary treatment of Shakespeare; Christoph Bode's examination of *Anglia* between 1933 and 1945 yields the result that this flagship journal of the discipline was less affected by the Nazi agenda than one might have expected and even continued to publish work by scholars who had already lost their professorships (such as Friedrich Brie, who had been dismissed from the University of Freiburg in 1937). However, Bode cautions against a too complacent belief in scholarly integrity: “If in the pages of the *Anglia* we find more continuity than discontinuity between Weimar and Nazi Germany, should that worry us – or should it put our minds at rest? And if in the pages of the *Anglia* we find more continuity than discontinuity between Nazi and Adenauer Germany, should *that* worry us – or put our minds at rest?” (132) Reading Hans-Werner Prahl's account of the uncritical restoration of the German university system after 1945, one tends to be worried, but the Germans were not the only ones commit-

ted to doubtful continuities. As Stephan Kohl and Annette Kern-Stähler show for education politics in the British occupational zone, the attitude of the British towards post-war Germany had some unmistakably colonial traits.

In the context of colonialism, the 'restructuring' of GDR Anglistics after reunification comes to mind, but this is an episode which the volume, unfortunately, circumvents. Since a few articles were specially commissioned, why not one devoted to this important – though uncomfortable – historical process? A process, incidentally, which also included the journal in which this review is published and whose history before and after 1990 might have formed an interesting comparison to Bode's analysis of *Anglia*. The volume only represents GDR Anglistics with two areas of a relatively uncontroversial nature: sociolinguistics (Manfred Uesseler) and models of interphilological literary studies during the 1960s and '70s (Petra Boden). At a time when knowledge about GDR Anglistics is already fading, a publication edited under the auspices of the *Anglistenverband* might have made a more considerable effort to keep that knowledge alive.

Apart from the articles mentioned so far, the view of Anglistics presented in Kohl's collection includes gender politics (Renate Haas), a critical assessment of cultural studies (Robert Weimann), the irresistible rise of the New Literatures (Heinz Antor) and the impact of (literary) theory (Christoph Reinfandt). Despite this wide range of topics, one misses comments on some other important areas and their development. Medieval Studies is a case in point: Richard Utz writes about 'eminent Chaucerians' in the years between the two World Wars, but the decline of medieval studies within Anglistics after 1945, a process of considerable consequences for our discipline, is left untouched. Nevertheless: this publication is

an important document of a growing self-awareness and a historical consciousness at a time when English (and American) Studies are facing a substantial restructuring in the wake of the Bologna process. It is a timely volume that should have its place in our seminar libraries. For reception abroad, it is a pity that the four papers written in German have not been translated, and one might also have wished for greater editorial intervention in a collection whose contributions range from anecdotal account to heavily footnoted analysis. A more substantial introduction might have provided contexts and indicated perspectives, and some articles – in particular Hans-Joachim Lang's reminiscences of studying Anglistics in the Third Reich – would have profited from explanations for readers not quite as familiar with the discipline as long-standing members of the *Anglistenverband*.

This (re-)commendable project alone will not be enough, however. The study of the history of individual seminars will yield more differentiated views of the ideological and other turns our subject has taken since its inception in the 19th century. One example is Ulf Morgenstern's revised MA thesis about Anglistics at the University of Leipzig between 1891 and 1945. Its reliance on detail and statistics makes this book more tiring to read than some articles in the volume reviewed above, but it provides an in-depth view and shows how much work (in archives and in conducting interviews of 'last witnesses') is entailed when the history of a subject like Anglistics is to be thoroughly explored. One would hope that the publications considered here will be followed by many others – especially volumes dedicated to developments *after* 1945 and 1989.

Barbara Korte (Freiburg)

*Hertel, Ralf. Sense Perception in the British Novel of the 1980s and 1990s.* Internationale Forschungen zur Allgemeinen und Vergleichenden Literaturwissenschaft, 81. Amsterdam und New York: Rodopi, 2005. 243pp. Pb. € 50.00. ISBN 90-420-1864-x.

*Rippl, Gabriele. Beschreibungs-Kunst: Zur intermedialen Poetik angloamerikanischer Ikontexte (1880 – 2000).* Theorie und Geschichte der schönen Künste, 110. München: Wilhelm Fink, 2005. 387pp. Pb. € 52.00. ISBN 3-7705-4124-3.

Mass audiovisual media and their strong appeal to the senses have significantly changed the status of literature in the 20th century. A side effect has been the rediscovery of silent, imaginative reading as a historically contingent cultural practice, originating in the late 18th century. Literature has recently come under scrutiny as an almost an-aesthetic notation system whose capacity to have bodily inert readers hallucinate imaginary worlds increasingly demands explanation. Within this wider context, Ralf Hertel and Gabriele Rippl ask which strategies 20th-century literature employs to negotiate its apparent lack of direct sensual stimuli, and how sense perception is organised by both the materiality of the text and its semantic dimensions.

For Hertel, cultural overdetermination and post-modern simulacra render sense perception unreliable and inauthentic. He reads the abundant descriptions of sensual experience in contemporary British writing as a counter-movement, an attempt to bring about a 'return of the body.' Combining Iser's aesthetics of reception with cognitive science, postcolo-

nia and gender studies, he argues that sense perception (as intersection between body and cultural formation) always remains partly intractable to codes or coercive practices. Which textual strategies, then, evoke quasi-experiences of the five senses and turn the act of reading into the "virtual reality" of being in another's body (191)? Hertel draws on research in the fields of ekphrasis (the verbal description of pictures or sculptures) and orality in order to identify ekphrastic evocations of the visual in John Banville and oral speech patterns in John Berger. As he admits, it proves more difficult to distinguish characteristic structures in articulations of smell, taste and touch (in Salman Rushdie's, Michèle Roberts's or Jeannette Winterson's texts): From the outset, verbalisations are restricted by the rudimentary vocabulary available for such perceptions (126). Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*, for example, works with correlatives and structural analogies instead: The immediacy of smell corresponds to unreliable narration, non-standard grammar and punctuation; its closeness to remembrance is mirrored in mnemonic textual strategies. But the same textual strategies (e.g. immediacy, defamiliarisation, non-linear narration) may evoke aural as well as olfactory or tactile impressions. Accordingly, the narratives mainly explore emotional and symbolic dimensions of the senses, including codes of race and gender. If Hertel sets out to write an "aesthetics of the contemporary novel" (26), his material stubbornly remains quasi-aesthetic (210, 219) and urges him towards a contemporary cultural poetics of the senses.

Gabriele Rippl focuses on 'icontexts' – texts about, or incorporating, images – in 20th-century fiction and poetry. Her initial chapter surveys historical conceptualizations of the 'central cultural difference' (31) of word and image. The turning point is Lessing's *Laokoon*, terminat-

ing the tradition of complementary 'sister arts' and initiating the notion of word and image as mutually exclusive mono-media. Lessing's distinction between the sequential order of verbal and the simultaneous presence of visual representation is elaborated in modern semiotics and symbol theory (S.K. Langer), stressing the fundamental differences between language and image (for example, the fact that images are not composed of discrete elements with distinct meanings). Rippl observes, however, that descriptions can bring the flow of reading to a halt and that studying a painting is actually a prolonged process, and she argues that words, pictures and mental images are in fact tightly interlaced in the process of reception. She introduces the concept of intermediality in order to account for both the convergences and the differences of media, for the cultural conventions governing them, and for the results of their interplay.

Contexts between 1880 and 2000 are challenged by a rapid succession of new technical media and image types – Rippl names photography, film, television, and finally video and digital image processing. What, then, is the impact of technically reproduced images on traditions and strategies of ekphrasis or pictorialism (descriptions of objects as if they were works of art)? The initial case study is devoted to Henry James's early novels. Long before his concept of fiction as 'prose pictures,' as evocations of mental images, took artistic and theoretical shape, pictorial descriptions played an important but ambivalent role in his fiction. James employs references to works of art or architecture in accordance with traditional rhetorics: as amplifiers and as abbreviations for a great tradition of Western art and culture. But Rippl's readings also show how semantically and emotionally charged pictorial passages function as structural equivalents to the *tableaux vi-*

*vants* in 19th-century melodrama. Descriptions interrupt the narrative flow, crystallise into stereotypes and severely limit the range of imaginative activity.

The imagists adapted the static character of James's 'prose pictures' three decades later. Inviting readers to contemplate the mere presence of words and things, T.E. Hulme, H.D., and Ezra Pound took the cue from the visual arts of classical modernism: Both foreground visible surfaces, forms, geometrical abstraction, and refuse symbolism, narrative and tradition. This radically reductive gesture, Rippl argues next, is interrogated by H.D.'s and in particular Sylvia Plath's poetry. Plath's ekphrases of de Chirico's paintings and of classical sculpture ("The Colossus," 1959) suggest that consolation is not to be found in the contemplation of art or things. Canonized art appears as a jumble of shattered fragments, and the collective memory it once represented is no longer intact. Neither is the subject, vainly seeking wholeness in relating to art. Departing from the beaten tracks of autobiographical Plath criticism here, Rippl reads her psychograms as responses to a general crisis of art and literature in the 1950s. A.S. Byatt, discussed next, likewise betrays her debt to imagism when she offers descriptions as invitations to contemplate the phenomenology of things. Her enquiries into the failure of language to convey the richness of visual perception in *Still Life* (1985), however, envisage a mutually supportive balance, with words guiding the experience of looking.

All of the authors discussed by Rippl share a preference for painting at the expense of new visual media. This result, however, would have deserved a more thorough discussion. Is the text corpus representative for 20th-century poetry and prose and its attitude towards new media? Or does it represent *one* possible reaction to increasingly dynamic media innovations, namely the impulse to pre-

serve a marginalized cultural practice? Visual and literary arts from James to Byatt, Rippl suggests, interlace in order to single out art objects in the 19th-century sense: objects to be contemplated as tokens of a discursively supplied cultural memory, but likely to petrify into dead monuments (336). Rippl thus reaches a conclusion diametrically opposed to Hertel's. While he roundly affirms the present-day potentials inherent in contemplating the art of fiction (its ability to bring art and even the body to life, 48), Rippl suggests that this practice is historically contingent and dependent on other media, and that supposedly media-specific qualities are, in the long run, less significant than the discursive practices they are embedded in.

Nicola Glaubitz (Siegen)

**Hans-Peter Wagner. A History of British, Irish and American Literature.** Trier: WVT, 2003. 553pp, plus CD-Rom. Pb. € 29.50. ISBN 3-88476-410-1.

Under the label of a new publisher, and with a modest refashioning of his own self, Hans-Peter Wagner presents a revised and expanded edition of his *Short History of English and American Literature*, last reprinted in 1995. Practical usefulness continues to be a guiding principle in this new one-volume history, which builds on and updates a concept which has been tried, but at the same time explores new ways towards an understanding of literature in the context of intermediality. This is achieved without a radically new approach, but on the whole with great success.

Compared with the preceding *Short History*, the edition under review represents a considerable enlargement. This is

not only a result of the consideration of a third national literature: Despite the impression given by its title, Wagner's new history does not address Anglo-Irish literature separately. As in the *Short History*, and as in the comparable history by Carter and McRae (*Routledge History of Literature in English*, 1997/2001), Wagner discusses British and Irish literatures together in their period and genre contexts, and then adds a separate account of the literary history of the USA (but not of Canada). One might have wished for an even more integrated view, but the treatment of altogether three anglophone literatures in a single volume is just one of those characteristics which render Wagner's history distinct among the great number of competitors. This new edition is moreover marked (even more so than its predecessor, and more than any competitor) by the inclusion of popular literature in a variety of forms – crime fiction, science fiction and fantasy, hyperfiction as well as children's books. Full treatment is however restricted to popular literature after 1900. In addition, non-fictional prose is covered, including travel literature, literary theory, political and literary historiography. Further valuable features which have been given more room now in the appendix, are the parallel synopsis of literary and political events and the glossary of literary terms. Glossary definitions are generally clear (with the exception of entries on alternating rhyme or assonance) and comprehensive (exception: 'ode'), and there is much cross-referencing (which might just be improved by an entry on 'accentual verse').

However, what emerges as really distinctive feature by comparison with competing accounts, and is in particular responsible for the greater bulk of the new version, is the extent of the verbal and visual illustrations that go with it. Like Pat Rogers (*Oxford Illustrated History of English Literature*, 1987), Andrew Sanders

(*Short Oxford History of English Literature*, 1994/2000) or Carter and McRae (1997/2001), Wagner quotes a great many poems – sometimes in longer excerpts, but often enough in full – and he also includes a large amount of visual material. In this, Wagner and his publisher clearly proceed further than their competitors (including the *Oxford Illustrated History*). An innovation of Wagner's history is its combination of different media: it is published both as an illustrated book and in the form of a CD-ROM which includes the full text of the book version plus many complementary illustrations. In keeping with Wagner's other research interests, this revised account puts particular emphasis on intermediality, and it is moreover opened up to multimedia access in a fashion which must enhance its own 'visibility' in international comparison.

This remains true despite the fact that some of these illustrations, while certainly of interest within a history of art, do not stand in direct relation to Wagner's account of literary history. This applies for example to the reproduction of artwork by Winslow Homer (307, 312), and in particular to those by John Hilliard (210), Barry Flanagan (214), David Hockney (338), Duane Hanson (371, 402), Cindy Sherman (377, 423) or Jeff Koons (419) as well as the thematic variations by Lucian Freud (116, 232). In these cases, a great fascination for modern art is given free rein. A related instance is the enthusiastic sketch of the life and works of cultural historian Roy Porter (260), which makes for fascinating reading, but is out of proportion in its context. The longer digressions on art history, on the other hand, profit without doubt from Wagner's expertise, and they are of highest value when they are related to the developments within literary history (44-82, 321-23), and do not merely represent additions (118-20, 277, 287-88).

In order to provide space for all these illustrations, and also with a view to the immediate practical use, Wagner cuts the treatment of literature in the medieval periods to a bare minimum (but with due regard to the multilingual situation). The readers of Sanders will here be informed in more detail, while Wagner – just like Carter and McRae – then gives progressively more space to recent centuries, in particular to developments since 1900. In this, Wagner's account is literally up to date, even though this has to be brought about occasionally by mere name-dropping. Wagner handles periodisation (by centuries) and also genre history in a pragmatic, albeit conventional manner; yet his strict subdivision of chapters into the histories of individual genres within each period allows for a reading that follows them on their own across the periods. Another link across periods is provided by many intertextual references, a procedure which works effectively against seeing earlier literature as outmoded. In the astonishing frequency of such intertextual cross-references, Wagner's history has no rival since Peter Conrad (*Everyman History of English Literature*, 1985).

Wagner's history can be highly recommended for undergraduate students and for use in secondary schools. Readers might want to complement its treatment of earlier literature from the British Isles, but they will profit very much from an expert account which is well-written, well-informed, and endowed with a visual dynamic which is both illustrative and stimulating.

*Helge Nowak* (München)

Dagmar Krause. **Timothy Findley's Novels between Ethics and Postmodernism.** Kieler Beiträge zur Anglistik und Amerikanistik, 19. Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 2005. 205 pp. Pb. € 29.80. ISBN 3-8260-3005-2.

Dagmar Krause touches in this book on a central theme and problem of Timothy Findley's novels. Whereas Findley, even before his death in 2002, had been widely recognized as one of Canada's leading contemporary fiction writers, many readers and critics have felt a certain uneasiness about his novels and short stories: For them, his extravagant postmodern narrative experiments – such as a retelling of the Noah story from his wife's point of view in *Not Wanted on the Voyage* or the bone-chilling tale of a Fascist plot involving Ezra Pound's brainchild Hugh Selwyn Mauberley and the Duke of Windsor in *Famous Last Words* – do not always seem to offer a sufficiently clear moral message. Some critics fear that postmodern experiments, which for other writers often seem to imply an 'anything goes' mentality, also extend to ethical questions in Findley's works, and this is seen to be all the more dangerous since he deals with central ethical themes of the twentieth century such as the Judeo-Christian ideology, Nazism and Fascism, the ethics of contemporary politics as well as science and medicine. According to Krause, "this raises the fascinating question how the postmodern and the ethical go together in Findley's novels. In order to label Findley as truly postmodern, his ethics would have to qualify for this category, too." According to Krause, "[t]he issue at stake in this study, then, is to clarify whether Findley advocates postmodern ethics or whether his categorization as a postmodern writer needs to be qualified with regard to this ethical stance embod-

ied in his novels" (10-11). The author thus sees her study in the context of an 'ethical turn' in literary studies. Her definition of postmodernism is based on the one given by Linda Hutcheon, which differs, as far as political and ethical involvement (at least in a Canadian context) are concerned, quite clearly from other, European, theories. Still, Krause sees Hutcheon – and here I would disagree with her – as the representative of a postmodernism which "never takes a political stand in order to avoid being accused of endorsing metanarratives" (26).

The introductory chapter on postmodernism is followed by a chapter on ethics, especially on postmodern ethics, which in Krause's view inevitably implies a relativist approach. She develops her own approach of ethical criticism, and "the leading question throughout will be whether what can be gathered in terms of an ethical stance in the novels is also to be deemed postmodern, or whether the overall labelling of Findley as a postmodern author might have to be qualified in this respect" (46).

The introductory section is followed by very detailed and thorough readings of ethical problems in *The Wars*, *Famous Last Words*, *Not Wanted on the Voyage*, *The Telling of Lies*, and *Headhunter*, which are all analyzed following the same structure: narrative technique, contents and a convincing interpretation in the context of ethical questions. Krause comes to the not very surprising conclusion that "while Findley up to a certain point subscribes to postmodern insights, he does not endorse the ethical consequences of them. Hence, the overall judgement of Findley as a postmodern writer has to be qualified in this respect" (162). It seems unfortunate that the earlier novels in Findley's oeuvre, which also deal with ethical questions and aspects of Nazism, are not included in this study. Neither are his short stories.

Still, all in all, this is a very diligent and useful study, which will be of great importance for further studies of Findley's novels.

As this book is obviously based on the author's doctoral thesis, it unfortunately sometimes also reads like a thesis. It would be much more reader-friendly if some of the elements of thesis-overload such as the enormous number and length of footnotes had been reduced. The German conclusion at the end also seems superfluous. The English style, especially of the earlier chapters, could also be improved in a few instances, but this does not distract from this book's important contribution to Findley studies.

*Martin Kuester* (Marburg)

*Matthias N. Lorenz*, ed. **Narrative des Entsetzens: Künstlerische, mediale und intellektuelle Deutungen des 11. September 2001.** Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2004. 328pp. Pb. € 29.80. ISBN 3-8260-2777-9.

"That's like a movie!" and: "Nothing will remain as it was" – these two claims constitute the point of departure of an essay collection that aims to analyse the ways in which the events of 11 September 2001 have inscribed themselves into "Western culture." Evolving from a symposium of graduate students at the University of Lüneburg (2003) and a conference at the Free University of Berlin (2004), the 19 contributions investigate a diversity of – mainly US-American and German – cultural practices and discourses which range from visual arts and architecture across fiction and poetry, theater, performance, and music, to comics, photography, television, documentary and feature films and also include philosophical reflections, con-

spiracy theories and the phenomenon of laughter 'in the face of the horrific' ("im Angesicht des Schrecklichen," 301).

The preface, entitled "After the Images – 9/11 as 'Culture-Shock,'" pinpoints what the editor considers the two main 'dispositions' of these discourses. While all films, poems, and pop songs that respond to 9/11 have emerged as intermedial phenomena and in competition with the dominant TV images, 'interpretations' of 11 September 2001, according to Matthias N. Lorenz, aspire to adequate and, at best, new forms of interrogating horror and the experience of shock. Accordingly, the authors read the many discourses disseminated by print media, arts, literature, and philosophy in the aftermath of 9/11 as new spaces of meaning production. At the same time their arguments acknowledge that current cultural practices cannot help but recall established patterns of cultural representation. Essays on 'real-time journalism,' documentary films, or Art Spiegelman's work affirm both the increasing dominance of visual over print cultures and the significance of seriality for processes of cultural memory. And yet most of the contributions tend to privilege cultural practices that promise authenticity and newness, aspire to break with traditions of representation and thinking, and irritate established cultures of memory. In this way, they highlight how the events of 11 September 2001 have allowed us to remember and repeat – at the beginning of the new millennium – the gestures of modernism, including its fundamental claim to 'make it new.'

Moreover, the collection attests to the fact that an event like 9/11 is so illuminating for cultural studies in part because it raises with a new urgency the question of the relation between representation and the real – a question that has gained in complexity by the increasing importance of the new media and that the essays collected here respond to in different ways.

There is little agreement among the authors, for instance, about the cultural work that popular culture can achieve – a disparity which adds to rather than diminishes the usefulness of this book. More significantly, though, the debates about cultural re-presentations and interpretations of 9/11 have resituated “the discourse about the power and cultural effects of art” (Walter Uka, 151) at the very center of our attention. 9/11 posed a new “ethical and aesthetic challenge to art, literature, and philosophy,” writes Pierangelo Maset (183). In this way the horrific events also revitalized crucial discussions about both the potential and the limitations of the political impact cultural practices such as literature and art may have.

However, the title of this publication also exposes the potential and limits of an enterprise that is preoccupied with the narrativization of 9/11. On the one hand, the essays persuasively show how cultural projections of the world and its historical realities utilize narrative strategies and – even more significant – are being read and interpreted as narratives. On the other, they are based on the assumption that an event as politically effective and sustainable as 9/11 can be mediated by narratives and that these narratives are somehow legible. Due in part to positions that currently dominate cultural studies, this precondition may narrow our perspectives and makes us forget that 9/11 has also inscribed itself into the aesthetics of cultural practices that do not deal explicitly with the events of 11 September 2001. The tendency to reduce representations of 9/11 to narratives not only bespeaks a desire for (narrative) order. It also foregrounds that ‘Western culture’ favors certain aesthetics of terror, thereby putting at a distance what is truly horrific. This explains why the ‘complex 9/11’ rapidly turned into a trope that aligned historically distant moments of “Entsetzen” – a

process which promotes forgetting. Such self-reflexive and self-referential moments remain marginal in this collection which impressively documents the cultural productivity of both destructive acts and the patterns of interpretation that we bring to such acts.

Sabine Sielke (Bonn)

**Conrad Solloch. Performing Conquista: Kulturelle Inszenierungen Mexikos in europäischen und U.S.-amerikanischen Medien im 20. Jahrhundert.** Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag, 2004. 331pp. Pb. € 49.80. ISBN 3-503-07928-9.

In this contribution to recent developments in the field of performance studies, Conrad Solloch explores the performative commemoration of the ‘Conquista,’ the Spanish conquest of Mexico in the sixteenth century, as a “paradigmatic event” (25) that constantly raises and intersects with questions of cultural identity in various cultural and historical contexts. As the framework of performance studies allows for an understanding of the theatrical aspects of historic intercultural encounters, Solloch obviates the question of historical factuality and veracity, arguing that collective memories should rather be understood as the successive substitution of performative practices. In this context, Solloch defines the ‘Conquista’ as a master trope (*Denkfigur*) which continues to influence the staging of cultural encounters. Solloch discusses the reciprocal relationship between locations and performances, and emphasizes the ability of the ‘Conquista’ to transform Mexico into a site of intercultural encounters in such diverse contexts as European avant-garde theater, post-colonial Chicano/a drama, and recent Mexican-American

Hollywood movies.

In the first part of his study, Solloch delineates a succession of representations of Mexico in Russian poetry and film of the early Soviet era, in French Surrealist theater, and in the more recent work of the German composer Wolfgang Rihm and reads these successive treatments of the 'Conquista' in the context of an avant-gardist quest for an anti-mimetic and non-dialogic countermodel to conventional Western theater. Central to Solloch's reading of this tradition is not the question of the appropriation of indigenous theatrical practices, but the significance of the trope of the 'Conquista' for a critique of conventional European theater traditions, a trope which simultaneously allows for the negotiation of cultural differences and the creation of new forms of dramatic representation.

In the second part of his study, Solloch brings together diverse theoretical frameworks in his discussion of the 'Conquista' in Chicano/a theater, whose origins he describes in terms of Christopher Balme's notion of a "syncretic theater" as a post-colonial fusion of culturally heterogeneous performative practices and as an attempt to define and maintain a distinct cultural identity in the face of an oppressive cultural other. In this context, Solloch distinguishes between earlier claims of a continual indigenous culture rooted in the legendary ancestral lands of *Aztlán* and the conception of a diasporic identity based on the liminal region of the *Borderlands*. In Solloch's reading, *Aztlán* functions as a safeguard against the inherently unstable successions of cultural commemorative practices while the *Borderlands* provide the grounds for a feminist and intercultural questioning of mythic cultural origins.

In the third part, Solloch extends his discussion of the trope of the 'Conquista' to Mexican-American Hollywood movies. Focusing on Robert Rodríguez's *From Dusk till Dawn* (1996), Solloch augments a 'purely' postmodernist reading of the film and demonstrates how Mexico and the Mexican-American border function as the site for staging intercultural encounters informed by the trope of the 'Conquista.'

Despite the heterogeneous character and wide scope of his study, Solloch in the end skillfully ties together the various strands of his analysis. However, the coherence of Solloch's book relies to a considerable extent on the theoretical framework provided by Joseph Roach in his *Cities of the Dead* (1996) and on the explanatory function of the 'Conquista' in a variety of cultural settings. The strongest parts of the book are Solloch's discussions of the conflicting struggle for a Chicano/a identity as it brings together recent developments in performance studies, post-colonial criticism, and cultural analysis. While the author is not concerned with the relationship between performance studies and postmodern theory, nor the debates on the general applicability of post-colonial criticism to the United States, Solloch demonstrates how recent theoretical developments in performance studies might be fruitfully applied to a reading of individual texts in the wider context of a culture's performative practices. After all, Solloch presents a versatile conceptual framework as he eschews a universal and transhistorical notion of the 'Conquista' and establishes historically and culturally specific contexts in which he develops his overall argument.

Frank Obenland (Mainz)

TOBIAS DÖRING

## Fictions of Translation: The Celts, the Canon and the Question of World Literature

**Abstract:** Debates on postcolonial writing, canon formation and Goethe's notion of world literature can profit from reconsidering the well-known case of James Macpherson's *Works of Ossian*. The fictions of translation which it offered to the eighteenth-century reading public questioned ruling norms while working towards cultural change, thus helping to suggest new views on the positioning of literature in the modern world.

### 1. Introduction: World Literature?

In 1952 Erich Auerbach published an article in which he explored the question what relevance, if any, Goethe's notion of *Weltliteratur* might still have in the modern world. For Auerbach, the contemporary age was characterized by a process he saw as increasing cultural uniformity. Throughout the world, he observed, local specificities and traditions were threatened by strong pressures of progressive levelling: Everywhere everything was becoming similar. This, he argued, undermined the possibility of world literature, because this concept, to be in any way meaningful and relevant, should be based on acknowledging and appreciating the actual plurality of languages and cultures. If, therefore, we should eventually live in what he called a "standardized world" with a single literary culture and perhaps a single literary language, the notion of *Weltliteratur*, as he memorably put it, "would at once be realized and destroyed" (Auerbach 1969, 3).

Auerbach's article is remarkable for a number of reasons. His diagnosis of global uniformity was, of course, made long before the impact of McDonald's, Starbucks or the internet or any of the other icons of globality which for us, more than half a century later, exemplify the economic move towards standardization. And yet, 120 years after Goethe's death, Auerbach was exploring a contemporary condition in which a world of total sameness, a standardized world without noticeable cultural difference seems to have been a real and a threatening scenario. As a matter of fact, his article was written in a postwar situation where any reference to the destruction of cultural diversity would imply Nazi terror and the painful experience of totalitarian rule. Himself a Jewish refugee, Auerbach only survived the war in Turkish exile where he wrote his magisterial study on the representation of reality in Western literature, *Mimesis* (first published in 1947), while the reality of the world he wrote about was bombed to fragments.

We may therefore see his scholarly and literary work as a brave and perhaps desperate effort to engage with wordly developments by compensating their destructive power, to intervene into the processes of total levelling while trying to salvage a cultural sense of wholeness and diversity in literature and writing.

In this way, Auerbach's argument serves as a reminder of what is at stake in any debate on world literature. The issues are, at heart, political. *Weltliteratur*, we learn from him, must presuppose a strong plurality. Only the continued presence of distinctly different literatures, languages and cultures could challenge efforts to think about some unifying trope. Any sense of unity must proceed from a given sense of diversity to be in the least substantial. On the level of linguistic practice, therefore, world literature is realized only by and in translation. Whatever its usefulness or status may still be, ever since Goethe coined the term, *Weltliteratur* has worked through acts of mediation and cross-cultural communication. As Pascale Casanova argues in a recent study about the continuing legitimacy and transformation of the terms, in Goethe's age the German language was to assert "its claim to the title of a new universal (which is to say, literary) language" in launching "an immense program of translation" (Casanova 2004, 237).

This, however, leads to questions about the productive working of translation in asymmetrical power relations. What interests and powers might such a programme serve? And what may it hold against them? To emphasize power relations here just serves to highlight a simple, fundamental point: Communication across languages and cultures never operates outside the material framework and conflicts in which they are placed. This has been one of the major issues argued in Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978), where he indeed commented on Auerbach's project in this respect (Said 1978, 258-9). The philological work of translation, he argued, is never innocent in the sense of purely academic and concerned with mediating meaning. Translation is an act of reconstruction and representation which involves a claim to power. A translated text is a cultural representation by others for the sake of others and sometimes for purposes of cultural domination.<sup>1</sup> This is a crude, but largely correct, summary of a central lesson learned from Postcolonial Studies and from Said's work in particular. And yet there may also be other aspects and effects to translation. Does translation, we may ask, on the other hand involve acts of power that cannot be contained in such a way? Does it show or use some force that may subvert practices of domination?

This paper sets out to address such questions, with reference to a particularly interesting case in the history of translation, whose beginnings lie in Goethe's time, but whose consequences are still relevant today. The translation of Celtic literature continues to challenge our understanding of the poetics and politics of cross-cultural communication. However, I should say right at the outset that this paper cannot contribute anything to Celtic Studies proper, because I neither speak nor read Gaelic and have no access to its culture – except through versions of translation. But this precisely is the point. To focus on the European case of Celtic

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<sup>1</sup> For helpful discussions of this issue, see Bachmann-Medick 1997 and Venuti 2004.

writing, I suggest, is to focus on a model for the processes and problems of new canon formations in the emergence of world literature. I shall argue that the position of Celtic literature, as a so-called ‘minor literature,’ towards the major European canon since the eighteenth century is paradigmatic for our present-day debates. How ‘the Celts’ have been traditionally received and perceived, translated and interpreted by, say, English and German readers offers a concise test case for current ways of reading in the postcolonial field, where African, Caribbean, Asian or Pacific literatures are set against a once dominant Western tradition. Celtic literature and its fictions of translation, I maintain, have historically served as a cultural ‘other’ in terms of which the canon has been repositioned. I shall try to substantiate these claims through a brief reading of Goethe’s early work and its engagement with the Celtic literary heritage. But before going into this material, some further remarks on the central concept may be useful.<sup>2</sup>

*Weltliteratur*, as a compound noun, attains its curious meaning from the semantics of both its components as well as from their special connection. This, however, involves various difficulties. It has been noted, for instance, that the German term *Welt* has different resonances – somehow more lofty and transcendental – than the English cognate *world* (Lange 1991, 98). But the main semantic problem lies in the syntagmatic combination of *Welt* and *Literatur* into one single unifying concept – ‘world literature’ as opposed to ‘literatures of the world’ – where the singular, as opposed to the plural, form appears to be most striking. Surely the term refers to a multitude of different linguistic and cultural manifestations across a very wide and varied geopolitical terrain. And yet, it suggests some kind of conceptual union, in which the given plurality is brought together. How can we think this through?

Various metaphors and images have been suggested as a means to conceptualize or visualize world literature. Traditionally, musical analogies predominate, like the ‘symphony’ or ‘concert’ of all literatures around the world, in which all nations play a part or add their voice to the artistic whole. The problem with this metaphor is not only its latent Eurocentric bias – the symphony, after all, is a localized form of classical European music – but also its emphasis on harmony and harmonious togetherness, which does not seem to allow for difference. Critical difference, however, comes into play not least because ‘world literature’ can only be conceptualized with reference to the counterpart of ‘National Literature.’ Logically and historically, these two terms belong together and are interdependent. According to eighteenth-century thinking, the world offers a number of distinct and identifiable national cultures, each of which grounded in a single language and expressed in literature, preferably epic poetry. In retrospective, it is precisely this assumption of the national as a given category which would appear to be most problematic from a contemporary point of view. In postcolonial perspectives, the ‘imagined communities’ of nations have famously come under scrutiny

<sup>2</sup> For details about Goethe’s concept and its literary and cultural implications, see Birus 1995 and Birus 2003; for a discussion of world literature in postcolonial perspective, see Bachmann-Medick 1994.

and often criticism for the exclusivist assumptions on which they used to be so often based.<sup>3</sup>

These become evident, for example, in the influential work of Johann Gottfried Herder, Goethe's senior friend and mentor in his younger years. Herder does not yet use the term *Weltliteratur*, but he speaks of the 'literature of the nations,' for which he employs a striking metaphor, describing the global literary unity not as a symphony, but as a colossal statue. Its head, he says, is made of 'Oriental gold' – representing the literature of the ancient East; its chest is made of 'Greek silver' – representing classical antiquity; belly and thighs are made of 'Roman ore' – representing classic Latin literature; while legs and feet are made of 'Northern iron' and 'Gallic clay.'<sup>4</sup> This image of the imagined literary statue has interesting implications. We note that the historical progression leads from the head downwards, i.e. descending from the ancient, hence most valuable part of the construct. The colossus stands on feet that symbolize Germanic and French literary cultures as the most recent national achievements. Herder's metaphor thus lends itself to illustrate a claim which Said has made in *Culture and Imperialism*, when he argues that the traditional field of world literature is epistemologically organized as a hierarchy (Said 1993, 52). The figure of the statue is strictly that. Its hierarchical nature is manifest in the anatomy just as in the choice of materials from gold to clay. Thus, Herder's figure of world literature is clearly moulded on a myth of the Golden Age long past but still remembered, from which all subsequent development descends and to which efforts of philology might eventually return. Yet the greatest difficulty with this image lies in its clear sense of closure. The figure of the statue is limited, ending with the feet. There is no space for new developments, as it does not allow for representations of other nations and their work – be they new productions or new discoveries in the field of literature. This limitation points to a fundamental query. Whatever metaphors are used to capture the notion of world literature, a crucial question principally concerns the possibilities of opening and of revision: What space do they allow for new developments? How can they accommodate recently emerged literatures or previously unheard voices? This is the central issue in debates on canon formation. For all the conflicts carried out in cultural terms, it never seems a major problem to postulate some canon of what is to count as world literature. But how to revise, extend or redefine this canon in the face of newness, i.e. in the face of what was previously unknown, ignored or wilfully excluded and which now demands attention and acceptance – *this* is the point on which debates and conflicts focus, whether on the level of teaching curricula and reading lists or, on a larger scale in the postcolonial politics of what Casanova calls "The World Republic of Letters"

<sup>3</sup> The most prominent text on this issue is Anderson 1991.

<sup>4</sup> Cf.: "Ist das wundersame Bild ein Traum, das ich in meiner Einbildung vor mir sehe, und das auf seiner Stirn den Namen trägt: Neuere Litteratur der Völker? Es ist ein großer Colossus: sein Haupt von Orientalischem Golde, das meinen Blick tödtet, weil es die Stralen der Sonne zurückwirft: seine hochgewölbte Brust glänzt von Griechischem Silber: sein Bauch und Schenkel vestes Römisches Erz: seine Füße aber sind von Nordischem Eisen mit Gallischem Thon vermengt [...]" (Herder 1877, 364).

(2004). The problem here at stake is neatly captured in the chapter title which Homi Bhabha borrows from Salman Rushdie to discuss the trials of cultural translation: “How Newness Enters the World” (Bhabha 1994, 212-35). The contemporary relevance and critical usefulness of Goethe’s notion of *Weltliteratur*, as I see it, ultimately turns around the question of how new literatures enter the field of world literature.

## 2. Goethe’s *Werther* and the Use of Ossian

Let us briefly explore such questions of restructuring the canon and accommodating new developments with regard to Celtic literature, its reception and translation through the work of Goethe and his European contemporaries. As an example, I shall look at the most famous work of his early career, *Die Leiden des Jungen Werther* (Goethe 1981, 7-124), by which the twenty-five year-old author established his literary standing and, almost overnight, became what we would call a ‘cult writer’: known and admired, even worshipped by a large reading public everywhere. What made the brief and rather simple story told in this epistolary novel so compelling was, of course, the powerful articulation of emotions and the intensity of sentiments Werther communicates. Yet what makes his languages of powerful passions relevant for the issues of world literature is the fact that they are framed and expressed by means of specific literary models. Not only a great and passionate lover, Werther is also a great and passionate reader. In several of his letters he writes at length about his reading matter or his response to poetry, and his most intimate moments with Lotte are regularly marked by his reading to her from his favourite books. Thus, Goethe’s sentimental hero communicates his inmost feelings through established literary voices.

In the early part of their affair, it is Homer and the heroic figures of Greek antiquity who serve in this way as expressive devices, or literary representatives, of personal passion. At a crucial stage in their relationship, however, Werther’s reading matter changes. He comes upon something new, a literary discovery highly significant for European culture at the time. He turns to the works of Ossian, i.e. the epic songs of a Celtic bard from the third century A.D., which, historically, became available in the 1760s through Macpherson’s English translations and which soon initiated a veritable ‘Celtomania’ throughout Europe. It is this move that is of interest here: the move from Homer to Ossian, from ancient Greek to ancient Celtic literature, from the canon towards something new. In fact, it is crucial to note how this literary discovery is placed into the context of the familiar, canonical tradition. Werther and Lotte turn to Ossian just before the tragic climax of their relationship, as if to mark the strangeness of their newly developed passion with the strangeness of newly available literary figures. As he reads to his love about Fingal and Oscar, Selma and Ryno and their Celtic brethren, Werther is preparing for his final desperate farewell through suicide. So it is the intensity of feeling at this pivotal and fateful moment in their tragic relationship that is communicated through these versions of the ancient Celtic bard. Goethe’s text

at this point includes a long quotation of some seven pages, which Werther reads from his Ossianic sources. Here is an example:

It is night; – I am alone, forlorn on the hill of storms. The wind is heard in the mountain. The torrent shrieks down to the rock. No hut receives me from the rain; forlorn on the hill of winds.

Rise, moon! from behind thy clouds; stars of the night appear! Lead me, some light, to the place where my love rests from the toil of the chase! [...] But here I must sit alone, by the rock of the mossy stream. The stream and the wind roar; nor can I hear the voice of my love. [...]

I sit in my grief. I wait for morning in my tears. Rear the tomb, ye friends of the dead; but close it not till Colma come. My life flies away like a dream: why should I stay behind? Here shall I rest with my friends, by the stream of the sounding rock. When night comes on the hill; when the wind is on the heath; my ghost shall stand in the wind, and mourn the death of my friends. (Macpherson 1996, 166-7)

In his comments on Werther's Ossianic reading, F.J. Lamport has argued that Goethe's attitude to the Celtic poems was previously rather negative, because he used to see them "as a blind alley, even a dangerous regression" against which we should guard ourselves (Lamport 1998, 97-118). The Werther scene, then, shows a change in attitude and yet we may feel that some of the dangerous, dark and unaccountably threatening aspects are retained. What emerges from this short excerpt is the brooding and darkly melancholic mood of the Celtic epic, clearly discernable even in translation. In the novel, the Ossianic passage is, of course, given in a German version which, on the fictional level, is presented as Werther's work but which, in actual fact, was Goethe's own translation (Goethe 1896, 66-77). In more than one respect, his Werther-figure is modelled on autobiographical material, which pertains not least to his well-known admiration for the recently discovered Celtic writing.<sup>5</sup> Goethe actually read Ossian's poetry on the advice of Herder, whose interest in folk culture and the literature of what he called 'primitive nations' was richly stimulated and rewarded by this material from the Celtic fringe, the far northwest of European culture. Goethe's translation and use of Ossian in *Die Leiden des Jungen Werther* had an enormous impact on the German readership and helped popularize it to such an extent that European culture of the early romantic age became thoroughly obsessed with all things Celtic.<sup>6</sup> For a whole generation and well into the nineteenth century, Ossian and the literature of the Celtic past became a powerful new means to open up the established canon and revise the ruling concepts of the dominant neoclassical tradition. The Celts were hailed and hallowed as liberating others, delivering bourgeois readers from the rule of rationalism and allowing for the free expression of their emerging subjectivity.

However – and this is the only point here why this old story merits retelling – all this was based on a *fiction* of translation. Goethe's German version of Ossian was a translation from the English texts published as *The Works of Ossian* in

<sup>5</sup> For a comprehensive survey of Goethe's involvement with and knowledge of Celtic culture, see Henning 1987.

<sup>6</sup> For a comprehensive documentation and discussion of this issue, see Schmidt 2003-4.

1765. These English versions, in turn, were understood to be transcriptions and translations from Gaelic originals, remnants of an ancient oral tradition which James Macpherson claimed to have discovered and salvaged on his travels through the Scottish highlands. In actual fact, however, no original as such exists. There never was such a thing as the great Ossianic epic: All the eighteenth-century enthusiasm, all the devotion and all the passion for Celtic literature was based on a literary masquerade by which the author served his audience what they asked for under the guise of ancient authenticity. Macpherson's so-called translation is well known as one of the most spectacular, elaborate and consequential cases of cultural forgery in Europe. Though loosely based on existing motifs and on some extant Celtic myths, mainly from Ireland, the works of Ossian were not just compiled but actually produced in the precise sense that Hobsbawm and Ranger have called "the invention of tradition" (Hobsbawm / Ranger 1983, 15-41).<sup>7</sup> Here, the important point is that the Celtic poetry Macpherson thus produced in the role of editor and mediator – and that so powerfully challenged the canon of classicism – literally exists only in the condition of translatedness. There never has been an original; its point of origin is lastingly displaced. But instead of calling it a literary forgery, we should more aptly call it a fiction of translation. The story of the remarkable career of James Macpherson and his Celtic bard has often been discussed:<sup>8</sup> how a young and unknown Scottish teacher with a rough working knowledge of Gaelic (a language rigorously repressed at the time by English domination) was asked by a friend to provide him with some translations of Celtic poetry; how Macpherson first hesitated, but eventually produced some fragments of what he said was a large and ancient epic; how these textual fragments were published with the help of Hugh Blair, a well-respected Edinburgh professor of rhetoric and a Scottish patriot; how they created such a sensation with the readership that the demand for more of the same became overbearing; how the recovery of this supposedly ancient Celtic heritage became a Scottish national project, so that money was raised for Macpherson to be sent on a research tour through the highlands with the mission to collect and transcribe the totality of the old bard's work; how the result of this field work was then published in English in two great volumes, complete with editorial footnotes and a critical dissertation by Hugh Blair on the cultural significance of what came to be known as the 'Caledonian Homer;' and how, despite early allegations of forgery and disbelief (most prominently voiced by Dr Johnson), these volumes spread the songs of Celtic heroism and melancholy far and wide through Europe. It took more than forty years before, in 1805, a report from a specially appointed Committee of the Highland Society of Scotland finally established Ossian's poetry as Macpherson's creation. But by this time, its creator was already dead and buried with all honours in Westminster Abbey, while the romantic cult of the sublime had long recruited

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<sup>7</sup> For the invention of highland traditions in eighteenth-century Scotland, see Hugh Trevor-Roper's contribution to Hobsbawm's and Ranger's volume (1983).

<sup>8</sup> See, for example, Höfele 1986, Gauger 1987, Stafford 1988, Gaskill 1991, Gaskill 2002, Moore 2003 and Moore 2004.

his Ossianic fiction into the modern canon of emotions and heroic grandeur. For all his doubtful methods, as one critic put it aptly, Macpherson “put the poetry of the Gael on the literary map of Europe” (Gaskill 1986, 139).

We may well take ‘map’ here in the same way that Said established for the early poetry of W.B. Yeats as a cultural remapping of the local territory of which inhabitants had been dispossessed under colonial domination (Said 1993, 265-88). In the case of Macpherson’s work, too, the changes concerned not just literary tastes or poetic fashions but had political consequences. Napoleon, for example, is said to have carried a copy of the works of Ossian on his military campaigns. And when at the turn towards the twentieth century the poets of the Irish Renaissance, like Yeats, revived Celtic myths and figures in order to de-anglicize Irish culture, Ossian’s songs were among the central sources they used for inspiration. Macpherson’s fiction of translation, then, has certainly revised the canons of European politics and culture. Through his ingenious fabrications and their reception by Herder, Goethe, Yeats and others, right into the twentieth century, ‘the Celts’ have become an identifiable presence and active agent in the emergent construct of world literature. This is the reason why the case of Ossian invites reconsideration in the light of present-day concerns and with regard to postcolonial issues. Ossian questions common notions of authorship, authority and cultural authenticity and thus challenges us to rethink the relation between centre and margins in our understanding of the canon and its postcolonial others.

### 3. Ossian in Postcolonial Retrospects

Setting out to reassess Macpherson’s Celtic fictions and their relevance today, I shall concentrate on three related points: (1) the construction of nationality, (2) the vocabulary of othering, and (3) the strategies of translation.

It is clear from all the historical evidence that Macpherson’s compilation would never have gained prominence and power had it not, in the beginning, been speaking to a local readership living under cultural conditions of rigorous oppression. For eighteenth-century Scots, the heroic, if unvictorious, Ossianic battles seemed highly symbolic of their own plight under English rule, following the 1745 defeat at Culloden and the subsequent campaigns of highland clearances and anglicization. In this way, Macpherson’s fiction of translation surely served a real need. As a purported recovery of the great Celtic epic, the Ossian project was seized upon by cultural nationalists hoping to restore Celtic power also to the present age and to the world of politics. Such a reading is not just suggested by the fact that the strongest disbelief and opposition against Ossian’s authenticity came from English conservatists like Dr Johnson, whose adverse stance against all peripheral cultures is well documented.<sup>9</sup> It also suggests itself through the nationalist debates between Scotland and Ireland that soon arose

<sup>9</sup> Johnson’s famous tour, with Boswell, through Scotland and the Hebrides in 1773 was not to make a major difference to his literary notions and interests.

over the rightful ownership and inheritance of the ancient Celtic bard. For Scottish as for Irish nationalists the crucial question was *whose* Ossian had been discovered there. While Macpherson claimed to have obtained his material from oral traditions in the Scottish highlands, his Ossianic protagonists and their mythic history were recognizably related – some would say, identical – with figures of Irish myth and folklore, so that the precise geography and location of Fingal’s ancient Celtic kingdom became a subject of intense discussion.

This eighteenth-century debate about rival and exclusive affiliations to the fictitious Celtic genealogy illustrates a fundamental point: It shows that cultural traditions are not necessarily – perhaps not even regularly – congruent with national formations. Cultures and nations are no ‘organic’ entities growing in unbroken succession since ancient times, nor are they clearly delineated by ‘natural’ boundaries. They are, rather, historical and social formations, embattled in their self-definition as much as they are intimately connected with one another through complex entanglements and interactions. In the Ossian controversy, however, the conflicts between Irish and Scottish nationalists who denied such shared traditions can only be understood with reference to the third power under which they both were placed and whose influence is crucial here: England. It is because of English political domination that both Scotland and Ireland felt the need to claim the newly discovered Celtic heritage as their own. The reassertion of a heroic past served to strengthen political aspirations in the present, a familiar strategy and project also in the later moves towards decolonization. As many examples from the cultural politics in twentieth-century Africa – such as in epic recreations of the history of Shaka Zulu (Mofolo 1981)<sup>10</sup> – or in other postcolonial countries show, the evocation of an old literary and epic tradition can turn into a powerful weapon in the political struggle. If nations are continuously imagined and defined through the use of narrative, Ossian has surely worked as an eighteenth-century precedent of subsequent postcolonial developments.

But even though there was a powerful demand for what Macpherson had to offer, this does not fully account for the continued reception of his texts nor does it explain what contemporary readers actually saw in them. This question brings us to the second point, the vocabulary of othering. Nationalist debates apart, how did eighteenth-century readers react to the Celtic epics as new affiliations to the literary canon? And what may their response suggest for the politics of reading? In fact, Goethe’s own reading of Ossian offers an interesting take on these questions. When he first discovered the English Ossianic poems in 1771 and began his efforts to translate them into German, he described his impression in an enthusiastic letter to Herder. He praised them for their “unrefined language,” their “wild unevenness of metre” and their “poignant imagery,” which he felt produced an altogether different effect than “the rhythm and elegance of the English ballads” (quoted in Böker 1991, 88). This response was paradigmatic of contemporary readings. Its emphasis on the irregular, the unrefined and wild was

<sup>10</sup> See also Mazisi Kunene’s epic poem *Shaka Zulu* (Kunene 1979) and Daphna Golan’s study of this issue (Golan 1994).

in fact given great authority through the critical dissertation by Hugh Blair which first accompanied the 1763 publication of Macpherson's English text and which, for quite some time, determined their reception. In this long and learned essay Blair does not just launch a staunch defence for Ossian's authenticity, he also explains why these particular ancient epics are so poetically powerful. Declaring poetry the "child of imagination," he finds it often most "glowing and animated" in what he calls the "first ages of society." And, echoing a commonplace of enlightenment philosophy, he goes on to argue: "As the ideas of our youth are remembered with a peculiar pleasure on account of their liveliness and vivacity, so the most ancient poems have often proved the greatest favourites of nations" (Macpherson 1996, 346).<sup>11</sup>

What Ossian's most influential academic champion thus invokes is a topos that has just as often been employed in colonial discourse and that has since become part of what we might call the vocabulary of othering: "The progress of the world in this respect resembles the progress of age in man" (Macpherson 1996, 346). Blair's reading of Celtic poetry constructs a parallel between the life of an individual and the history of nations. A distant historical period is thus regarded as the period of a nation's childhood and endowed with a sense of programmatic primitivism. This does not only serve to illustrate Bhabha's argument that the study of world literature is "the study of the way in which cultures recognize themselves through their projections of otherness" (Bhabha 1994, 12). Blair's reading also shows how the standard response to Celtic poetry rehearsed a rhetoric that was further used in conceptualizing colonial encounters, for instance by travelers or explorers when describing their impressions of colonial others. Especially in eighteenth-century discourse, Native Americans, Africans or islanders were regularly championed as precivilized and hence 'childlike' Noble Savages while, at the same time, they were understood to be in need of European guidance. As living representatives of another nation's childhood, the Celts no less than other people colonized could be declared to require strict parental control.

When, a few years after Blair, the scholar John Smith published an Ossianic treatise entitled *Gaelic Antiquities* (1780) and described Ossian's language as "strong and undisciplined" (cf. Price 1991, 110), his lexical choice offers an immediate political interpretation: that the 'undisciplined' Gaelic nations, whether Scottish or Irish, are naturally in need of discipline through English rule. The subsequent history of Anglo-Scottish and Anglo-Irish relations bears this out. Matthew Arnold published his famous Oxford lectures *On the Study of Celtic Literature* in 1867, the year of the foiled Fenian uprising, with the explicit aim of sending "a message of peace to Ireland," but his characterization of the Celtic genius as charming, rebellious, imaginative, ineffectual and stubborn leaves no doubt about the Celt's essential childishness (Arnold 1962, 395).<sup>12</sup> This discursive correlation of Celt with child, undisciplined and primitive, first gained ground with the Ossian enthusiasm. It has clearly had some far-reaching effects. From a postcolonial

<sup>11</sup> Blair's dissertation is reprinted in Macpherson 1996, 345-408; see also Price 1991.

<sup>12</sup> For a discussion of Arnold's contradictory attitude towards Celtic Studies, see Döring 1998.

point of view we can see that it has helped to popularize a colonial vocabulary of othering which has since been applied in many contexts, most notoriously in Kipling's poem "The White Man's Burden" where colonial subjects feature as "half-devil and half-child" (Kipling 1990, 136). But – and this is an important qualification of this argument – there is another side to it, a different aspect which must be considered and which brings me to the third point, the strategies of translation.

Goethe's observations, quoted above, on the "wild unevenness" of the Ossianic language, quite unlike familiar English ballads, raise the question why it was Macpherson's fiction of translation that so impressed the reading public, rather than any other translation of Gaelic source material previously available. This question may invite us to rethink the translation strategies. Translation is often thought of as a merely instrumental technique that yields a purely derivational text, which is why translations are most often criticized for being 'unfaithful' to their source. In this view, a translation derives its entire status and meaning from the status and meaning of the original that it serves to mediate. Ideally, then, the translated text is understood to be fully functional and transparent for the powerful truth which lies behind (cf. Venuti 1995). This belief, however, might well be called the greatest fiction of translation: the belief in some pre-existing, underlying essence, origin and truth behind each text – a belief which, as poststructuralist and post-colonial theory since the 1970s has shown, comes down to a metaphysical chimaera.<sup>13</sup> In accordance with such critical interventions, we could even reinterpret the expression 'fictions of translation' so as to understand *all* translation as a fiction, in the sense of the verb *fingere* from which the term derives: an artifice, a product of meaningful and planful fabrication that is itself productive of meaning in its own right and power, instead of serving some pre-existing original.

This revised view of translation as a productive and creative activity can well be illustrated with Macpherson's work. A very brief comparison of his text with the strategies of an earlier translator of his time can help to make this clear. As mentioned above, Macpherson was not the only one whose literary production responded to the general demand for Celtic poetry in English. In 1756, three years before his first Ossianic publication, the *Scots Magazine* printed an old Gaelic ballad – in this case, a genuine fragment from the Celtic oral tradition – in a transcript of the original and the English translation by Jerome Stone. A look at this text, to be held against the mournful "Song of Selma" quoted earlier, shows the difference to Macpherson's poetry:

But now he's gone! and nought remains but woe  
 For wretched me; with him my joys are fled,  
 Around his tomb my tears shall ever flow,  
 The rock my dwelling, and the clay my bed!  
 Ye maids, and matrons, from your hills descend,  
 To join my moan, and answer tear for tear;  
 With me the hero to his grave attend,

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<sup>13</sup> For an excellent discussion of this issue, see Niranjana 1992.

And sing the songs of mourning round his bier,  
 Through his own grove his praise we will proclaim,  
 And bid the place for ever bear his name. (Moore 2004, 21)<sup>14</sup>

This shows how Stone, as a translator, renders the Gaelic text in the conventional idiom of English poetic diction, with cross-rhymes, regular iambic pentameter and due observance to all the decorum required by the classical aesthetics prevailing at the time. Macpherson, by contrast, did away with this. His free rhythms and flowing melodies, his choice of rare, unusual words, his daring metaphors and pathetic fallacies, his grand and sublime style – all this seemed new and daringly unconventional and, as such, suggested a challenge to the dominant poetics. His English texts may largely have been fabrications rather than translations from the Gaelic, but they created linguistic possibilities and opened up stylistic registers which had not been readily available to English-language poetry before. The same creative ingenuity, in fact, has been observed in Goethe's German translation of Macpherson's English text. As one critic noted, Goethe's version of "The Song of Selma" included in *Die Leiden des Jungen Werther* leaves its original far behind in its poetic power. His translation has even been praised for having introduced new words and images into the German register (Gaskill 1998, 824). Thus extending and revising the expressive possibilities of the target language, it clearly has linguistic value and cultural meaning in its own right rather than offering merely a reflection of the original's.

In the eighteenth-century context, Macpherson's unconventional poetic features, his 'unrefined' and 'poignant' language, were meant to prove his poems' authenticity by recreating what were thought to be typical features of the ancient bardic voice. Thus, we see again how closely Macpherson was responding to public preconceptions and popular demands and was, to all effects, just marketing his epics in the shape that sold them best. On the other hand, the cultural and political significance of his works, as argued above, extended far beyond, so that his linguistic strategies, too, may have some larger relevance. With their guarded transgression of dominant poetics, Macpherson's texts have opened up ruling aesthetic canons towards something new. As a result, their purported act of translation has indeed foreignized the English language, made it subservient to expressing cultural difference and has even inscribed such differences into its poetic structures. In this sense, the Celticized language of the Ossianic poems may be seen to anticipate some strategies of postcolonial poetry in our time. At heart, the same issues are at stake here. Postcolonial poetry, too, has often been seen to reject conventional diction, to de-anglicize the English language and to displace authoritative models with radically different registers of rhythm, sound and imagery. To cite just one example, Caribbean poetry has sometimes articulated a programmatic cultural otherness, produced through the use of Creole forms and other oral devices into an English-language script. The existing model and its literary idiom is thus rewritten and revised. The Barbadian poet Edward Kamau Brathwaite, one

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<sup>14</sup> See also Höfele 1999, 85.

of the pioneers of this tradition, has famously declared – in terms which bear on the Ossianic poems, rejecting English poetic diction – that “the hurricane does not howl in pentameters” (Brathwaite 1984, 8). This claim reminds us that linguistic expression and poetic forms should not be canonical and universally the same – they must always be localized and translated into the complexities of cultural difference. It seems to me that Macpherson’s Ossian texts, in their particular eighteenth-century context, achieved just that. Their fabricated Celticism effectively appropriated and unsettled a ruling cultural model and brought the power of translation to bear on the English language. Just as postcolonial poetry might do in our times, Ossian has begun to decolonize the canon from within.

#### 4. Conclusion: Worlding Literature

In conclusion, then, let us return to the question of world literature. Against the background of the material discussed, the notion of *Weltliteratur* can be reconsidered. Goethe himself seems to have been well aware that nations do not represent ‘organic’ and ‘authentic’ entities, but are constructed and defined in a constant cultural interplay of self and other (Lange 1991, 107). His striking, singular compound of *world* with *literature*, therefore, may not be adequately understood as a global coalition or world wide communication of all the various national literatures. Late in his life, in 1828, he made a statement<sup>15</sup> which plainly acknowledges that there has always been exchange and interplay between the literary productions of different nations because none of them could ever have existed in cultural isolation. Instead, he explains, the notion of *Weltliteratur* in the new sense and in the modern age should mean that literature and its representatives, the writers, must work and operate and be creative in the social world at large.

It is in this revised perspective in which Auerbach’s observations bear reconsideration so as to reinterpret Goethe’s compound noun: world literature can also be seen as a plea for the “worlding” of literature in Said’s sense (Said 1983, 4), that is to say, as a claim that literature should not be seen as strictly separate from the world, from social conflicts and political developments, but intervene in them and engage with power. It seems to me that the case of Ossian and the Celtic challenge to the canon supports such a conclusion precisely because, in strictly literary terms, the whole affair was a highly successful fraud – which is to say, that it could only work because it served a very real, worldly purpose. In terms of political effects, then, Ossian provides a powerful reminder of the ways in which texts take part and issue in the world and become agents of change – especially as fictions of translation.

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<sup>15</sup> Cf.: “Wenn wir eine europäische, ja eine allgemeine Weltliteratur zu verkündigen gewagt haben, so heißt dieses nicht, daß die verschiedenen Nationen von einander und ihren Erzeugnissen Kenntnis nehmen, denn in diesem Sinne existiert sie schon lange, setzt sich fort und erneuert sich mehr oder weniger. Nein! hier ist vielmehr davon die Rede, daß die lebendigen und strebenden Literatoren [*sic*] einander kennen lernen und durch Neigung und Gemeinsinn sich veranlaßt finden, gesellschaftlich zu wirken” (Goethe 1981, 363).

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KURT MÜLLER

## The 'Search for Order' and the Crisis of Masculinity: The Naturalist American Novel and the Cultural Anxieties of the 'Strenuous Age'

**Abstract:** This article discusses the American naturalist novel both as a reflection of and a reaction to the symptoms of cultural crisis around 1900. By the turn of the century, the modernization process had led to a widespread sense of uprootedness and disorientation, often resulting in feelings of displacement, anxiety, and identity diffusion, not least in terms of 'gender trouble.' That, in turn, generated a strong need for stabilizing structures of order, control, and power. This need is reflected in the naturalist *écriture*, which signifies a massive claim for power and control over the fictional material and over the reader, as well as in terms of plot construction and character conflict. Taking Norris's *McTeague* (1899) as a major example, the article demonstrates how the characters of that novel are motivated by an anxiety-ridden "search for order" (Wiebe 1967) and at the same time involved in a gender conflict constellation that is indicative of the crisis of masculinity that was part of the socio-psychological substratum of the 'strenuous age.'

In E.L. Doctorow's *Ragtime* (1975), a novel dealing with the troubles and anxieties in American life around 1900, there is a masterfully imagined scene in which Theodore Dreiser is presented in one of the worst psychological crises of his career. The passage reads as follows:

[...] this was the time in our history when the morose novelist Theodore Dreiser was suffering terribly from the bad reviews and negligible sales of his first book, *Sister Carrie*. Dreiser was out of work, broke and too ashamed to see anyone. He rented a furnished room in Brooklyn and went to live there. He took to sitting on a wooden chair in the middle of the room. One day he decided his chair was facing in the wrong direction. Raising his weight from the chair, he lifted it with his two hands and turned it to the right, to align it properly. For a moment he thought the chair was aligned, but then he decided it was not. He moved it another turn to the right. He tried sitting in the chair now but it still felt peculiar. He turned it again. Eventually he made a complete circle and still he could not find the proper alignment for the chair. The light faded on the dirty window of the furnished room. Through the night Dreiser turned his chair in circles seeking the proper alignment. (Doctorow 1985, 28)

It is a well-known story that after the disappointing failure of his first novel Dreiser fell into a deep depression which lasted for several years. During that painful period he was frantically looking for some firm ground which would help him to over-

come his identity crisis.<sup>1</sup> Dreiser's biographers confirm that this search for some sense of fixity resulted in neurotic symptoms such as the ritualistic repetition of certain actions and behavioral patterns.

Doctorow's scene not only illustrates the individual disorientation of America's most famous naturalist writer and his frantic search for some sort of new 'center.' It also reflects, in a symbolically condensed form, the general sense of diffusion, fragmentation and cultural uneasiness of his time, as well as on the intensified need of the age for models of order and patterns of control (cf. Wiebe, 1976). In the present paper, I want to discuss the naturalist novel around the turn of the century as a reflection of and reaction to this cultural crisis. From this stance, I follow the 'functionalist' approach to literature as outlined and exemplified by Heinz Ickstadt and Winfried Fluck, among others (cf. Ickstadt 1977, 223-47; Fluck 1992). That is, I will regard literature not simply as a 'mimesis' of a given reality, but as a basically 'dialogic' response to that reality. Literature, thus understood, is a form of 'symbolic action,' an elaborate 'speech act' in which the artist dramatizes his efforts to gain symbolic control over his material.

### 1. The Search For Order: Historical Backgrounds and Contexts

Tracing the development of what he considers the 'classic phase' of American realism in the 1870s and 1880s, Winfried Fluck (1992) regards realism as a reaction to the social and cultural changes that accompanied the rapid growth of the industrial revolution in the 19th century. Innovations in the fields of transport and communication led to the rapid disappearance of the old, agrarian America. An increasing exploitation and destruction of natural resources went along with an explosive expansion of big cities, caused by ever new waves of mass immigration which resulted in the growth of urban ghettos and slum areas.

Taken as a whole, contemporary reactions to these developments were ambivalent. On the one hand, these developments nourished the optimistic belief in unlimited progress. On the other hand, there was also a major increase in social tensions and conflicts which resulted in a widespread sense of crisis. Among the most conspicuous 'collateral damages' of the march of progress were the dispossession and partial annihilation of the Native American population, the ongoing discrimination of African Americans, increased hostilities between different immigrant groups and also between immigrants and 'native-born' Americans, and violent labor conflicts culminating in bloody riots such as the notorious Chicago Haymarket riot in 1886.

These symptoms of crisis reached their peak in the 1890s, a period which the historian Henry Steele Commager has characterized as a "watershed" in American history (cf. Commager 1950, viii). While the closing of the frontier in 1890 limited the opportunities to buy cheap farm land, the technological revolution of farm-

ing by means of modern machinery resulted in overproduction which, in turn, led to the 'agrarian revolt.' At the same time, the situation in the urban and industrial centers was affected by a global economic crisis which resulted in intensified racial, ethnic and labor conflicts. In addition, the 1890s witnessed another social upheaval along gender lines when technological innovations like the telephone and the typewriter opened up the white-collar labor market for the first time in history for a substantial number of women. Women were thus able to leave their domestic 'women's place' and enter the hitherto largely male-dominated public sphere. It is no coincidence that in 1890 the National Women's Suffrage Association was founded, and that the 1890s saw the emergence of the 'new woman,' the first powerful wave of the women's emancipation movement in the United States (cf. Bederman 1995).

These developments in the economic sphere were accompanied by characteristic features of the modernization process such as the tremendous increase in geographical and social mobility. As never before, people were breaking out of their inherited conditions, and being confronted with a plurality of different, often vastly heterogeneous social, ethnic, and ideological subcultures and life worlds. Such experiences provided the social matrix of a widespread sense of uprootedness and disorientation that marked the era around 1900. In socio-psychological terms, these experiences would often lead to feelings of displacement, status anxiety, and identity diffusion, above all in terms of 'gender trouble.'

This general state of crisis generated a strong need for stabilizing structures of order, control and power. In the political realm, such structures were provided by the territorial expansionism and the hegemonic rule of the United States over Latin America, which served as an impressive model of virtually unlimited imperial power. Another model of the same sort was provided by industrial 'tycoons' such as Jay Gould, John D. Rockefeller, Andrew Carnegie or J.P. Morgan, who in the popular imagination became mythical figures representing such arch-American concepts as the pioneer spirit, rugged individualism, the 'luck and pluck' mentality of the Horatio Alger hero, and, last but not least, male fantasies of financial and sexual omnipotence. Significantly, the myth of the industrial tycoon originated at a historical moment when his leading role in the economic system of the United States had already largely been taken over by anonymous joint-stock companies and corporations. In a similar way, it seems to be no coincidence that the historian Frederick Jackson Turner found such tremendous popular resonance when he ennobled the frontier myth in 1893, three years after the closing of the frontier, by presenting it as a 'scientific truth.' All these forms of mythologizing can be seen as attempts to counter the sense of crisis and disorder with a 'search for order' (Wiebe 1967), that is, with a stabilizing strategy of 'sense-making' that one hoped would help to express and communicate a stance of symbolic control.

In their own way, literary discourses were, of course, also involved in this process of 'sense-making.' As Winfried Fluck and others have shown, the American realists of the 'classic phase' were still filled with the optimistic belief that they

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Riggio 1982, 3-43. For a comprehensive study of Dreiser's oeuvre and its sociobiographical contexts cf. my monograph *Identität und Rolle bei Theodore Dreiser* (1991).

were able to symbolically integrate even the “threatening aspects of reality into a fictitious model of order and cohesion”:

In this attempt, the realists met one of the most remarkable challenges of their time: not to close their eyes to the increasing conflicts and contradictions of American society and yet to keep their faith in the particular potential of American civilization. (Fluck 1992, 39; my translation)

With the growth of the above-mentioned symptoms of crisis, however, this stance became more and more untenable, and realism as a literary form became more and more problematic. One road out of this dilemma, as exemplified by Henry James, who thus became one of the precursors of the modernist novel, was to turn away from outward reality and turn inward into the depths of human consciousness.

Other roads were to turn back into the past or forward into the future. An example of the forward-looking tendency is Edward Bellamy's utopian novel *Looking Backward* (1888), which depicts an ideal future state governed by reason and common sense. The large increase in the production of utopian novels after the book's publication, as well as the fact that numerous Bellamy-Clubs sprang up all over the country with the aim of putting Bellamy's program into practice, indicate that the genre indeed served the particular need of the contemporary reading public for models of order. The backward-turning tendency is best exemplified by Owen Wister's classical cowboy novel *The Virginian* (1902). Wister's glorification of the frontier past and his celebration of the Western hero are both a reflection of and a response to the cultural anxieties besetting the male Anglo-Saxon elite on the American East coast (cf. Ostendorf 1984, 273-87), above all fin-de-siècle-fears of racial degeneration and anxieties about the loss of male strength. It is only fitting that the book is dedicated to President Theodore Roosevelt, for whom, just as for Wister himself, the West had been quite literally a place of personal ‘regeneration,’ and who later became famous for his conspicuous public self-performance as an adventurous male culture hero.

## 2. Theoretical Considerations: The Naturalist Doctrine and the Narrative ‘Search for Order’

It is within the contexts outlined above that the mode of naturalism has its place. While both realism and naturalism aim at a representation of ‘reality as it is,’ naturalism goes one step further and lays claim to a ‘scientific’ representation of reality. Although it is virtually impossible to carry out that claim in literary practice, it is significant that the naturalist doctrine, as it was first formulated in Zola's famous essay “Le roman expérimental” (1880), held such an attraction for intellectuals of the time. It is the same attraction which also emanated from the philosophical systems which influenced naturalism most strongly, namely positivism, Darwinism and Social Darwinism. Like Marxism, another late 19th century product, these quasi-scientific systems held the promise of providing a key to total intellectual control over the phenomenal world. It is exactly in this sense that these systems have a totalitarian thrust. Doctrinaire naturalism, in other words,

represents a kind of literary discourse that emerges from the impulse to get reality under total symbolic control. In the historical context of the time, the obsessive nature of that impulse appears as an indication of a subterranean cultural anxiety – as the symptomatic expression of a fear of disorder, loss of control and powerlessness. It is this functional relation which appears to be the most conspicuous paradox of the naturalist discourse. There is a curious discrepancy between the essentially depressing message of the naturalists that the human individual is nothing but a powerless victim of circumstances and the triumphantly authoritarian gesture with which this message is typically announced. Thus, in comparison to the ‘dialogical’ mode of realism (Fluck 1992, cf. also Zimmermann, 2006), naturalism is basically a ‘monological’ mode, that is, a kind of discourse which is permeated with rhetorical gestures that signify a massive claim for power and control over the fictional material and over the reader. The most conspicuous of such rhetorical gestures is the pseudo-scientific jargon couched in obtrusive omniscient commentaries in so many novels of that type.

As a consequence of these preliminary reflections I would suggest that in order to learn about the ‘deep structure’ of the naturalist agenda, we have to look behind the ‘scientific’ explanatory devices that are officially offered in these novels, in order to detect their hidden historico-psychological content. In the following, I would like to identify that content in more concrete terms, using Frank Norris's *McTeague* as a major example.

### 3. The Desire for Control: The Example of Norris's *McTeague* (1899)

Among the American naturalists, Frank Norris is generally regarded as a rather dogmatic representative of the naturalist doctrine. Influenced by the evolutionary theories of Charles Darwin and Herbert Spencer, by the positivist philosophy of Hippolyte Taine and by Emile Zola's concept of ‘scientific’ literary representation, the novel appears to be a typical naturalist case study illustrating the ‘natural laws’ of the process of evolution and degeneration and the deterministic power of heredity, environment and historical circumstances. *McTeague*, the title hero, is a blond “young giant” (*M*, 3)<sup>2</sup> of Irish ancestry whose brute strength, low intelligence and animal-like physiognomy indicate that he is still on a low rung on the evolutionary ladder. Originally a product of the wild California mountain regions where he worked as a gold miner, a strain of ambition inherited from his mother has caused him to leave his primitive natural environment and settle in the comparatively more complex urban milieu of San Francisco where he practices as a self-taught dentist. His social and cultural ambitions seem to be fulfilled when he marries Trina Sieppe, a pretty young woman of German Swiss origin who represents a slightly higher stage of evolution than *McTeague*. On the one hand, the encounter with Trina awakens *McTeague*'s animalistic sexual impulses, on the

<sup>2</sup> Page numbers related to Norris's *McTeague* [siglum *M*] refer to the edition listed in “Works Cited.”

other hand, it stimulates his ambitions in a way that raises him to a new level of sophistication.

Having thus reached the peak of his evolutionary potential, which for purposes of symmetry happens exactly in the middle chapter of the novel, the reverse process of dissolution sets in. McTeague has to close down his dental practice because a jealous rival has denounced him to the city authorities for his lack of a professional diploma. Unexpectedly confronted with the complex organization of the city environment with its abstract rules and procedures, McTeague and Trina, both products of more archaic forms of life, are unable to meet the challenge in a constructive way. What follows is a process of degeneration in which both characters revert to an earlier evolutionary stage. Depicting this process, Norris makes heavy use of ethnic and gender stereotypes which at the time of the novel's publication were still in currency as valid forms of 'scientific' discourse. Thus, McTeague's 'inborn' male aggressiveness, in connection with a disposition for dipsomania inherited from his Irish father, develops into a pathological sadism. Likewise, Trina's 'inborn' female submissiveness, in connection with a pecuniary 'hoarding instinct' supposedly derived from her Swiss German family heritage, turns her into a miser and masochist. Thus the novel suggests a pattern of 'scientific' causality which ends in the inevitable destruction of both characters. In the drawn-out climax of the novel, McTeague first murders his wife and then meets his own death after a melodramatic flight and pursuit in the Californian desert.

If we look beneath the surface of the text's naturalist rhetoric, we can see that on the level of its 'deep structure' Norris's novel is preoccupied with patterns of control and with the anxieties connected with the threat of losing control. In a more detailed analysis, it can be demonstrated that this preoccupation emerges in a number of seemingly secondary plot motifs (cf. Hochman 1988, 61-76 and *passim*). Significantly, the novel abounds in examples in which the characters try to control their lives by ritualistic forms of behavior. As becomes evident in the initial sections of the novel, this applies, among others, to McTeague, who by his habits, his daily method of observing the street scene before his office, and his ritual of singing always the same song on special occasions and playing the same tunes on his concertina, manages to impose a kind of order upon his life. A veritable 'rage for order' is staged in the comic episodes surrounding the Sieppe family, as exemplified, for instance, in the hopelessly ineffective military precision with which Trina Sieppe's German Swiss father tries to prepare the family's move to another place:

Mr. Sieppe would assume charge of the [...] general supervision. The twins would be under the command of Owgooste, who, in turn, would report for orders to his father. Day in and day out these minutiae were rehearsed. The children were drilled in their parts with military exactitude; obedience and punctuality became cardinal virtues. The vast importance of the undertaking was insisted upon with scrupulous iteration. It was a manoeuvre, an army changing its base of operations, a veritable tribal migration. (*M*, 152)

This behavior pattern is explained by the authorial voice of the novel in terms of a well-known ethnic stereotype. Being presented as a 'biological' – that is, a sup-

posedly scientific – category, this stereotype actually points toward a hidden socio-historical content.

The anxiety-ridden rage for order and control dramatized here is also the common denominator of other superficially 'comic' passages; for instance, when during a theatre visit August can not hold his water and the whole family is utterly scandalized. Another example is a picnic scene when Mr. Sieppe is toying with August's birthday present, a "small tin steamboat" (*M*, 73), and when he inadvertently causes it to explode in spite of his most careful study of the instructions for its use, he vents his frustrated anger against his son when he sees that the "little tin toy turned over and sank out of sight before any one could interfere" (*M*, 74).

In particular, the desire for order and control is the driving force of Trina's personality. Strict order, cleanliness and economy are her guiding characteristics as a young housewife. While such traits are once more explained in terms of biological inheritance, from a socio-psychological point of view they are indicative of a social type that has totally internalized the values of self-control and self-discipline. This includes the desire to have total control over her own body, a trait which is symbolically suggested by the description of Trina's "monastic" appearance (*M*, 23):

Her face was [...] rather pale; [...] her lips and the lobes of her tiny ears were pale, a little suggestive of anaemia [...]. But it was to her hair that one's attention was most attracted. Heaps and heaps of blue-black coils and braids, a royal crown of swarthy bands, a veritable sable tiara, heavy, abundant, odorous. All the vitality that should have given color to her face seemed to have been absorbed by this marvellous hair. [...]

She was dressed all in black, very modest and plain. The effect of her pale face in all this contrasting black was almost monastic. (*M*, 22-3)

Significantly, in the theatre scene when her young brother loses control over his body functions, Trina's face becomes "scarlet" (*M*, 106) with shame. In Freudian terms, she can aptly be described as an 'anal personality.' Following Eric Erikson's (1959) model of childhood development, this is the personality type which, as a result of rigorous early toilet training and the frustrating childhood experience of not being able to 'hold fast,' has developed an obsessive need to 'keep things under control.' According to Erikson, this personality type, which has, as it were, 'unlearned' the ability to 'let go,' is characterized by typical traits such as we find in Trina, including not least a compulsive desire to hoard money and other material things.

As Norris's novel further suggests, Trina's character disposition is complicated by her gender role. Her behavior indicates that she has been socialized into the female role pattern of sexual submissiveness: a pattern which demands of her to 'let herself go,' that is, to give up that very self-control over her own body into which she has otherwise been socialized. In her sexual relationship with McTeague, Trina is therefore in a typical double-bind situation where she is forced to obey two mutually exclusive inner commands. Following the gender-determined command to 'give herself' sexually, she violates the internalized command to 'keep things under control.' As a consequence of her anal character disposition, she is at the same time driven to compensate for this loss of control in other areas. Seen in this light, it makes sense that Trina, once she is married, compensates for her gender-based submissiveness with mechanical forms of work, ritualistic adherence

to a fixed daily timetable, and rigid methods of keeping control over her household, including the frustrating battle against dirt and stench:

Try as she would, Trina could never quite eradicate from their rooms a certain faint and indefinable odor, particularly offensive to her. The smell of the photographers chemicals persisted in spite of all Trina could do to combat it. She burned pastilles and Chinese punk, and even [...] coffee on a shovel, all to no purpose. Indeed, the only drawback to their delightful home was the general unpleasant smell that pervaded it [...]. (*M*, 222)

With her gradual social decline, the control over her physical environment slips more and more from her hands, although, as her final job as a scrub-woman aptly symbolizes, she keeps on the fight against dirt and physical disorder until the end of her life. But the more hopeless this fight becomes, the more perversely obsessive becomes her desire for money, the possession of which has become the last and only symbol of her drive for control.

In a similar way, Erikson's model can be applied to McTeague, whose neurotic symptoms can easily be identified as forms of an oral fixation (cf. Freedman 1980, 52-61). According to this model, the loss of symbiotic unity with the mother in the earliest phase of childhood is the decisive experience for the oral character, an experience which later in life finds its neurotic form of compensation in compulsive oral activities such as heavy eating, drinking and smoking. All these symptoms apply to McTeague, even including the reference to a lack of early childhood nourishment by a mother who "was an overworked drudge," "cooked for forty miners" and was "filled with the one idea of having her son rise in life" (*M*, 2). Even McTeague's sexual passion takes on an oral quality, when he takes possession of Trina by kissing her "grossly, full on the mouth" (*M*, 31; see also 180), and it is only logical that this passion cools down soon after the wedding when Trina, acting out for him the substitute role of the 'nourishing mother,' provides him with the oral "animal comforts" he needs (*M*, 190).

Significantly, as soon as McTeague's life comes into a crisis, the satisfaction of his oral desires turns more and more into a compulsion. He becomes an alcoholic, devours "three good meals a day" (*M*, 304), and finally develops "a passion for fishing," eating the fish "without salt or knife or fork," devouring it "slowly and with tremendous relish, picking the bones clean, eating even the head" (*M*, 333-4). At the same time, McTeague's oral compulsion takes an increasingly sadistic turn when he develops the habit of biting Trina's fingernails. And under the influence of alcohol, which makes him "active, alert, quick-witted, even talkative" (*M*, 305), these impulses even take the more 'sublimated' form of verbal sarcasm. All in all, the frustration of McTeague's compulsive oral desires by Trina becomes a decisive motivating factor for the murder. Already in the earlier stages of her crisis, there is a scene in which he reacts like a frustrated child when she drives him out of the kitchen and thus bans him from the central source of his oral satisfaction (*M*, 207). The same pattern repeats itself later in what can be taken as the key scene for the murder, when McTeague, hungrily eating half-ripe cherries in the garden in front of Trina's house, is begging for nourishment and is turned away by her. It is a situation which repeats the archetypal oral scene of the child rejected by his

mother. Significantly, McTeague's more and more uncontrollable rage finds its expression in an image of oral frustration which recurs as a leitmotif throughout the novel: "[...] his teeth ground furiously upon one another" (*M*, 365).

Comparing the pathological personality structures of both characters, we can say that their common denominator is a compulsive urge for possession. And in both cases, these obsessions can be seen as compensatory manifestations of an intense fear of losing control. Yet it is not the individual pathologies of the characters as such which are of interest here, but their function as indicators of socio-historical conflict structures. Under this perspective, Trina and McTeague can be seen as personifications of different stages of human deformation caused by the progress of modern civilization. Within this pattern, McTeague appears as the product of an earlier historical stage, typifying the deracination of the archaic 'man of the soil' and his pathetic search for the 'lost harmony.' Trina, on the other hand, represents a more modern personality that is the typical product of the modern machine age. As long as her internalized psychological system is in good working order, her character disposition perfectly fits the conditions of "a mechanized world, in which [...] orderliness, punctuality, and thrift" (Erikson 1959, 67) as well as cleanliness are held as major virtues. Yet as the novel demonstrates, there is a hidden pathology attached to these virtues which is brought out in personal and historical crisis situations in which individuals are overwhelmed by the experience of change.<sup>3</sup>

All in all, Norris's novel can be seen as both a reflection and a symptom of a historical situation of flux and a society obsessed with a frantic search for new structures of stability and control. In the following, I would like to deal with a more particular aspect of that phenomenon which relates to the field of gender relations.<sup>4</sup>

#### 4. *McTeague* and the 'Battle of the Sexes'

One of the most conspicuous features of American naturalism in general is what may be called its male 'gender bias' (Gammel 1994, 1). It appears to be symptomatic that almost all major representatives of this movement – Frank Norris, Theodore Dreiser, Jack London and Stephen Crane – were men. One can even say that naturalism, with its heavy emphasis on concepts of order, control and domination, is a characteristically 'male' mode of discourse.<sup>5</sup> What concerns me here, however, is the more obvious phenomenon that in many naturalist novels there seems to be a curious fascination with images of extraordinary male strength (cf. also Gammel 1994, 2 and *passim*). This fascination, however, is ambiguously mixed with images of loss and defeat. Again, *McTeague* is a good case in point.

<sup>3</sup> A more detailed analysis could show how the two subplots also contribute to the issues outlined so far.

<sup>4</sup> For a similar approach, cf. Donaldson's chapter "Naturalism and Novels of Besieged White Masculinity: Theodore Dreiser and Frank Norris" in Donaldson 1998, 124-89.

<sup>5</sup> Cf., among others, Baguley 1990, Donaldson 1998, 124-189 with further pertinent bibliographical references in footnote 18, 187.

If we look behind the supposedly objective 'scientific' authorial stance suggested by the naturalist rhetoric of the novel, we can detect a significant ambivalence in the characterization of both figures which seems to point back to the unresolved gender conflict pattern just mentioned. The core of that ambivalence lies in the author's paradoxical treatment of the relationship of McTeague and Trina in the two halves of the novel. In the first half, this relationship conforms basically to the conventional Victorian role model. Here, McTeague is the embodiment of wild, untamed animal instincts, who, with his beast-like appearance, his primitive living habits and his low level of intelligence and sensibility, is treated with a contemptuous attitude that is apt to evoke reader reactions of critical distance, if not downright aversion. In contrast, Trina, though also treated in a slightly condescending way, represents the opposite pole of culture and refinement, thus fulfilling the prototypically female role of 'taming' and 'civilizing' the man. Yet while Trina in this role is, on the whole, supposed to attract the reader's sympathies, the authorial rhetoric of the sexually-charged passages also renders a subliminal fascination with McTeague's brute-like masculine strength, even though ambiguously intermixed with opposite feelings of moral aversion. Consider, for example, the description of the first kiss, where McTeague takes possession of Trina in a rape-like gesture:

Suddenly he took her in his enormous arms, crushing down her struggle with his immense strength. Then Trina gave up, all in an instant, turning her head to his. They kissed each other, grossly, full in the mouth. [...]

"Oh, please! please!" she pleaded, on the point of tears. McTeague released her, but in that moment a slight, a barely perceptible, revulsion of feeling had taken place in him. The instant that Trina gave up, the instant she allowed him to kiss her, he thought less of her. She was not so desirable, after all. [...] Perhaps he dimly saw that this must be so, that it belonged to the changeless order of things - the man desiring the woman only for what she withholds; the woman worshipping the man for that which she yields up to him. With each concession gained the man's desire cools; with every surrender made the woman's adoration increases. (M, 84)

Ironically, this male fantasy of sexual domination, which the authorial voice rationalizes with pseudo-scientific speculations about the supposedly "changeless order of things," is undermined by the following plot development. Because right from the above-quoted scene onward, Trina more or less takes over the power position in their relationship, not least through the financial control she is able to attain by way of a five-thousand dollar lottery prize.

The discrepancy between the rhetorical and the dramatic structure manifested here becomes even more pronounced in the second half of the novel. What is more, in this part there is also a paradoxical shift in the author's sympathies. Even though McTeague's violent and aggressive nature is here shown in its most perverted form, including scenes of sadistic torture and finally culminating in the atrocious murder scene, he nevertheless comes across on the moral scale of the novel as superior to Trina.<sup>6</sup> While both figures are equally presented as victims of inheri-

<sup>6</sup> On this point, I disagree with Donaldson, who argues that "the distance between narrator and character and between reader and character increases markedly" (1998, 143) as McTeague descends into a brute-like state.

tance, environment and circumstance, McTeague appears also as a victim of Trina, whose 'inborn' avarice has in the meantime grown so overwhelmingly that it has become her "one dominant passion; [...] driving out by degrees every other natural affection" (M, 354). Instead of investing her lottery money to build a new life together, Trina holds on to every penny with pathological obsession. Notwithstanding the 'scientific' authorial explanations of her behavior, her treatment of McTeague thereby assumes such inhuman proportions that it is apt to turn the balance of sympathy or at least pity in his direction. Caused by Trina's avarice, McTeague is continuously stripped of all remaining vestiges of human dignity. In this way McTeague, for all the monstrosity of his actions, emerges as a man driven into a corner and desperately fighting for the remains of his sense of human identity.<sup>7</sup>

Even in the development culminating in the murder scene the authorial sympathies seem to be directed more towards the male killer than towards his female victim. The climax is prepared by a lengthy description of Trina's pathological obsession which indicates that her passion for money has by now turned into a perverse form of displaced sexual desire. One night when she is visited by McTeague, who in the meantime has become a city vagrant, she is described as follows:

One evening she had even spread all the gold pieces between the sheets, and had then gone to bed, stripping herself, and had slept all night upon the money, taking a strange and ecstatic pleasure in the touch of the smooth flat pieces the length of her entire body. (M, 360-1)

It is against this background when McTeague, run down and starved to death, appeals for her pity and asks for some money for something to eat, that Trina's stubborn refusal appears singularly cold-hearted. The reader's sympathies with McTeague's growing rage are, furthermore, prepared by a narrative segment focalizing upon McTeague's emotions when he learns that Trina has secretly sold his concertina, one of the last emblems of his former pride. So when McTeague, after once more exclaiming "You ain't going to make small of me this time [...]" (M, 374), commits his atrocious murder, he also becomes a protagonist in a scenario in which a male revenge fantasy is acted out.

What conclusions can we draw from this analysis? What is enacted here is actually a variation of the old motif of the 'battle of the sexes.' In this battle, the author is on both sides of the front line. In the first half, his sympathies are with the woman, who is here cast in the prototypical Victorian role of refining and ennobling the man, while his fascination with the spectacle of masculine strength is ambiguously mixed with and outweighed by an aversion to the 'male brute.' While this aversion is still there in the second half, it is toned down by a sense of pity for the creature who becomes the victim of a destructive form of female domination. In other words: The gentle female of the first half has turned into an emasculating *femme fatale*, and it appears that on the subliminal fantasy level of the novel her murder is meant as a form of 'poetic justice.'

<sup>7</sup> Significantly, in situations of stress, McTeague reacts with phrases such as "They - they can't make small of me" (M, 267) or, as in one of his violent arguments with Trina, "You can't make small of me *always*" (M, 297).

## 5. The Crisis of Masculinity: The Autobiographical, Socio-Historical and Cultural Context

The authorial ambivalence exposed here can partly be traced back to autobiographical sources. Norris himself was involved in the 'battle of the sexes' scenario of his parents, who represented in their respective ways the dualism of gender roles typical of the time. While Norris's father was a typical exemplar of the rough, energetic self-made man, his mother, who nevertheless happened to be a very strong-minded person, occupied the so-called 'female spheres' of art, refinement and cultivation. Between these two role models, Norris shifted back and forth. After being a "mama's boy" (Lynn 1955, 165) in his childhood and posing as a dandy and *décadent* in his early adulthood, he later cultivated the 'masculine' role of 'rugged individualism,' sportsmanship, physical strength, endurance, etc. So one can say that, on the level of a subliminal fantasy scenario, in his life and in his novel Frank Norris identified both with his mother against his father and with his father against his mother.

Yet the main interest here is, once again, not the individual constellation as such, but its paradigmatic socio-historical significance. I would indeed argue that the case of Frank Norris is indicative of the typical anxieties and ambiguities of the male psyche around the turn of the century. In recent years, with the emergence of 'men's studies' as a new field of gender research, a substantial number of books and articles have dealt with the changing conceptions of masculinity in American history.<sup>8</sup> Elisabeth and Joseph Pleck, for example, the editors of the anthology *The American Man* (1980), distinguish in their introduction four different phases in the development of American masculinity. Of particular interest in the present context is the third phase, "The Strenuous Life (1861-1919)," named after Theodore Roosevelt's notorious phrase. According to the findings of that study, the period in question was still dominated by the doctrine of the 'separate spheres,' considering the 'public sphere' as being largely reserved for men and the 'domestic sphere' as the female domain. As already mentioned, this doctrine came under attack in the 1890s with the increasing number of women on the job market and with the rise of the 'new woman' movement. To many men, these developments, in addition to other modernization phenomena discussed above, were a major threat to their sense of manhood:

Rapid industrialization, technological transformation, capital concentration, urbanization, and immigration – all of these created a new sense of an oppressively crowded, depersonalized, and often emasculated life. Manhood had meant autonomy and self-control, but now fewer and fewer American men owned their own shops, controlled their own labor, owned their own farms. (Kimmel 1996, 83)

<sup>8</sup> For a thorough discussion of the concept of masculinity and its multiple interdisciplinary contexts, and for a hermeneutically productive application of the concept to the cultural-historical analysis of the literary works of English novelists in the transitional phase between late Victorianism and early modernism cf. also Stefan Horlacher's recent monograph *Masculinities: Konzeptionen von Männlichkeit im Werk von Thomas Hardy und D.H. Lawrence* (2006).

All in all, "[t]he concept of manliness was suffering strain in all its dimensions – in work and success, in familial patriarchy, and in [...] sexuality. The masculine role was uncertain" (Filene 1986, 69-70).

As a reaction, there arose a widespread fear of the growing 'feminization' of American life (cf. Douglas 1977). Basil Ransom, the male protagonist of Henry James's *The Bostonians* (1885), though not necessarily expressing his author's views, in his response to the feminist movement is quite representative of what many men of the turn-of-the-century generation felt:

The whole generation is womanized; the masculine tone is passing out of the world; it's a feminine, nervous, hysterical, chattering, canting age [...]. The masculine character, the ability to dare and endure, to know and yet not fear reality, to look the world into the face and take it for what it is [...] that is what I want to preserve, or rather, [...] to recover [...]. (James 1985, 1111)

In the decades before and after the turn of the century, the recovery of the "masculine character" of American culture became something like a collective national enterprise, resulting in a veritable 'cult of masculinity' in which physical strength, vigor and endurance were regarded as major cultural values (cf. Brandt 1997, 204). As Michael Kimmel notes in his cultural history of *Manhood in America*, "the ideal of the Self-Made Man gradually assumed increasingly physical connotations so that by the 1870s the idea of 'inner strength' was replaced by a doctrine of physicality and the body" (1996, 120). While in American everyday culture, the cult of masculinity manifested itself in all kinds of educational programs fostering sports activities and other forms of 'virilizing' physical training (Brandt 1997, 201), it found its corresponding 'mythical' expression in the Western, with Owen Wister's *The Virginian* (1902), "one of the most enduring models of manliness [...] in American literary history" (Silber 1993, 188), as its most popular exemplar. Celebrating the mythology of the frontier as the lost Eden of American manhood, the genre of the Western functions as "the apotheosis of masculinist fantasy, a revolt not against women but against feminization. The vast prairie is the domain of male liberation from workplace humiliation [...] and domestic emasculation" (Kimmel 1996, 159).

Finally, in the political realm, the "fin de siècle mission to thwart feminization and revitalize [...] manhood – reached its symbolic apotheosis in Theodore Roosevelt" (Kimmel 1996, 181). Roosevelt, who led a volunteer regiment of "rough riders" in the Cuban War of 1898 and became a war hero, who went on African expeditions as a big game hunter, and who was President of the United States between 1901 and 1909, became one of the most celebrated culture heroes of his time with his self-conscious public enactments of male vigour with which he illustrated the doctrine of the "strenuous life" which he used to preach to the nation:

I wish to preach, not the doctrine of ignoble ease, but the doctrine of the strenuous life, the life of toil and effort, of labor and strife; to preach that highest form of success which comes, not to the man who desires mere easy peace, but to the man who does not shrink from danger, from hardship, or from bitter toil, and who out of these wins the splendid ultimate triumph. (Roosevelt 1906, 8).

The gender anxiety behind such manifestations of the masculinity cult becomes evident when we consider that both Owen Wister and Theodore Roosevelt, the two most central historical protagonists of this cult (cf. Brandt 1997, 340), belonged to the "large numbers of weak and puny eastern city men" who "in the last two decades of the century [...] all came west to find a cure for their insufficient manhood" (Kimmel 1996, 135). Wister, suffering from psychosomatic symptoms of "nervous disorder," was following a doctor's prescription when he went west on a "rest cure" for his personal "regeneration" (cf. Ostendorf 1984, 279-80). In a similar way, Roosevelt came west to improve his physical constitution with an extended fitness program as cattle breeder before going out and announcing his ideology of the 'strenuous life' to the public. The gender-political implications of Roosevelt's doctrine become obvious in his emphatic plea for 'separate spheres,' when he suggests a role scenario in which the man is "glad to do a man's work," and the woman equally happy in the supporting role as "the house-wife, the helpmeet of the homemaker, the wise and fearless mother of many healthy children" (Roosevelt 1906, 5-6). The 'natural' legitimacy of this scenario is symbolically enacted in Wister's *The Virginian*, where "[u]nder the surface decorum love is presented as [...] a series of competitive battles in which [...] 'the man,' masculine values, and masculine sexuality triumph over 'the woman,' who surrenders to him" (Shulman 1998, xxvii).

It is within this field of gender-related cultural practices and discourses that the literary phenomenon of American naturalism has to be located also. In a variety of ways, the ambiguous preoccupation with images of male strength under the threat of disintegration that we have observed in the case of Frank Norris can also be detected in the works of other naturalist authors such as Jack London, Stephen Crane, or Theodore Dreiser. In the case of Dreiser, this preoccupation appears in a particularly "sexualized" shape (Gammel 1994, passim). Like *McTeague* and other novels in the naturalist tradition, Dreiser's works are obsessed with the intricate connection between sexuality and power. Yet all of his major novels, including even the "Cowperwood Trilogy" with its self-conscious celebration of the economically and sexually omnipotent superman, bespeak a "deeply felt 'crisis of masculinity'" (Gammel 1994, 77) as their subtext.<sup>9</sup> This subtext is already evident in Dreiser's famous first novel *Sister Carrie* (1900), whose double plot of Carrie's rise and Hurstwood's fall can be read as an emblematic emplotment of the historical power shift between the sexes (cf. Gammel 1994, 77). Seen in this context, the legend launched by Dreiser and his supporters that emplotted the initial failure of *Sister Carrie* as the result of the powerful influence of a strong woman over her weak husband, usually presented as a cultural drama of the author's revolutionary struggle against the repressive norms of the genteel tradition, gains an additional significance in terms of male 'gender trouble' (cf. also Donaldson

<sup>9</sup> Opinions differ, although not on the phenomenon itself, on the question whether the turn-of-the-century situation can be characterized as a "crisis." Cf. Bederman: "Middle-class men were unusually obsessed with manhood at the turn of the century; yet I would hesitate to call this obsession a 'crisis' [...]" (1995, 11).

1998, 124). According to that legend, Mrs. Frank Doubleday, the wife of Dreiser's publisher, being outraged by the manuscript of *Sister Carrie*, put pressure on her husband to cancel his contract with the author. Whatever the truth of that story may be, the fact is that Doubleday, following his lawyers' interpretation of the contract, made sure that only a very limited number of copies were sold and advertising was reduced to a minimum (cf. Newlin 2003, s.v. "Doubleday, Page & Co"). The extended state of depression which befell America's most famous naturalist afterwards is just one of the many manifestations of the historical crisis symptoms which have left their imprint on the literary production of late 19th-century and early 20th-century America.

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BETTINA BOECKER

## “Zuspruch inmitten Sinnlosigkeit”: Zur Rezeption T.S. Eliots im Deutschland der Nachkriegszeit

**Abstract:** It was only after World War II that Germans discovered T.S. Eliot’s poetry, drama and cultural criticism. Eliot’s intellectual development seemed to offer a paradigmatic example of how to cope with the predicaments of modernity: The desperation of “The Waste Land” and the iconoclastic tendencies of “Tradition and the Individual Talent” had transmuted into the conciliatory – if often dogmatic – tones of the work produced after his conversion to Anglo-Catholicism. Eliot proffered much-needed spiritual guidance to a country faced with total breakdown – material as well as moral. His espousal of tradition as the basis for any kind of new beginning was especially pertinent to the country’s search for a new identity. Eliot’s Christian teachings, however, met with mixed reactions. Endorsed by many critics and intellectuals, they found little favour with audiences of his play *Murder in the Cathedral*, which premiered in Germany in 1947. After years of indoctrination, many were tired of messages as such. The controversy about Eliot’s Christian doctrines marks the beginning of a debate about Eliot the cultural critic which continued well into the 1970s.

### 1. Eliot und die Re-Europäisierung Deutschlands

Ich stelle mir ein Wunder vor: von morgen ab könnte man Eliots Werke in jeder deutschen Buchhandlung kaufen. Ein Wunder nicht im präzisen, theologischen Sinne: das Moment des Übernatürlichen würde ihm fehlen. Aber ein Wunder im Sinne des Märchens.

Was für Folgen würde es haben? Tausende von Studenten würden das Buch kaufen (*Opera omnia* in einem Bande). Dutzende von Kommentatoren würden auf den Plan gerufen. Seminarübungen würden abgehalten. Alle jungen Menschen, die an Dichtung interessiert sind, würden lesen, lernen, diskutieren. Sie würden durch Eliot zur großen Tradition Alteuropas geführt werden, würden an ihm literarische Kultur lernen.

Wie schön könnte das alles sein! Wie fruchtbar! Hoffen wir! (Curtius 1948, 55)

Ernst Robert Curtius’ “Märchen” ist längst Wirklichkeit geworden. Es lässt jedoch ahnen, mit welchem Enthusiasmus T.S. Eliot im Deutschland der Nachkriegszeit aufgenommen wurde. Nach Jahren der kulturellen Isolation unter den Nationalsozialisten war der Anglo-Amerikaner für die meisten eine echte Neuentdeckung: Zwar war die erste deutsche Übersetzung des “Waste Land” durch Curtius bereits 1927 in der *Neuen Schweizer Rundschau* erschienen (Eliot 1927), zwar hatte Eliot während des Krieges sporadisch in Gesamtdarstellungen der englischen Literatur Eingang gefunden, doch musste Curtius 1948 feststellen: “Mein Versuch,

T.S. Eliot [in den zwanziger Jahren] in Deutschland einzuführen, wurde so schnell und gründlich vergessen, dass Eliot zwanzig Jahre später neu entdeckt werden musste” (Curtius 1948, 72). Die deutsche Auseinandersetzung mit T.S. Eliot nimmt 1945 ihren eigentlichen Anfang.

Den äußeren Beginn dieser Neuentdeckung stellten Eliots später in Buchform veröffentlichte Rundfunkreden *Die Einheit der europäischen Kultur* dar, die am 10., 17. und 24. März 1946 über den deutschen Dienst der BBC ausgestrahlt wurden. Diese Reden stießen in Deutschland vor allem deshalb auf breite Resonanz, weil sie das Land knapp ein Jahr nach Kriegsende auf der Basis des Christentums wieder in die “abendländische Kultur” (ein Begriff, der für die frühe Phase der deutschen Eliot-Rezeption prägend werden sollte) eingliederten (Viebrock / Frank 1975, 16). Eliots Versuch einer Art Reeuropäisierung Deutschlands ist durchaus typisch für die Kulturpolitik der britischen Besatzungsmacht, die anders als die amerikanische einer echten *re-education* der Deutschen von vornherein skeptisch gegenüber gestanden hatte (Jürgensen 1985, 84). Stattdessen sollte Hilfestellung bei der Rückbesinnung auf ein besseres Deutschland geleistet werden. So ist *The Unity of European Culture* peinlich darum bemüht, jeglichen Verdacht auf einen britischen Kulturimperialismus im Keim zu ersticken. Stattdessen betont Eliot die Notwendigkeit genuinen kulturellen Austausches:

I have suggested earlier, that the cultures of the different countries of Europe have in the past derived very great benefit from their influence upon each other. I have suggested that the national culture which isolates itself voluntarily, or the national culture which is cut off from others by circumstances which it cannot control, suffers from this isolation. Also, that country which receives culture from abroad, without having anything to give in return, and the country which aims to impose its culture on another, without accepting anything in return, will both suffer from this lack of reciprocity. (Eliot 1948, 121)<sup>1</sup>

Klagen über die Überflutung mit ausländischer literarischer Produktion waren 1946 zwar noch nicht zu hören,<sup>2</sup> doch war allen Beteiligten wohl nur allzu klar, dass sich Deutsche und Alliierte kaum als gleichberechtigte Partner im kulturellen Dialog gegenüberstanden.<sup>3</sup> Das musste die von Eliot so nachhaltig betonte Wechselseitigkeit in den Augen der Deutschen umso attraktiver machen. Augenfällig ist auch, wie sorgfältig Eliot jegliche Schuldzuweisung vermeidet. Seine allgemein gehaltenen Bemerkungen zur kulturellen Isolation hätten sich kaum ein Jahr zuvor noch sehr konkret auf die Situation in Deutschland anwenden lassen. Ob dieser Alleingang aber tatsächlich als eine Art Naturereignis über die Bevölkerung kam (“[caused] by circumstances which it cannot control”), ist doch sehr

<sup>1</sup> Ich zitiere die englische Fassung der Vorträge, erschienen als Appendix zu Eliots *Notes towards the Definition of Culture*. Die deutsche Fassung erschien als *Die Einheit der europäischen Kultur* 1946 bei Habel in Berlin.

<sup>2</sup> Ein Jahr später dann aber durchaus. Siehe z.B. Markus 1947, Gau-Hamm 1949.

<sup>3</sup> Exemplarisch belegt dies der umstrittene Begriff *re-education* selbst, der – insbesondere in seiner deutschen Fassung als ‘Umerziehung’ – alles andere als partnerschaftliche Assoziationen weckte. Siehe hierzu Pronay / Wilson 1985, Mosberg 1991, Füssl 1997, Gerhardt 1999, Gerhardt 2003.

fraglich. Obwohl Eliot den Nationalsozialismus nicht explizit als Unfall der Geschichte darstellt, lassen seine (bewusst?) unkonkret gehaltenen Ausführungen die Möglichkeit einer derartigen Deutung zumindest offen. In jedem Fall ruft er dazu auf, statt der Politik nun wieder die Kultur in den Mittelpunkt des Interesses zu stellen:

A nation's political structure affects its culture, and in turn is affected by that culture. But nowadays we take too much interest in each other's domestic politics, and at the same time have very little contact with each other's culture. The confusion of culture and politics may lead in two different directions. It may make a nation intolerant of every culture but its own, so that it feels impelled to stamp out, or to remould, every culture surrounding it. An error of the Germany of Hitler was to assume that every other culture than that of Germany was either decadent or barbaric. Let us have an end of such assumptions. (Eliot 1948, 118)

Kultureller Austausch soll keineswegs zur Entstehung einer einheitlichen "Weltkultur" ohne erkennbare Unterschiede zwischen den einzelnen Nationen führen. Sofern die besiegten Deutschen Angst vor kulturellem Identitätsverlust empfanden, muss Eliots Plädoyer für eine organisch gewachsene Nationalkultur – gerade weil es als Botschaft der Siegermacht autorisiert war – hochwillkommen gewesen sein.<sup>4</sup> Vor allem aber bietet Eliot Kultur als Ausweg aus der Politik an, und das nicht nur, weil er die nationalsozialistische Ideologie und ihre sehr konkreten Folgen als bloßen kulturellen "Irrtum" (*error*) darstellt. In der Aufforderung, sich statt auf die jeweilige Innenpolitik wieder mehr auf die jeweilige Kultur zu konzentrieren, lag für das politisch am Boden liegende Deutschland auch die Möglichkeit beschlossen, sich auf einem quasi politikfreien Terrain wieder in die internationale Gemeinschaft einzugliedern.<sup>5</sup>

Ermöglichte *The Unity of European Culture* den Deutschen eine erste Begegnung mit Eliots Literatur- und Kulturkritik, so wurde er durch seine Vortragsreisen einem breiteren Publikum bekannt. Diejenige des Jahres 1948 führte in Verbindung mit der Verleihung des Nobelpreises rein quantitativ zu einem ersten Höhepunkt an deutschsprachigen Veröffentlichungen. Wegweisend war dabei Hans Henneckes Einleitung zu den 1950 erschienenen *Ausgewählten Essays*, in der er drei zentrale Begriffe der Eliotschen Dichtungstheorie hervorhob: *dissociation of sensibility*, *objective correlative* und *pattern*. Eliot ist für ihn zugleich Dichter, Moralist und Theologe, ein "Humanist der Tat" (Hennecke 1950, 46). Betont wird der normative Charakter seiner Kritik, der für Hennecke im Begriff des Klassischen begründet liegt und mit einer als kanonisch begriffenen abendländischen Kultur in engem Zusammenhang steht.

<sup>4</sup> Was die Beschwichtigung solcher Ängste anging, waren die amerikanischen Besatzer weit weniger erfolgreich – die "Amerikanisierungsdebatte" wird bis heute geführt. Siehe hierzu u.a. Bergsträsser 1963, Ostendorf 1999, Ostendorf 2006.

<sup>5</sup> Dies spielte natürlich dem Selbstverständnis (und der Selbstexkulpation) derjenigen in die Hände, die meinten, sich in ihrer Nische mit ihren Kulturgütern moralisch 'heil' durch die 'dunklen Jahre' gerettet zu haben – in einem vermeintlich dem System entzogenen Privatbezirk, der mit Goethe, Beethoven und Rilke möbliert war.

Eliots Propagierung dieses (von ihm teilweise neu definierten) Kanons fällt in Deutschland, zumal in der britischen und der amerikanischen Besatzungszone, auf überaus fruchtbaren Boden. Er erscheint als "Fürsprecher abendländischen Gemeinsinns" (Niedermayer 1948, 281), der "persönliche Verantwortung für die Erhaltung abendländischer Tradition [...] bewusst trägt" (Schaeder / Schaeder 1948, 36) und

unbekümmert um Beifall oder Tadel die ewig gültigen Marksteine der Menschheit demütig im Werk auf[richtet], überzeugt vom Wert des Geistes und dem Vorrang der Seele, vom lebendigen Sinn der Vergangenheit, der Bedeutung von Ordnung und moralisch-sozialem Gleichgewicht für Mensch und Welt. (Hennecke 1950, 46)

Auch die Nationalsozialisten hatten Ordnung und Tradition für ihre Zwecke instrumentalisiert, so dass diese Werte zunächst diskreditiert erschienen. Eliots Eintreten für ihre unverminderte Gültigkeit bot hier eine Neuorientierung, die in gewisser Weise dennoch ein Festhalten an traditionellen Konzepten ermöglichte: "order not oppressive, traditions not destructive, values not discredited" (Frank 1986, A 29).

## 2. Aus der Dunkelheit ins Licht

In den Jahren unmittelbar nach Kriegsende begegnete den Deutschen mit Eliot eine der bedeutendsten Gestalten der literarischen Moderne, dies jedoch, nachdem deren eigentliche Blütezeit längst vorüber war. Anders als im englischen Sprachraum war so die gesamte Entwicklung Eliots auf einmal zu überblicken; d.h. der Weg von der Desperatheit des "Waste Land" und den ikonoklastischen Tendenzen von "Tradition and the Individual Talent" hin zu den versöhnlicheren Tendenzen der "Four Quartets" und den zunehmend dogmatischen Essays. Das Pionierwerk der deutschen Eliot-Rezeption, Grete und Hans-Heinrich Schaeders *Ein Weg zu T.S. Eliot*, wertet das nicht als Nachteil. Im Gegenteil:

Es ist vielleicht eine Gunst des Schicksals, dass wir nicht, gleich Eliots Landsleuten, Schritt für Schritt den scheinbar ziellosen Weg mitgehen müssen, den [seine] Dichtung von den ersten lyrischen Sammlungen [...] über "Das wüste Land" [...] und "Die hohlen Menschen" [...] ging, durch alle Finsternisse der Schwermut und der Verzweiflung hindurch, die sich erst in "Aschermittwoch" [...] aufzuhellen begann. Uns ist es vergönnt, diesen Weg in dem hellen und befreienden Lichte zu überblicken, das in der letzten, mit nichts zu vergleichenden Schöpfung des Dichters, den "Vier Quartetten" [...], entzündet ist. (Schaeder / Schaeder 1948, 11)

Die Jahre der Naziherrschaft werden unversehens zur *splendid isolation*: Während Deutschland sich mit dem materiellen und vor allem moralischen Ruin konfrontiert sieht, kann Eliot bereits Wege aus der Krise weisen – ein Mitertragen seines dichterischen Leidens am 20. Jahrhundert bleibt den Deutschen erspart.

Diese beinahe heilsgeschichtliche Deutung der dichterischen Entwicklung Eliots ist charakteristisch für einen großen Teil der einschlägigen Publikationen im Zeitraum von 1945 bis 1950. Auch Eliots Biographie wurde vielfach unter diesem Blickwinkel betrachtet; insbesondere seine Übersiedlung nach Großbritannien erschien als Bekenntnis zum Abendland und seiner Kultur (Niedermayer 1948, 280). Der 'weltanschauliche' Strang der deutschen Eliot-Rezeption suchte den

Zugang zum Verkünder neuer "poetischer Heilsbotschaften" (Viebrock / Frank 1975, 9) naturgemäß bevorzugt im Spätwerk. Zwar wurde "The Waste Land" vielfach als Diagnose eines kranken Jahrhunderts gelesen,<sup>6</sup> von Interesse war aber für viele der um einen Neuanfang bemühten Deutschen eher die Möglichkeit einer spirituellen Regeneration, wie sie sich in den Gedichten ab "Ash Wednesday" und dann vor allem in den Dramen abzuzeichnen schien. Nicht zufällig beschäftigt sich *Ein Weg zu T.S. Eliot* vorwiegend mit dem Versdrama *Murder in the Cathedral*, auf dessen Aufnahme im Deutschland der Nachkriegszeit ich weiter unten genauer eingehe.

*The Family Reunion* und *The Cocktail Party*, Eliots in den fünfziger Jahren gefeierte und heute beinahe vergessene Bühnenstücke, wurden ebenfalls unter starker Beachtung ihres weltanschaulichen Gehalts rezipiert. So ist es denn wenig verwunderlich, dass Eliot, der "konservative Neuhumanist" (Niedermayer 1948, 280), nicht primär als Lyriker und vielleicht nicht einmal primär als Schriftsteller erscheint, sondern beinahe als eine Art geistig-geistlicher Führer. Das Maß an Aufgeschlossenheit, das seinen Lehren entgegengebracht wird, kann damit zum Indikator der moralischen Reife des jeweiligen Rezipienten werden. Eine gewisse Tendenz zur 'Nostrifizierung'<sup>7</sup> jedenfalls ist in der frühen deutschen Eliot-Rezeption nicht zu übersehen:

Wenn Eliot [...] für viele seiner Landsleute der Dichter des "Wüsten Landes" geblieben ist, so liegt das zum guten Teil daran, dass sie die christliche Wahrheit nicht annehmen wollen, die ihm mehr bedeutet als alle Dichtung,

postuliert Grete Schaeder in der *Neuen Schweizer Rundschau* (1947, 730) und impliziert damit eine Art spirituelle Höherwertigkeit des dieser Wahrheit gegenüber vermeintlich offeneren deutschsprachigen Publikums. Dies muss vor dem Hintergrund der im Namen des 'Dritten Reiches' begangenen Verbrechen anmaßend erscheinen; den Zeitgenossen hingegen mag der Gedanke an ein aus dem totalen moralischen Bankrott zu schlagendes moralisches Kapital tröstlich gewesen sein.

Gegen eine derartige Vereinnahmung Eliots, vor allem aber gegen eine primär weltanschaulich orientierte Herangehensweise an sein Werk stellen sich Hans Egon Holthusen und, konsequenter und von Anfang an, Ernst Robert Curtius. Im Gegensatz zur Position beispielsweise der Schaeders ist Eliot für sie primär als Lyriker von Interesse, nicht so sehr als Dramatiker und erst recht nicht als Offenbarer spiritueller Wahrheiten. Seiner quasi-religiösen Verehrung stehen beide skeptisch gegenüber. Dichtung, so Holthusen, sei kein Ersatz für Philosophie

<sup>6</sup> So z.B. von Hans Egon Holthusen: "In dem großen Gedicht 'Das wüste Land' [...] hat Eliot die ganze Unfruchtbarkeit, Trockenheit und Leere der modernen Welt, ihre schmutzige Gemeinheit und ihre frivole Verzweiflung zum Ausdruck gebracht [...]" (Holthusen 1949, 682).

<sup>7</sup> Dieser sonst eher im Zusammenhang mit der deutschen Shakespeare-Rezeption des 19. Jahrhunderts gebrauchte Begriff erscheint für die "Einbürgerung ehrenhalber," die viele der hier besprochenen Autoren dem Wahl-Engländer Eliot angedeihen lassen, durchaus angemessen, auch wenn der Enthusiasmus, mit dem Eliot in Deutschland aufgenommen wird, sich als weniger beständig erwiesen hat als im Falle Shakespeares.

oder Theologie oder Religion (Holthusen 1951, 69). Curtius insistiert auf einer klaren Trennung zwischen dem Kunstwerk und seiner (vermeintlichen) Botschaft:

Dem deutschen Leser liegt es nahe, in den Werken eines Dichters eine Weltanschauung zu suchen. Und man findet leider immer das, was man gesucht hat. Aber der Wert – und fast möchte ich hinzufügen: das Interesse – eines Gedichtes hängt nicht davon ab. (Curtius 1948, 75)

Eine solche Vermischung von Literarischem und Außerliterarischem resultiere in einem unfruchtbaren Rigorismus:

Ein christlicher Moralist hat natürlich das volle Recht, Literatur zu verurteilen, die er für schändlich oder für ketzerisch hält. Aber er muss es dann vom kirchlich-orthodoxen Standpunkt tun, nicht von dem der literarischen Kritik. (Curtius 1949, 354)<sup>8</sup>

“The Waste Land” ist für Curtius Eliots bedeutendstes Werk, während er, ganz im Gegenteil zum eher weltanschaulich orientierten Rezeptionsstrang, die Dramen vor *The Cocktail Party*, auch und vor allem *Murder in the Cathedral*, für “den fragwürdigsten Teil von Eliots Produktion” (Curtius 1949, 346) hält. Dessen vielbeschworenes Europäertum bleibt für den Autor von *Europäische Literatur und lateinisches Mittelalter* ein nicht erfülltes Versprechen, da der Wahl-Brite sich hauptsächlich mit der Revision des englischen, nicht aber des europäischen Kanons befasst und so zunehmend eine insulare Position eingenommen habe. Dennoch sieht auch Curtius in Eliot eine der bedeutendsten Dichterpersönlichkeiten des 20. Jahrhunderts.

Wenn Eliot nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg in Deutschland mit “intellektuelle[r] Begeisterung, [...] ethischem Enthusiasmus, [einem] tiefe[n] Gefühl des Wiedererkennens” (Viebrock / Frank 1975, 8) aufgenommen wurde, dann allerdings nur in den Westzonen. In der sowjetischen Besatzungszone bleibt er so gut wie unbeachtet; Armin Franks einschlägige Bibliographie (Frank 1986) verzeichnet im Zeitraum bis 1950 nur einen einzigen Artikel, erschienen im Jahr 1948 anlässlich der Nobelpreisverleihung. Unter dem Titel “Nobelpreis für einen Philister?” befasst sich Georg Mende – mit wohl als charakteristisch zu bezeichnender Verspätung – mit den 1946 erschienenen Reden zur Einheit der europäischen Kultur. Dass Eliot unter europäischer Kultur insbesondere die der mitteleuropäischen Staaten versteht, fasst er als antisowjetisch auf; Eliots Plädoyer für einen differenzierten Kulturbegriff (“the culture of an artist or a philosopher is distinct from that of a mine worker or field labourer” (Eliot 1948, 120)) provoziert – vorhersehbarerweise – einen Ausbruch sozialistischer Linientreue:

Hier bricht ungeniert durch die polierte Oberfläche der anmaßende Anspruch einer sterbenden Klasse auf ihr Bildungsprivileg hervor. [...] Nicht das Schöpferische in den Menschen, nicht das allen gesunden Menschen gemeinsame Aufwärtsstreben zu Freiheit, Frieden, Fortschritt und Wohlstand sind bei Eliot das Kriterium echter Kultur, sondern die erreichte äußerliche Differenzierung, der Grad der formalen Bildung. (Mende 1949, 281-2)

<sup>8</sup> Hans Hennecke wendet sich in “T.S. Eliot als Kritiker und Essayist” (Hennecke 1950) vehement gegen die von Curtius vertretene Position, insbesondere gegen den Vorwurf eines kritischen “Rigorismus.”

Der kaum zu leugnende Elitarismus der Eliotschen Kulturkritik wird in den Westzonen erst sehr viel später thematisiert. Im Vordergrund steht hier zunächst eindeutig Eliots Eintreten für eine Erneuerung aus dem Geist des Christentums. Dass aber auch diese keineswegs unumstritten war, zeigt sich vielleicht am deutlichsten an der Aufnahme seines Bühnenstücks *Murder in the Cathedral*, das im Oktober 1947 in einer Übersetzung Rudolf Alexander Schröders auf die deutschen Bühnen kam.

### 3. Verkündigungstheater

Die Uraufführung des im englischen Sprachraum sehr erfolgreichen Stücks<sup>9</sup> fand fast zeitgleich in Köln, Göttingen und München statt. Unabhängig davon dürfte ihm die Tatsache, dass der Theateroffizier der britischen Zone Ashley Dukes war, der Leiter des Londoner *Mercury Theatre*, eine freundliche Aufnahme durch die alliierte Verwaltung gesichert haben: An seinem Haus hatte *Murder in the Cathedral* seit 1935 mehrere erfolgreiche Spielzeiten durchlaufen.

Eliots ursprünglich als Auftragsarbeit für das Canterbury Festival entstandenes, in der Tradition mittelalterlicher *mystery* bzw. *morality plays* stehendes Versdrama inszeniert den Tod des Märtyrers Thomas Becket: seine letzte Predigt am Weihnachtstag, die Ermordung durch die Chargen des Königs sowie deren anschließende, direkt an das Publikum gewandte Rechtfertigung ihres Tuns. Eliot fügt vor Thomas' Sterben eine Psychomachie ein, eine Auseinandersetzung Becketts mit vier Versuchern, die für jeweils unterschiedliche innere Anfechtungen stehen. Diese Auseinandersetzung ist der zentrale Konflikt des Stückes, ein Konflikt jedoch, der den Gang der Handlung nicht beeinflusst: Thomas' Überwindung der Versucher ist für die innere Logik des Stückes zwar zwingend vorausgesetzt, kann aber dramatisch letztendlich nicht überzeugend vermittelt werden – er stirbt so oder so.

Der überlebensgroßen Gestalt des Thomas Becket stellt *Murder in the Cathedral* mehrere weniger individualisierte Figurengruppen gegenüber: den an *Everyman* erinnernden Chor der Frauen von Canterbury, die durch Thomas' Tod vom kleintütigen "living and partly living" (Eliot 1937, 19) der Eingangsszene zur Einsicht in die eigene Schuldhaftigkeit gelangen, die Priester, die Thomas auf dem Weg in den Märtyrertod begleiten, ohne ihn jedoch ganz verstehen zu können, und schließlich, als Antagonisten, die vier Versucher und die vier Ritter, moderne *vices*.

Das durch rituelle Strukturen geprägte Stück weist durch die Apologien der Ritter, aber auch durch Becketts direkt an die Zuschauer adressierte Weihnachtspredigt einen starken Publikumsbezug auf. Auch die Frauen von Canterbury ziehen die Zuschauer in das Geschehen auf der Bühne hinein, insbesondere durch die während dem Mord an Becket vorgetragenen Zeilen:

It is not we alone, it is not the house, it is not the city that is defiled  
But the world that is wholly foul.

<sup>9</sup> Eine Übersicht bietet Malamud 1992, 70-2.

Clear the air! Clean the sky! Wash the wind! Take the stone from the stone, take the skin from the arm, take the muscle from the bone, and wash them. Wash the stone, wash the bone, wash the brain, wash the soul, wash them wash them! (Eliot 1937, 77)

So, wie Thomas angesichts der Versucher Zeugnis für seinen Glauben ablegt und damit zum Märtyrer im eigentlichen Wortsinn wird, soll zusammen mit dem Chor auch das Publikum Zeuge werden, und zwar in zweierlei Hinsicht: zum einen, indem es dem Opfertod Becketts beiwohnt (Goldman 1973, 175), zum anderen, indem es selbst der Versuchung durch die Ritter widersteht und so seinerseits seinen Glauben bezeugt. Die theologische Motivation wird hier durch einen fast didaktischen Impetus ergänzt.

Mit seiner Schuld-und-Sühne-Thematik bot sich *Murder in the Cathedral*, ähnlich wie das meistgespielte Stück der unmittelbaren Nachkriegszeit, Hoffmannsthals *Jedermann* (Rischbieter 1989, 228), für eine Um-, Wieder- oder Neuerziehung der Deutschen in besonderem Maße an. Gerade die Reue des Chors hatte im Deutschland der Nachkriegszeit eine besondere Resonanz. Vor dem Hintergrund der eben erst beendeten Herrschaft der Nationalsozialisten sind aber auch die Figuren der Ritter, der Mörder Becketts, von hoher Brisanz. Durch ihre an Parlamentsdebatten erinnernden Formulierungen und rhetorischen Gesten stellt das Stück eine Verbindung zwischen der Gegenwart der Zuschauer und dem Staat her, dem die Ritter durch den Mord an Becket ihre Loyalität bewiesen haben. Ihre totalitäre Apologetik dürfte vielen nur allzu bekannt vorgekommen sein.

Der Bezug zur jüngsten Vergangenheit wurde bei der deutschen Uraufführung in Köln durchaus bemerkt: "In seinem Inhalt klingt das Werk an eine kaum vergangene Zeit an" (*Nouvelles de France* 1947, 5). Die Erinnerung an diese kaum vergangene Zeit scheint jedoch vom Publikum insbesondere in Verbindung mit der Anrede "Sie sind Engländer, und deshalb glauben Sie an faires Spiel" ("You are Englishmen, and believe in fair play" (Eliot 1937, 77-8)), eher negativ aufgenommen worden zu sein:

Aus dem Mut des Dichters wird hier eine Zumutung für die Zuhörer. Was in England selbstverständlich ist, wirkt hier [in Deutschland] noch längst nicht verständlich: von der Bühne herab als Engländer angesprochen zu werden, und zwar mit Argumenten, deren Anwendung auf uns und unsere Situation auch in der Theorie verstimmt, selbst wenn die Praxis nicht dazu stimmen sollte. (*Rheinischer Merkur* 1947, 4)

Das Kölner Publikum scheint den totalitären Charakter der Verteidigungsreden nur allzu gut erkannt zu haben. Genau aus diesem Grund erregte die Schuldzuweisung der Ritter – obwohl sie in Köln in gekürzter Form aufgeführt wurde – auch so großen Unmut: Sie wurde nicht als Erinnerung an eine allgemein-menschliche Sündhaftigkeit verstanden, sondern sehr konkret auf die eben überstandene NS-Herrschaft bezogen. An die eigene Rolle in dieser Zeit wollte man offensichtlich nicht erinnert werden. Dass die antidemokratischen Parolen der Nationalsozialisten allerdings noch keineswegs aus den Köpfen verschwunden waren, zeigt sich am Beispiel des Rezensenten der *Rheinischen Zeitung*, der befindet: "[D]ie Mörder Becketts [treten] ins Proszenium und [rechtfertigen ihre Tat] mit allen Künsten parlamentarischer Zweckrabelistik und in deren waschechtem Sprachstil [...]"

(Jardon 1947, 3). Die von den Nationalsozialisten gepflegte antiparlamentarische Häme ist an dieser Stelle nicht zu überhören; im Zusammenhang mit einem "historischen Thema" sind derlei antidemokratische Grundeinstellungen (für deren Vorhandensein auch bei Eliot sich durchaus Argumente finden ließen) aber offensichtlich bereits wieder – oder wohl eher: immer noch – salonfähig.<sup>10</sup>

Wenngleich die deutschen Theater sich in der unmittelbaren Nachkriegszeit recht eindeutig als moralische Anstalten verstanden, so stellte sich doch für eine Vielzahl an Kommentatoren im Zusammenhang mit *Mord im Dom* die Frage, inwieweit eine moralische Anstalt auch eine religiöse Anstalt sein dürfe. Nicht gering ist die Zahl der Stimmen, die sich ganz gegen eine Vermischung von Theater und Kirche (wie sie die streckenweise fast liturgische Kölner Inszenierung in besonderem Maße betrieb) stellten. Scheu fragt ein Rezensent der *Rheinischen Zeitung*: "Ist es vermessen und ketzerisch zu sagen: wenn Du beten willst, so gehe in Dein Kämmerlein und schließe die Tür zu, oder geh in die Kirche, aber nicht ins Theater" (Weniger 1947).

Sofern eine grundsätzliche Aufgeschlossenheit gegenüber Eliots christlicher Botschaft besteht, wird das Ineinandergehen von Theater und Kirche naturgemäß durchaus positiv gesehen. In den Rezensionen der Göttinger Inszenierung des Stücks ist dies auffällig oft zu beobachten. *Mord im Dom* erscheint als "läuternde Dichtung der Wandlung voller Zuspruch inmitten Sinnlosigkeit" (Kuehne 1947). Die in Göttingen stark weltanschauliche Besprechung des Stückes gipfelt in der Feststellung, dass eine ausschließlich ästhetischen Prinzipien verpflichtete Regieführung, die den religiösen Aspekt des Stücks außer Acht lasse, dem Sinn des Dramas nicht gerecht werde. Hier schließt sich der Kreis zu Eliots eigenen Theorien über eine ethisch-moralische Fundierung der Literatur, wie er sie insbesondere in *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism* (Eliot 1933) formuliert hatte. Eben jener Anspruch stößt im Zusammenhang mit der Göttinger Inszenierung aber auch auf Kritik:

Der Versuch, hier Kunst und Religion wieder eins werden zu lassen, misslang, weil dort, wo Propaganda ist, weder Kunst noch Religion sind. [...] Immerhin: Christliche Propaganda mit surrealistischen Mitteln [angespielt wird auf die Illusionsdurchbrechung durch die direkte Anrede des Publikums in den Apologien der Mörder] ist etwas Neues. Wenn es auch in dieser Verbindung von Religion, Politik und Kunst ein Widerspruch in sich ist. Dazu schmeckt es noch etwas zu sehr nach Prophetenknall und Erweckungschristentum. (Hoffmeister 1947, 7)

<sup>10</sup> Derartige Anklänge finden sich auch bei dem politisch ansonsten so korrekten Hans-Egon Holthusen. Über Eliots spezifische Verbindung von Christentum und Moderne schreibt er: "Ein Geist wie Eliot, der echten politischen Instinkt, 'parlamentarische' Besonnenheit und Nüchternheit des Denkens mit religiöser Genialität, der 'common sense' mit visionärer Mystik verbindet, ist in Deutschland schwer zu begreifen. Russischer Ideologismus und französischer Nihilismus, Desperatismus und 'Existentialismus' ist uns ohne Schwierigkeiten verständlich, weil wir die soziale und politische Situation kennen, in der beides gedeihen kann, und weil beides aus gewissen Ideen der deutschen Philosophie ableitbar ist. Fremder als alle andern aber scheint uns der englische Volksgeist zu sein, der *Denkstil einer Rasse* [meine Hervorhebung], die in ihren besten Exemplaren [!] metaphysische Begabung mit einem fast genialen Tatsachensinn vereinigen kann" (Holthusen 1947, 935).

Wenn der Rezensent *Mord im Dom* gar mit einer Goebbels-Rede in Verbindung bringt, so zeigt sich darin die Kehrseite des Enthusiasmus für Eliots "Botschaft". Offensichtlich waren Teile der deutschen Öffentlichkeit nach Jahren der Indoktrination der Botschaften als solcher überdrüssig, welcher Art sie auch sein mochten.

Die Reaktionen des Publikums auf die Münchner Aufführung von *Mord im Dom* scheinen diese These zu bestätigen. Augenfällig wird dies vor allem anhand der beiden Publikumsanreden, der Weihnachtspredigt Becketts und der Apologie der Mörder.

Bei der Predigt stellte sich heraus, dass die Leute, die nur für eine Theateraufführung bezahlt hatten, sich wohl hintergangen fühlten, als sie sich von einer *action directe* der streitenden Kirche gleichsam überfallen wähnten, und zwar reagierten offenbar Freunde und Feinde des Christentums gleich ablehnend. (Braun 1947, 7)

Wieder ergab sich hier die Situation, dass das über Jahre hinweg indoktrinierte deutsche Publikum sich einer derart konkreten, in diesem Falle christlichen Botschaft wie der von *Mord im Dom* entweder nicht öffnen wollte oder die Angemessenheit von Ort und Mitteln der "Verkündigung" bezweifelte: "Den Gläubigen erscheint [eine Predigt auf dem Theater] als Blasphemie und den weniger Gläubigen als klerikaler Überfall [...]" (Groll 1947). Das Stück fällt beim Münchner Publikum durch.

Eliots Rückgriff auf das mittelalterliche Kirchenspiel stieß im Deutschland des Jahres 1947 offensichtlich an seine Grenzen: Eine gemeinsame religiöse Grundeinstellung, wie sie das Stück zumindest teilweise präsupponiert, existierte nicht. Als rituelles Drama setzt es eine gemeinsame religiöse Basis aber immer schon voraus – der Ritus will mitvollzogen werden. Der große Erfolg, den *Murder in the Cathedral* anlässlich seiner Uraufführung beim *Canterbury Festival* verzeichnen konnte, ist auch darauf zurückzuführen, dass es sich um ein Publikum handelte, bei dem in religiöser Hinsicht keine Überzeugungsarbeit mehr nötig war (Dukes 1948, 114). Dass sich dies in München gänzlich anders verhielt, zeigte sich an der eklatanten Fehleinschätzung der Mordapologien durch das Publikum:

Man war gerade zu einem außerordentlich befriedigten Eindruck über das Plädoyer der weltlichen Mächte [...] hingeführt worden, man wollte mit dem Bewußtsein aufstehen: Ja, sie haben recht, der König, die Richter, die Ritter! ... man war bereit, kräftig Beifall zu klatschen ... nur der Zuruf: "Es geht noch weiter!" rettete die Situation. (*Echo der Woche* 1947)<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Von derartigen Reaktionen bei englischen Aufführungen des Stücks berichtet auch E. Martin Browne in *The Making of T.S. Eliot's Plays* (Browne 1969, 52). Das ist auch nicht weiter verwunderlich: Wenn die Apologien der Ritter die Versuchung der Zuschauer darstellen, so würde es für eine äußerst ungewöhnliche Zusammensetzung des Publikums sprechen, wenn nicht Teile der Versuchung auch tatsächlich erliegen würden. In dieser Lesart wären die Ritter eindeutig die *bad guys*; das Publikum hätte moralisch versagt. Es gibt aber auch eine andere Deutungsmöglichkeit, die die moralischen Wertigkeiten genau umgekehrt verteilt. Anlässlich der Inszenierung am Berliner Hebbel-Theater im Jahr 1949 erschien der von Becket konsequent vertretene Prioritätsanspruch der Kirche mehreren Kritikern als eine Form des Totalitarismus. Entsprechend scharf urteilt der Rezensent der *Berliner Zeitung* (Elrich 1949): "[Eliot] gibt vor, mit den Mitteln des Theaters der Religion zu dienen, aber er meint die Kirche, ihre

Der Rezensent wünschte sich dementsprechend, die “ohnehin nicht überzeugend motivierte Wendung zum Religiösen am Schluß” (*Echo der Woche* 1947) wäre ganz gestrichen worden. Wenn der “eine, ganz einfache, zögernde Satz Thornton Wilders in der *Kleinen Stadt* [*Our Town*,] ‘Etwas muß ewig sein ...’ [, ...] in den Menschen dieser Zeit echtere religiöse Energien [entband]” (Groll 1947) als Eliots *Mord im Dom*, dann zeigt sich daran zwar die prinzipielle Offenheit des deutschen Nachkriegspublikums für eine auch spirituelle Neuorientierung. Gleichzeitig wird aber auch deutlich, dass beileibe nicht jede Botschaft auf offene Ohren stieß, und dass unverbindliche (um nicht zu sagen platte) Weisheiten wie “Etwas muß ewig sein” es bei den ideologiemüden deutschen Zuschauern mit Sicherheit leichter hatten als Eliots orthodoxe Sühnethematik.<sup>12</sup>

#### 4. Sinnsuche und Neuorientierung

Wenngleich Eliots Drama um Thomas Becket auf der Bühne wenig mehr als ein Achtungserfolg beschieden war, ließ es sich als Sprachkunstwerk in Zusammenhang mit Eliots Gesamtwerk setzen, insbesondere mit den Dichtungen ab “Ash Wednesday.” Dies wurde exemplarisch in *Ein Weg zu T.S. Eliot* von Grete und Hans Heinrich Schaefer durchgeführt, wo das Stück als Teil des “hellen und befreienden” Spätwerks erscheint. Für den weltanschaulichen Strang der deutschen Eliot-Kritik wird insbesondere die Annahme wichtig, dass die Einstellung zu Eliot etwas über die moralische Konstitution des Rezipienten aussage. Für die Bewunderer Eliots stellte sich die Frage, ob der mäßige Erfolg von *Mord im Dom* nicht darauf zurückzuführen sei, dass das Publikum dem Stück nicht gewachsen gewesen sei: “Diese Dichtung fordert Entscheidung, die überkommene, gewohnte Tradition des ‘Zuschauens’ wird überwunden und aus dem Zuschauer wird ein Mitvollziehender” (Kienecker 1947, 300). *Mord im Dom* wird so zum Prüfstein der ethischen Gesinnung und geistigen Tiefe von Leser bzw. Zuschauer:

Gültigen Anteil an dieser hohen Dichtung gewinnt nur, wer bereit und fähig ist, die Vordergründigkeit und Vorläufigkeit der sichtbaren Oberfläche zu durchdringen und durchzustoßen in die Tiefe der ganzen Wahrheit. (Kienecker 1947, 299-300)

Eliots Mysterienspiel erscheint in diesem Zusammenhang als Wegweiser aus der gegenwärtigen geistigen Krise, als Orientierungspunkt im Chaos der Nachkriegszeit:

Es ist das Drama eines Glaubens an den Sinn des Lebens, an die Erneuerung der ewigen Werte und Lebensgesetze, die eine unselige Entwicklung der Geschichte verschüttet

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Herrschaft und ihre – Politik. [... W]orum es jetzt in [seinem] Schauspiel [...] geht, ist nicht das Christentum, sondern die Herrschaft seiner Repräsentanten – und derer, die diese Herrschaft brauchen, um sie zu gebrauchen. [...] D]er Mensch soll den Weg, der ihn über Auflösung und Zerfall der Ordnungen zur totalen Hörigkeit führt, für die direkte Straße zur Erlösung halten.” Wird das Stück so gelesen, haben die Ritter recht; diejenigen, die ihnen Beifall klatschen, zeigen sich als aufrechte Demokraten.

<sup>12</sup> Zum großen Erfolg von Wilders privat-quietistischen Stücken im Deutschland der Nachkriegszeit siehe Frenz 1961, Oppel 1977 und Lang 1987.

und durch Mechanisierung ersetzt hatte. [...] Die Zeit des Nihilismus liegt hinter uns [...]. T.S. Eliots Dichtung ist eine einzige ernste und tiefe Mahnung an unsere Trümmerswelt. (Hübner 1950, 352)<sup>13</sup>

Das Stück wird hier auch als Kontrapunkt zum existentialistischen Drama wahrgenommen, das im Deutschland der Nachkriegszeit kontrovers diskutiert wurde. Durchaus gemeinsam etwa mit Sartres Bühnenwerk wird *Mord im Dom* aber dem so genannten "magischen Theater" zugerechnet, als dessen Hauptvertreter Wilder und O'Neill gelten. Der maßgebliche Versuch, das magische Theater näher zu definieren, Gunter Grolls gleichnamiger Artikel im *Theater-Almanach* 1946/47 (Groll 1946), bleibt allerdings einigermaßen vage. Einziges Kennzeichen der unter diesem Begriff subsumierten Stücke scheint es zu sein, dass entweder sprechende Tote auftreten oder sich das Stück in sonst einer Form mit dem Tod auseinandersetzt – wobei eine Auseinandersetzung schon dann gegeben zu sein scheint, wenn überhaupt eine der Personen stirbt. Klar benannt werden hingegen die emotionalen Befindlichkeiten, aus denen heraus Stücke wie Wilders *Unsere kleine Stadt* für die besiegten Deutschen so attraktiv werden:

[D]as Gesamtphänomen des magischen Theaters hat [...] einen unmittelbar aus dem Zentrum der Zeit genährten und insofern legitimen Zug. In ihm spricht sich wohl Hilflosigkeit, Sehnsucht, Flucht vor der Wirklichkeit und Urangst der Epoche, doch gleichzeitig ein Einströmen eines verwandelnden Grundgefühls und ein neues existentielles Bewusstsein aus. (Groll 1946, 258)

Dass die meisten dieser in Deutschland so intensiv rezipierten Stücke aus dem Ausland kamen, wenn auch teilweise mit einiger Verspätung, lässt die "Sinnsuche" nicht als ausschließlich deutsches Phänomen erscheinen. Ebenso wenig beschränkte sie sich auf die Dramatik: Die von der literarischen Moderne diagnostizierte Fragmentierung von Kultur und Gesellschaft führte auch anderswo zu einem vermehrten Bedarf an Orientierung und überzeitlichen Normen. Diese Entwicklung hatte Eliot exemplarisch vollzogen. So jedenfalls sah es Hans-Egon Holthusen:

Eliots Fortschritt zum christlichen Glaubensbekenntnis ist kein untergeordnetes Nebenthema des Zeitgeistes, sondern entspricht einer legitimen und hochbedeutenden Hauptströmung im Denken der Epoche. [...] Wo der totale Bankrott einer säkularisierten Zivilisation, der Zusammenbruch aller Illusionen über die Leistungsfähigkeit der menschlichen Vernunft, die Relativität, der "Chiffre"-Charakter aller philosophischen Systeme allgemein bewusst geworden ist, da liegt es in der "Teleologie" der geistigen Sachlage, dass eine Instanz, die oberhalb der Kapazität menschlicher Ideen besteht, gleichsam unentbehrlich wird. (Holthusen 1947, 936-7)

In Deutschland, wo dieser Bankrott totaler kaum zu denken war, erstaunt es wenig, dass das von Eliot propagierte christliche Gedankengut auf fruchtbaren Boden fiel. Gleichwohl war Eliot im deutschen Theater bis etwa 1950 kein durchschlagender Erfolg beschert. Doch auch dies änderte sich in der Folgezeit. Ausgehend

<sup>13</sup> Angesichts der geradezu enthusiastischen Bereitschaft, Eliots Sühnethematik zur eigenen zu machen, ist es umso bezeichnender, dass der Nationalsozialismus hier euphemistisch-abstrakt als "unglückselige Entwicklung der Geschichte" gefasst wird – denn wer könnte für eine solche Entwicklung persönliche Schuld tragen?

vom Düsseldorfer Schauspielhaus unter Gustav Gründgens wurde Eliot zu einem der meistgespielten englischen Autoren der frühen fünfziger Jahre (Daiber 1976, 53). Im Zeitraum von 1947 bis 1975 wurde *Die Cocktail Party* (*The Cocktail Party*) 49 mal, *Der Privatsekretär* (*The Confidential Clerk*) 25 mal und *Ein verdienter Staatsmann* (*The Elder Statesman*) 24 mal inszeniert. Die Gesamtzahl der Aufführungen einschließlich *Mord im Dom* und *Der Familientag* (*The Family Reunion*) betrug 2012 (Hadamczik 1978, 54). Von dieser Popularität profitierte *Mord im Dom* jedoch kaum; das Stück wurde zunehmend in die respektable Marginalität sommerlicher Festspiele und Freilichtaufführungen verbannt, so dass etliche deutsche Domstufen zur Bühne des Spiels um Thomas Becket wurden.

Das Interesse an Eliots dramatischem Werk nahm ab 1962 zusehends ab; zwischen 1968 und 1975 kam es überhaupt nur noch zu zwei Inszenierungen (Hadamczik 1978, 54). Diese Entwicklung spiegelt den Gang der deutschen Eliot-Rezeption insgesamt. Der Dichter war für diejenigen, die das 'Dritte Reich' und seinen Zusammenbruch noch bewusst miterlebt hatten, insbesondere aufgrund seiner Verbindung von Innovation und Tradition ein Bildungserlebnis gewesen: Eliot wollte "durch Umwertung bewahren und durch Bewahrung umwerten" (Viebrock / Frank 1975, 17) – dem insgesamt ambivalenten Charakter der sogenannten 'Stunde Null' trug dies ideal Rechnung. Die Notwendigkeit eines Neuanfangs war unübersehbar, doch ein totaler Bruch mit der Vergangenheit war zum einen wohl illusionär, erschien zum anderen aber auch nicht wünschenswert. Das deutsche Bedürfnis nach Neuorientierung beinhaltete auch die Notwendigkeit, sich auf die Vergangenheit des 'besseren Deutschland' zu besinnen. Eliots Konzept der wechselseitigen Abhängigkeit von Vergangenheit und Gegenwart bot hier erste Ansätze; zudem schien er nicht wenigen die Punkte zu artikulieren, an denen sich ein Neuanfang zu orientieren habe.

Eliot war eine Leitfigur im kulturellen Leben der frühen Bundesrepublik. Bis in die frühen sechziger Jahre hinein wurden seine Positionen nur selten hinterfragt – die teils kritische Aufnahme von *Mord im Dom* bildet hier eine Ausnahme. Als die Bundesrepublik ab Mitte der sechziger Jahre allerdings immer größeren Teilen der Öffentlichkeit als zu überwindendes "System" erschien, wirkte sich dies auch auf die Wahrnehmung Eliots aus: Nicht nur ließ das Interesse an ihm stark nach, er geriet auch zunehmend in Misskredit – als Reaktionär, Antisemit, Klerikofaschist (Viebrock / Frank 1975, 17). Doch weder Heiligenverehrung noch Ikonoklasmus haben sich dauerhaft als Paradigma der deutschen Eliot-Rezeption etablieren können. Während sich das lyrische Werk eines unumstritten kanonischen Status erfreut, werden seine Dramen und kulturkritischen Schriften, derjenige Teil des Werks also, der im Deutschland der vierziger und fünfziger Jahre Orientierung im Neuanfang bot und in den sechziger Jahren zum Stein des anti-bourgeois Anstoßes wurde, heute bestenfalls am Rande zur Kenntnis genommen. Eliots literarische Bedeutung ist unstrittig, seine politische Relevanz jedoch ist verblasst.

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CORINA ANGHEL CRISU

## “Tell Nannan I Walked”: Reconstructing Manhood in Ernest J. Gaines’s *A Lesson before Dying*\*

**Abstract:** Drawing on a variety of philosophical and ethical views, as well as on African American studies, this paper discusses the way in which Ernest J. Gaines’s *A Lesson before Dying* reconsiders the black male character in the context of racial prejudices in the segregated South in the late 1940s. The paper demonstrates that Gaines is one of the authors who had to face the difficult task of transforming the invisible African American presence into the central element of his narrative. From a silent, subjugated figure, from being simply a substitute of the white man, the black protagonist metamorphoses into a *polytropic* character. The article proposes a close textual and intertextual analysis of Gaines’s reconstruction of black male identity. The main argument focuses on the way in which Gaines rewrites the earlier representation of the lonely rebellious African American – (de)constructing the image of the *native son* and *invisible man* – by insisting on the importance of the pedagogical role of the community.

If we must die, let it not be like hogs  
Hunted and penned in an inglorious spot. (Claude McKay)

The major conflict in my work is when the black male attempts to go beyond the line that is drawn for him. But you’ve also got conflict between young and old, between the desire to go back to the place where you were born or to stay where you are, between religious feeling and atheism [...]. There has to be conflict before there can be a story and before the story reveals racial tensions. (Ernest J. Gaines, in Magnier 1995, 6)

### 1. “A White-Defined Heroism”: Beyond Assumptions

Stripped of their humanity, their names and social status, African Americans strangely creep inside canonized white narratives in which they act as contrasting images for defining white heroes. In these works, the authorial focus has always been on the white protagonist’s quest, whose heroism is narcissistically highlighted by a black presence “playing” in the background. By specifying that “literary blackness” is part of the world of “literary whiteness,” Toni Morrison criticizes the assumption that “traditional, canonical American literature is free of, uninformed, and unshaped by the four-hundred-year-old presence of, first, Afri-

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cans and then African-Americans in the United States” (1992, 4-5). As she stresses in *Playing in the Dark*, the main characteristics of American literature are shaped as a response “to a dark, abiding, signifying Africanist presence,” which is “crucial to [the white writers’] sense of Americanness” (6).

What would have happened, we can ask with Morrison, if such a black character as Hemingway’s Wesley had been individualized, given a prominent role in a narrative in which his only function is to underline the white man’s omnipotence? Hemingway’s text and countless others foreground instances of white heroes whose identity development feeds in a vampire-like manner on the marginal black presence.<sup>1</sup> In order to let the subaltern speak, African American authors had to face the difficult task of transforming this invisible black presence into the central element of a complex racial, spiritual, and cultural adventure. From a silent, subjugated figure, from being simply a substitute of the white man, the black protagonist metamorphoses into a *polytropic*<sup>2</sup> character, whose restorative presence changes the others’ destiny for the better.

In the motley landscape of contemporary African American literature, Ernest J. Gaines has a distinguished place; his fame grew after the 1970s with the publication of his acclaimed revisionary slave narrative, *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman*. In his novels – *Catherine Carmier* (1964), *Of Love and Dust* (1967), *The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman* (1971), *In My Father’s House* (1978), *A Gathering of Old Men* (1983), and *A Lesson before Dying* (1993) – Gaines explores in depth the dehumanizing consequences of racial discrimination, the collision between past and present mind-sets, as well as the importance of resistance to the myth of white supremacy.

Gaines’s novel *A Lesson before Dying* (winner of the 1993 National Book Critics Circle Award) is an intricate instance of the subtle ways in which authorial awareness succeeds in disassociating blacks from degrading images. The author moves away from the representation of black manhood as a simple shadow of the white man’s superego, and moreover, he presents black heroism as a central element of his narrative. In order to accomplish his task, Gaines reaches down to the lowest social strata and brings up the most miserable character – an epitome of the wretched of the earth.

The author chooses the period of the late 1940s, a difficult time characterized by postwar economic uncertainty, racial tensions in a segregated South where Jim Crow laws prevailed, and a growing Southern resistance to integration and recognizing black civil rights. Documenting the violent changes of the time, Gaines describes an event that shakes a small Cajun Louisiana community: the trial of a young black man, Jefferson, who is accidentally involved in shooting a

<sup>1</sup> In *Playing in the Dark*, Morrison broadly analyzes the antithesis between the white man, Harry, and the black man, Wesley, two characters in Ernest Hemingway’s *To Have and Have Not*.

<sup>2</sup> Polytropic from Gr. *polytropos* (*poly* + *tropos*), turning many ways, versatile, also much traveled. As *The Oxford English Dictionary* (1989, vol. XII, s.v.) points out, the term refers to the capability “of turning to many courses or expedients.” In my understanding of the term *polytropic*, there are two basic meanings: first, being polytropic means being in a continuous mental movement; second, it means deviating from settled rules in a multiplicity of directions.

white storekeeper. Accused of murder, Jefferson is condemned to death in the electric chair several months later. During his imprisonment, Jefferson is able to reinvent himself and proves to be an example of humanity for both the black and the white characters. He appears as a symbolic person whose emancipatory movement from physical bondage to spiritual liberation takes place within the circumscribed area of panoptic white power. Jefferson's story is told from the perspective of a black teacher, Grant Wiggins, the character-observer who narrates both his and the others' inner struggle.

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Organized into four sections, the present paper focuses on the importance of reconstructing black manhood in *A Lesson before Dying*. The framing argument is provided by the first section that discusses Gaines's rewriting of the seminal image of the "violent man" or "bad Nigger"<sup>3</sup> present in Richard Wright's *Native Son* (1940). After addressing some of the similarities in Wright's and Gaines's depiction of the criminal, the analysis moves to various methods employed by Gaines in order to depart from Wright's naturalistic view of existential isolation. While Wright's setting is Chicago after the Great Migration (a cityscape where Bigger gets alienated from the others), Gaines's setting is a Southern town in the late 1940s (a countryside where Jefferson is placed in relation to a supportive community).

The second section demonstrates that it is the teacher's *maieutic* mission to awaken Jefferson's conscience, to transform his *self-crushing*<sup>4</sup> image into a heroic effigy.<sup>5</sup> The teacher also has the role of a mediator between the main protagonist and the community. Using Foucault's late writings, the analysis underlines the interrelation between the domains of ethics and freedom, which become essential in reconstructing black manhood.

The third section discusses Gaines's novel in connection with Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* (1952). Tackling the notion of the dominant white discourse, and shaking the buttresses of the white educational institutions, both Ellison and Gaines produce a harsh critique of black existence either as continuous flight or as

<sup>3</sup> For a complex analysis of the figure of the "bad man," see Jerry H. Bryant (2003) who discusses nineteenth-century bad man ballads in connection with the image of the violent man in the fiction of authors such as Wright, Baldwin, Ellison, Himes, Mosley, Wideman, and Morrison. The multiple connotations related to the term "bad nigger" are underlined in Litwack 1998, 438.

<sup>4</sup> "Self-crushing" is a striking attribute to be found in Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God* 1990 [1937], 122.

<sup>5</sup> In her essay "New Narratives of Southern Manhood: Race, Masculinity, and Closure in Ernest Gaines's Fiction," Suzanne W. Jones discusses the way in which Gaines's *Lesson* proposes new versions of black masculinity that disagree with traditional male roles. Jones demonstrates that for Gaines's heroes, "being men in a modern world means accepting their vulnerability, expressing a range of emotions, asking for help and support, learning nonviolent means of resolving conflicts, and accepting behaviors that have traditionally been labeled feminine" (30). The present paper takes for granted Jones's ideas and moves the discussion in a new direction by proposing an intertextual analysis of Gaines's ability to reconstruct black male characters.

mere imitation of white models. From the perspective opened by Ellison, the paper stresses how Gaines condemns the false pedagogy that manipulates students according to white rules, and how he insists on a form of resistance pedagogy that implies “communal responsibility” (cf. Folks 1999). Gaines’s novel thus reconceptualizes African American identity as heroic behavior that subverts pre-existing forms of power.

The last section of the paper reveals that *A Lesson before Dying* addresses issues of transcendence. Its message refers not only to the trespassing of racial and social lines, but also to one’s ability to move beyond the designated limits by means of religious belief or faith in a black communal hero. Gaines does not simply restore Jefferson’s dignity, humanity, and sense of liberation in the face of death. He also places him in a religious environment where his heroic redemption resonates deeply into the others’ consciences. His final words inscribed in his journal can be understood as a symbolic “lesson” that encompasses a *peratology* – a science of crossing one’s limits – in which the student/teacher roles are interchangeable.

## 2. Dispossessions: Native Son’s “Unfinished Quest”

Even though Gaines does not “see the world” in the same way as Richard Wright, he admits in an interview that both of them struggle to present in their writing the same dehumanizing effects of racism (Magnier 1995, 7). Gaines differentiates his manner of writing from that of his precursor, while simultaneously acknowledging their common focus on redefining black identity. As Keith Byerman specifies, “this very denial of literary fathers, also made by James Baldwin, Ralph Ellison, and Amiri Baraka (LeRoi Jones), has itself become part of a tradition” (1985, 41).

By drawing an intertextual parallel between Gaines’s *A Lesson before Dying* and Wright’s *Native Son*, one should take into account the two authors’ focus on similar literary matters: the importance of finding imaginative ways of redrawing the figure of the negative character – the outcast, the criminal, the prisoner. Both Wright and Gaines deconstruct the stereotype of the black man as a “beast” reflected in numberless literary portrayals from the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries.<sup>6</sup> Both authors present young rebellious heroes who seem to “hide from humanity” by experiencing feelings of anger and shame – “that ubiquitous emotion in social life” (Nussbaum 2004, 173). While

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<sup>6</sup> See, for example, Thomas Nelson Page’s *Red Rock* (1898) and Thomas Dixon’s *The Clansman* (1905) as turn-of-the-century novels that proliferate the “beast” image of the black man, an image that has roots in biological views of the African race as inferior. In *The Black Image in the White Mind*, George M. Fredrickson indicates that, at the beginning of the century, demonized images of blacks were propagated mostly in connection with rape. Moreover, “although rape was the central and most horrifying example of the Negro’s allegedly inherent criminality, some writers took a broader approach and emphasized the increase of Negro crime of all sorts” (Fredrickson 1987, 281).

denouncing public exposure and imprisonment as ways of reinforcing white morality, both authors rethink the rebellious image of the *native son* as a means of reconstructing African American manhood.

There is a long, thorny path from Jefferson's wordless apathy to his final words: "Tell Nannan I walked" (254). Jefferson's phrase echoes Bigger's message to his mother: "Tell Ma I was all right and not to worry none" (453). In both novels, self-erasure is replaced by self-affirmation, as expressed by the two heroes' final gesture of overcoming the determinism of social forces. For both characters, their imprisonment initiates the process of self-awareness. On the one hand, Bigger assumes the significance of his crimes as part of his self-definition and learns to articulate his own story in order to defend himself. On the other hand, Jefferson becomes conscious of the uselessness of his anger and the impossibility of claiming his innocence, while acknowledging that a dignified attitude is the only solution.

*A Lesson before Dying* begins where *Native Son* ends.<sup>7</sup> While captivated by the sensational thriller of Bigger Thomas's troubled existence, while watching his two crimes, his flight, capture, trial and death sentence, one is left with a sense of Bigger's unfulfilled potential. Subtly connecting in a naturalistic manner the relationship between Bigger's environment and his reaction to it, Wright places him in a communal void. As Nick Aaron Ford suggests, the main theme of Wright's novel encodes "the inability of the individual to find satisfactory fellowship in the group" (1970, 29). What triggered the causes of his "unfinished quest"?<sup>8</sup> What made Bigger surround himself with this impenetrable aura of spiteful solitude? Was it his mother's version of the American Dream, her desire for him to find a decent job that would pull them out of the poorest black neighborhoods in Chicago? Or the impossibility to continue attending a Southern school during the Great Depression of the 1930s? Or the killing of his father in a riot when Bigger was a boy?

Trapped in a hostile social environment, Bigger is alienated from both the black and the white community. When he is fortunate enough to get a "decent job" as a chauffeur for a white family, the Daltons, he still perceives their Daltonism, their color blindness that accounts for their inability to really see him. Even Mary, their "open minded" daughter, makes him feel insecure whenever she treats him as her equal, thus stressing the racial/social gap between them. As some critics have suggested, although he kills Mary by accident, his act might be fully intended.

The above remarks were primarily supposed to draw attention to the feeling of universal dispossession that Wright constantly inflicts upon his character. The

<sup>7</sup> It is interesting to remember here *Native Son*'s genesis. Disclosing the process of writing his novel in his Introduction to *Native Son*, Wright confesses that he initially wrote the last part of the novel, that is, the scene in the courtroom.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Fabre (1973) who argues that *Native Son* seems to end without developing Bigger's sense of liberation. In Wright's own words, the novel seems to contain a number of "unrealized potentialities" (Wright 2000, 30).

writer himself underlines that Bigger Thomas “is the product of a dislocated society,” that “he is a dispossessed and disinherited man” (Wright 2000, 15). Hence the epigraph of his novel, pointing to the emblematic story of the Biblical Job – whose loss functions as a test of faith:

Even today is my complaint rebellious,  
My stroke is heavier than my groaning. (32)

Bigger’s dispossession should be considered both in a social and economic context, as well as from a cultural and religious perspective. As most critics have suggested, his failure to be integrated into the system is mostly due to the very system that “is responsible for everything Bigger is” (Jackson 1985, 447). More than that, Bigger is dispossessed of human assistance, as he dangerously inhabits an emotional wasteland. He becomes estranged from his girlfriend, Bessie, whom he rapes and later kills for fear that she would betray him. He has no real friend to show him compassion, the only exceptions being the communist Jan and his advocate Max, who finally do their best to understand him. As we follow Bigger’s tempestuous race, all the other characters fade into mere sketches, lose their concreteness, and no longer interact with him. In such a Sartrean, existentialist novel, the individual is left alone and there is no prospect to transcend subjectivity.

If we read *A Lesson before Dying* with *Native Son* as a point of reference, we observe that Gaines’s book opens with the same motif of crime and punishment with which Wright’s novel ends. In prison, Jefferson embodies a new version of a Native Son: a lonely, victimized, orphaned character. Job’s complaint is even truer in Jefferson’s case, since he is a naïve young man who suffers undeservedly. Even if he is accidentally involved in the shooting of a white man, even if the defense calls him “an innocent bystander,” the prosecutor keeps stressing Jefferson’s premeditated crime, placing his story in a stereotypical scenario where he presumably plays the role of the “bad Nigger.” His attempt to establish the truth is useless, his testimony does not count:

A white man had been killed during a robbery, and though two of the robbers had been killed on the spot, one had been captured, and he, too, would have to die. Though he told them no, he had nothing to do with it, that he was on his way to the White Rabbit Bar and Lounge when Brother and Bear drove up beside him and offered him a ride. After he got into the car, they asked him if he had any money. When he told them he didn’t have a solitary dime, it was then that Brother and Bear started talking credit, saying that old Gropé should not mind crediting them a pint since he knew them well, and he knew that the grinding season was coming soon, and they would be able to pay him back then. (4)

The above scene reminds us of another instance in *Native Son*, in which Bigger’s pals Gus, Jack, and G.H. are the same sort of troublemakers as Jefferson’s friends, Brother and Bear. In *Native Son*, Bigger and his friends plan to rob a white man’s shop, but the plan is never realized. What is only suggested in Wright’s novel does actually take place in Gaines’s story. Here, Jefferson’s friends do not commit a premeditated crime, since their only intention is to have a drink. As the white storekeeper refuses to offer them alcohol, they shoot and kill each other. Left

alone at the scene of the crime, Jefferson acts unintentionally, in a state of prostrated bewilderment. His half-conscious decision of having a drink and getting the money from the counter stigmatizes him in white people's eyes as a criminal, a drunkard, and a robber.

Without social and moral status, Jefferson suffers another form of dispossession: he is deprived of his manhood, his intelligence, his humanity. Significantly, this blow does not come from the prosecution, but from the defense that uses the argument of racial inferiority as the very proof of Jefferson's lack of guilt. In front of a racially mixed audience, the court-appointed attorney invokes Jefferson's racial inferiority as an argument for his innocence. He thus brings forth the reductive perspectives upon Africans that have been perpetuated by the works of such philosophers as Friedrich Hegel, David Hume, or Arnold Toynbee. The zoomorphic definition that the attorney manages to imprint on Jefferson's identity – "a cornered animal," "a hog" (7) – discloses the attorney's internalization of white prejudices. Intertextually, this definition evokes another scene in Wright's novel, where Buckley, the prosecuting attorney, repeatedly calls Bigger a "half-human black," a "thing," a "beast," a "fiend" (403). In addition, the newspapers proliferate an animal-like image of Bigger, a demonized version of a criminal and rapist whom the enraged whites desire to lynch. As Trudier Harris explains, lynching was a form of punishment that emerged as a result of racial antagonism, serving as an instrument to consolidate white supremacy by symbolically and literally emasculating black men (1984, xii). Even if the events in *A Lesson before Dying* happen nearly twenty years after those in *Native Son*, and even if Gaines's novel does not explicitly discuss lynching, this idea appears in infinitely subtle ways. One may argue here that Jefferson is spiritually lynched, crippled, and mortified. Like Bigger, Jefferson is "a particular person who struggles with the burden of his humanity" (Gibson 1995, 35), with the white reductive gaze that stigmatizes him as a criminal.

Jefferson's precarious notion of *being* is defined in terms of not *having*, so that his own pejorative self-definition marks his dispossession, as is revealed by the dialogue between Jefferson and Grant:

"Reverend Ambrose say I have to give up what's down here. Say there ain't nothing down here on this earth for me no more."  
 "He meant possessions, Jefferson. Cars, money, clothes – things like that."  
 "You ever seen me with a car, Mr. Wiggins?"  
 "No."  
 "With more than a dollar in my pocket?"  
 "No."  
 "More than two pair shoes, Mr. Wiggins? One for Sunday, and for working in?"  
 "No, Jefferson."  
 "Then what on earth I got to give up, Mr. Wiggins?"  
 "You've never had any possessions to give up, Jefferson. But there is something greater than possessions – and that is love..."  
 "Y'all asking a lot, Mr. Wiggins, from a poor old nigger who never had nothing." (222)

In addition to the reference to Jefferson's lack of possessions, this scene also contains the solution employed by Gaines to redefine his protagonist. As this paper

will further explore, *A Lesson before Dying* stresses that only Jefferson's responsible care for the others, as well as the others' united efforts to help him can be channelled towards a collective project of spiritual redemption.

### 3. The Teacher's "Lesson": Ethics and Freedom

Enlarging Wright's textual quest, Gaines accomplishes a thorough revision of African American male identity in relationship to Southern communal values, social institutions, and racial issues. *A Lesson before Dying* thus focuses on an initiatory process, during which Jefferson acquires a polytropic identity so that his self-definition changes from an animal-like to a heroic image. In this way, Gaines's "fiction demonstrates his penetrating understanding of the complexities and subtleties of universal nature that affect and are affected by these regional realities" (Hudson 1985, 515). In truth, the South appears as a significant regional reality whose ethical principles contribute to Jefferson's self-reconstruction. Unlike Bigger – an uprooted character taken from his native South to Chicago – Jefferson is beneficially affected by the Southern traditional culture, "which includes African-American religion, respect for elders, loyalty to family and neighbors, and common-sense morality, a useful and enduring cultural tradition that can be set against the fragmentation inherent in the long Diaspora" (Folks 1999, 259).

In this Southern milieu, Gaines creates a constellation of symbolic black figures that contribute to Jefferson's development: the teacher (Grant Wiggins), Jefferson's godmother (Miss Emma), Grant's lover (Vivian), Grant's aunt (Tante Lou), the priest (Reverend Ambrose), and the children whom Grant teaches. In addition, a white man significantly named Paul Bonin appears to show sympathy for Jefferson; like the Biblical Paul converted to Christianity, Paul Bonin is "converted" to an understanding that transcends racial limits. In this way, Gaines's reconstruction of black manhood transforms his hero's invisibility (imprisonment/marginality) into visibility (liberation/centrality) by placing him in relation to the black and white community.

By highlighting the principles of the elders, Grant Wiggins makes an important contribution to Jefferson's conversion. His role is reminiscent of a mediator between the *puer* and the *senex*, between Jefferson (the rebellious youth) and Miss Emma (the wise elder). Grant has to assume the role of an educator, as urged by Miss Emma's words: "I don't want them to kill no hog. I want a man to go to that chair, on his own two feet" (13). Miss Emma's words intertextually allude to the famous lines written by the Harlem Renaissance poet Claude McKay: "If we must die, let it not be like hogs/Hunted and penned in an inglorious spot" (1997, 984). McKay's insistence on heroic self-reconstruction is echoed by Grant's ideas. Grant thus realizes that his task of assisting Jefferson in redefining himself implies going against the white system that strives to implant self-denigrating images in young black men. Sensing the implications of such a burdensome enterprise, Grant's first gesture is one of negation, of refusal to play "God" (31).

As autumn stretches inaudibly into winter, Grant undertakes a subtle metamorphosis during which the complex facets of his personality are polished through his interaction with the elders. Together with Miss Emma, Reverend Ambrose, and Tante Lou, Grant pays visits to Jefferson in prison, striving to reach beyond the boy's inaccessible blankness. Grant's double task as witness and agent of Jefferson's trial opens up the text for new symbolic readings:

I was not there, yet I was there. No, I did not go to the trial, I did not hear the verdict, because I knew all the time what it would be. Still, I was there. I was there as much as anyone else was there. Either I sat behind my aunt and his godmother or I sat beside them. (3)

Through the technique of *indirect directness* which suggests both attachment and detachment, the above fragment hints at the narrator's ubiquitous *presentia in absentia*, to his position as an insider/outsider, able to preserve his perspective while incorporating the views of others. The paragraph also sets the utterly simple, objective tone of the novel à la Hemingway; it points to the procedure of not burdening the sentence unnecessarily, as if leaving space for the words to breathe.

This metaphorical freedom of words is made explicit in the message of the novel: the importance of liberating oneself from the white normative discourse that reifies blackness. In this respect, the book deeply resonates with Michel Foucault's views. Throughout his work, Foucault stresses the impossibility of liberating oneself from the network of power in which one is caught, while he nevertheless maintains that one can become free only in connection with others. In his late texts, Foucault constructs the "ethics of the concern of the self," in which one's self-formation is connected with one's relationship to others. He considers that "human freedom is expressed in the deliberate actions individuals perform in response to others and the world," so that "one can be neither detached from one's own actions and possibilities nor inconsiderate of others and still be free" (Infinito 2003, 156-7).

Gaines emphasizes that the complementary domains of ethics and freedom are equally important for his characters' ontological (re)definition. In a creative sense, both ethics and freedom are essential for Jefferson's and Grant's self-transformation, as well as for changing others. Being a teacher, Grant strongly advocates the importance of ethics for a new educational system that assists one's formation, in an antinomian manner that defies normalized identities.<sup>9</sup> Struggling to disrupt various formative discourses, Grant must fight on several battlefields: the black man's cell, the black children's school, the white man's kitchen, and the black people's club. Using what Foucault called "technologies of the self" (1988a), Grant helps Jefferson assume a fully realized identity by revealing to him his potential

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<sup>9</sup> James Marshall states that Foucault's work on power has challenged the process of education from two points of view: "first, philosophically, his work challenges liberal education philosophy (and liberal education) and its use of authority as the fundamental concept for describing and understanding the 'process' of the transmission of knowledge [...]. Second, he challenges the relationship between teacher and learner and the sorts of human relationship that underline that relationship" (2002, 413-4).

for spiritual freedom in spite of the imprisoning conditions. This form of reconstructing manhood is thus achieved only through intense self-examination and dialogue with others.<sup>10</sup>

Even if he is placed in the privileged position of a literate person, Grant himself passes through an acute crisis characterized by his feeling of entrapment within the limitations of his own community.<sup>11</sup> His frustration is exacerbated by the scarcity of financial means, the poverty of children, and meagre teaching materials. The place where he teaches – the church – functions as a symbolic setting, framing his pedagogic assignment within the community's religious activity. By juxtaposing the church and the school in the same institutionalized space, Gaines urges the reader to consider their equal importance in education. Both the church and the school appear as systems of power that work to discipline either the body or the spirit. Conscious that the church is imbued by white ideology, Grant admits that even his teaching has to follow the imposed white norms meant to “tame” black children by keeping them half-illiterate.

In the segregated South of the late 1940s, where the doctrine “separate but equal” actually meant “separated but unequal,” Grant is able to recognize the social and economic reasons that made many white people oppose any education for blacks. Seen as “mules and oxen,” African Americans were needed as a source of cheap labor and this is why they were consciously denied access to knowledge (Litwack 1998, 101). As Frank Schubert cogently notes, Gaines's novel is “a strong reminder of the South's success in the Civil War.” The novel stresses the maintenance “of a two-tiered racial system, albeit without chattel slavery, through a combination of legislation, custom, and outright terror for an entire century. The vocabulary of Gaines's novel underscores the South's long-term triumph – ‘plantation,’ ‘quarter,’ ‘back door’ – as does the entire narrative regarding social arrangements” [Schubert, copy in author's files].<sup>12</sup>

<sup>10</sup> As Justen Infinito points out, “absolute control of or liberation from the forces of power was not Foucault's goal – indeed, for him this is an impossibility – nevertheless, he advocated exerting our positive freedom by experimenting on and creating a self” (2003, 163). According to Foucault, there are certain technologies of self-formation that allow us to disrupt various discourses. Exploring the ancient technologies of the self, Foucault noticed that the Greeks used to understand their own existence as a permanent exercise (1988 b).

<sup>11</sup> Grant's desire to leave is also hindered by his relationship with his girlfriend, Vivian Baptiste, who gets divorced and, in order to keep her children, cannot leave Bayonne. Symbolically, Vivian reminds us of Catherine Carmier, the title heroine of Gaines's first novel (1964). Like Catherine, Vivian comes from a Creole family who forbids her to associate with anyone darker than herself. Like Catherine, who falls in love with Jackson, a black man, Vivian's first husband is black – hence the racial and emotional conflict initiated by her family's mentality. Moreover, by describing the relationship between Grant and Vivian, *A Lesson before Dying* also stresses another aspect: Vivian's struggle to be accepted as a Creole by Grant's black community. Since Vivian, Grant's aunt, and Miss Emma share the same religious and ethical values, they learn to accept and respect each other.

<sup>12</sup> Schubert's point is also supported by Oliver and Lois E. Horton, who draw attention to the difference between the urban, industrial North and the rural, agrarian South where the two-tiered slave system survived during Reconstruction, and later during the twentieth century: “As the nation turned its attention to the more northern concerns of industrialization, urbanization, and European migration, the South was increasingly free to develop its own

A significant instance of disciplining ideology is offered in a key scene, in which Dr. Joseph, the school inspector, pays a visit to the school. As in an episode taken from a slave narrative, Dr. Joseph starts inspecting the children's hands and teeth. His "lesson" to them lays stress on hard work, leaving little room for intellectual activities: "In other words, hard work was good for the young body. Picking cotton, gathering potatoes, pulling onions, working in the garden – all of that was good exercise for a growing boy or girl" (56). Mispronouncing Wiggins's name, Dr. Joseph hilariously calls him *Higgins*, a name that reminds us of the professor in Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion*. Indeed, departing from the model offered by Dr. Joseph, Grant assumes the true role of a Pygmalion, one who does not only transform himself, but also models his students internally into "responsible young men and young ladies" (39). Through a Foucauldian lens, Grant's demand from each of his students is to *work* on himself or herself, seeking to "develop and transform oneself, and to attain to a certain mode of being" (Foucault 1984, 282). By all means, Grant searches for transgressive ways of breaking the vicious circle that makes these children either run away from Bayonne or remain at home to live in poverty. His option for a form of pedagogical ethics that is constructive rather than reductive points to his understanding of education as a liberating process of self-creation and not as a process of normalization.

#### 4. Rethinking Ellison: "A Myth of Success"

Searching for new pedagogical means of reconstructing black identity, Gaines undermines the white institutionalized educational standards. In his *Lesson*, he highlights two types of fallacies that have led to an erroneous idea of freedom: first, the error of negating the black community's values, and second, the mistake of unselectively adopting the white educational models. The representation of African American identity forks in two directions: in the first instance, the black person turns into an outsider/runaway, while in the second, he/she turns into a mere imitator/pretender.

A famous critique of these two stereotypes – the runaway and the imitator – can be found in Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*. Ellison's masterpiece stresses the same point as *A Lesson before Dying*, i.e. negative images of black identity are proliferated in order to consolidate the myth of white domination. As will be further discussed in this part, both Ellison and Gaines expose the necessity of subverting hegemonic norms by challenging the image of the black fugitive and that of the black imitator. At the beginning of *Invisible Man*, the narrator's grandfather urges the reader to become accomplice to his haunting message: "To Whom It May Concern: Keep This Nigger-Boy Running" (26). As the nameless narrator obeys his grandfather's advice, his existence proves to be a continuous flight. We follow his convoluted trajectory from the rural South to the urban

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policies on race, and southern blacks found themselves isolated in poverty and oppression. For most African Americans freedom remained – in the words of poet Langston Hughes a generation later – 'a dream deferred'" (2001, 199).

North, from the Edenic college to the paint factory, from the Brotherhood to his hibernating hole. While “the boomerangs of history are ever whirling down on the protagonist’s naïve head” (O’Meally 1994, 245), two more decades will pass before he acknowledges the uselessness of his running, the illusion of his progress.<sup>13</sup> In order to do that, he will have to get rid of his dream of equality, of his “unquestioning willingness to do what is required of him by others as a myth of success” (Ellison 1972, 177). His innocence manifests itself on various occasions: when he is expelled from college for revealing too much about his black people to Mr. Norton, a white man; when he is unable to obtain a job as a result of the accusatory letters he receives from Dr. Bledsoe; when he misinterprets the Brotherhood’s manipulation of phony social slogans. Ultimately, his descent into his well-lit hole conveys the pointlessness of his existential flight and the revelation of his emblematic invisibility.

The grandfather’s message in *Invisible Man* adumbrates Matthew Antoine’s ideas in *A Lesson before Dying*. A former teacher, Matthew Antoine stresses the importance of escaping a choking environment by prompting his students to run away from Bayonne, despite the violent death that might await them in the future. Putting into practice Antoine’s advice of breaking their vicious circle, a great number of young men have been mesmerized by the Eldorado of a better life. Away from their community, labeled as criminals, they could never transcend the poverty and violence of their condition. Consequently, Antoine’s pedagogy perpetuates the myth of black illiteracy that goes back to the time of slavery. Referring to the inability to surpass the determinism of social forces, Antoine chastises Grant for his increased efforts to educate his pupils, to “scrape away” their ignorance:

When you see that those five and a half months you spend in that church each year are just a waste of your time, you will. You will. You’ll see that it’ll take more than five and a half months to wipe away the blanket of ignorance that has been plastered and replastered over those brains in the past three hundred years. (64)

Antoine and Wiggins therefore personify two contrasting educational views. While the first advocates the uselessness of any didactic effort, the latter strives to find ways of guiding the students in their attempt to overcome the oppressive conditions of their circumscribed existence.

At the same time, via Grant, Gaines does not only criticize the image of the black fugitive, but also that of the black imitator. In order to accomplish his liberating mission, Grant must prove the falsity of the learning he has received from the university, the place where one is told “how to succeed in the South as a colored man” (Gaines 1993, 65). Whereas in college he was taught mere numbers and letters, Grant now realizes that he needs to grasp the real situation of his people. Gaines emphasizes the black students’ manipulation by means of the mirage of a successful career – an idea to be found in *Invisible Man* as well.

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<sup>13</sup> The invisible man acknowledges his awareness in the prologue of Ellison’s book, where he thinks retrospectively: “I have been boomeranged across my head so much that now I can see the darkness of lightness” (5).

In the famous college episode in *Invisible Man*, Ellison ironically depicts two heroic black men whose intellectual efforts have lifted their people: the Founder and Dr. Bledsoe.<sup>14</sup> Their legendary biographies document poor men who rose to important positions, leaders who strove to inspire tender minds. A dangerous Janus-faced personality, Bledsoe models his existence upon the white men's standards, while he stands as an example to be emulated by black students. As his voice modulates into humbleness and his face assumes the mask of meekness, he is a master of appearance whose power manipulates the white millionaires who "support" the college but cannot really control it. Conscious that all institutions are run by white people, Bledsoe has to be subversive and "act the nigger" in order to maintain and consolidate his position. Under his façade of humility, his tactic is doubly aimed at controlling influential white men and deceiving innocent black students – the future teachers.

Searching for a solution to the white-faced education presented in *Invisible Man*, Gaines creates another type of black teacher, essentially different from Bledsoe. Grant Wiggins does not have Dr. Bledsoe's material possessions, influence and power, nor is he the leader of a prosperous Southern college. Yet, at the modest school level, Grant dares to search for various educational methods that can reconstruct a liberated image of African American identity. His confession to Jefferson encompasses his open dissatisfaction with the normative system:

I have always done what they wanted me to do, teach reading, writing, and arithmetic. Nothing else – nothing about dignity, nothing about identity, nothing about loving and caring. They never thought we were capable of learning these things. 'Teach those niggers how to print their names and how to figure on their fingers.' And I went along, but hating myself all the time for doing so. (192)

As the scene takes place in the day room of the prison where Jefferson is brought with chains around his ankles, the teacher's words attain a profound significance. Jefferson is one of those misled children who have wrongly internalized the whites' belief in their own superiority, one who was turned into a victim by the whites' need to consolidate their authority by scapegoating others.

In order to help Jefferson regain his self-esteem and develop his personality, Grant asks him to become a hero, in his own words, to be one who does something for others. Grant's demand of sacrificial heroism is essential not just for Jefferson's redemption, but also for educating others.<sup>15</sup> In this respect, black children need someone who can stand as a genuine model of higher conduct. Jef-

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<sup>14</sup> Commenting upon the portrait of The Founding Father and Bledsoe, Robert Stepto affirms: "While the demystification of these would-be examples is prerequisite for the *Invisible Man*'s blossoming as a truly literate figure, the thrust of the narrative is not to replace these portraits with that of the *Invisible Man* as a heroic example. Rather, it is to *identify* Bledsoe, Norton, and the rest as varying fictions of reality and history which must be deposed [...], defiled in order for the fiction that is the narrative to be imagined" (Stepto 1986, 61).

<sup>15</sup> There are two instances in the novel when Grant searches for models of heroes. One is Jackie Robinson (the first African American to play baseball in the major leagues and an activist in the Civil Rights Movement in 1947). The other one is Charles Stewart Parnell (the Irish national hero, leader of the Irish nationalist movement during the early 1880s).

erson's godmother also needs his courage in order to die peacefully, and in his turn, Reverend Ambrose needs Jefferson's conversion as a religious example for his community. Last but not least, Grant himself acknowledges Jefferson's importance for his own self-discovery and development as a true teacher. As Suzanne Jones specifies, Jefferson's ability to make something of himself becomes a true lesson for Grant, "who by succeeding with Jefferson learns that he can make a difference by teaching in the rural South" (2004, 140).

At a deeper level, Jefferson's heroism represents a means of destabilizing white supremacy, the "old lie that people believe in" (192). As Grant explains to Jefferson, black people need someone who is able to embody the "common humanity that is in us all" (192). Through Jefferson's example, the meaning of a whole history of slavery is overturned, left without a justification. By demonstrating his humanity, Jefferson proves the falsity of the white myth, as shown by Grant: "I want you – yes, you – to call them liars. I want you to show them that you are as much a man – more a man than they can ever be [...]. You – you can be bigger than anyone you have ever met" (192-3).

In this light, Gaines undertakes a thorough reconsideration of Ellison's pedagogic view. While, in essence, both authors strive to undermine the white supremacy that propagates degrading images of black people, the two employ different techniques in order to find educational solutions. Ellison acknowledges pretension as a subversive weapon, whereas Gaines ascribes a redeeming role to heroism.

On the one hand, Ellison advocates invisibility and camouflaged fighting through the use of masks and ambivalence as means of overcoming white power. For that reason, the invisible man's grandfather utters oracular words on his deathbed, advising the narrator to be "a spy in the enemy's country," to "overcome 'em with yeses, undermine 'em with grins, agree 'em to death and destruction" (13). In this sense, the narrator's emblematic invisibility is nothing else but "covert preparation for a more overt action" (*Invisible Man* 11).

On the other hand, Gaines stresses the significance of Jefferson's visibility and exemplary posture as a means of undermining white rules: "You have the chance of being *bigger* than anyone who has ever lived on that plantation or come from this little town. You can do it if you try" (193, my italics). Above all, the author conflates a strong message of racial uplift in Jefferson's transfiguration. It is the aim of the final part of this paper to demonstrate how Jefferson's identity comes to symbolize that "piece of drifting wood" that can be polished through the increased efforts of communal support.

## 5. Jefferson's Notebook: "Humanity Masked with Blackness"

Gaines asserts the importance of an education based on communal solidarity and searches for new pedagogic ways that strengthen intra- and inter-racial relations. His view on human solidarity distances him from Wright's and Ellison's tradition that emphasized the characters' isolation from their community. Gaines ultimately aims at rewriting the former image of the lonely black individual as a *native son* or

*invisible man* (partly juxtaposed in Jefferson's portrait) by providing us with a pedagogy of communal responsibility.

Importantly, Gaines manages to subvert in his novel the preexisting perception of intra- and inter-racial relations.<sup>16</sup> Through the communal lesson, not only black people attain a complex awareness of themselves, but also white people acquire a new perspective upon blackness.<sup>17</sup> While at the beginning of the novel, white people perceive African Americans in a degrading way, some of them gradually change their views. Impressed by Jefferson's Christ-like courage in the face of death, Paul Bonin, for instance, is "converted" to a new understanding that transcends racial limits. Witnessing Jefferson's death, Paul comes to testify for Jefferson's heroic manhood, symbolically ingrained in his message: "Tell Nannan I walked" (254).

Jefferson's "standing," his heroic reformation is finally accomplished in the process of writing. In this way, his self "is constituted intertextually across a range of discursive practices," his subject being "active in the negotiation of those discursive practices" (Lloyd 1996, 253-4). Coming from a half-literate character, Jefferson's notebook represents the antithetical response to a whole system whose social, racial, religious, and even economic basis is undermined. In a broken confession, his writing emerges as a fundamental means of reconstructing black male identity. His *écriture masculine*<sup>18</sup> has the therapeutic function of overcoming the traumatic event of his inevitable death by transmitting to the others his most intimate thoughts.

The pen and the notebook – which were symbolically given to Jefferson by the teacher – become essential instruments in redefining Jefferson's identity. As Jefferson's journal is preserved and shown to others in the future, his writing has the role of *communication* that takes "the form of a *community-making*" (Sell 2004, 29), i.e. of creating links between various individuals and acknowledging their common beliefs. Gaines therefore succeeds in creating a Bildungsroman in which Jefferson recreates himself from an enslaved man into someone who is able to transfigure his existential imprisonment into a liberating "lesson" for others. Unlike in canonized white texts, the black protagonist is no longer a meek, shadow-like presence reinforcing the splendor of the white character. On the contrary, Gaines's novel reveals to us the African American man as a standing hero, whose final endurance remains an exemplary lesson inscribed in both the black and white communal spirit.

Returning to the initial argument of this paper, we may finally notice that the stereotypical assumption undermined in Gaines's novel is the inability of the African American character to transform, to evolve, and to be more than a simple

<sup>16</sup> Gaines does not only reconsider black and white relations. He also pays attention to the relation between blacks and Creoles in two significant instances. One of them hints at Vivian's Creole blood, the other at the conflict between blacks and Creoles at the Rainbow Club.

<sup>17</sup> At the end of the novel, Jefferson's death is narrated from the perspective of various black and white characters who sympathize more or less with his suffering.

<sup>18</sup> Mark J. Justard used the term "écriture masculine" in his essay on male physicality, stressing how this type of writing "deconstructs stereotypical constructions of masculinity" (1996, xi).

pawn in the white people's legal game. No longer a scapegoat or a contrastive image, the African American character becomes part of a redemptive project that makes both black and white people reconsider their deepest held convictions. To paraphrase Ellison, Gaines tells us that "in his America humanity masked its face with blackness" (1994b, 148).

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TILMAN HÖSS

## Kapital, Feld, Habitus und sozialer Raum: Pierre Bourdieu für Anglisten

**Abstract:** Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002) is one of the most influential sociologists of our time. But although his notion of 'cultural capital' has become a household word, many literary scholars still shy away from the sheer bulk of his writings. This essay offers a short introduction to his work, focusing on two crucial studies, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* and *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field*. In the first part, four key terms – capital, field, habitus and social space – are explained with reference to Bourdieu's empirical research in France and Algeria. The second part applies Bourdieu's theory to (1) the interpretation of literary texts, (2) problems of literary history, and (3) aspects of literary theory. It is the aim of this essay to suggest the wealth of Bourdieu's sociological insights – and to show that Bourdieu has an important role to play in literary and cultural studies.

Obwohl die Literaturwissenschaft heute von kulturwissenschaftlichen Methoden geprägt wird, ist die Literatursoziologie für viele ein Phänomen der 1970er Jahre geblieben; der Triumph der *Cultural Studies*, der *Gender Studies*, der *Postcolonial Studies* hat paradoxerweise kein wachsendes Interesse am Fach Soziologie geweckt. Die gesellschaftstheoretische Reflexion innerhalb der Literatur- und Kulturwissenschaft wird weitgehend von Philosophen bestimmt. Um in der Kulturwissenschaft als *theory* rezipiert zu werden, müssen Soziologen zugleich als Philosophen ausgewiesen sein.<sup>1</sup> Eine große Ausnahme bildet ein Soziologe, der die Eigenständigkeit seines Faches und seine Identität als Soziologe stets betont hat: Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002). Bourdieu, der schon jetzt zu den Klassikern der Soziologie gezählt wird, bietet nicht nur eine überzeugende Perspektive für die Erneuerung der Literatur- und Kultursoziologie; durch sein Pochen auf die Notwendigkeit empirischer Forschung gehört er auch zu denjenigen, die eindringlich an den interdisziplinären Charakter einer als Kulturwissenschaft konzipierten Literaturwissenschaft erinnern.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Eine imposante Bestandsaufnahme wie die *Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism* (Leitch 2001) dokumentiert z.B. ausführlich die marxistische Tradition, doch die einzigen Soziologen – bei über 2600 Seiten – sind Adorno, Baudrillard, Habermas und Bourdieu.

<sup>2</sup> Von Bourdieus Kanonisierung zeugen die Artikel in Käsler (1999) sowie Käsler und Vogt (2000), aber mehr noch die zahlreichen Monographien und Sammelbände seit den 1990er Jahren, von denen hier nur eine Auswahl genannt werden kann. Schwingel (2003 [1995]) ist inzwischen ein Standardwerk; weitere Monographien sind Jenkins (1992), Robbins (1991) und Swartz (1997). Calhoun, LiPuma und Postone (1993) sowie Shusterman (1999) bieten Arti-

Der vorliegende Text verfolgt ein doppeltes Ziel: einerseits mit den Grundzügen der Soziologie Pierre Bourdieus vertraut zu machen, andererseits die Fruchtbarkeit seiner Konzepte für die Anglistik und Amerikanistik darzulegen. Im ersten Teil werden vier zentrale Begriffe Bourdieus vorgestellt: Kapital, Feld, Habitus und sozialer Raum. Im zweiten Teil werden Möglichkeiten der Anwendung dieser Begriffe im Bereich der Textinterpretation, der Literaturgeschichtsschreibung und der Literaturtheorie demonstriert. Die Darstellung konzentriert sich auf die beiden für Literatur- und Kulturwissenschaftler aufschlussreichsten Werke, *Die feinen Unterschiede* und *Die Regeln der Kunst*. Auch in dieser Beschränkung präsentiere ich einen 'Bourdieu für Anglisten,' einen pragmatischen Zugang, der Perspektiven eröffnen soll.

### Kapital, Feld, Habitus und sozialer Raum

Der vielleicht bekannteste Begriff Bourdieus ist der des kulturellen Kapitals. Diesem Begriff liegt die Vorstellung zugrunde, dass auch kulturelle Güter und Praktiken ökonomischen Gesetzen unterliegen, wobei das Feld der Kultur allerdings besondere ökonomische Gesetze aufweist. Bourdieu arbeitet mit einem sehr allgemeinen Kapitalbegriff: Kapital bedeutet nicht einfach Geld und materieller Reichtum, sondern umfasst im Grunde alles, was auf einem Markt in der Hoffnung auf Gewinn investiert werden kann. Jemand geht zur Bank, erwirbt Sparbriefe und Aktien und bekommt später Zinsen: So funktioniert ökonomisches Kapital. Aber kulturelles Kapital funktioniert recht ähnlich: Jemand erwirbt etwa in der Schule sein Abitur – und damit das Recht, die Universität zu besuchen, d.h. noch mehr Bildung seiner schulischen Bildung hinzuzufügen. Auf durchaus vergleichbare Weise lesen Menschen in ihrer Freizeit Bücher, die im Gespräch sind, in der Hoffnung, beim nächsten Mal mitreden zu können und damit ihr kulturelles Kapital zu vermehren. Auch kulturelles Kapital wird folglich investiert. Und insofern ist Dietrich Schwanitz' Bestseller *Bildung* (1999) eine Art Anlageberatung: Welche Bücher, Informationen, Kenntnisse werfen auf dem kulturellen Markt Gewinn ab? Offenbar gibt es einen Markt für Geldgeschäfte, aber auch einen Markt für verschiedene Formen von Bildung.

Bourdieu unterscheidet drei Formen von kulturellem Kapital: institutionalisiertes, objektiviertes und inkorporiertes Kulturkapital. Das institutionalisierte Kulturkapital umfasst vor allem staatlich sanktionierte Bildungstitel, vom ersten Schulabschluss bis zum Dokortitel. Das objektivierte Kulturkapital umfasst die verschiedenen Formen des kulturellen Konsums: die Bücher und Schallplatten im Regal, die Gemälde oder Poster an den Wänden, die Einrichtung, das Auto, die Kleidung, die Art, wie jemand seine Freizeit verbringt, und was er isst und trinkt – d.h. all das, was von seinem *Geschmack* zeugt. Bourdieu betont in *Die feinen*

kel von hoher Qualität. Bourdieu-inspirierte soziologische Studien sind Illouz (1997) und Lamont (1992), literaturwissenschaftliche Fragen erörtern Fowler (1997), Guillory (1993) und Jurt (1995). Auch meine eigene Studie *Poe, James, Hüchcock: Die Rationalisierung der Kunst* (2003) verdankt Bourdieu entscheidende Einsichten.

*Unterschiede* das Kontinuum zwischen der ästhetischen "Urteilkraft" im Sinne Kants und "dem elementaren Schmecken von Zunge und Gaumen" (1987a, 17). Das inkorporierte Kulturkapital schließlich ist vielleicht die interessanteste Kategorie. Man kann es nicht kaufen wie das objektivierte Kulturkapital, es wird nicht staatlich kontrolliert und legitimiert wie das institutionalisierte Kulturkapital, und man kann es sich in der Regel auch nicht bewusst aneignen. Denn das inkorporierte, verinnerlichte Kulturkapital umfasst das kulturelle Wissen, das meist unbewusst von der Kindheit an erworben wird: die guten oder schlechten Manieren, grundlegende Denk-, Wahrnehmungs- und Bewertungsschemata, auf denen Schule und Universität später aufbauen, aber auch körperliche Dinge wie Mimik, Gestik und Kinesik. In diesem Sinne ist das inkorporierte Kulturkapital tatsächlich einverleibtes, sozusagen Leib gewordenes Kapital. Selbst Dinge, die normalerweise als persönliche Charakteristika, fast als Ausdruck des Wesens eines Menschen wahrgenommen werden, wie Mienenspiel und Körpersprache, können damit als sozial bedingt und als Kapital mit spezifischen Vor- und Nachteilen begriffen werden.

Bourdieu's Kapitalbegriff ist weit gefasst. Verschiedene Kapitalsorten zirkulieren dabei auf verschiedenen Märkten. Verschiedene Märkte funktionieren nach verschiedenen Regeln, sind aber nicht gegeneinander abgeschottet. Dementsprechend sind die verschiedenen Kapitalsorten auch prinzipiell konvertierbar: Man wendet z.B. Geld auf, um sich Bücher oder Karten fürs Konzert zu kaufen, konvertiert damit ökonomisches in kulturelles Kapital. Und man geht zur Schule in der Hoffnung auf ein erfolgreiches Berufsleben, d.h. in der Hoffnung, sein kulturelles Kapital später in ökonomisches konvertieren zu können (die Wechselkurse sind natürlich instabil).

Diesem erweiterten Kapitalbegriff entspricht allerdings ein erweiterter Ökonomiebegriff. Und insofern ist es falsch zu sagen, Bourdieu 'übertrage' ökonomische Konzepte auf die Kultur. Er benutzt den Begriff der Ökonomie vielmehr in seinem allgemeinsten Sinn: als Ausdruck für Vorgänge des Gebens und Nehmens, bei dem jeder vom Prinzip der Nutzenmaximierung geleitet wird und – natürlich im Rahmen der jeweiligen Sitten und Gebräuche – seine Interessen auf einem Markt durchzusetzen versucht. In *Sozialer Sinn*, dem wichtigsten seiner ethnologischen Werke, wirbt Bourdieu z.B. dafür, "die Dichotomie von Ökonomischem und Nichtökonomischem über Bord zu werfen," weil man so nicht begreife, dass auch die als zweckfrei oder uneigennützig wahrgenommenen Praktiken "auf materielle oder symbolische Profitmaximierung" ausgerichtet sind. Dementsprechend begreift Bourdieu die Art Ökonomie, die die Wirtschaftswissenschaft untersucht, tatsächlich als einen "Sonderfall" (1987b, 222).

Sein Hauptargument für diese Sichtweise ist ein historisches. Bei der Untersuchung der Kabylen, einem Berberstamm in Nordalgerien, stellt er fest, dass zwar getauscht und gehandelt wird, das ökonomische Kapital aber nur selten unverhüllt zur Geltung kommt. Denn man handelt nur mit einem Ehrenmann, man kauft nicht einfach dort, wo es am billigsten ist. Geschäfte werden bevorzugt nach der Logik von Geschenk und Gegengeschenk abgewickelt. Und ob-

wohl alle ihre Interessen verfolgen, ist das rein Ökonomische (im Sinne der Wirtschaftswissenschaften) tabu. Das aber heißt: Die Ökonomie ist älter als die Geldwirtschaft, das Ringen um Kapital älter als das Geld. Das Geld ist nicht die Urform des Kapitals oder das Kapital schlechthin, sondern vielmehr eine besondere Form von Kapital, die eine entfaltete Geldwirtschaft (im Gegensatz zur Naturalwirtschaft) voraussetzt. Dementsprechend ist der Ausdruck "ökonomisches Kapital" auch kein Pleonasmus.

Obwohl Bourdieu den Kapitalbegriff ausgesprochen lässig handhabt – er spricht von juristischem, religiösem, politischem Kapital, unterteilt das kulturelle Kapital in schulisches und universitäres, intellektuelles, wissenschaftliches und philosophisches –, lassen sich vier Grundkategorien in seinem Werk ausmachen. Die ersten beiden wurden bereits genannt. Das ökonomische Kapital ist das Geld – und alles, was mit Geld erworben und aufgewogen werden kann. Das kulturelle Kapital umfasst die verschiedenen Formen von Bildung. Die dritte Kategorie ist das soziale Kapital: all die Beziehungen, über die jemand verfügt oder nicht verfügt, was vor allem mit der sozialen Herkunft zusammenhängt. Die vierte Kategorie ist die des symbolischen Kapitals, ein Begriff, der manchmal Verwirrung stiftet, weil er auf einer anderen logischen Ebene liegt.

Zunächst bedeutet symbolisches Kapital soviel wie Prestige, Ansehen, Ehre. Prestige kann tatsächlich als eigene Kapitalsorte wirken: Die Löhne in teuren Kaufhäusern sind manchmal niedriger als die Löhne in billigen Kaufhäusern, weil letztere die Verkäuferinnen nicht mit ihrem großen Namen locken können (Labov 1972, 47-8). Prestige ist also keineswegs nur ein Nebeneffekt z.B. des Einkommens: Es gibt ehrenvolle und schlecht bezahlte Jobs, aber auch gut bezahlte und anrühige Jobs. Zugleich bezeichnet symbolisches Kapital jedoch einen entscheidenden Aspekt aller anderen Kapitalsorten: dass sie gesellschaftlich anerkannt sein müssen, um den Kapitalbesitzern soziale Anerkennung verschaffen zu können. Auch das ökonomische Kapital hat damit seine symbolische Seite: Es macht einen Unterschied, ob jemand eine Fabrik besitzt oder ein Bordell, selbst wenn der Umsatz der gleiche ist. Und wenn Bill Gates eingeladen wird, auf einem Kongress eine Rede zu halten, so nicht einfach wegen seiner Milliarden, sondern wegen dem, was diese Milliarden symbolisieren: Technik, Fortschritt, den amerikanischen Traum. Bill Gates' ökonomisches Kapital ist also zugleich symbolisches Kapital. Jede als legitim anerkannte Form von Kapital bedeutet immer zugleich symbolisches Kapital.<sup>3</sup>

Bis hierhin wirkt Bourdieus Entwurf wie eine utilitaristische Handlungstheorie – mit einem materialistischen, in Bezug auf die Kultur vielleicht auch demonstrativ ketzerischen Einschlag: Jeder kämpft um sein Kapital, jeder will mehr, und wer

<sup>3</sup> Insofern eignet sich der Ausdruck "symbolisches Kapital" auch als Restkategorie für alles, was sich wie Kapital investieren lässt, aber nicht eindeutig als ökonomisches, kulturelles oder soziales Kapital klassifizierbar ist, wie etwa Charme, Charisma, Sex-Appeal oder moralische Integrität. All diese Eigenschaften wirken, da sie allgemein positiv bewertet werden, als symbolisches Kapital.

hat, dem wird gegeben. Mit den nächsten beiden Begriffen, d.h. Feld und Habitus, wird der Rahmen traditioneller Handlungstheorie jedoch gesprengt.

Der Begriff des Feldes überwindet den methodologischen Individualismus, d.h. die Konzentration der Handlungstheorie auf das Individuum, das Herunterspielen der Bedeutung gesellschaftlicher Strukturen. Dabei entspricht Bourdieus Begriff des Feldes in mancher Hinsicht dem des Subsystems bei Niklas Luhmann. Beide Theoretiker begreifen die moderne Gesellschaft als in verschiedene, relativ autonome Bereiche aufgespalten, die ihrer jeweils eigenen Logik folgen: Wirtschaft und Kultur, Politik und Recht, Wissenschaft und Religion. Während Luhmann diese Sphären jedoch als autopoietische Systeme begreift, die sich gewissermaßen über die Köpfe der Akteure hinweg reproduzieren, lehnt Bourdieu Begriffe wie Autopoiesis und Selbstorganisation ab. Felder reproduzieren sich nur kraft der Aktionen der Akteure, die die Logik des Feldes verinnerlicht haben – und entwickeln sich über Konflikte zwischen den Akteuren bzw. Gruppen von Akteuren innerhalb dieses Feldes (Bourdieu / Wacquant 1996, 134-5; siehe auch Nassehi / Nollmann 2004).

Kapital- und Feldtheorie bilden bei Bourdieu eine Einheit. Dies wird besonders deutlich, wenn man die Entwicklung der Felder und der verschiedenen Kapitalsorten historisch untersucht. Denn Kapitalien funktionieren nicht in allen Gesellschaften gleich. In modernen Gesellschaften etwa ist das ökonomische Kapital von zentraler Bedeutung. Bourdieu aber zeigt, dass eine traditionale Stammesgesellschaft wie die der Kabylen gar keinen freien Markt kennt. Tausch-, auch Geldgeschäfte bleiben eingebunden in die Beziehungen zwischen den Menschen, die es ängstlich vermeiden, sich wie in der reinen Marktbeziehung nur von Käufer zu Verkäufer und umgekehrt zu begegnen (Bourdieu 1998, 176-7). Die Geltung des ökonomischen Kapitals in unserer Gesellschaft hängt folglich mit der Entstehung eines autonomen ökonomischen Feldes zusammen, in dem es erlaubt und sogar geboten ist, Geschäft als Geschäft und zwar nur als Geschäft zu betrachten. Und dies lässt sich auf das kulturelle Kapital übertragen. Denn die Bedeutung des kulturellen Kapitals wächst offenbar mit der Autonomie und der Macht des kulturellen Feldes: Bildungsabschlüsse entscheiden heute maßgeblich darüber, wem welche berufliche Laufbahnen offenstehen, und es ist der moderne Staat, der dem Bildungskapital – vor allem gegenüber dem ererbten sozialen Kapital – in zunehmendem Maße Geltung verschafft.

Mit dem Feldbegriff überwindet Bourdieu den Individualismus der traditionellen Handlungstheorie: Die Kapitalsorten verdanken ihren Wert nicht der spontanen Anerkennung einzelner, sondern den Feldern mit ihren Institutionen, d.h. der Struktur der Gesellschaft. Mit dem Begriff des Habitus überwindet Bourdieu die andere große Schwäche der Handlungstheorie: ihren impliziten Rationalismus, d.h. den Glauben, Menschen handelten überwiegend bewusst und rational. Wie wohl inzwischen jeder zugibt, existiert eine schier endlose Grauzone zwischen unbewusstem, fast instinktivem Verhalten und dem bewussten Planen mit verbal begründbaren Motiven und Absichten. Und selbst wenn jemand bewusst Pläne schmiedet und Entscheidungen trifft, dann nur innerhalb eines bestimmten Spektrums.

rums: Es gibt Dinge, die man 'nie tun würde' – und zwar deshalb, weil man dann 'nicht mehr man selbst wäre.' Für solche Grenzen, die dem Handeln und dem Bewusstsein eines Menschen gesetzt sind (und die zu seiner zweiten Natur geworden sind), benutzt Bourdieu den Ausdruck "Habitus."

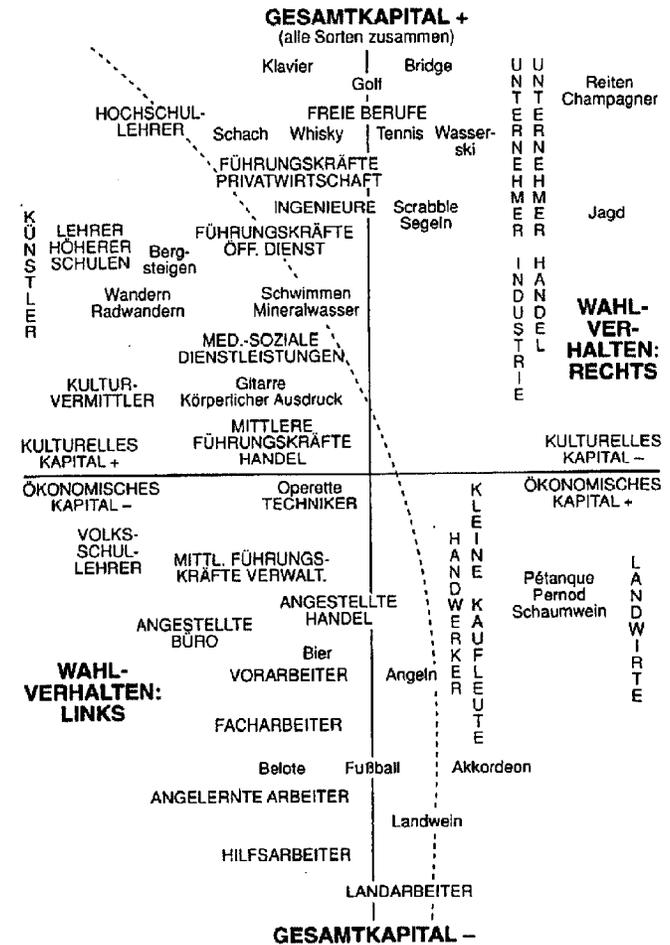
Der Habitus ist eine Art "Tiefenstruktur" des Verhaltens, Denkens und Fühlens. Bourdieu bezieht sich in einem Interview ausdrücklich auf Noam Chomsky und betrachtet den Habitus als eine Art generative Grammatik, die eine Fülle von Handlungen produziert und ermöglicht – aber eben nur innerhalb der Grenzen dieser Grammatik (Bourdieu 1993, 33-4). An anderen Stellen bezeichnet Bourdieu den Habitus als ein "System dauerhafter Dispositionen," das die Handlungen eines Menschen nicht determiniert, aber bestimmte Handlungsweisen in hohem Maße wahrscheinlich bzw. unwahrscheinlich macht (Bourdieu 1976, 165, und 1987b, 98).

Dieser Habitus ist sozialisationsbedingt und insofern sehr stark klassengebunden. Bourdieu spricht zuweilen von einem Klassenhabitus oder z.B. von einem kleinbürgerlichen Habitus. Habitus ist damit das, was uns soziale Typen erkennen lässt: der Handwerker, der Professor, der mittelständische Unternehmer. Und Habitus ist auch das, was Lebensstilen ihre charakteristische Einheit gibt: der Monteur bei Ford, der in der Kneipe Bier trinkt und am Wochenende Fußball spielt – oder der Steuerberater, der im Restaurant Wein trinkt und am Wochenende Tennis spielt.

Der Habitus kann allerdings auch an ein Feld gebunden sein und innerhalb eines Feldes erworben werden. So gilt kulturelles Kapital im ökonomischen Feld oft als Firtlefanz, ökonomisches Kapital im kulturellen Feld dagegen als Mamon. Und dies begründet die traditionelle Feindschaft zwischen Künstlern und Bürgern, Bildungsbürgertum und Geldadel: Die besonderen Wertmaßstäbe und Regeln eines Feldes werden innerhalb dieses Feldes verinnerlicht, verdichten und verfestigen sich zu einem Habitus, dessen Träger dann die Struktur des Feldes mit seinen Werten und Regeln reproduzieren. Dasselbe gilt Bourdieu zufolge für Klassen: Das klassenspezifische Verhalten, Denken und Fühlen wird im Sozialisationsprozess verinnerlicht und über den Habitus in der nächsten Generation reproduziert. Damit ist Habitus auch das, was die Ebenen von Handlung und Struktur, Individuum und Gesellschaft miteinander verklammert.

Bourdieu's Theorie hat nun deutlich an Komplexität gewonnen. Bourdieu zufolge verfügen Menschen über bestimmte Mengen verschiedener Kapitalsorten und agieren in verschiedenen Feldern, die die Gültigkeit des jeweiligen Kapitals garantieren. Ihre Handlungsweise ist geprägt von ihren rational begriffenen Interessen, aber auch von ihrem Habitus, d.h. einem System verinnerlichter Dispositionen, das ihren Handlungsweisen eine bestimmte Richtung gibt und darüber hinaus zur Reproduktion der sozialen Ordnung beiträgt. Da Bourdieu aber von ständigen Konkurrenzkämpfen auszugehen scheint, stellt sich eine wichtige Frage: Was ist das Ergebnis all dieser Kämpfe um das Kapital? Mit anderen Worten: Wo befinden sich die Akteure und wo sind die Felder, auf denen sie sich bew-

gen? Und in welchem Machtverhältnis stehen verschiedene Akteure bzw. Felder zueinander? Als Antwort entwickelt Bourdieu sein Modell des sozialen Raums:



Dieses Diagramm ist eine stark vereinfachte Version der Darstellung in Bourdieus Hauptwerk *Die feinen Unterschiede*. Die Skizze stammt von Bourdieu selbst, aus einem der Vorträge in dem Band *Praktische Vernunft* (Bourdieu 1998, 19; vgl. 1987a, 212-3). Man sieht eine vertikale und eine horizontale Linie, die sich in der Mitte kreuzen. Des Weiteren sieht man Ausdrücke (in Großbuchstaben), die soziale

Positionen oder Berufsgruppen bezeichnen, sowie Ausdrücke (in normaler Schrift), die Getränke und Hobbys, verstanden als Indikatoren des Lebensstils, bezeichnen. Berufe und Hobbys, Berufe und Getränke, d.h. soziale Positionen und Lebensstile, sind statistisch korreliert. Dies ergab sich aus der empirischen Untersuchung, die noch zahlreiche andere Variablen aufwies. Und ganz unten und ganz oben finden sich meine Beispiele von vorhin: der Arbeiter, der Fußball spielt, und der Freiberufler, der Tennis spielt.

Die vertikale Linie bildet die Achse des Kapitalvolumens, eine Skala, deren Enden mit "Gesamtkapital plus" und "Gesamtkapital minus" markiert werden. Die Logik ist simpel: Wer viel Kapital besitzt, steht oben, wer wenig Kapital besitzt, unten. Dabei bestätigt Bourdieus Auflistung von Berufen an der Längsachse die gängigen Schichtungstheorien: Von oben nach unten sieht man Freiberufler, Führungskräfte, Angestellte und Arbeiter. Man könnte auch zwei Linien quer ziehen, um so die Berufsgruppen tendenziell der Oberschicht, der Mittelschicht und der Unterschicht zuzuordnen.

Die horizontale Linie dagegen stellt eine wichtige Neuerung dar. Sie bildet die Achse der Kapitalstruktur, bei der die Zusammensetzung des Kapitalvolumens, d.h. das relative Gewicht der einzelnen Kapitalsorten innerhalb des Gesamtkapitals, entscheidend ist. Bourdieu konzentriert sich auf das kulturelle und das ökonomische Kapital als zwei staatlich sanktionierten Formen, die heute für den sozialen Status ausschlaggebend sind. Das Ergebnis: Links stehen Gruppen mit mehr kulturellem als ökonomischem Kapital, wie z.B. Lehrer und Intellektuelle. Rechts stehen dagegen Gruppen mit mehr ökonomischem als kulturellem Kapital, wie z.B. Unternehmer und Landwirte. Eine Position in der Mitte, dort, wo sich die beiden Achsen kreuzen, zeigt eine ausgeglichene Kapitalstruktur an: Das Gesamtkapital setzt sich zu annähernd gleichen Teilen aus ökonomischem und kulturellem Kapital zusammen.

Insgesamt ergeben die beiden Achsen ein Bild vertikaler, aber auch horizontaler Differenzierung. Dadurch ist der soziale Raum doppelt gespalten: oben gegen unten, links gegen rechts. Daraus ergeben sich prinzipiell zwei Formen von Konflikten: der vertraute Konflikt zwischen 'denen da oben' und 'denen da unten' (die Achse des Kapitalvolumens) sowie der im Grunde modernere Konflikt zwischen den Vertretern verschiedener Felder auf der horizontalen Achse, etwa Kultur, Bildung und Wissenschaft auf der einen Seite (dies sind auch überwiegend staatlich kontrollierte Felder), und der freien Wirtschaft auf der anderen. Der politische Gegensatz von 'links' und 'rechts' resultiert, wie die gepunktete Linie im Diagramm zeigt, aus dem Zusammenwirken beider Konfliktformen.

Schließlich veranschaulicht das Diagramm, inwiefern noch der friedlichste Mensch in diese Konflikte verwickelt ist: über seinen Lebensstil, der ihn mit Menschen seinesgleichen verbindet und ihn von anderen trennt. So werden die meisten Leser dieses Aufsatzes vermutlich der mittleren oder oberen Mittelschicht angehören und geprägt sein durch die Zugehörigkeit zum wissenschaftlichen Feld; ihr Habitus wird der sozialen Herkunft wie der beruflichen Laufbahn ent-

sprechen. Literaturwissenschaftler gehören im Diagramm in das Viertel oben links. Und dies legt nahe, dass die meisten Anglisten niemals auf die Jagd gehen (die Jagd steht oben ganz rechts), Akkordeonmusik eher langweilig finden (das Akkordeon steht unten rechts) und alle einen großen Respekt vor dem Klavierspiel haben, auch wenn man selbst nicht unbedingt spielen kann. Dies bedeutet zweierlei. Erstens entspricht der räumlichen Distanz zwischen Positionen in diesem Diagramm die soziale Distanz in der Wirklichkeit: Es ist unwahrscheinlich, dass ein Anglist viele passionierte Jäger in seinem Leben kennenlernt. Zweitens bedeutet räumliche Nähe in diesem Diagramm über den Habitus vermittelt Loyalität: Unter Anglisten gilt das Klavierspiel etwa mehr als die Jagd oder das Fußballspiel, und so hält man im Zweifelsfall eher zu den Klavierspielern als zu den Jägern oder Fußballspielern. Damit sind unsere Loyalitäten aber zugleich latente Antipathien.<sup>4</sup> – Bourdieus Bild der Gesellschaft ist nicht gerade angenehm: Der soziale Raum ist ein Gefüge von Hierarchien, eine Stätte ständigen Kampfes und vor allem: ein System von Unterschieden, d.h. der groben Unterschiede des Einkommens und der feinen Unterschiede des Lebensstils und des Geschmacks.

### Bourdieu für Anglisten

Was hat das alles mit Literatur zu tun? Was lässt sich mit dieser Theorie anfangen? Einige Anwendungsmöglichkeiten liegen auf der Hand. Bourdieu entwirft eine Theorie des Sozialen, und insoweit, wie Literatur das Soziale schildert, lässt sich seine Theorie auch auf die Literatur anwenden. Bei einem Roman wie F. Scott Fitzgeralds *The Great Gatsby* etwa drängt sich der Kapitalbegriff geradezu auf. Soziologisch betrachtet ist der Roman eine Studie über die Erwerbbarkeit von Kapital – und über die Probleme eines zu schnellen sozialen Aufstiegs. Die Handlung ist schnell erzählt: Gatsby liebt Daisy, Daisy liebt ihn, er aber hat kein Geld, also heiratet sie einen anderen, und nach Jahren kehrt Gatsby mit den Taschen voller Geld zurück. Gatsby versucht Daisy zurückzugewinnen, endet aber (nach einigen Verwicklungen) erschossen in seinem Swimmingpool. Fragt man nun, woran Gatsby scheitert, so werden viele Leser zu moralisieren beginnen: an Daisys Feigheit, an der Herzlosigkeit der Reichen, der "careless people," wie es im Text heißt (Fitzgerald 1988, 170), am Materialismus der 1920er Jahre. Eine erste Analyse wird einen melodramatischen Grundkonflikt erkennen: zwischen Liebe und Geld. Dies alles ist richtig. Mit Bourdieu entdeckt man jedoch mehr. Denn Gatsbys Problem bestand nie einfach darin, zu arm zu sein, sondern darin, dass er in einem recht umfassenden Sinn soziologisch 'nicht gut genug' war. Daisy scheidet sich vor dem 1. Weltkrieg gegen Gatsby, weil er 'nicht ihresgleichen' ist. Aber auch nach dem 1. Weltkrieg ist Gatsby nicht ihresgleichen, wenn man sein

<sup>4</sup> Wenn sich jemand überhaupt nicht getroffen fühlt: Dies sind selbstverständlich statistische Durchschnittswerte, und die Untersuchung gilt dem Frankreich der 1960er und 1970er Jahre. Die Bedeutung einzelner Indikatoren des Lebensstils kann sich ändern, und Individuen können ein Verhalten zeigen, das vom statistisch wahrscheinlichen Verhalten abweicht.

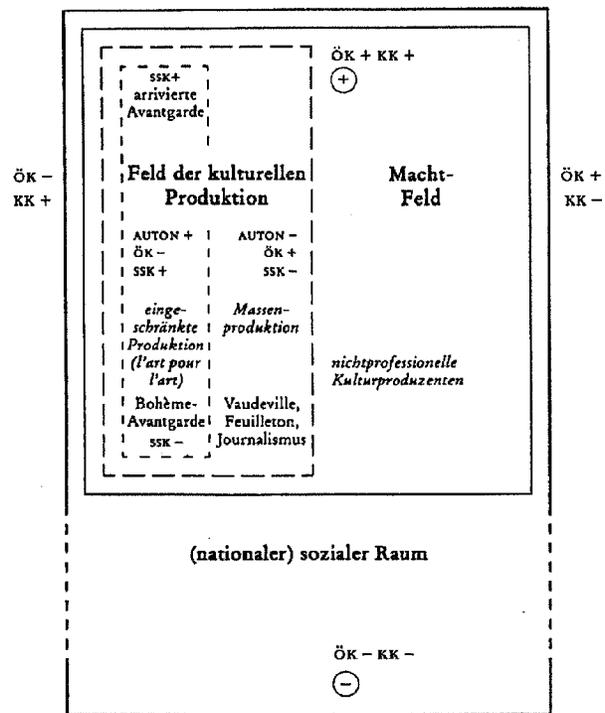
Kapital genauer untersucht. Gatsby ist zwar reich, er besitzt genug ökonomisches Kapital. Aber als symbolisches Kapital taugt dieses Geld nicht viel. Sein Reichtum ist verdächtig, weil er zu schnell erworben worden ist, und so stellt man neidische Spekulationen über die Herkunft des Geldes an. Auch sein soziales Kapital ist fragwürdig: Gatsby gibt rauschende Partys, umgibt sich mit bekannten Schauspielern und Musikern, aber dies ist zu wenig, um seine soziale Herkunft vergessen zu machen, und die geknüpften Beziehungen sind auch zu neu und zu oberflächlich (zu seiner Beerdigung kommt dementsprechend fast niemand). Das kulturelle Kapital ist vielleicht die interessanteste Kategorie. Denn Gatsby verfügt über ein Unmaß an objektiviertem Kulturkapital: Statussymbole wie Auto, Villa, Swimmingpool, sogar eine Bibliothek. Aber die Bücher hat er nie gelesen, und sein institutionalisiertes Bildungskapital besteht aus einer Stippvisite in Oxford. Das inkorporierte Kulturkapital verrät ihn schließlich: Manieren und Sprache wirken künstlich und einstudiert (wie die verstaubte Anrede "old sport"), und seine Anzüge sind zu protzig, wie Daisys Ehemann Buchanan bemerkt: "An Oxford man! Like hell he is! He wears a pink suit" (Fitzgerald 1988, 116). Daraus lassen sich einige Lehren ziehen: Man kann schneller zu Geld kommen als zu guten Manieren, objektiviertes Kulturkapital lässt sich schnell zusammenkaufen, verinnerlichtes Kulturkapital dagegen nicht. Die *Zeit* spielt eine zentrale Rolle. Und Gatsby ist tatsächlich 'neureich,' aber nicht nur in Bezug auf das ökonomische, sondern auch das soziale und das kulturelle Kapital. Gatsbys Manierismen und Entgleisungen markieren die Grenzen seines *Habitus*, die er nicht sprengen kann, Grenzen des Geschmacks, den er in seiner Jugend erworben hat und der ihn bei der Auswahl dessen, was er sich finanziell nun endlich leisten kann, ganz schlecht berät. *The Great Gatsby* ist ein Lehrstück über die unterschiedliche Erwerbbarkeit verschiedener Kapitalsorten und über die Macht des *Habitus*, der hier fast wie eine Art Schicksal wirkt.

*The Great Gatsby* illustriert menschliche Probleme, die aus der Stratifikation, der vertikalen Differenzierung der Gesellschaft entstehen. In Bourdieus Diagramm des sozialen Raumes liegen Gatsbys Probleme damit auf der vertikalen Achse des Kapitalvolumens. Aber Bourdieus Modell zufolge ist die Gesellschaft auch horizontal differenziert, und die Kapitalstruktur – das relative Gewicht verschiedener Kapitalarten innerhalb eines Kapitalvolumens – ist nicht unbedingt an Klassen oder Schichten gebunden, sondern eher an die Zugehörigkeit zu bestimmten Feldern, insbesondere Kultur und Ökonomie. Der Feldbegriff wirft einiges Licht auf einen anderen Autor: Henry James. In seinem vielleicht bekanntesten Roman, *The Portrait of a Lady*, erkennt man wiederum Aufsteigerprobleme: Isabel Archer, eine junge Amerikanerin, wird von ihrer Tante nach England gebracht, erbt von ihrem Onkel ein Vermögen und fällt einem Mitgiftjäger, Gilbert Osmond, in die Hände. Ein Grund ist sicher, dass sie sich in Europa nicht auskennt und durch ihren plötzlichen Reichtum überfordert ist. Auch Isabel Archer bleibt in ihrem *Habitus* gefangen: Wenn sie z.B. Lord Warburton einen Korb gibt, so deshalb, weil sie sich einfach nicht vorstellen kann, als 'Lady Isabel' in einem Schloss voll livrierter Diener zu leben. Aber James bietet noch mehr: Lord Warburton wird als politi-

scher Reformers vorgestellt (mit einem Sitz im Oberhaus), Isabels zweiter Verehrer Goodwood verkörpert den Typ des amerikanischen Unternehmers, und Osmond schließlich wird vor allem als Ästhet und Kunstsammler charakterisiert. Alle drei repräsentieren damit Felder: das politische, das ökonomische und das kulturelle. Und Isabel entscheidet sich mit Osmond gegen Politik und Ökonomie – und für das kulturelle Feld. Anders als bei Daisy in *The Great Gatsby* ist die Wahl des Ehemannes also nicht so sehr eine Wahl zwischen Klassen, zwischen oben und unten, sondern eine Wahl zwischen Feldern, die im Prinzip relativ gleichberechtigt nebeneinander stehen.

Auch Isabel Archer endet allerdings im Unglück. Insofern vermittelt James die Einsicht, dass die Dynamik der Felder für den einzelnen nicht weniger verhängnisvoll sein kann als der Gegensatz zwischen Klassen. Man kann innerhalb eines Feldes gefangen sein wie Isabel Archer, die Osmonds Ästhetizismus als steril und lebensfeindlich erfährt. Und man kann zwischen zwei Feldern zerrieben werden, wie etwa Strether in James' *The Ambassadors*, der sich im ökonomischen Feld nicht zurechtfindet und im kulturellen Feld nur dilettiert. Das letzte Beispiel wirft schließlich einiges Licht auf das berühmte *international theme*: Es scheint so, als würde James Amerika mit dem ökonomischen Feld identifizieren, Europa dagegen mit dem kulturellen. Denn er schildert vor allem reiche Vertreter der neuen Welt. Junge Erbinnen wie Daisy Miller und Isabel Archer machen Bildungsreisen, vermehren ihr kulturelles Kapital bei Abendgesellschaften und dem Besuch von Museen und Sehenswürdigkeiten. Und Unternehmerfiguren wie Christopher Newman in *The American* oder Adam Verver in *The Golden Bowl* kaufen sich in Europa ihr objektiviertes Kulturkapital zusammen. Sie alle tauschen amerikanisches Geld gegen europäische Kultur. So gesehen, wirken 'Amerika' und 'Europa' wie Chiffren für das ökonomische und das kulturelle Feld.

Bis hierhin habe ich mich auf die Textinterpretation beschränkt. Ich möchte nun auf eine andere Ebene wechseln, d.h. die Ebene von Autor und Leser, Sender und Empfänger, Produzenten und Konsumenten. Denn Literatur handelt zwar von Feldern, Kapital- und *Habitus*formen, wird aber natürlich auch selbst in einem Feld produziert, in dem das Kapital zirkuliert und ein bestimmter *Habitus* gefordert, erzeugt und reproduziert wird. Bourdieu selbst hat mit *Die Regeln der Kunst* eine Analyse dieses Feldes vorgelegt, und dies ist das zentrale Diagramm (Bourdieu 1999, 203):



—————	sozialer Raum	ÖK	ökonomisches Kapital
—————	Macht-Feld	KK	kulturelles Kapital
- - - - -	Feld der kulturellen Produktion	SSK	spezifisches symbolisches Kapital
- - - - -	Subfeld der eingeschränkten Produktion	AUTON+	hoher Autonomiegrad
		AUTON-	niedriger Autonomiegrad

Dieses zweite Diagramm (siehe nachfolgende Seite) stellt eine Ergänzung und Erweiterung des ersten dar. Beide Diagramme decken sich zum Teil, und so kann man sie im Geiste übereinanderlegen. Denn auch hier sieht man den sozialen Raum vor sich (das große Rechteck), in dem sich zwei gedachte Linien kreuzen: die Achse des Kapitalvolumens und die Achse der Kapitalstruktur. Während das erste Diagramm allerdings soziale Gruppen mit ihren Positionen und Lebensstilen darstellt, zeigt dieses Modell die Position bestimmter Felder. Und während in dem ersten Diagramm die Künstler und Intellektuellen links stehen, die Unternehmer rechts, sieht man hier auf der linken Seite das Feld des kulturellen

Produktion – und das ökonomische Feld wäre irgendwo rechts anzusiedeln. Darüber hinaus lokalisiert Bourdieu das kulturelle Feld innerhalb des großen Vierecks im oberen Bereich des sozialen Raumes. Dies ist das sogenannte Macht-Feld, kein Feld wie die anderen, sondern eine Art Querschnitt durch die Felder, die in besonderem Maße Macht generieren, wie Politik und Wirtschaft und mit Einschränkungen Kultur und Wissenschaft.<sup>5</sup>

An dieser Topographie ist zunächst bemerkenswert, dass Bourdieu das kulturelle Feld innerhalb des Macht-Feldes verortet, Schriftsteller und Intellektuelle also trotz ihres relativ schwachen ökonomischen Kapitals keineswegs als ohnmächtig oder als grundsätzlich oppositionell einschätzt: Vom Volk werden Schriftsteller durch ihr hohes kulturelles Kapital getrennt. Der nächste wichtige Punkt ist, dass Bourdieu die Autonomie des kulturellen Feldes betont. Das heißt, Schriftsteller und Künstler produzieren nicht lediglich Überbauphänomene, sondern ein eigenständiges kulturelles Kapital, das zum Teil sogar mit dem ökonomischen Kapital konkurrieren kann. Was als legitimes kulturelles Kapital gilt, wird für Bourdieu weitgehend innerhalb des kulturellen Feldes entschieden. Der Marxismus legt dagegen nahe, dass diejenigen mit dem meisten ökonomischen Kapital auch über das legitime kulturelle Kapital bestimmen.

Schließlich zeigt das Diagramm, wie das kulturelle Feld strukturiert ist und nach welchen Spielregeln der Kampf um das spezifische symbolische Kapital dieses Feldes – der literarische Ruhm – geführt wird. Das Feld der kulturellen Produktion ist zweigeteilt in das Subfeld der Massenproduktion (rechts) sowie das Subfeld der eingeschränkten Produktion (links). Massenproduktion bedeutet große Auflagen, das große Publikum, das große Geld. Das Feld der eingeschränkten Produktion bedeutet umgekehrt kleine Auflagen, ein kleines Publikum und wenig Geld. Entscheidend dabei ist, dass es innerhalb des kulturellen Feldes zu einer erstaunlichen Verneinung der ökonomischen Logik kommt. Bourdieu betrachtet die Kultur als eine Art verkehrte Welt, und zwar deshalb, weil das, was nur wenig Geld bringt, wie z.B. Lyrik, unter Umständen auch deshalb hoch angesehen ist, während umgekehrt der ökonomische Erfolg in der Kunst und Literatur oft auf Kosten des Ansehens geht. Autoren wie John Grisham und Michael Crichton haben schon allein deshalb keinen guten Ruf, weil man sie vor allem als Stofflieferanten für Hollywood wahrnimmt. Dies analysiert Bourdieu in seinem Diagramm (ÖK minus entspricht SSK plus und umgekehrt) als eine chiasmatische Struktur der Kapitalsorten: Es ist schwer, in beiden Subfeldern anerkannt zu werden, und so muss man sich zwischen dem symbolischen und dem ökonomischen Kapital, zwischen dem rein literarischen Erfolg und dem literarisch-kommerziellen Erfolg entscheiden; das eine geht auf Kosten des anderen. Die Vertreter beider Subfelder verhalten sich dementsprechend: Der Bestseller-Autor freut sich in Inter-

<sup>5</sup> In früheren Werken spricht Bourdieu noch von einer herrschenden Klasse, die in verschiedene Fraktionen gespalten ist. Auf der vertikalen Achse dominieren obere Klassen untere, auf der horizontalen Achse dominieren Fraktionen mit überwiegend ökonomischem Kapital Fraktionen mit überwiegend kulturellem Kapital. Ökonomisches Kapital 'schlägt' also im Zweifelsfall kulturelles Kapital.

views über die vielen glücklichen Kunden, beruft sich auf seinen Erfolg in der Welt, der Avantgarde-Autor dagegen bezieht sich implizit fast immer auf die Anerkennung unter seinesgleichen, den Erfolg innerhalb des Feldes der eingeschränkten Produktion. Der Bestseller-Autor spricht die Sprache des Volkes sowie der Medien. Der Avantgarde-Autor, der seine Werke erläutert, spricht dagegen die Sprache der Kritiker und der Kollegen – er weiß, dass er nicht in der Straßbahn gelesen wird. Und genau diese Selbstbezüglichkeit ist mit Autonomie gemeint: dass *innerhalb* des Feldes bestimmt wird, was als große Literatur, als legitimes symbolisches Kapital gelten soll, dass nicht nach ökonomischen oder politischen Kriterien – d.h. den Kriterien *anderer* Felder – entschieden wird.

Wie wird man also Bourdieu zufolge ein großer Dichter? Man muss hauptberuflich schreiben (die „nichtprofessionellen Kulturproduzenten“ stehen außerhalb des Feldes), man muss mit dem großen Publikum und – zumindest vorläufig – dem großen Geld brechen. Das heißt, der große Dichter ist professionell (kein Amateur, kein Sonntagsdichter), aber nicht kommerziell, er fühlt sich nur seiner Kunst verpflichtet, und er schreibt für die *happy few*, die wie er selbst im Subfeld der eingeschränkten Produktion zu Hause sind: professionelle Kritiker (mit Affinitäten zur Avantgarde) und vor allem andere Dichter. Das klingt natürlich wie eine Parodie. Aber sie kommt nicht von ungefähr. So hätte der Autor von *Daisy Miller* oder selbst *The Portrait of a Lady*, der beliebte Porträtist des *American girl*, niemals den Weg ins Pantheon der Moderne gefunden. Erst als Henry James das große Publikum verloren hatte, am Theater gescheitert war und die immer anspruchsvolleren Werke der sogenannten „major phase“ verfasste, wurde er langsam zu einem Mythos. Und wenn man Sylvia Beachs Memoiren *Shakespeare and Company* (1960) liest, so gewinnt man den Eindruck, dass es im Grunde ein kleiner Kreis von Verschwörern in Paris war, der Joyces *Ulysses* zum berühmtesten Roman der Moderne machte. Joyces Ruhm wuchs jedenfalls mit der Unzugänglichkeit seiner Werke.

Das autonome literarische Feld hat seine Geschichte. Es hat nicht immer existiert, und es wird nicht immer existieren. Dies erklärt, warum vielleicht nicht jedes Detail in Bourdieus Diagramm überzeugt. Das Diagramm zeigt genau genommen die Struktur des literarischen Feldes in Frankreich in der zweiten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts. Deshalb finden sich hier Ausdrücke wie *Bohème* und *Vaudeville*, die eher historischen Phänomenen gelten. Bourdieu konzentriert sich in *Die Regeln der Kunst* auf die Zeit Flauberts und Baudelaires, deren zentrale Bedeutung für die literarische Moderne ja auch Sartre (1984, 1977-80), Barthes (1982), Walter Benjamin (1974) und Hugo Friedrich (1956) hervorgehoben haben. Trotzdem hat es den Anschein, als habe sich in Frankreich ein Differenzierungsprozess ereignet, der von internationaler Bedeutung war. Denn auch in England kommt es zu einer Ausdifferenzierung des kulturellen Feldes aus dem Macht-Feld, auch hier gibt es um etwa 1900 den Bruch der Avantgarde mit dem großen Publikum, und auch hier entsteht, spätestens mit Joyce und Virginia Woolf, ein Feld der eingeschränkten Produktion.

Wendet man sich allerdings der Gegenwart zu, so mehren sich die Zeichen, dass die Struktur, die Bourdieu beschreibt, wie der Modernismus selbst historisch zu werden beginnt. So scheint es heute leichter zu sein, künstlerischen und kommerziellen Erfolg zu vereinen: Nobelpreisträger wie Toni Morrison und Günter Grass sind ja keine Geheimtips, sie werden in viele Sprachen übersetzt, verfilmt, sind in den Medien präsent, auch politisch aktiv. Und obwohl man sich heute immer noch von der Massenproduktion absetzen muss (das Prestigegefälle zwischen Toni Morrison und Grisham ist eindeutig), darf man um keinen Preis elitär wirken: Ein Autor wie Paul Auster kombiniert etwa in auffälliger Weise Avantgarde-Elemente im Stile Kafkas und Becketts mit populären Elementen der Detektivgeschichte oder der Science-Fiction. Dies alles könnte bedeuten, dass das Bildungsbürgertum des 19. Jahrhunderts endgültig abgedankt hat, die Macht der Gralshüter von Matthew Arnold bis zu T.S. Eliot gebrochen ist.<sup>6</sup> Es könnte aber auch darauf hindeuten, dass das literarische Feld – aufgrund der Medien, vielleicht auch im Zuge der Globalisierung – einfach an Autonomie verloren hat und nun stärker ökonomischen Prinzipien unterworfen wird. Wie auch immer man diese Prozesse beurteilt, ich denke, dass eine genauere Analyse des literarischen Feldes und seiner Mechanismen enorm zum Verständnis der Literaturgeschichte wie der Gegenwart beitragen wird.

Ich habe Bourdieu zunächst auf einige literarische Texte angewendet und seine Analyse des literarischen Feldes in Frankreich anschließend auf den angelsächsischen Modernismus übertragen. Eine dritte wichtige Anwendungsmöglichkeit sollte man allerdings nicht verschweigen: Bourdieus Begriffe greifen selbstverständlich auch bei der Analyse des wissenschaftlichen Feldes (siehe Bourdieu 1988) und nötigen fast zu einer Selbstreflexion der Literaturwissenschaft. Bourdieu beschreibt das literarische Feld als eine Stätte des Kampfes. Vertreter der Massenproduktion und der Avantgarde-Produktion kämpfen miteinander, denunzieren sich gegenseitig als kommerziell bzw. als versnobt. Innerhalb beider Subfelder wird wiederum um die Rangfolge gekämpft, etwa zwischen der arrivierten Avantgarde einer Epoche und ihren Herausforderern. Und alle, die oben sind, werden irgendwann abgesetzt: die Romantiker wie die Realisten, die Naturalisten wie die Modernisten.

Wenn man ehrlich ist, muss man sich eingestehen, dass das Feld der Literaturwissenschaft im Grunde recht ähnlich funktioniert. Denn auch im wissenschaftlichen Feld gibt es ein spezifisches symbolisches Kapital – die wissenschaftliche Reputation. Und wie das literarische Feld ist das literaturwissenschaftliche Feld zweigeteilt: in das Subfeld der Massenproduktion – Biographien, populäre Literaturgeschichten oder die vielen *study guides* – sowie das Subfeld der Avantgarde, das vor allem die Literaturtheorie umfasst. Das literarische Feld bringt große Künstler und Entertainer hervor. Ähnlich produziert das literaturwissenschaftliche Feld

<sup>6</sup> Huyssen (1986) postuliert in diesem Sinne eine demokratische Einebnung des Unterschieds zwischen Hoch- und Populärkultur in der Postmoderne; das Programm der *Cultural Studies*, die Erforschung und Aufwertung der Populär- und Alltagskultur, beruht im Prinzip auf derselben Diagnose.

die großen Stars der Theorie – und andererseits das Fußvolk, “born-again teachers,” “uncool and tweedy,” wie es bei Philip Roth heißt (2001, 266). Nicht anders als bei den modernistischen Meisterwerken wird das Prestige der Literaturtheorie um den Preis einer radikalen Reduzierung der Leserschaft erkaufte. Und die Paradigmen jagen einander: *New Criticism*, Marxismus, Strukturalismus und Poststrukturalismus folgen aufeinander wie literarische Schulen, ohne dass die Probleme des angeblich überwundenen Paradigmas jemals gelöst werden.

Dies ist natürlich eine Karikatur. Aber sie verdeutlicht einige Eigenschaften von Bourdieus Theorie. Sie bewirkt eine ständige Verfremdung der gewohnten Wahrnehmung. Sie ist fast ostentativ pietätlos. Und sie ist ein zweiseitiges Schwert: Wenn man sich gerade über einen Lebensstil mokiert, erkennt man plötzlich seinen eigenen, und wenn man gerade ein fremdes Feld zerpfückt hat, erkennt man, dass man sich direkt nebenan befindet. Dieses reflexive Moment kann der Literatur- und Kulturwissenschaft nur zugute kommen.

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## Buchbesprechungen

Terry Eagleton. *The English Novel: An Introduction*. Malden, MA and Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005. 365 pp. Pb. £ 14.99. ISBN 1-4051-1707-9.

An introduction to a literary genre by Terry Eagleton could be seen as a natural continuation along the lines of his bestselling *Literary Theory: An Introduction*. Like his 1983 classic, *The English Novel: An Introduction* tries to avoid an elitist approach and is explicitly aimed at students of literature as well as the interested general reader. Eagleton's targeted audience in turn shapes the corpus of this overview. In the preface Eagleton apologizes for perpetuating the traditional literary canon from Defoe to Woolf but explains that "this was determined by the need to discuss authors whom students are at present most likely to encounter in their work" (ix) – although he does swerve slightly from the mainstream by dedicating a few anecdotal pages to the Brontës' lesser known brother Branwell.

The reader searching for enlightenment on the definition of the novel is confronted in an introductory chapter with a wealth of fuzzy attributes. In true Eagleton-style, prone to alliteration, the novel is described as a "mighty melting pot," a "mongrel among literary thorough-breds." The unruly genre "mixes ... promiscuously" and has an appetite for its own breed, "cannibaliz[ing]" (1) other forms of literary production. Eagleton manages to invest today's most popular literary genre with a truly sensational flair, recreating perhaps some of the outrageousness it was attributed with at its inception.

Despite the novel's resistance to definition, two characteristics are identified: as a genre it is about common life and it portrays diverse and conflicting values. The relation between these two paradigms, between realism and morals, also proves the guiding question to this introductory study and is Eagleton's way of "making sense" of the novel. No less is promised in the blurb. However, with so vast a topic the task of giving the grander picture and drawing cross-references at the same time is susceptible to generalizing arguments which hardly convince the reader. When Eagleton claims that "the ordinary reader" (the labourer) has always revelled in an escapist preference for "the exotic and extravagant [...] the monstrous and miraculous" (5) whereas the above average literary consumers (lawyers, in Eagleton's example) generally favour realism, should one then draw the conclusion that the realist novel was never a popular form, or that lawyers do not read fantasy?

A question never satisfyingly addressed is that of national identity. Why the 'English' novel and not the 'British'? Eagleton does include Irish and Scottish writers, crediting them with innovating literature from the margins. But while he is less interested in the correct nationality of an author there is no doubt as to the national embeddedness of the readership: "The English have traditionally admired balance, symmetry, moderation and sound judgement, and there is plenty of these qualities in Austen" (121). With immigrant authors nationality inevitably becomes an issue, sparking the ambivalent characterisation that "Conrad is not quite an 'English' writer, if there is indeed such an animal" (232) followed by the affirmation of the claim that foreigners mimic their host culture to become more English than the English. When it comes to assert-

ing Sterne's Irish qualities despite his English socialisation, the argument is turned around: "Perhaps it is an illustration of the old saying that we are all Irish in the eyes of God" (93).

Eagleton peppers his explorations with frequent side-remarks which might at most elicit a faint smile in a round of literary academics: "One would not pass up a *tête-à-tête* with Miss Havensham [sic] for an evening with David Copperfield" (149). Speculative characterisations are added to popularise the topic: "If [Dickens] were alive today he would carry an electronic organizer and could be separated from his mobile phone only by a crowbar" (157). Where humorous anecdotes suffice there is no need for a coherently constructed argument.

However popular in style, Eagleton ultimately confounds the expectations raised by his publisher. *The English Novel* is not an undergraduate English studies introduction. He does not provide publication dates to any of the novels discussed and consistently refrains from providing references to his quotes, a practice students seeking for guidance in this book should certainly not adopt. The same goes for a conspicuously absent bibliography. Instead of leading the way, Eagleton takes his reader on an aimless ramble along with the established authorities of novel writing – "as we have seen" is a common phrase – but one might marvel whether the novice will be able to gain much insight.

Barbara Simpson (Berlin)

Arno Löffler and Eberhard Späth, eds. *Geschichte der englischen Kurzgeschichte*. Tübingen und Basel: A. Francke Verlag, 2005. vi, 388 pp. Pb. € 22.90. ISBN 3-8252-2662-X.

Sabine Buchholz. *Narrative Innovationen in der modernistischen britischen Short Story*. Studies in English Literary and Cultural History, 8. Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2003. 407 pp. Pb. € 38.50. ISBN 3-88476-587-6

Löffler and Späth's excellent collection of essays presents the history of the English short story in Great Britain and Ireland in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The essays do not merely follow a chronological order. Each contribution succinctly delineates key aspects of the short story of a particular country, era, genre or author in context and briefly discusses major examples. Two comprehensive introductory essays delineate short story theories and the literary market for short fiction. The survey on the Victorian short story (Dickens, Gaskell, Trollope, Eliot, and Meredith) is complemented by articles on detective stories and Gothic tales in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. For example, in the chapter on Victorian Gothic fiction, Franz Meier explores the sentimental and Romantic cultural contexts which gave rise to the Gothic novel, and the Victorian mass entertainment that Gothic narratives cater to. He explains the evolution of Gothic fiction with frequent references to stories and novels as a move towards urban and middle-class settings, as a turn from the supernatural towards subjective psychology, and as a tendency towards ambiguity and hybridity, which locates the evil other within the self.

The editors privilege the development of the late Victorian and the modernist period. Apart from an overview of that era they also assigned many articles on individual

authors, such as Kipling and Conrad, Henry James, James Joyce, Woolf and Mansfield, as well as Forster, Lawrence and Huxley. These presentations of individual authors combine a biographical with a contextual approach and take the opportunity to analyze several stories each, revealing artistic variety and growth. Silvia Mergenthal, for example, relates Mansfield's and Woolf's artistic developments to each other, to impressionist painting and to film. Mergenthal is convincing in her argument that these authors influence each other and develop modernist techniques in ways similar to their male peers but that the women writers add a specific critique of patriarchal society through their female protagonists' perspectives. While Woolf stresses her own marginalization in spite of belonging to the cultural elite, Mansfield suffers from double marginalization due to her colonial descent.

The subsequent parts of the volume have more ground to cover, a task they accomplish very well: humorous short stories (revealing occasional overlaps concerning Waugh and Pritchett with the section on stories between modernism and postmodernism), science fiction, postmodern short fiction, postcolonial stories, short stories from Ireland in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and from Wales and Scotland. Erhard Reckwitz solves the daunting task of covering the mass of heterogeneous postcolonial short stories in a masterly manner. It is impossible to deal with his subject matter in the chronological and comprehensive way chosen, say, for Irish or postmodern stories. He argues that most of the postcolonial stories fall into the basic categories of the existentialist model of literature as a political weapon and the postmodern negotiation of (neo-colonial) representations. Reckwitz convincingly analyzes in detail one short story each under the paradigm of Black militant resistance and liberation (James Matthews), the white liberal discourse of embarrassment and concern (Nadine Gordimer), the discourses of diaspora (Ben Okri) and of hybrid multiculturalism (Salman Rushdie). It would have been a welcome addition if, apart from the four stories discussed, he would have added important anthologies for further reading, such as Charles R. Larson's *Under African Skies* (1997) or Stewart Brown's and John Wickham's *Oxford Book of Caribbean Short Stories* (1999).

Löffler and Späth's valuable publication is very well structured and highly readable except for the essay on Henry James, which is too close to the convoluted style of the stories it discusses. It is a pity that the volume was not written in English, complementing Barbara Korte's remarkable history cum anthology, *The Short Story in Britain* (2003), which takes the longer historical perspective and locates the beginning of short stories in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The target audience of the edition under review, German students, will discuss the material in courses and exams in English, and the volume would also deserve international readers.

In her more specialist study on the modernist story in Britain, Sabine Buchholz concedes that the turn from the representation of external reality to that of internal reality in Modernism is a commonplace. However, she maintains that the innovative forms and functions of the British Modernist short story have not met with adequate attention so far because primacy was given to Modernist novels and to Modernist short fiction from the United States. She assumes that the marginalization of the form adds to that of gender because she finds many stories of great interest from 'minor' female writers, who have even been neglected by feminist scholars.

I find her argument of the marginalization of the genre a little bit more convincing than that of gender. Buchholz argues that the short form allows more radical departures from traditional narrative patterns than the novel. She mentions, for example,

that taking a child's perspective would be too naïve and restrictive for a novel but quite adequate for short fiction (232). Possibly Buchholz harbours a paradoxical preference for a consistent focus in radical experiment. While it is true that experimental novels would hardly sustain one perspective throughout the text they would have more options to combine various forms of focalization and styles. In addition, I wonder whether it was easier to publish James Joyce's *Ulysses* than experimental short fiction in one of the little literary magazines of the time. Buchholz's argument of marginalizing women's short fiction seems to fly in the face of recent literary studies because the widely acknowledged figureheads of Modernist short prose are Virginia Woolf and Katherine Mansfield. It is remarkable that, in order to reverse that imaginary imbalance in gender, Buchholz, who is generous in her inclusion of women, rules out James Joyce because he did not live and publish in Great Britain most of the time. It seems that her selection of British stories mostly by female authors is as much a consequence of the material at hand as of the author's intention to reverse the alleged gender bias. Buchholz deals not only with the usual suspects – Woolf, Mansfield, and Dorothy Richardson – but deservedly puts neglected authors, such as Stella Benson, Mary Borden, Mary Butts, Anna Kavan and Henry Handel Richardson in the limelight.

Buchholz begins with a comprehensive and balanced overview of the social, cultural and literary context and history of Modernism and the Modernist short story. Then, she discusses the state of the art in research on short story theory and narratology. The highly systematic discussion of postclassical narratology and possible worlds theory presents fruitful concepts which surpass the rigid binary differences of structuralist narratology and question the absolute distinction between narrator and focalizer. Her definition of plot derives from possible worlds theory as a dynamic network of relationships between real and virtual worlds conceived by narrators and characters (101). While the extension of the concept of plot to events within the mind (102) seems helpful to analyze Modernist fiction, the definition of plot as a meaningful, coherent, and linear sequence of real and virtual events (102) reverts to traditional definitions of the term, which much Modernist fiction seems to leave behind because it questions meaning, coherence and linearity. Buchholz's subsequent replacement of what has been called the "Plotlosigkeit" (360-61) of Modernist fiction by the rather vague concept "Plothaltigkeit" diminishes somewhat the innovative potential of Modernism.

However, Buchholz is very convincing when it comes to analyzing short stories in depth. Her section on reducing plot in favour of impersonal subjectivity amply documents varieties of displacing objective time and space by the subjective perception of these dimensions (106-23, 339-59). The chapters on experiments in focalization are illuminating. She explains how the blurring of boundaries between narrators and focalizers, the merging of focalizers, post-mortem perspectives, and radical information gaps are particularly challenging to the readers' constructions of meaning. The choice of focalizers among marginalized characters, such as children, dying people, drunks and madmen, questions social stigmata and cultural norms rather than denouncing the outsiders.

In spite of Buchholz's sophisticated approach, the analyses are not clouded by jargon. This very comprehensive and lucid study with its numerous analyses of individual stories in context reads extremely well and will be profitable to a large variety of academic readers. It would be desirable to give Sabine Buchholz the opportunity to edit an anthology of women's Modernist short fiction in order to make accessible a balanced selection of interesting short prose including 'minor' writers.

Michael Meyer (Koblenz)

Eva Müller-Zettelmann and Margarete Rubik, eds. *Theory into Poetry: New Approaches to the Lyric*. Internationale Forschungen zur Allgemeinen und Vergleichenden Literaturwissenschaft, 89. Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2005. 375 pp. Pb. € 75.00. ISBN 90-420-1906-9.

This book presents sixteen essays (two based on previously published versions) by fifteen authors, thematically grouped in four sections. A very brief introduction mainly criticises a perceived "impressionistic and narrowly formalistic critical debate on the genre" of poetry (8) – which, considering other relevant publications of many contributors, is clearly not the whole critical debate, but rather a kind of 'mission statement.' The eclectic collection understands 'theory' in a wide sense, not specifically as a theory of poetry; it does not set out to create *the* new theory for/of poetry.

The first section, "Defining the Lyric," represents the most clear-cut theorizing about poetry in general, offering three distinct approaches: Werner Wolf sketches a cognitive concept of the genre based on prototype-theory and drawing on nine typical 'traits.' Sabine Coelsch-Foisner sees poetry as the site "where the speaking voice is posited as a self" (71), and she calls for a methodology that addresses the various modes of self-creation and their cultural contexts. In a psychoanalytic approach, Angelica Michelis explores the connections between poetry, food and the human body. In the second section, "Narratology and Beyond," theoretical concepts widely used in the analysis of other literary genres are applied to poetry. For example, Monika Fludernik and Peter Hühn both look for narrative structures; conversely, Wolfgang Müller examines the insertion of poetry in narrative texts; Margarete Rubik demonstrates that poems and narrative prose texts can use similar verbal strategies, thus blurring the genre-boundary. The third section, "Mapping (Post)Modern Poetry," is defined not through the theory offered, but the 'target' poetry discussed; of particular interest is Norbert Bachleitner's extensive survey of the various forms of "digital poetry," as it takes stock of a very recent development in the field of poetry. The final section, "Constructing Group Identity," combines Michael Metzeltin's theory of the origin of poetry (i.e. courtship rituals) and Eva Müller-Zettelmann's analysis of the conservatism of the contemporary British poetry scene.

As is often the case with an essay collection, the individual contributions cater for various tastes and interests. Not all essays follow the wide generic understanding of 'lyric' as synonymous to poetry which the introduction implies, and some authors who treat the topic pass over the issue of generic differentiation rather lightly. Wolf, for example, in his criticism of earlier attempts of defining poetry, does not clarify that many of these attempts were aimed at defining *lyrical* poetry, not poetry in general. And when Pilar Abad-Garcia claims to base her approach on Käte Hamburger, she does not discuss the fact that Hamburger explicitly did not extend her theory to the dramatic monologue, as Abad-Garcia herself does. Some essays propose contradictory views, again highlighting the fact that there is no such thing as *the* theory of poetry. For example, Wolf calls for a fuzzy concept of genre, while Müller-Zettelmann (who has herself argued for this concept in recent publications) proposes a structuralist classification of various forms of 'metalyric' that re-introduces clear distinctions.

Given the wide range of contributors and interests, a certain 'fuzziness' of the overall scope may be inevitable (and even a good thing). In any case, the collection certainly does provide a good overview of current interests in poetry that go well beyond 'impressionistic' commentary. It shows poetry to be a truly multi-faceted genre to which

theoretical approaches – also those developed in other generic contexts – can be fruitfully applied. An index would have made the collection much more ‘user friendly’; and a little more care in copy-editing the text (particularly with regard to word division) would have been appropriate to a scholarly publication.

Jochen Petzold (Freiburg)

**Jana Gohrlich. Bürgerliche Gefühlsdispositionen in der englischen Prosa des 19. Jahrhunderts.** Anglistische Forschungen, 340. Heidelberg: Winter, 2005. 522 pp. Hb. € 75.00. ISBN 3-8253-1648-3.

The question of how to attain happiness is of perennial interest, and the controversies sparked off by Fay Weldon’s recent book *What Makes Women Happy* (2006) indicate that today’s search for happiness still follows the lines developed in Victorian times: Weldon, much in the spirit of 19<sup>th</sup>-century ‘how-to’ books, suggests ‘performing’ happiness to find private happiness. In not too dissimilar a vein, 18<sup>th</sup>-century writers recommended their readers the pleasures of self-taught ‘contentment,’ as any attempt to find absolute happiness would lead to disappointment: “Happy the man, whose wish and care / A few paternal acres bound” (Pope, “Ode on Solitude”). Focused exclusively on 19<sup>th</sup>-century processes of the construction of personal happiness, Gohrlich’s *Habilitationsschrift* makes no attempt to position the Victorian construction of happiness in a wider historical context, and readers are not informed of the sources of that – certainly not natural – belief that being happy is one’s due. Locke’s influence (e.g. *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, 1693) on English notions of happiness is never mentioned, and when ‘happiness’ and ‘contentment’ are used indiscriminately in Victorian conduct books, Gohrlich will not raise the question of whether these books attempt to blur the distinctions between 18<sup>th</sup> century and Romantic notions of a not-unhappy life. Yet, it was in the 18<sup>th</sup> century when philosophies of a happy life were published in great abundance, and, consequently, one is left to wonder whether the 19<sup>th</sup>-century disquisitions on happiness as discussed by Gohrlich would not make more sense by placing them in their historical context. Equally, there is no glance at more recent recipes for a happy life in order to characterise the specific Victorian contribution to a philosophy of life.

However, Jana Gohrlich’s perceptive monograph provides its readers with a fascinating view of the Victorian idea of ‘happiness,’ happiness achieved through the management of one’s emotions, that is. It was widely held that, beginning with exercises in ‘performing’ happiness, one could talk oneself into real happiness. Gohrlich’s study amply documents this idea as it manifests itself in ‘how-to’ books and novels, she defines the social function of these texts by pointing out, in summary fashion, that in Victorian times, the separation of workplace and home was identified as a source of irritation because home was presented, in this view of society, as a place exempt from the social and economic pressures of the time. Consequently, home – a private place, not affected by society – was seen as a site where the achievement of happiness depended exclusively on one’s character: there was no excuse for being unhappy by gesturing to the outside world. As a well informed guide, Gohrlich takes us on a tour of Victorian manuals which all give advice on how women, men and children should train themselves to feel happy in this neatly divided world. Home, in these books, is treated like a

stage where one is asked to rehearse the appearance of happiness until, somehow, one has convinced oneself of one’s own real happiness.

The novels discussed by Gohrlich are selected with a view to showing how, in the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, literary texts were increasingly concerned with the limits, even futility, of self-education towards both the performance and the internalisation of happiness. Thus, we are introduced to fictional characters constantly ‘practicing’ the construction of socially acceptable emotions. Many passages of well-known novels reveal indeed an additional meaning when read from this perspective. Gohrlich tends to follow the emotional careers of fictional characters step by step, often plodding through the plot in the process. Yet, exactly because of these patient chronological readings – which are often made rewarding by Gohrlich when she identifies the functions of the narrative strategies employed by the novelists – this monograph succeeds in establishing various narrators’ and characters’ views on the attainability of happiness. Fresh readings of canonical texts are forcefully established when, for instance, in a particularly sharp-sighted chapter, Gohrlich is able to show that *Agnes Grey* is purposefully constructed to give a convincing example of how, on the basis of strong religious convictions, happiness will be achieved by a continued process of self-fashioning. In contrast, the chapter on the structure of *Dombey and Son* reveals that this novel is devised to show that male attempts at happiness have to be based on a separation of the private and the public spheres. Thus, a new definition of ideal middle-class masculinity is propagated by Dickens’s novel, and Gohrlich is able to show how late-Victorian novels – after *Middlemarch*, treated in an illuminating chapter as the last systematically devised vision of the possibility of private happiness in a politicised, materialistic society – invent plots which ‘discuss’ this division of the private and the public in a spirit of outright scepticism. Hardy’s *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, for instance, is read as a novel of failure for the very reason that it denies the beneficial effects of self-education.

Methodologically, Gohrlich approaches her texts with common sense: Her readings follow the conventional lines of character analysis and, for her, novels are all novels with a social purpose as literary characters are to provide models of how to mediate between the demands of society and one’s private emotions, of transforming ‘natural’ emotions into socially accepted emotions. Neither psychology nor literary theory is used for the development of a refined descriptive model, though Gohrlich is of course well aware of the relevant research in her field (see ch. 2.2). Consistent use of the concepts and insights developed by psychologists dealing with the formation of resolutions and processes of self-persuasion would have resulted in a more rewarding typology of the fictional characters paraded in Gohrlich’s long chapter 4. Also, one regrets that, instead of placing her study firmly in the context of the emerging field of literary anthropology, Gohrlich relies on character analysis of the most conventional sort. However, the lack of theoretical ambitions is somehow compensated for by a consistently helpful ‘meta-text’ guiding the reader through all stages of her study.

The strictly text-based character of Gohrlich’s approach neglects a serious discussion of the social function of these books on happiness. Without substantiating her claim with any evidence – the passage on Mill (86-93) is too general to be useful in this context –, Gohrlich feels drawn to a sort of conspiracy theory, according to which the publication of ‘stage directions’ for the production of a happy family could be seen as a clever strategy by the ruling classes to transform the members of the middle classes into subjects, stupid in their happiness and therefore easy to manipulate. It is doubtful that this claim can be substantiated. After all, the sources of unhappiness were mani-

fold; lack of happiness derived not only from the lack of “a large income” – as Jane Austen’s narrator of *Mansfield Park* claims, and as Gohrlich’s hidden manipulators seemed to think (cf. 63) – but also from an intense awareness of religious doubt, or utter boredom in a society restricting the choice of useful occupations for women. Would a propagated ideal of appearing happy be able, then, to cover all personal existential problems behind a smooth varnish? This question is not addressed by Gohrlich; but her book is a thorough study – and a fascinating study at that as it gives detailed information on Victorian masculinities and femininities – of the methods of middle-class strategies of self-management, and their evaluations in fiction.

Stephan Kohl (Würzburg)

**Heather Worthington. The Rise of the Detective in Early Nineteenth-Century Popular Fiction.** Crime File Series. Houndsmill, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005. 203 pp. Hb. £ 45.00. ISBN 1-4039-4108-4.

When Dr Watson learns about the profession of his mysterious new flatmate in 221B Baker Street, his first reaction is to cite a literary source to indicate where the likes of Sherlock Holmes are to be found: “You remind me of Edgar Allan Poe’s Dupin,” he says with reference to the well-known tales published in the 1840s, some four decades earlier. And he adds with curious candour: “I had no idea that such individuals exist outside of stories.” Holmes at once dismisses the comparison and declares that, in his opinion, Dupin may have had “some analytical genius” but was otherwise “a very inferior fellow” (Doyle, *The Annotated Sherlock Holmes*, 1967, I: 162). This minor dispute among the two most celebrated figures from the English cult and culture of detection, recorded in “A Study in Scarlet” (1887), the founding story of the Holmesian canon, points to the major history of the genre, the *grand récit* about the nineteenth-century rise of the detective from Poe’s Frenchman Dupin to Doyle’s *fin de siècle* dandy figure, a history familiar not just to late-Victorian readers but rehearsed also in many contemporary studies. By contrast, it is Heather Worthington’s project in this book to question the validity of this “well-trodden, not to say beaten, path” (1) and venture into the earlier cultural territory of the 1820s to 1850s whence English detective fiction, as she claims, historically emerged from popular periodicals and their series about crime, police routine and topical investigation.

For this purpose, she looks at pertinent publications such as *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, *Household Words*, *The London Review*, *Chambers’s Edinburgh Journal* and others, and indeed presents ample evidence for the growing number of journalistic articles and semi-fictionalized stories – some of them, like *Richmond: Scenes in the Life of a Bow Street Runner* (1827), later republished as books – testifying not only to growing public interest in crime as a pervasive social problem, i.e. no longer confined to the low and so-called ‘criminal’ classes only, but also in the increasing professionalization of the methods, institutions and authorities designed, and officially commissioned, to handle it. In view of this latter point, Worthington’s analysis of the debates surrounding the 1829 introduction of the London Metropolitan Police, soon known by its place of residence as “Scotland Yard,” turns out to be particularly revealing. Before this new force was installed, delinquency was to be dealt with by the magistrates, so that many writers at the time campaigned against what they saw as a dangerously foreign, because central-

ized and hence ‘French’ new institution threatening to curb traditional civil liberties (see 123). Interestingly, Worthington suggests that Peele’s previous experience as Secretary of Ireland qualified him to transfer the apparatus of a colonial constabulary into the metropolitan space at home, while writers such as Dickens, in his early journalistic work, actively helped to normalize the new police inspectors as regular sights on London streets and turn detective agents into domesticated figures of Victorian England.

The merits of this study lie throughout in making such material, often neglected and not always easily accessible, available again for critical inspection, thus urging us to broaden the views of detective literature so as to include the wider field of cultural discourses in which it operated. In this way, the often long and somewhat rambling paragraphs we are treated to may also be useful as offering first acquaintance with these texts. As far as critical analysis and insights are concerned, however, this book, to my mind, rarely rises to its self-proclaimed agenda to provide “theoretically informed” (5) readings of the textualization of criminality and detection, mainly because it rarely stops to reflect on the central terms it uses – “ideology,” “privacy,” “gaze,” etc. – without once considering their theoretical or historical inflections, which a more sophisticated reading surely would require. Generally speaking, as the dispute between Holmes and Watson illustrates, the rise of the detective should rather be traced at the intersection of *two* cultural discourses, since the figure represents not just the rational ethos of a modern professionalized police force but also inherits the *ingenium* from the romantic celebration of creative genius whose mystery and romance are thus rescued for the drab and dull world of modernity. Worthington’s book, after all, tells us at least half this story.

Tobias Döring (München)

**George Butte. I Know that You Know that I Know: Narrating Subjects from Moll Flanders to Marnie.** Columbus: Ohio University Press, 2004. viii, 278 pp. Hb. \$ 44.95. ISBN 0-8142-0945-9

George Butte’s ambitious monograph is best described as a transgeneric and transmedial phenomenological account of narrative subjectivity. His epilogue finally admits that he intends no less than “to open the door to a new phenomenology of narrative” (236). He starts from the paradox that readers tend to address marks on a page as characters with a history and a consciousness. Butte acknowledges that he has not pursued a path that, at least to this reviewer, would have seemed natural and promising in answering this question, that of reader-response theory (236). Transcending the semiotic boundaries of media (films and novels) the study clearly challenges ‘medium-specific’ approaches to narrative. The monograph eclectically discusses narratives from 18<sup>th</sup>-century novels to Woody Allen – effortlessly shifting from Hawthorne to Hollywood, Hawks and Hitchcock under the heading of ‘masquerade.’ Butte’s argument, rooted in the key term ‘deep intersubjectivity,’ is applied to a vast range of genres and devices, from omniscient literary narrators to the Steadicam (123).

Butte in part accepts the deconstructivist approach to subjectivity, but maintains that it does not allow for the role of the body (23). The ‘I’ Butte proposes is neither Cartesian and holistic nor Lacanian and elusive. Wary of the traditional universalism of phenomenological approaches to subjectivity, Butte acknowledges the specificity of

particular cultures and ethnicities. Against discourse analysis, he insists that the embodied agency of the subject can go beyond positions determined by power relations, in this way pre-empting a multiculturalist critique of his approach. Picking up a central question asked by the phenomenology of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Butte clearly sees the world to a large extent constituted by narration. He believes in the power of narratives and represented subjectivity to overcome identity boundaries in the reading process. Drawing on Merleau-Ponty, Butte insists that partial participation in an 'inter-world' is possible: White, gay readers can and do read representations of straight blackness, and one historically specific way of overcoming boundaries is 'deep intersubjectivity.' With Bakhtin and J. Hillis Miller, Butte argues that novels are defined by their multivocal, complex representation of multiple consciousnesses. Deep intersubjectivity is, somewhat vaguely, "a web of partially interpenetrating consciousnesses" (28) and the dominant mode of Victorian narration. Butte's main part tells the story of how the more superficial intersubjectivity in the 18<sup>th</sup>-century novel deepens in the 19<sup>th</sup> century with Jane Austen and George Eliot. Sadly, but maybe wisely, Butte skirts the crucial question of why this occurs (237). In a 'before' and 'after' sequence, he pairs one narrative of deep intersubjectivity (*Great Expectations*, *Middlemarch*) with another text in which intersubjectivity is "exterior and mechanical" (46; *Moll Flanders*, *Tom Jones*). Deep intersubjectivity is subsequently adapted to Hollywood and rejected in the *nouveau roman*.

Invoking Merleau-Ponty's term "chiasmus," Butte shows how in Austen or Eliot subjects emerge fundamentally in the relatedness to other consciousnesses (30). Because consciousness hardly ever appears transparent and simple, Butte is of course interested in "inherently intersubjective" (134) terms such as 'theatricality,' 'gaze,' 'performance,' 'masquerade' and 'play.' In the field of film studies, Butte is overly wary of charges against his "ancient formalism" (125), which he seeks to conjoin to psychoanalytic film studies in order to overcome the boundaries of gendered gazes towards "an intersubjective gaze" (37) in which multiple viewing positions are offered. In his epilogue, Butte attacks both sociocultural and neuroscientific approaches to literature by insisting on subjectivity, agency, intentionality, and narrative inventiveness as the defining characteristics of literature that will continue to expose the shortcomings in the explanatory apparatus of these disciplines. Maybe in this context the deeply personal conclusion (238), in which Butte relates his narratological project to the seven miscarriages of his wife, is not as out of place as it may seem. I would forgive any of my students this excess of subjectivity – seemingly irrelevant and *lebensweltlich* – if it came after a discussion of narratives as nuanced and intelligent (but at times vague and eclectic) as Butte's.

Eckart Voigts-Virchow (Siegen)

Roger Ebbatson. *An Imaginary England: Nation, Landscape and Literature, 1840-1920*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005. 240 pp. Hb. £ 45.00. ISBN 0-7546-5092-8.

*An Imaginary England* offers readings of canonical as well as lesser known English poems and narratives from the period 1840 to 1920 which construct Englishness through figurations of landscape. Marked as it is by growing industrialisation and Britain's im-

perialist ventures, the period witnesses a "rediscovery of place in terms of a kind of reterritorialisation" (3). Ebbatson's study thus positions itself in the vast field of critical writing that centres on the nexus between identity and place. Accordingly, he acknowledges the debt that he owes to such seminal studies on English identity as *Englishness* by Robert Colls and Philip Dodd (1986) and John Lucas's *England and Englishness* (1990) but claims a stronger theoretical underpinning for his own contribution to the field (6). The key concept of Englishness itself, however, does not receive much critical consideration by Ebbatson, nor is the term 'imaginary' explained beyond a passing reference to Lacan (13).

The study opens with an interpretation of three of Alfred Lord Tennyson's *English Idylls* composed between 1833 and 1839 ("The Gardener's Daughter," "Walking to the Mail," and "The Golden Year"), in which Ebbatson identifies themes such as the male gaze constructing both female bodies and landscapes. He continues with Tennyson's *Enoch Arden* (1864), centring on the experience of Enoch's alienation from family and society and its homologue in the precarious position of Tennyson himself, compromised as Ebbatson sees it between artistic autonomy and the restrictions imposed by the literary market. Next, he approaches Tennyson's brother Charles Tennyson Turner, offering perspicacious readings of selected poems from *Sonnets and Fugitive Pieces* (1830). The theme of Eden violated in an age of increasing mechanisation identified here continues with a reading of Richard Jefferies's novel *The Dewy Mom* (1884) that traces both Jefferies's pantheist thinking and his indictment of the dreary lot of the rural poor. The next chapter provides a critique of "The Spectre of the Real" (1894), a story which Thomas Hardy co-authored with Florence Henniker but which was published solely under the name of Hardy. Interestingly, Ebbatson too fails to acknowledge the co-authorship of Henniker when first mentioning that story (6). He interprets the tale as inflected by the figure of the authorial double and establishes an analogy with the postcolonial Other as double. The theme of the Other as the self's own Other is explored in Hardy's "The Souls of the Slain" (1900), a response to the experience of British soldiers in the Boer War. The comparison between female and colonial Other recurs in Quiller-Couch's *Poison Island* (1907), which pursues the issue of mapping as a way of making the purely imaginary tangible. The range of Rupert Brooke's engagement with questions of identity becomes manifest in a reading that pits his South Sea poetry against a poem such as "The Old Vicarage, Grantchester" (composed in 1912) with its evocation of modernist metropolitan chaos on the one hand and the seeming security of rural England on the other. In selected readings from Edward Thomas's poetry and fiction, Ebbatson studies the trope of wandering. It is revealed here that Englishness is almost always informed by an Otherness which lies at its very heart. With D.H. Lawrence's *England, My England* (1915, 1922), Ebbatson turns to versions of Englishness undermined by the reality of war.

It will be apparent even from this synopsis that the ten chapters of the book take an impressively broad sweep. As for the theoretical grounding promised in the introduction, Ebbatson does indeed illuminate his readings with the help of cultural theory from Walter Benjamin to Homi Bhabha. As the author himself seems to imply when describing his study as being "infiltrated with trace elements from European cultural theory" (6), the selection of critical approaches at times appears somewhat haphazard, and the sheer amount of detail occasionally leaves the reader disoriented.

What emerges from the analyses is not so much an account of Englishness across the period under scrutiny but rather a collection of individual readings that stand each

in their own terms. However, the absence of an overarching narrative is quite in keeping with a text that, borrowing Wilson Harris's phrase, uses the image of "infinite rehearsals" (*sic*, 7) for the diversity of 'Englishnesses' considered. On the whole, *An Imaginary England* offers a wide range of very fine and inspiring readings of the pieces selected, and it significantly complements our understanding of the way Englishness is constructed in those texts.

Marie-Luise Egbert (Leipzig)

**Dunja M. Mohr. Worlds Apart? Dualism and Transgression in Contemporary Female Dystopias.** Critical Explorations in Science Fiction and Fantasy, 1. Jefferson, NC and London: McFarland, 2005. 312 pp. Pb. £ 29.50. ISBN 0-7864-2142-8.

Utopia is dead, long live transgressive utopian dystopias. Dunja Mohr's erudite study is not the attempt to resuscitate an old idea but to conceptualize a new genre. Along the way, she demonstrates the vitality, actuality and critical need of utopian thinking not only in contemporary literature but in contemporary society.

As less than holistic, transgressive visions of what has previously been "invisible, untold, unspoken (and so unthinkable, unimaginable, 'impossible')" (Teresa de Lauretis quoted in Mohr 280), contemporary utopian narratives abound, "though in the guise of dystopias" (3). Focusing on contemporary, mostly postmodern, feminist dystopias, Mohr shows not only the persistence of utopian literary narratives *per se* but divulges a new hybrid genre. Her study "analyzes in depth transgressive aspects of contemporary feminist utopian/dystopian literature and argues that these texts form a new subgenre: that of feminist 'transgressive utopian dystopias'" (3) because they "incorporate within the dystopian narrative a utopian undercurrent" and "transgress the established binary logic of dystopia" (3). The objective of her study is to identify "generic [...] hybridizations," to investigate "the dualisms the dystopian narratives are grounded in and [...] trace the various transgressions therein that embody the utopian narrative strands" (3). She does this by analyzing eight novels: Suzette Haden Elgin's *Native Tongue* trilogy (*Native Tongue* (1984), *The Judas Rose* (1987), *Earthsong* (1994)); Suzy McKee Charnas's *Holdfast* tetralogy (*Walk to the End of the World* (1974), *Motherlines* (1978), *The Furies* (1994), *The Conqueror's Child* (1999)); and Margaret Atwood's well-known *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985).

The book starts with a thorough and comprehensive literary history of the idea of utopia, its sibling dystopia, and the often more inclusively used genre of science fiction. Mohr discusses classical, social, modern, and feminist literary utopias/dystopias as well as utopian thinking in various genres, disciplines, cultural contexts and languages. In itself, this section is one of the most concise, scrupulous and instructive dissections of the terminology and literary history of utopian thinking currently available. The clear style should make it additionally attractive to students and teachers alike.

The next part, "Demanding the Impossible? The Artificiality of Boundaries" (49-70) addresses the critical utopias and dystopias that arise in the 1970s against the backdrop of social, political and cultural upheavals and movements. From the generic blurring and the dissolution of the classical and modern utopia, it is only a small and convincing argumentative step to the transgressive utopian dystopias of the subtitle. Their char-

acteristics, according to Mohr, are a changed narrative form that "accentuates character development, non-linear narratives, and multiperspectivism" (52) and a changed content that depicts imperfection, change and socio-political dynamics (52), thus narrating "the point of transition" from dystopia to utopia (53) without reaching the closure of the classical blueprint. Building on deconstruction, feminism, postcolonialism and previous utopian studies, Mohr defines transgression as "cultural and linguistic hybridity" (64), "signifying multiple and previously unconceptualized possibilities beyond our persistent binary structuring" (67). According to Mohr, the selected literary texts exemplify exactly this kind of transgression on the generic, formal and content level.

The utopian texts are given ample space in the following section of "Textual Analyses," divided into three parts. The discussion succeeds in addressing the specifics of these often vastly different texts because it does not cling to a prefabricated structure but also manages to bring out common key features: much of the transgression revolves around unsettling and displacing constrictive structures of othering; language and its representative function are a "key tenet" (275), and "some of the manifold narrative transgressions are indubitably related to the use of postmodern narrative strategies" (272). Characteristic of all texts are "fragmentary assemblage of a polyphony of conflicting voices and perspectives, and the female character's move from silence to speech" (272). Time and again the analysis shows that transgression also means that there is no one true and lasting site of resistance.

In the conclusion, the true ambition of her study becomes clear when Mohr asks: "how can the telling of stories about the future transform the present?" (278) Her answer is that utopias catalyze desires and show "how our real world could be changed" (278). They fulfill not only an aesthetic function, but offer a "valid social vision" (279). Thus, "transgressive utopian dystopian texts provide us with literary expressions of and reflections on cultural attitudes, our human potentialities, and social structures of the future" (279). This is a fitting conclusion for a study that wonderfully demonstrates what literature and literary studies may be capable of when at their best. The appendix contains a special treat, a short interview by the author with Suzy McKee Charnas.

Rüdiger Heinze (Freiburg)

**Susanne Rohr. Die Wahrheit der Täuschung: Wirklichkeitskonstitution im amerikanischen Roman 1889-1989.** München: Fink, 2004. 324 pp. 6 Abb. Pb. € 44.90. ISBN 3-7705-3901-X.

The title of this study – the constitution of reality in the American novel between 1889 and 1989 – indicates that the project undertaken is an ambitious one. Rohr tries to trace the development of American fiction from the late nineteenth to the late twentieth century – that is from realism, modernism and postmodernism to what has been tentatively called post-postmodernism – by examining the complex relationship between reality and the literary representations of that reality on the basis of an approach for which the author has coined the term 'semiotic-epistemological.'

In the introduction, Susanne Rohr places her study in the on-going critical debate about mimesis. Since Plato and Aristotle, this term has referred to the complex relation between reality and its representations, between truth and illusion. Drawing on ground-breaking studies by Nelson Goodman and Gebauer/Wolf (*Mimesis*, 1992) Rohr defines mimesis not as the imitation of reality but as the representation and reflection

of the processes, strategies and techniques by which reality – or the world – is constructed and shaped. The American philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce is given a central role in Rohr's study as he is presented as the 'founding father' of the constructivist view of reality. According to Rohr, Peirce's triadic conception of the sign, which puts signs and the objects referred to in relation to a perceiving and interpreting subject, is far superior to other language theories – in particular poststructuralism – as it allows for conceptualising both the conventionality as well as the creativity of language and for capturing the referential as well as the expressive and poetic functions of language. Rohr thus decidedly distinguishes her own 'semiotic' approach to literature – which she had already developed in her dissertation – from all theoretical approaches based on poststructuralist language theory. Whereas deconstruction, so Rohr, puts an emphasis on the impossibility of ever attaining fixed and stable meanings, new historicism underestimates the potential of literature to create meaning in the interpretive process. Rohr's claim is that only a semiotic approach based on Peirce's theory of the sign can do justice to the complex interrelation between object, sign and the interpreting subject.

Following Peirce, Susanne Rohr defines reality as the result of an interpretation (125) and the interpreting subject as a constructive agent. In Rohr's opinion, the image which illustrates best the process of world-making is the spiral. It represents a potentially unlimited and on-going cyclical movement which can be broken down to distinct moments: The subject constantly forms hypotheses about reality which are then subject to testing until reality emerges and can then become the object of intersubjective debate (125). The mimetic relation between literature and reality thus consists of the analogy between the strategies which go into the creation of fiction and the strategies by which the world itself is made. The formal characteristics of a literary text, which Rohr calls 'aesthetic profile,' are based on an epistemological subtext. Literary periods can be distinguished and characterized by the specific moment of the 'interpretive spiral' which is prominent in the formation of the text as well as reality at a given time.

The theoretical assumptions laid out in chapters 1 and 2 are illustrated by interpretations of representative American novels. In William Dean Howells's *A Hazard of New Fortunes*, Henry James's *The Golden Bowl*, Gertrude Stein's *Blood on the Dining-Room Floor*, Nabokov's *Lolita*, Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow* und Auster's *Moon Palace*, Rohr examines the interplay of aesthetic form and epistemological subtext. Each text is presented as exemplary of the way in which reality is conceptualised within its period or expressive of the transition from one period to the next. Furthermore, these texts are credited with an innovative thrust and are thus looked upon as "privileged sites" of public debate about the conceptualisation of reality (54).

In very broad terms, the shift in the conception of reality as presented by Susanne Rohr can be summarized as follows: In the realist period represented by William Dean Howells, the frequency of dialogue points to the need of authors to intersubjectively reach a consensus about reality. In contrast, the modernist novel which is already anticipated by James's late novels, focuses on the subjective perception and interpretation of reality, in particular on the moment when reality appears as a riddle that needs to be solved (17). At its height, modernism presents the opacity of reality as a fact which confronts the observer with a multiplicity of meanings and interpretations. Nabokov's *Lolita* which is seen as straddling the border between modernism and postmodernism is said to represent the moment when conflicting needs and power relations come to the fore (17). According to Rohr, *Lolita*, published in 1955, marks a qualitative turn in the conceptualization of reality as it realizes in an exemplary manner the semiotic un-

derstanding of reality anticipated by Peirce (217). Postmodernism is considered as a further radicalisation of this concept. Pynchon's fictional worlds, for example, display contradictory and incommensurable conceptions of reality (17). By the 1980s, postmodernism has exhausted itself and a new trend sets in. Auster's *Moon Palace* expresses once more the need for an intersubjectively agreed upon understanding of the world. According to Rohr's model of reality constitution, the cycle of the distinct moments which can be distinguished in the constitution of reality has been completed (291). At the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the reflection of intersubjectivity which has been prominent in realism, is once more an important concern.

The strength of Rohr's study lies in its detailed and profound analyses of individual texts by which the highly abstract and theoretical concepts are illustrated and fleshed out. Each chapter starts with an inventory of the formal characteristics of the respective literary period. In a second step, these formal features are then presented as the expression of particular epistemological needs that arise from a specific cultural and socio-economic constellation. The outstanding role which is claimed for Charles Sanders Peirce emerges in the course of the study and is made plausible by the successive chapters. Whereas Hans Vilmar Geppert in *Der realistische Weg: Formen pragmatischen Erzählens bei Balzac, Dickens, Hardy, Keller, Raabe und anderen Autoren des 19. Jahrhunderts* (1994) has already quite convincingly shown in how far the realist conception of reality can be aligned with Peirce's pragmatist theory, Susanne Rohr equally convincingly extends the reach of Peirce's theory by aligning the various stages of reality constitution with distinct shifts in the literary conception of reality since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The question that arises is whether Peirce's semiotic theory really allows for the wide-ranging conclusions which Rohr draws from it. At times, her narrative seems like an artfully contrived thought experiment. The texts are certainly well chosen to support Rohr's thesis yet one sometimes wonders whether what is said about Gertrude Stein can be applied equally well to other representatives of American modernism such as Hemingway or Faulkner. While Rohr's study is strong on the interrelation between aesthetic techniques and their epistemological implications, her delineation of the historical contexts – necessarily – relies on generalization and abstraction. Historical turning-points are invariably presented as moments of instability. Whereas the Gilded Age is characterized by its 'incoherence and a dynamics of disorder' (151) the situation at the beginning of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century is identified as the result of a modernization which 'did leave no stone unturned' (153). The 1960s are also presented as a 'time in which the very foundations of the United States were shattered' (225) and thus prepare the ground for the 1970s which in Rohr's view are more significant as far as the conception of reality is concerned.

Due to Rohr's theoretical interest in the relation between reality and its representation in narrative fiction, a more thorough investigation of the particular contexts in which the novels were written can hardly be expected. The study very clearly states its goals and its methodological approach and attains a high degree of coherence and persuasiveness by the frequent repetition of its theses and by frequent references to its theoretical assumptions. Largely due to the excellent textual analyses of important American novels this study not only introduces a new theoretical approach to literary texts but also provides new insights into the aesthetic complexity of the novels discussed and contributes to a better understanding of the dynamics underlying the literary history of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

**Tamar Jeffers McDonald. Romantic Comedy: Boy Meets Girl Meets Genre.** London and New York: Wallflower, 2007. 133 pp. Pb. £ 12.99. ISBN 978-1-905674-02-2.

Bei dem hier zur Diskussion stehenden Buch bzw. Büchlein handelt es sich um eine Einführung, und zwar eine ausgesprochen lesenswerte. Sie widmet sich der *romantic comedy*, kurz: *romcom*, das heißt, einem Genre, das innerhalb des Genrespektrums als "lowest of the low" (7) gilt und um das der Cineast im Allgemeinen einen weiten Bogen macht. Auch bei der Filmwissenschaft ist die *romantic comedy* nicht eben beliebt. Zumindest lässt hierauf die Überschaubarkeit der Anzahl der Beiträge schließen, die sich ihr widmen. Eine historisch perspektivierte Gesamtdarstellung, wie sie Jeffers McDonald zu geben versucht (wenngleich ihr Blick hierbei allein auf Hollywood gerichtet ist), fehlte bislang.

Bei der *romantic comedy* handele es sich um "a film which has at its central narrative motor a quest for love, which portrays this quest in a light-hearted way and almost always to a successful conclusion" (9), heißt es im einleitenden Kapitel, das den Leser mit den zentralen Motiven, Ideologien und narrativen Mustern des Genres vertraut macht. Es folgen vier weitere Abschnitte, gewidmet den wichtigsten Subgenres: der *screwball comedy*, der *sex comedy*, der *radical romantic comedy* sowie der *neo-traditional romantic comedy*. Nacheinander werden sie – unter besonderer Berücksichtigung je eines einschlägigen Filmbeispiels (*My Man Godfrey* [Gregory LaClava, 1936], *Pillow Talk* [Michael Gordon, 1959], *Annie Hall* [Woody Allen, 1977] sowie *You've Got Mail* [Nora Ephron, 1998]) – vorgestellt, wobei Jeffers McDonald sich immer wieder darum bemüht, die unterschiedlichen Erscheinungsformen der *romantic comedy* historisch und gesellschaftspolitisch zu kontextualisieren. Besonders überzeugend gelingt ihr dies im Falle der von der Forschung noch weitgehend ignorierten *sex comedy*, die in den fünfziger und frühen sechziger Jahren boomte und nicht zuletzt als ein – dezidiert beschwichtigender – Reflex auf den im Jahr 1953 erschienenen Kinsey-Report über das weibliche Sexualverhalten verstanden werden kann. Letzterer sorgte für größtes Aufsehen in der Öffentlichkeit unter anderem dadurch, dass Kinsey in ihm behauptete, die Hälfte der von ihm befragten Frauen hätten vorehelichen Sexualverkehr praktiziert – eine Erkenntnis, die die *sex comedy* implizit leugnet, indem sie wieder und wieder, wie in *Pillow Talk* oder *Lover Come Back* (Delbert Mann, 1961), Protagonistinnen ins Zentrum rückt, die ihrem männlichen Gegenüber den Sex ohne vorangehende Eheschließung kategorisch verweigern. "The sex comedies attempted to reassure audiences that, despite Kinsey's bombshell, nothing had really changed" (47), resümiert Jeffers McDonald.

Weist die *sex comedy* zahlreiche offenkundige Gemeinsamkeiten zu ihrer Vorgängerin, der zwischen 1934 und 1942 florierenden *screwball comedy* auf – speziell auf den in beiden Subgenres profilierten Geschlechterkampf ist hier hinzuweisen –, so unterscheidet sie sich drastisch von der *radical romantic comedy* der siebziger Jahre. Auf's Nachhaltigste vom Feminismus bzw. dessen geschlechterpolitischen Folgen beeinflusst, bewahrt diese, so Jeffers McDonald, "the basic framework [...] of the standard romantic comedy, but makes much of its own realism in certain areas – language, sexual frankness – being prepared to discard older conventions and frequently permitting a much more open ending." (72) Als diesbezüglich mustergültig könne Allens so ostentativ auf ein *happy ending* verzichtendes Meisterwerk *Annie Hall* gelten, das zudem ein weiteres zentrales Merkmal der *radical romantic comedy* erkennen lässt: ihre

exzessive Selbstreflexivität unter anderem hinsichtlich der Genretradition, in die sie sich einschreibt. "While it is possible to say with certainty," erklärt Jeffers McDonald, "that the romantic comedy before the 1970s was about love and romance, and would end happily with the couple's union, the radical romantic comedy, for a short period, was interested to see what became of the genre if more realistic elements were permitted space." (70) Dieses Interesse teile die seit nunmehr gut zwanzig Jahren die Leinwände dominierende *neo-traditional romantic comedy* ausdrücklich nicht. Im Gegenteil: Ein starker Hang zum Eskapismus sowie zur hohlen, allein auf romantische Stimmungswerte abzielenden Nostalgie wird ihr attestiert, der noch dazu gepaart sei mit einer unübersehbaren, an der Realität völlig vorbei gehenden Prüderie bzw. "aversion to sex" (112). Ephrons Erfolgsfilm *You've Got Mail* vermag, wie Jeffers McDonalds Einzelinterpretation zeigt, all diese Vorwürfe zu stützen, die in Kombination keinen Zweifel daran lassen, dass die Autorin die *neo-traditional romantic comedy* als eine Verfallsform der *romantic comedy* begreift. Letztere, so die am Ende des Buches stehende Zukunftsprognose, bedürfe unbedingt neuer Impulse, um als ein vitales Genre weiter überleben zu können.

Jörn Glasenapp (Köln)

**Gabriele Pisarz-Ramírez. MexAmerica: Genealogien und Analysen postnationaler Diskurse in der kulturellen Produktion von Chicanos/as.** Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2005. 405 pp. 15 Abb. Hb. € 65.00. ISBN 3-8253-5048-7.

Gabriele Pisarz-Ramírez's study explores how contemporary literary and cultural productions by Chicanas and Chicanos relate to, configure and revise narratives of the nation. Following a postnational approach, which has been developed by New Americanists in order to study and critique mechanisms of national inclusion and exclusion, a central objective of *MexAmerica* is to interrogate the emphasis which Chicana/o nationalist cultural productions place on ethno-racial homogeneity and a linear conception of time. In addition, the study aims to illustrate how during the past thirty years Chicana/o texts have developed and employed specific aesthetic strategies (e.g., defamiliarization, fragmentation or recycling) to represent Mexican-American subject positions 'beyond the nation.'

Before engaging in a thorough and well-researched analysis of different modes of cultural articulation, Pisarz-Ramírez's study defines "MexAmerica" as an imaginary and discursive space between two national cultures (the United States and Mexico). In this space, the notion of the border is of central importance, because it marks the margins and edges of each nation, and thus the seemingly predestined locale for transnational cultural contacts and intercultural awareness. Furthermore, for an analysis of Chicana/o cultural productions, the border paradigm functions as a useful lens to contrast the discourse of Chicano nationalism of the late 1960s and early 1970s, which centered around the reconstitution of "Aztlán," the primordial Chicano homeland. *MexAmerica* deserves credit for demonstrating how the notion of postnationalism functions both as an internal and an external marker of critique in Chicana/o discursive and aesthetic practices. That is, even though the nationalist rhetoric employed during the Civil Rights Movement can already be seen as postnational, because it constituted a resistance "outward," directed against the nation (US) by way of the nation (Aztlán), the

study also accentuates intraethnic subject positions which were excluded from the national narrative of Aztlán. To do so, Pízarz-Ramírez follows Donald Pease and other New Americanists in developing a theoretical frame that highlights a critique of cultural and socio-political modes of exclusion by the US and, at the same time, interrogates the securing of cultural homogeneity through patriarchal and heteronormative discourses within the national narratives of Mexico and Aztlán.

The textual analyses center around three key concepts: body, family and community. Pízarz-Ramírez eloquently demonstrates how discourses of the body, which have a specific coding in the national narratives of Mexico and the United States (e.g., the cultural constructions of gender and sexual preference), are reconfigured in Chicana/o literature and art. This is especially convincing in her readings of the "postnationalization" of virgin iconography by female and lesbian artists, whose works undermine the seemingly natural congruence of the *Virgen de Guadalupe* and the Mexican nation.

The chapter "Borderland *Familias*" focuses on how the representation of family in works by Jack López, Patsi Valdez, Sheila Ortiz Taylor and Sandra Ortiz Taylor, and Pat Mora function as similar interventions into national discourses. One of the strongest subchapters, on Chicana/o art as a postnational mode of aesthetic articulation, undertakes an insightful analysis of Chicana/o *muralism*. Pízarz-Ramírez's excellent reading of this public art form not only offers a useful introduction to an area of study largely neglected in German American Studies, but offers interesting insights into the possibilities and limits of artistic figurations of 'community' in urban America.

The final chapter treats Chicana/o art and literature as mediators of hemispheric identities. The readings of works by Alfredo Véas, Juan Felipe Herreras, Rubén Martínez, and Guillermo Gómez-Peña trace different subject positions and community organizations that lose their national identification and, instead, become ideal cases for transnational and postnational versions of the body, family and community. Here, as elsewhere in the study, one wonders about the lacking delimitation of "postnational" and "transnational," for it remains unclear whether the two are to be seen as synonymous, related or, if not, how one differs from the other. A clearer definition of the two charged terms could have facilitated a more critical reading of the texts, especially in light of the overall theme of the book. Nevertheless, the knowledgeable text and discourse analyses in *MexAmerica* are insightful and convincing, because they point out different aesthetic strategies for articulating postnational positions and interventions in Chicana/o cultural productions at the turn of the century. Pízarz-Ramírez's book marks an important contribution to the fields of Chicana/o and American Studies not least because, next to a number of illustrative examples, the reader finds a wealth of background information on current cultural and socio-political affairs pertaining to an ethnic minority in the United States.

Marc Prieue (Potsdam)

## Die Autoren dieses Heftes

- Dr. Bettina Boecker, Institut für Englische Philologie, Universität München, Schellingstr. 3/RG, 80799 München  
 Corina Crisu, Ph.D., 16 Regency Court, Alexandra Road, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire, HP2 4AX, United Kingdom  
 Prof. Dr. Tobias Döring, Department für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, Universität München, Schellingstr. 3/RG, 80799 München  
 PD Dr. Marie-Luise Egbert, Institut für Anglistik, Universität Leipzig, Beethovenstr. 15, 04107 Leipzig  
 PD Dr. Jörn Glasenapp, Institut für Theater-, Film- und Fernsehwissenschaft, Universität Köln, Meister-Ekkehart-Str. 11, 50937 Köln  
 Dr. Rüdiger Heinze, Englisch Seminar, Universität Freiburg, Rempartstr. 15, 79098 Freiburg  
 Dr. Tilman Höss, Luxemburger Str. 469, 50939 Köln  
 Prof. Dr. Stephan Kohl, Neuphilologisches Institut/Anglistik, Universität Würzburg, Am Hubland, 97974 Würzburg  
 Prof. Dr. Michael Meyer, Institut für Anglistik, Universität Koblenz-Landau, Universitätsstr. 1, 56070 Koblenz  
 Prof. Dr. Kurt Müller, Institut für Anglistik/Amerikanistik, Universität Jena, Ernst-Abbe-Platz 8, 07743 Jena  
 Dr. Jochen Petzold, Englisch Seminar, Universität Freiburg, Rempartstr. 15, 79098 Freiburg  
 Dr. Marc Prieue, Institut für Anglistik/Amerikanistik, Universität Potsdam, Karl-Liebknecht-Str. 24-25, 14476 Potsdam  
 Barbara Simpson, Großbritannien-Zentrum/Centre for British Studies, Humboldt-Universität Berlin, Jägerstr. 10-11, 10117 Berlin  
 Prof. Dr. Eckart Voigts-Virchow, Fachbereich 3/Anglistik, Universität Siegen, Adolf-Reichwein-Str. 2, 57076 Siegen  
 PD Dr. Jutta Zimmermann, Institut für Anglistik/Amerikanistik, Universität Jena, Ernst-Abbe-Platz 8, 07743 Jena

## THOMAS HERBST AND KATRIN GÖTZ-VOTTELER

## INTRODUCTION: THE MYSTERY OF COLLOCATION

The term *collocation* presents an almost prototypical example of the phenomenon of polysemy. In what one could call a rather neutral sense it is used to refer to any combination of two words that co-occur in language text.<sup>1</sup> Other uses of the term identify more specific types of combination but differ as to what they consider to be the relevant criterion that makes up specificity. One type, the *sandy beaches*-type, refers to specificity in statistical terms of co-occurrence in the language, or in a corpus, – where statistical significance is not necessarily determined in terms of absolute frequency of co-occurrence but calculated on the basis of some sort of measure of mutual expectancy. In the second type, the *guilty conscience*-type, the combination is significant because it is established or institutionalized, to use a term common in word formation, and somehow unpredictable on the grounds of the meanings of the words. It is relatively obvious why the first type, referred to as “quantitative” by Hausmann and Blumenthal (2006, 3) should feature prominently in corpus linguistics, whereas the second, which Hausmann and Blumenthal (2006, 3) characterize as “essentiellement qualitative” (essentially qualitative) and in terms of “cooccurrence lexicale restreinte” (restricted lexical co-occurrence), has been a key concept of foreign language linguistics for a very long time.

That a foreign speaker of English who knows the noun *tea* will need to know (or be able to find out from a dictionary) that it can be qualified as *weak tea* but not as *feeble tea* or *light tea* or that the verb that accompanies *tea* to express the idea of preparation is *make* and not *cook* or *boil* is an insight that is reflected in Makkai’s (1972) classification of such combinations as “encoding idioms”<sup>2</sup> and in Hausmann’s fundamental distinction between *Basis (tea)* and *Kollokator (collocate)*, which is of particular relevance to foreign language teaching and foreign language lexicography.

While the original vagueness of the term as used by Firth can be seen as leading to the emergence of its different uses, there is also considerable overlap

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<sup>1</sup> Cf., for instance, Sinclair (2004, 141).

<sup>2</sup> Compare also Fillmore/Kay/O’Connor (1988), Croft/Cruse (2004, 250).

between them.<sup>3</sup> What is of crucial importance, however, is that both foreign language linguistics and corpus linguistics provide ample evidence for the fact that language text, or discourse, is not the result of some sort of application of grammatical rules followed by lexical insertion, or, in other words, that grammaticalness is not “the only restraint” in lexical choice (Sinclair 1991, 109). Rather, syntagmatic relations between lexical items in the sense of co-selection seem to play a crucial role in language. A programmatic title such as “Wortschatzlernen ist Kollokationslernen” (Hausmann 1984) is perfectly compatible with Barlow’s (2004, 213) statement that “collocations are the building blocks of language and are, in some sense, fundamental units of language in use”, although they represent different uses of the term collocation. In other words, it might make sense to regard the *sandy beaches*-type of collocation and the *guilty-conscience*-type as two prototypical centres of the same phenomenon. Certainly, both can be subsumed under Sinclair’s (1991, 110) idiom principle, namely “that a language user has available to him or her a large number of semi-preconstructed phrases that constitute single choices, even though they might appear to be analysable into segments.”

In fact, coming from a foreign language background one might ask to what extent a combination such as *sandy beaches* should be seen as a free combination of two lexical items at all since the fact that the concept of a sandy beach is expressed in German by a compound, *Sandstrand*, would generally be taken as a reason for considering this a single lexical choice. Since *sandige Strände* does not seem to be used in German (although *feinsandige Strände* do occur), even what appears to be a free combination, such as *sandy beaches*, in English is in some way subject to usage or the level of *Norm* in Coseriu’s (1973) sense. It is interesting to see that the parallel between free combinations and compounds is already apparent in the writing of John Rupert Firth (1956/1968, 107), when he talks about “collocational compounds and collocational phrases in which common words appear” and gives examples such as *safety match* and *safety first*.

While phraseology in the past has concentrated on studying the relations between different lexical forms which often co-occur, the correlation between the expression of particular meanings in a particular way also deserves investigation. For instance, the time span comprising some 180 days can be referred to as *half a year/halbes Jahr* or *six months/sechs Monate* in English and German; nevertheless these different expressions are not really equivalent. In English, *six months* is definitely the preferred way of expressing that meaning (with 4009 instances for *six months* in the BNC as against 49 of *half a year*), whereas in German no such clear picture emerges. Units such as *six months*, which play a major role in bilingual lexicography, for instance, have been termed *probabemes* (Herbst/Klotz 2003 and forthcoming) and it can be argued that knowledge of probabemes is part of the competence of the speakers of a language. It is obvious

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<sup>3</sup> For definitions of collocation and a discussion of various approaches see e.g. Bahns (1996), Jehle (2007), Nesselhauf (2004), Herbst (1996), Steinbügl (2005) Hausmann (this volume). Compare also Hausmann (2007).

that the study of probabemes in different languages also cuts across the traditional distinction between words or lexemes on the one hand and combinations of words or collocations on the other, as the example of *Sandstrand* and *sandy beach* shows quite clearly. The fact that *Sandstrand* is lexicalised in German (and found in dictionaries), whereas *sandy beach* is commonly considered a free combination (which is not lemmatised in dictionaries) suggests that, in Sinclair's terms, when talking about *sandy beaches*, speakers of German carry out a single lexical choice whereas speakers of English carry out two lexical choices. This obviously raises the fundamental question of the relationship between conceptualisation and lexical elements.<sup>4</sup>

As far as such psycholinguistic or cognitive issues are concerned, it is very encouraging that within cognitive linguistics construction grammar "grew out of a concern to find a place for idiomatic expressions in the speaker's knowledge of a grammar of their language" (Croft/Cruse 2004, 225).<sup>5</sup> So far, construction grammar has not really offered any new insights into the nature of the different types and degrees of fixedness and variability exemplified in the volumes of the *Oxford Dictionary of Current Idiomatic English*, for example. However, in the long run, it might provide a framework which integrates insights into the idiomatic character of language in terms of the idiom principle into a comprehensive model of language which is compatible with valuable insights about the collocational and idiomatic nature of language provided by foreign language linguistics and corpus linguistics.<sup>6</sup>

It was this range of issues that was in the focus of attention of a series of papers given at the *Interdisziplinäres Zentrum für Lexikografie, Valenz- und Kollokationsforschung* at the Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg in the summer term of 2006, which provided the impetus for this volume. Franz Josef Hausmann's (Erlangen) opening article offers an outline of his theory of collocation and the history of the term, referring mostly to its use in the description of French and English. Dirk Siepmann (Osnabrück) discusses various concepts of collocation with respect to the teaching of English and French to German students and gives an outline of the Bilexicon project. The aspect of collocation in foreign language teaching is covered in two further papers: Diana Lea (Oxford University Press) provides insights into the linguistic and lexicographical principles underlying the compilation of the *Oxford Collocations Dictionary for Students of English*, and Gaëtanelle Gilquin (Louvain) deals with the analysis of learner corpora in English and French. Göran Kjellmer's (Göteborg/Gothenburg) contribution is an example of collocational analysis in corpus linguistics, focussing on constructions of the type *a couple hours* offering a diachronic perspective. Hans-Jörg Schmid's (München) article focuses on an analysis of shell nouns with respect to Sinclair's idiom principle in a construction grammar framework.

<sup>4</sup> Compare Lea's discussion of *grey area* (this volume).

<sup>5</sup> See also Fillmore/Kay/O'Connor (1988) and Goldberg (2006)

<sup>6</sup> Compare, for example, Granger (1998).

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FRANZ JOSEF HAUSMANN

## DIE KOLLOKATIONEN IM RAHMEN DER PHRASEOLOGIE – SYSTEMATISCHE UND HISTORISCHE DARSTELLUNG

**Abstract:** This paper gives an overview over the development of the concept and the term *collocation*, focussing on French lexicography. The first section examines the place of collocations within phraseology, introducing the two constituents of collocations, *base* and *collocator*. The article then goes on to present a history of the treatment of collocations in dictionaries; furthermore, the author reflects on the role collocations have had in linguistic theory, pointing out that collocations have only been treated systematically in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

**Vorbemerkung:** Die folgende Darstellung bezieht sich vorrangig auf das Französische und Deutsche. Aus anglistischer Sicht ist sie zu lesen als Plädoyer für die Erforschung der englischen Kollokationslexikographie *vor* Aufkommen des Kollokationsbegriffs.

### 1. Systematische Darstellung

Phraseologie ist Phrasemlexikologie. Das Phrasem ist eine kodierte mehrmonematische Einheit, wobei das Monem im Sinne von A. Martinet als Oberbegriff zu Lexem und Morphem zu verstehen ist. Statt Phrasemlexikologie kann auch der Terminus Mehrwortlexikologie benutzt werden. Wichtig ist: Phraseme bestehen nicht nur und nicht notwendig aus Lexemen, sondern auch aus freien Morphemen. Phraseologie geht also über die Polylexematik hinaus. Sie umgreift auch Polymorphematik und Morpholexematik. Sie ist Polymonematik.

Im Zentrum der Phraseologie stehen Idiome (idiomatische Redewendungen, z.B. englisch *to kick the bucket*), Kollokationen (typische Wortkombinationen, z.B. englisch *to meet a deadline*) und Phraseoterme (terminologische Mehrwortbildungen, z.B. englisch *cardiac arrest*). Im 20. Jahrhundert wurde die Phraseologie meist unter Ausschluss der Kollokationen und Phraseoterme verstanden als Wissenschaft der Idiome. Diese enge Sehweise, in der vor allem die Kollokationen außerhalb jeglicher linguistischer Betrachtung blieben, entsprach nicht der lexikographischen Praxis seit der Renaissance (siehe unten) und wird derzeit zunehmend überwunden.

Kollokationen (Beispiele: *confirmed bachelor, to lay the table / célibataire endurci, mettre la table / eingefleischter Junggeselle, Tisch decken*) sind normtypische phraseologische Wortverbindungen, die aus einer Basis und einem Kollokator bestehen. Die Basis ist ein Wort, das ohne Kontext definiert, gelernt und übersetzt werden kann (*bachelor, table*). Der Kollokator ist ein Wort, das beim Formulieren in Abhängigkeit von der Basis gewählt wird und das folglich nicht ohne die Basis definiert, gelernt und übersetzt werden kann (*confirmed, to lay*, vgl. Hausmann 2004 und die dort verzeichnete Literatur). Die natürliche Formulierungsabfolge geht progressiv von der Basis zum Kollokator und nicht umgekehrt: Wer von *Verbrechen/Dummheit/Meineid* redet, braucht ein Verb, das die Realisierung ausdrückt: *begeben*. Kollokationen sind vor allem produktionsidiomatisch (Götz 1976). Unkenntnis des passenden Kollokators führt zur für den Fremdsprachler typischen Formulierungsnot. Das Sammeln von Kollokatoren zu einer Basis ist lebensnah: *Tisch decken, abräumen / to lay, clear the table / mettre, débarrasser la table*. Es rekonstruiert Szenarien, Frames, Skripts oder Rollenspiele.

In der Kollokation wird das Basiswort banal gebraucht (*Aufzug, Passagier, Hund, Streit, Eid, dumm*). Die Spanne des Kollokatorgebrauchs geht von wenig idiomatisch (*holen* in *Aufzug holen*, aber nicht *rufen*) bis zu stark idiomatisch (*blind* in *blinder Passagier*). Der Kollokator kann Redewendung sein: *vom Zaun brechen* in *Streit vom Zaun brechen*.

Funktionsverbgefüge (*Eid leisten*) und Vergleichsformeln (*dumm wie Bohnenstroh*) haben Kollokationsstruktur (Basis: *Eid* und *dumm*). Lexikalische Solidaritäten des Typs *der Hund bellt* sind ein Sonderfall, insofern der Kollokator *bell* ohne Kontext definiert werden kann, aber nicht ohne Nennung des Basiswortes in der Definition („die für einen Hund typischen Laute von sich geben“). Eine Basis kann gleichzeitig mehrere Kollokatoren haben: *harsche Kritik üben* (komplexe Kollokation).

Manche Linguisten beschreiben die Kollokation vom Kollokator zur Basis. Sie sammeln zu Kollokatoren Basisklassen (Subjektklassen, Objektklassen, usw.). Das ist z.B. in der distinktiven Synonymik sinnvoll. Unterschiede wie zwischen *broad* vs *wide*, *tun* vs *machen*, *lächerlich* vs *lachhaft*, *zieht nicht* vs *verfängt nicht*, *rufen* vs *holen* (*Taxi rufen / Aufzug holen*, aber: *appeler un taxi/un ascenseur*), *mince* vs *étroit* (*lèvres minces / hanches étroites*, aber: *schmale Lippen/Hüften*) können nur über das Aufzeigen verschiedener Basisklassen erläutert werden. Lebensnah ist diese Fragestellung allerdings nicht. Es handelt sich nicht um eine natürliche Formulierungsabfolge, sondern um eine Metasicht. Es ist linguistisch, zu fragen: Was kann ich alles *begeben*? Was ist alles *schmal*? Natürlich ist dagegen die Frage des Fremdsprachlers: Was sagt man mit *Lüge*? Kann ich eine *Lüge begeben*? Die Antwort sollte er im Wörterbuch unter *Lüge* finden.

Kollokationswörterbücher existieren in zwei Typen: Typ 1 ist formulierungsorientiert und liefert zu Basiseinträgen Kollokatoreninformation. Leuch-

tendes Beispiel ist das *Oxford Collocations Dictionary* 2002 (OCD)<sup>1</sup>, das allerdings der Vervollständigung bedarf. Typ 2 ist kognitionsorientiert und liefert zu Kollokatoreinträgen Information über mögliche Basen und Basisklassen. Eindrucksvollstes Beispiel ist hier Bosque 2004 für das Spanische (siehe aber auch schon Brueckner 1975 für das Französische).

Idiome haben keine Basis, weil sie durch Block-Verfügbarkeit und Block-Bedeutung gekennzeichnet sind (als Redewendung: *den Löffel abgeben*, als Sprichwort: *Wer im Glashaus sitzt, soll nicht mit Steinen werfen* oder als exzentrische Wortbildung: französisch *cordon bleu* = Mann/Frau mit Kochkünsten).

Blockverfügbar sind auch Pragmateme (*Du kannst mich mal!*), Probabeme (deutsch *Bleib stehn!* französisch *Bouge pas!*; Herbst/Klotz 2003) und berühmte Zitate, Titel u.ä. (*Wer zu spät kommt, den bestraft das Leben*). Auch sie gehören zu den Phrasemen.

In den Terminologien sind polylexematische Einheiten häufig, die keine Basis-Kollokator-Struktur haben (*Herzstillstand / Hafenanlage; arrêt cardiaque / équipement portuaire*). Sie können mit G. Gréciano (1997) Phraseoterme genannt werden.

Die morpholexematische Phraseologie bildet komplexe Verben (*avoir pour but de*), Adjektive (*de nature à / à cran*), Adverbien (*en vain*), Präpositionen (*à côté de*), Determinanten (*un nuage de qc*), Konjunktionen (*au fur et à mesure que*) und Pronomina (*le tien / n'importe qui*), die aus der Kombination von Lexem und Morphem hervorgehen. Unter den komplexen Präpositionen und Konjunktionen kommen auch polymorphematische vor: *au-dessus de, en deçà de, parce que, sans que, afin de*. Die komplexen Präpositionen und Konjunktionen (polymorphematisch wie morpholexematisch) werden gelegentlich als grammatische Phraseologie zusammengefasst.

Wie verhält sich die Valenz zur Phraseologie? Haben wir es bei der Valenz mit einer kodierten mehrmonematischen Einheit zu tun? Stehen die Leerstellenfüller (Aktanten) zum regierenden Wort in einem phraseologischen Zusammenhang? Nicht *qua re*. *Qua re* steht nur die Leerstelle in diesem phraseologischen Zusammenhang. Das Verhältnis von regierendem Element und Leerstellenfüller kann sein: eine freie Kombination, eine Kollokation, Teil eines Idioms. Valenz ist Kollokation der Leere.

Wo ist der systematische Ort der *phrasal verbs* (Thim 2006)? Sie entsprechen deutschen Einzelwörtern wie *aufgeben* (= *to give up*) vgl. *gibst Du auf?* = *do you give up?* Die unfesten Verben des Deutschen gehören teilweise in die Phraseologie, die *phrasal verbs* als morpholexematische kodierte Einheiten vollständig.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Siehe aber auch schon Rodale (1947).

<sup>2</sup> Warum bemühe ich mich nicht um die semantische Beschreibung der Kollokationen, wie – wissenschaftlich verdienstlich – es etwa Peter Scherfer in mehreren Publikationen getan hat (1999, 2001, 2002)? Weil ich an den pädagogischen Nutzen, kurz die Lernbarkeit solcher Beschreibungen nicht glaube. Kollokationen sind als solche sinnvoll zusammenzu-

Noch ein Wort zur Quantität: Die Zahl der Phraseme einer Sprache (also nicht nur der Idiome) geht laut G. Gross in die Hunderttausende (Gross 1994), laut I. Mel'čuk in die Zig-Millionen (mündlicher Diskussionsbeitrag von 1994)!

## 2. Wissenschaftsgeschichtliche Darstellung (Schwerpunkt Französisch)

### 2.1 Der Beginn der Lexikographie ist Kollokationslexikographie

Wir leben in einer Epochenwende, der Virtualisierungs- und Globalisierungswende. Gehen wir zwei Epochenwenden zurück: Die erste ist die Industrialisierungswende im 19. Jahrhundert, die zweite ist die Buchdruckwende im 16. Jahrhundert. Diese bescherte uns das Wörterbuch, und zwar in erster Linie das Wörterbuch des Lateinischen. Im 16. Jahrhundert wurde Latein zum aktiven Gebrauch erlernt. Montaigne musste als Kind zu Hause Lateinisch sprechen. Folgerichtig gibt es im 16. Jahrhundert eine ganze Reihe von Kollokationswörterbüchern des Lateinischen. Sie stehen heute noch in unseren Bibliotheken. Die meisten habe ich in der Staatsbibliothek Augsburg gefunden. Sie sind in Hausmann 1982 und 1989 dokumentiert.

Aus den Wörterbüchern des Lateinischen schält sich im 16. Jahrhundert langsam auch eine Lexikographie der modernen Volkssprachen heraus, zuerst zweisprachig Latein–Volkssprache, dann Volkssprache–Latein, schließlich einsprachig in der Volkssprache. Die ersten einsprachigen Wörterbücher sind aber keine Definitionswörterbücher, denn für Definitionen besteht nicht der größte Handlungsbedarf. Sie sind von praktischerem Typus, kurioserweise in Deutschland und Frankreich verschieden. In Deutschland sind es Auflistungen von Synonymen zur richtigen Wortwahl. In Frankreich sind es, ebenfalls zur richtigen Wortwahl, Kollokationswörterbücher. Im ersten einsprachigen Wörterbuch des Französischen werden 1571 zu Substantiven passende Epitheta, also Adjektive, geliefert (La Porte, *Les Epithetes*, siehe Bierbach 1997). Solche Epitheta-Wörterbücher findet man dann durch die Jahrhunderte für alle Sprachen. Das

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stellen und zu memorisieren; die komplizierten semantischen Verhältnisse stellen sich, wenn sie beschrieben sind, als so verwickelt und umständlich heraus, dass sie sich einem Lernvorgang verschließen. Gegen diese Überzeugung hat Peter Scherfer eingewandt: „Wie sollen denn die Sprecher einer Sprache ein Phänomen meistern, das zu kompliziert ist, um noch lernbar zu sein?“ (Scherfer 2001, 19). Scherfer verwechselt Lernen und Beschreibung, ferner L2-Lernen und Leben. Der Muttersprachler lernt die kompliziertesten Dinge durch Hineinwachsen, durch Leben. Mit Beschreibung hat das nichts zu tun. Vieles Sprachliche kann man nur leben, aber nicht beschreiben, denn es *ist* das Leben, und das Leben kann man auch nur vollständig leben und nicht vollständig beschreiben. Insofern lernt auch der Fremdsprachler zwar manches auf der Basis von Beschreibung, vieles aber nur durch das Leben – oder nie. Wenn die Lernbarkeit der Sprachen von ihrer Beschreibbarkeit abhinge, wären wir arm dran. Diese Aussage relativiert mit Absicht den Stellenwert der Linguistik für das Fremdsprachenlernen. Ganze Bereiche der Linguistik sind für das Fremdsprachenlernen wertlos.

erste deutsche scheint Sattler 1607 (*Teutsche Epitheta*). Sehr früh kommt auch die Verbindung von Epitheta-Wörterbuch und Synonymwörterbuch vor, also die Kombination der beiden praktischsten Wörterbücher. Sie heißt später für das Lateinische *Gradus ad Parnassum* und hat großen Erfolg (Hausmann 1989, 1011). Kollokationswörterbücher (überwiegend vom lebensnahen Typ 1) gehören zu den ersten Wörterbüchern überhaupt, und es hat sie seither immer gegeben.

## 2.2 Die Kollokation im allgemeinen einsprachigen Wörterbuch

Die nächste Frage wäre: Wie hat sich das auf die ersten allgemeinen einsprachigen Wörterbücher ausgewirkt, auf die Definitionswörterbücher?

Dazu muss man zunächst verstehen, dass es für die Definitionswörterbücher zwei ganz verschiedene Modelle gab. Definitionen kommen als Mindestinformation in beiden Modellen vor. Was sie unterscheidet, steht hinter der Definition – und das war im ersten modellgebenden einsprachigen Wörterbuch, nämlich dem der italienischen *Accademia della Crusca* 1612 das Zitat (mithin *parole*). Die Crusca setzte zur Beglaubigung der Definition dahinter ein Zitat aus den großen sprachlichen Autoritäten, den Klassikern Dante, Petrarca und Boccaccio, obwohl diese schon 300 Jahre tot waren. An Kollokationen dachte die Crusca nicht. Sie kommen höchstens zufällig in den Zitaten vor.

1635 wurde die *Académie française* gegründet, um ein Wörterbuch zu machen, und sie dachte zuerst, sie könne vorgehen wie die Crusca und ein zitierendes Autoritätenwörterbuch erstellen. Aber die Situation war in Frankreich völlig anders. Man verachtete die frühere Literatur, und für klassisch hielt man nur sich selbst. Da man aber doch nicht sich selbst zitieren wollte, blieb nur übrig, gar keine Zitate aufzunehmen. Und nun trat an die Stelle der Zitate die Phraseologie (also das Nicht-Kreative, das Vorgefertigte) und damit statt des Großen, Schönen, Außergewöhnlichen, das Übliche, das Banale, das Normale, das Alltägliche, das man sich übrigens vor allem aus zweisprachigen Wörterbüchern holte. So wurde das Definitionswörterbuch der Akademie zu einem linguistischen und syntagmatischen Wörterbuch mit Schwerpunkt auf den Kollokationen. Man sehe sich nur den Artikel *débat* an, wie er 1694 erschien:

DÉBAT. Différend, contestation.

(1) *Être en débat de quelque chose*

(2) *mettre en débat*

(3) *vider un débat*

(4) *terminer un débat*

(5) *avoir débat avec quelq'un*

(6) *ouvrir un débat*

(7) *apaiser un débat*

(8) *débat d'un compte*

On dit prov. **A eux le débat/entre eux le débat** pour dire qu' On ne se veut point mettre en peine de leur différend.



terbücher. Dazu müsste man den Kollokationsreichtum der Kollokatorenartikel umverteilen in die Basisartikel, was aber elektronisch schwieriger ist, als man sich vorstellt.<sup>3</sup>

Dass sich dergleichen lohnt, habe ich vor Jahren am *Dictionnaire du Français Contemporain* (DFC) vorgeführt, einem kollokationsreichen Lernerwörterbuch von 1000 Seiten. Im Artikel *débat* stehen nur zwei Kollokatoren: *soulever* und *ranimer*. Wenn man das ganze Wörterbuch durchsucht, kommen folgende 16 Kollokatoren hinzu:

*le débat s'engage mal/trîne/s'éternise*  
*instituer/diriger/prolonger/élargir/clore/clôturer le débat*  
*envenimer/passionner/dépassionner/politiser/dépolitiser le débat*  
*incident qui échauffe le débat*  
*porter le débat sur le plan politique*

An einem Beispiel will ich zeigen, was in den großen kollokationsreichen Wörterbüchern des Französischen noch fehlt. Eine Debatte, *in der es hoch hergeht* (deutscher Kollokator), heißt auf Französisch typischerweise *houleux*, womit ursprünglich das stürmisch bewegte Meer qualifiziert wird (*la houle* = der Seegang). Im TLF fehlt die Kollokation sowohl unter *houleux* wie unter *débat*.

Von einem Kompromiss muss man Negatives aussagen können. Im Deutschen tut man das etwa mit *faul*: *ein fauler Kompromiss* (*Langenscheidts Großwörterbuch Deutsch als Fremdsprache*). Im TLF findet man unter *compromis* keinen einzigen negativen Kollokator.<sup>4</sup> Ich selbst habe aus einer CD-Rom *Le Monde* (2 Jahre) die ersten 200 Kotexte von *compromis* durchgesehen und dabei folgende Liste negativer Kollokatoren zusammenstellen können: *alambiqué, bancal, boiteux, délicat, faux, honteux, laborieux, mal ficelé, mauvais, pâle, qui ne dit pas son nom*.

### 2.3 Das historische Verschwinden des Kollokationsbegriffs

Die nächste Frage, die wir uns stellen wollen, lautet: Wie sprechen eigentlich Lexikographen seit der Renaissance über die Kollokationen und über die Phraseologie überhaupt? Welche Termini benutzen sie? Lateinisch gibt es folgende:

<sup>3</sup> Hätte ich vor 20 Jahren gewusst, dass dies heute elektronisch immer noch nicht geht, hätte ich es damals von Hand durchführen lassen, und wir hätten ein wunderbares französisches Kollokationswörterbuch. Jetzt ist es zu spät.

<sup>4</sup> Bei der Gelegenheit wird übrigens auch das Fehlen eines französischen Valenzwörterbuchs der Substantive deutlich, denn der TLF kennt zwar die Konstruktionen „un compromis *avec* qn, *entre* les parties“, vergisst aber „compromis *sur* qc“.

N + A: Epitheta/Adiuncta Nominibus  
 N + V: Phrases/Locutiones/Formulae  
 V + Adv: Adiuncta (verbis)  
 X et Y: Coniuncta

Für das Französische kommen als Quellen in Frage: Wörterbuchvorworte und Meta-Literatur, Wörterbuchartikel und die Bearbeitungspraxis in den drei ersten Definitionswörterbüchern des Französischen von 1680, 1690 und 1694: Richelet 1680, Furetière 1690, *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française* 1694.

Am deutlichsten und einheitlichsten benannt ist das Sprichwort (*proverbe*). Was wir heute eine Redewendung oder Idiom nennen, heißt *façons de parler proverbiales* oder *phrases proverbiales*. „Sprichwörtlich“ (*proverbial*) bedeutet also nicht die Ableitung von *Sprichwort*, sondern „als langue-Einheit kodiert“. Den heutigen Terminus *locution* gibt es, aber er ist nicht geläufig. Im 19. Jahrhundert ist er dann verbreitet, hat aber noch häufig *proverbial* bei sich: *locution proverbiale*. Ein anderer wichtiger Indikator für Phraseologizität ist von Anfang an der Terminus „figürlich“ oder „figurativ“, nachgewiesenermaßen bis in den heutigen *Petit Robert* hinein.

Die Kollokationen haben keinen einheitlichen Namen. Für die Substantiv-Adjektiv-Verbindungen steht der Terminus *épithète* bereit, für die Substantiv-Verb-Verbindungen der Terminus *phrase*. Auch wenn der Gebrauch durcheinander geht und *phrase* gelegentlich sowohl Kollokation als auch Idiom bezeichnet, kann man den Kollokationsgebrauch von *phrase* deutlich nachweisen, z.B. bei Furetière in den metalexikographischen Schriften. Er stellt dort mehrfach den Definitionen vier syntagmatische Bauteile gegenüber: die *épithètes*, die *phrases* oder *phrases propres*, die *figures* oder *phrases figurées*, die *proverbes* (Hausmann 1982). Die ersten beiden sind die zwei Kollokationstypen. Dann folgen Idiome und Sprichwörter.

Nachteilig für die Kollokationen und ihre Verankerung im Sprachbewusstsein war die Bedeutungsveränderung, die das Wort *phrase* durchmachte, nämlich einmal zum syntaktischen Inhalt hin („Satz“), daneben zur rhetorischen Abwertung im Sinne von „Gemeinplatz“. Ab dem 19. Jahrhundert ist *phrase* in der Bedeutung „Kollokation“ auf dem Rückzug. Wodurch wurde es ersetzt? Durch einen sehr allgemeinen Begriff, nämlich „Beispiel“, *exemple*. Das war für den Kollokationsbegriff katastrophal. Er war damit verschwunden. Zwar waren die Wörterbücher voll von Kollokationen, die einsprachigen wie die zweisprachigen, aber benannt wurden sie nicht. In Deutschland übrigens nur wenig mehr. Im Stilduden las man von „einfachen Beispielen“ (vs Beispielsätze), „Fügungen“ oder „Verbindungen“ (Grebe 1966). Das war der historische Untergang des Kollokationsbegriffs!<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> In diesem Zusammenhang wäre eine Geschichte des englischen Terminus *phrase* von großem Interesse.

## 2.4 Linguistik und Kollokationsbegriff

Soweit zu den Lexikographen. Was sagen nun die Linguisten? Was sagen die Lexikologen? Dazu muss man zunächst wissen, dass die Lexikologie die jüngste der linguistischen Teildisziplinen ist. Linguistik war Jahrhunderte lang Grammatik oder Etymologie. Die Wörter, so wie sie sind, überließ man den Lexikographen. Lexikologen gab es gar nicht. Was sagten nun die Linguisten?

Die Linguistik des 19. Jahrhunderts weiß von den Kollokationen nichts. Hermann Paul (1880/1970, §73) spricht von Wortgruppen, Verbindungen und Wendungen. Seine Beispiele zeigen nur Redewendungen. Und Saussure? Saussure kennt unfreie Syntagmen. Er nennt sie *expressions* und *locutions toutes faites* und führt etliche Beispiele an (1965, 172):

*prendre la mouche*  
*forcer la main à qn*  
*rompre une lance*  
*avoir mal à*  
*à force de*  
*que vous en semble?*  
*pas n'est besoin de*  
*à quoi bon?*  
*allons donc!*  
*s'il vous plaît*

Kollokationen sind nicht darunter.

Ganz anders ist die Situation für einen Kollegen und Leser von Saussure, Charles Bally. Bally war im Moment des *Cours de Linguistique Générale* 45 Jahre alt und hatte Saussure gegenüber einen entscheidenden Vorteil. Er lehrte in Genf Französisch als Fremdsprache. Dadurch stößt er auf die Tatsache, dass die *locutions phraséologiques* (= phraseologische Einheiten oder Phraseme) aus zwei deutlich unterschiedenen Typen bestehen, einerseits den Idiomen (er nennt sie *unités phraséologiques*) und andererseits den Kollokationen (die nennt er *séries phraséologiques* oder *groupements usuels*; Bally 1909/1951 Bd. 1, 68-70, 1909/1951 Bd. 2, 43-53). Als Beispiele für letztere nennt er zuerst *grièvement blessé*, *gravement malade*, *désirer ardemment*, *aimer éperdument*, *intimement lié*, *refuser catégoriquement*, *chaleur tropicale*, *chaleur torride*, dann aber auch zahlreiche Substantiv-Verb-Kombinationen.

Diese Analyse hat in der Linguistik seiner Zeit nicht die geringste Spur hinterlassen, außer in Russland. Man kann dafür drei Gründe verantwortlich machen. Zuerst das Buch, in dem sie stand: eine praktische Stilistik für Ausländer. So etwas wurde von den Theoretikern der Linguistik nicht wahrgenommen. Die Angewandte Sprachwissenschaft gab es noch nicht. Charles Bally selbst hat später als theoretischer Linguist in seinem berühmten Buch von 1932 *Linguistique Générale et Linguistique Française* kein Wort über die Kollokationsanalyse verloren. Er hat sie verraten.

Zweiter Grund für die missratene Rezeption war wohl die benutzte Terminologie. Sie war einfach zu periphrastisch. Sie identifizierte und isolierte das neue Faktum nicht mit einem neuen Terminus. Der dritte Grund lag darin, dass die Linguistik mit ganz anderen Dingen beschäftigt war. Die Sache passte in keine aktuelle Diskussion. Sie kam 60 Jahre zu früh.

Dabei hatte Bally im Vorwort dieses eigentlich für das Gymnasium bestimmten Buches geschrieben: „Peut-être les chercheurs y trouveront-ils aussi leur compte“ (‚Vielleicht kommen ja die Forscher darin auch auf ihre Kosten‘; Bally 1909/1951, Bd. 1, VIII f.). Aber die Forschung hat lange gebraucht, um im *Traité* von 1909 etwas Brauchbares zu entdecken. Stöbern wir bei großen Namen der französischen Nachkriegslinguistik: B. Pottier (1974, §290 ff.) kennt komplexe Lexien (Phraseme), aber er differenziert sie nicht. E. Benveniste (1966) spricht von Synapsien, aber damit meint er nur die Substantiv+Präposition+Substantiv-Verbindungen. A. Martinet (1979, 253) kennt unter dem Terminus *synthème* nur die Idiome. J. Dubois macht ein Wörterbuch mit vielen Kollokationen (das DFC), aber theoretisch hat er nur Augen für die Wortbildung. Wer hat denn nun überhaupt die Stilistik von Bally gelesen? Nun, ein späterer Stilistiker namens Jules Marouzeau, der daraus schloss: „[...] on peut constater que la langue est faite de formules autant que de mots (‚Die Sprache besteht fast mehr aus Formulierungen als aus Wörtern‘; Marouzeau 1941/1969, 145), englisch gesprochen: *Language is formulaic* (Wray 2002). Das nun wiederum las bei Marouzeau und auch bei Bally ein bedeutender Kopf, nämlich der Exilrumäne E. Coseriu. Und nun kommt ein Wunder, auch wenn es anfänglich wenig genützt hat. 1964 veranstalteten die Franzosen in Nancy das *Erste Internationale Kolloquium der Angewandten Sprachwissenschaft*. An diesem Kolloquium nehmen viele Große der Linguistik teil: Baldinger, Culioli, Gougenheim, Isacenko, Larochette, Ullmann. Coseriu hält einen großen Vortrag (Coseriu 1966 und 1970), in dem (allerdings unter anderem Namen) die Kollokationen vorkommen. Seine Beispiele sind: *un gros chagrin, une grande douleur, de graves soucis*. Er nennt sie „lexikalische Clichés“ und „lexikalisierte Syntagmen“ und weist ihnen einen Platz in der Norm zu, d.h. in der Sprache, wenn auch nicht im System. Denn Sprache ist System und Norm. Dem System nach könnte es auch heißen ein *verstockter Junggeselle*. Es heißt aber ein *eingefleischter*. Aus den Möglichkeiten des Systems trifft die Norm eine arbiträre Auswahl. Das war nun großartig, hat aber nicht gewirkt, weil Coseriu an einer anderen Stelle seines Vortrags, wo er die Einheiten des *discours répété* aufzählt, die Kollokationen vergisst. Außerdem war das Publikum auf die Kollokationen nicht vorbereitet, und es wird immer nur verstanden, was man schon weiß. Aus den Diskussionen geht deutlich hervor, dass nur zwei seiner Zuhörer begriffen haben, wovon er redete, und das waren – drei mal darf man raten – Briten. Der in Australien wirkende Mediävist K. V. Sinclair (nicht zu verwechseln mit John Sinclair) spricht in der Diskussion von der fundamentalen Bedeutung der „high-frequency collocations“ und wird unterstützt von seinem britischen Romanistenkollegen P. J. Wexler.

*Collocation*, das war der Terminus, den Harold Palmer 1933 in seinem *Interim Report on Collocations* gebrauchte (und der von da auf Hornby, Mackin, Cowie und vermutlich das *Oxford Collocations Dictionary for Students of English* überging; Cowie 2000), und es war der Terminus von Firth (Geiger 1979, Steiner 1983), den Halliday 1962 in der *Revue de Linguistique Appliquée* gebrauchte (TLF s.v. *collocation*) und 1964 in einem weit verbreiteten und viel übersetzten Buch (Halliday et al. 1964), und dieser Terminus taucht ab 1965 als *collocation* auch bei französischen Autoren auf, nämlich bei Mitterand (1965, 79), Wagner (1967, 140), Quemada (1967, 508ff.) und Imbs (1971, xxxii). Aber nur so am Rande. Er setzt sich nicht durch. Der TLF wird von *syntagmes types* sprechen. Der *Petit Robert* definiert erst ab 1993 die Phraseologie als das Gesamt der „expressions, locutions, collocations et phrases codées dans la langue générale“. Und die Definition der *collocation* im *Petit Robert* ist bis auf den heutigen Tag (*Nouveau Petit Robert 2007*) unbrauchbar. Josette Rey-Debove, die kürzlich verstorbene Theoretikerin der Robertischen Wörterbücher, hatte sich schon 1971 gegen den Terminus *collocations caractéristiques* ausgesprochen zugunsten von *syntagme* oder *syntagme lexicalisé*, womit aber wegen der syntaktischen Bedeutung von *Syntagma* kein Staat zu machen war (Rey-Debove 1971).

Außerdem fehlte es jetzt immer noch an einer Beschreibung der inneren Struktur der Kollokationen, die auch Bally nicht geleistet hatte. Das tat aber nun ein Wortschatzdidaktiker, nämlich Robert Galisson. In einem verbreiteten Büchelchen von 1971, das seit 1965 als graue Literatur zirkulierte, unterschied er in der Kollokation einen *terme-noyau* (Kernwort = *la base*) und einen *terme-satellite* (Satellitenwort), den er selbst *collocatif* nannte.<sup>6</sup>

Ich selbst habe das Wort *collocation* zum ersten Mal 1967 aus dem Mund meines als Lexikograph bedeutenden Saarbrücker Französischlektors Pierre Gilbert gehört, der zu Mitterand in Beziehung stand und aus dessen bekannten *Que sais-je? Les mots français* (1963) zitierte. Aber richtig fruchtbar ist der Begriff für mich erst geworden, als ich bei dem Anglisten Broder Carstensen (1969 und 1970) las, wie er sich mit *broad* und *wide* herumschlug und damals noch ohne Computer an den Kollokationen verzweifelte. Ich hielt diesen Ansatz vom Kollokator zur Basis für unfruchtbar. Einzig brauchbar schien mir die uralte Richtung von der Basis zum Kollokator – und die war auch ohne zu verzweifeln machbar.

In der britischen Kollokationsforschung wurde diese Auffassung von Kollokation vor allem von Tony Cowie in seiner Theorie der *restricted collocations* vertreten (Cowie 1978-2004).

Es ist indes noch ein anderer Traditionsstrang zu nennen, der von Bally völlig unabhängig ist, aber für die Kollokationsbeschreibung des Französischen wie vieler anderer Sprachen von größter Bedeutung wurde. Diese Tradition geht von

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<sup>6</sup> Damit hatten wir den Kollokator schon, und es reichte, nun auch noch für das Kernwort einen griffigen Terminus zu finden. Das habe ich dann getan, das Kernwort *Basis* genannt – und darin besteht so ziemlich meine einzige originäre Leistung in der Kollokationsforschung.

dem Russen Igor Mel'čuk aus. Geboren 1932, arbeitet Mel'čuk nach dem Studium des Spanischen und Französischen seit 1956 an der automatischen Übersetzung und stößt auf das Phänomen der Kollokationen anlässlich der Äquivalenzfindung von *heavy rain* und *to launch an attack* und durch die Stil-Wörterbücher von Reum. 1962 schleppt er einem Geologen das Gepäck durch die steinigten Hügel von Kasachstan und denkt dabei über die Kollokationsproblematik nach. Und dabei hat er einen genialen Gedanken, der den Fillmoreschen Rollen nicht unähnlich ist. Er möchte die Kollokationskombinatorik systematisieren und geht aus von einem Grundinventar von Ausdrucksabsichten um die Basen herum. Das nennt er lexikalische Funktion. Eine solche Funktion ist z.B. der Ausdruck des hohen Grades („Magn“). Wenn ich diese Funktion auf *Regen* anwende, kommt *stark* heraus. Wenn ich sie auf *rain* anwende, kommt *heavy* heraus. Die Grundannahme ist, dass es ein begrenztes Inventar solcher Funktionen gibt und dass man auf diese Weise die Kollokationsbildung formalisieren kann. Mel'čuk geht also konsequent von einer Sprachproduktionsperspektive aus. Deshalb hat er inzwischen auch den Terminus *Basis* übernommen. Seine Kollokationstheorie ist basisbezogen. Allerdings bleibt er bei den Kollokationen nicht stehen. Die Kollokation ist bei der Anwendung der lexikalischen Funktion nur *ein* mögliches Ergebnis, das syntagmatische. Es kann auch paradigmatische Ergebnisse geben, z.B. *Regen* + *Magn* = *Wolkenbruch*. Auf der Basis dieser Theorie werden inzwischen in der ganzen Welt Wörterbücher erstellt. Mel'čuk hat die Sowjetunion schon bald verlassen und im frankophonen Kanada eine neue wissenschaftliche Heimat gefunden. 1984 erschien der erste Band seines *Dictionnaire Explicatif et Combinatoire*, inzwischen sind 4 Bände erschienen. Aber in jedem Band sind nur wenige Artikel, denn das Verfahren ist aufwendig und umständlich. Die Formalisierung bremst die Kollokatorenansammlung enorm. Mel'čuk hat inzwischen einen jüngeren und ebenso dynamischen Mitstreiter gefunden namens Alain Polguère, der soeben eine ausgezeichnete Einführung in die Lexikologie vorgelegt hat, in der auch das Kollokationsphänomen adäquat beschrieben wird (Polguère 2003).<sup>7</sup> Das von Peter Blumenthal und dem Schreiber dieser Zeilen herausgegebene Themenheft über die Kollokationen in der bekanntesten französischen Zeitschrift, *Langue Française* (Blumenthal/Hausmann 2006), verhilft hoffentlich der innerfranzösischen Kollokationsforschung zum Durchbruch.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Bislang gab es in Frankreich keine Einführung in die Lexikologie, welche die Kollokationen berücksichtigte, und auch die zahlreichen Wörterbücher linguistischer Terminologie ignorierten das Phänomen bis 2002. Namentlich das bekannteste Werk dieser Art von Jean Dubois bei Larousse (Dubois 1994) ist, was die gesamte Phraseologie betrifft, völlig unzureichend. Es gibt zwar auf dem französischen Markt eine schöne Einführung in die Phraseologie unter adäquater Berücksichtigung der Kollokationen (González Rey 2002), aber das Buch ist wenig bekannt, an keine der herrschenden linguistischen Schulen gebunden und deshalb vorerst wirkungslos.

<sup>8</sup> Ein französisches Kollokationswörterbuch nach Art des OCD gibt es jetzt (*Dictionnaire des Combinaisons des Mots* 2007). An drei Stellen wird an Ähnlichem gearbeitet. Mel'čuk/Polguère habe ich schon genannt. Dann gibt es ein Team in Leuven (Belgien)

## 2.5 Ein Nachwort zur Terminologie

Vor allem unter dem Druck der elektronischen Corpora begreift die Linguistik in den letzten 50 Jahren zunehmend, in welchem Ausmaß der Wortschatz phraseologisch geprägt ist und dass neben das Monem (Martinet 1979, 6) das Binem (Schneider 1998; 2003), das Tripel (Zinsmeister/Heid 2003) und weitere Polyneme zu setzen sind. Damit kommt sie der Erfahrung des Fremdsprachlers entgegen, der immer schon merkte, dass er viel mehr lernen muss als Wörter. Da nicht das Open-Choice-Prinzip gilt, sondern das Idiom-Prinzip (John Sinclair 1991), sind Phraseme aller Art zu memorieren: Sprichwörter, Redewendungen, Basis-Kollokator-Kollokationen, Phraseoterme (Gréciano 1997), Probabeme (Herbst/Klotz 2003), Kolligationen (Siepmann 2005; 2006), Valenzen und vieles mehr. In der Fremdsprache ist nahezu alles idiomatisch. Der Kampf um diese Einsicht ist beendet. Was jetzt beginnt, ist der Kampf um die terminologische Besetzung des Forschungsfeldes. Denn der Benennungsmöglichkeiten sind viele. Man kann von Fixierung (*figement*) sprechen, von Idiomatik, von Phraseologie, von *lexical priming* (Hoey 2005), von Prägung (Feilke 1996), von kombinatorischem Profil (Blumenthal 2006) usw. Besonders der Terminus *Kollokation*, der geradezu globale Potenz in sich trägt, weil er leicht in viele Sprachen adaptierbar ist und der wie kaum ein anderer Fanal-Charakter hat für die phraseologische Wende in der Lexikologie, ist starken Pressionen unterworfen. Viele möchten ihn statt des anderweitig bevorzugten Terminus *Phrasem* für die Besetzung des phraseologischen Oberbegriffs „polymonematische holistische Wortschatzeinheit“ verwenden. Dagegen ist letztlich nichts einzuwenden. Derlei begriffliche Ausweitungen sind der Preis des Erfolgs. Und sie waren immer schon angelegt, nicht nur bei Palmer und Firth, sondern auch in dem Aufsatztitel „Wortschatzlernen ist Kollokationslernen“ (Hausmann 1984), der durch die Ausweitung des Kollokationsbegriffs immer wahrer wird. Die Kollokationen im engeren Sinne, die Basis-Kollokator-Kollokationen, lassen sich allerdings besser verteidigen, wenn sie nicht missverstanden werden können als Begriff zur Abdeckung der gesamten Phraseologie. Das Besondere an ihnen ist, dass sie eben weniger holistisch sind als die Idiome und halb kompositionell, und dass sie deshalb eine Zwischenposition einnehmen zwischen Wort und Phrasem (Mel'čuk nennt sie Halb-Phraseme). Sie sind analytisch und deshalb im Prinzip leicht lernbar. Das Lernhindernis ergibt sich aus der Quantität, nicht aus der Qualität (vgl. jetzt Reder 2006).

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unter Leitung von Serge Verlinde mit didaktischem Ansatz (*Dictionnaire d'Apprentissage du Français Langue Étrangère ou Seconde*). Vor allem aber hat in Köln Peter Blumenthal unvergleichliche Materialien, auf deren Publikation alle hoffen, nicht nur die Wissenschaftler sondern auch die Didaktiker und Fremdsprachenlehrer an den Schulen wie an den Sprachenzentren der Universitäten.

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DIRK SIEPMANN

## COLLOCATIONS AND EXAMPLES: THEIR RELATIONSHIP AND TREATMENT IN A NEW CORPUS-BASED LEARNER'S DICTIONARY

**Abstract:** The production of learners' dictionaries raises a number of specific problems regarding the treatment of collocations and examples. It has been claimed, among other things, that example sentences should not be based exclusively on collocations. The present article argues that a clear distinction must be drawn between collocations and examples, and that, under certain conditions, collocations must also be exemplified. It discusses various approaches to the microstructural arrangement of collocations and establishes guiding principles for the choice and presentation of examples.

### 1. Introduction

In recent years great strides have been made in linguistic description – a development that was partly sparked by lexicographic projects (COBUILD, Herbst et. al.: *A Valency Dictionary of English* 2004). With unprecedented riches of data and powerful enquiry tools at their fingertips, lexicographers have produced dictionaries which give a highly accurate and very detailed picture of language in use. Ample testimony to this can be found in the five “big” learners' dictionaries and in many bilingual works of reference. One area that has received particularly close attention is collocation. Thus, the *Oxford Collocations Dictionary for Students of English* has succeeded in recording 150,000 collocations of 9,000 common nouns, verbs and adjectives.

That said, there is still room for improvement. One type of shortcoming, which I have enlarged on elsewhere (Siepmann 2005b; Siepmann 2006; Siepmann, forthcoming), is linguistic: particular types of collocations have so far been given short shrift or are difficult to access. Another type of shortcoming is pedagogic: the major monolingual learners' dictionaries are reference tools for occasional consultation, but they cannot be used for serious vocabulary expan-

sion. To assimilate the vocabulary of a foreign language, students therefore need to turn to works in which lexical items are arranged in topic areas.<sup>1</sup>

However, thematically arranged bilingual thesauri designed for vocabulary learning still lag badly behind their monolingual alphabetical counterparts in terms of both depth and breadth of coverage, and the production of such dictionaries raises a number of specific problems regarding selection and categorization as well as exemplification and translation. The present article provides an account of some of the solutions adopted in the Bilexicon project (see Siepmann 2006), whose purpose is to produce bilingual thesauri geared to the needs of the foreign learner. Section 1 gives a broad definition of collocation. Section 2 proceeds to discuss various solutions to the arrangement of collocations in the microstructure. Section 3 discusses exemplification, placing particular emphasis on the problems posed by a) the distinction between collocations and examples and b) the special characteristics of examples in bilingual learners' dictionaries.

## 2. Definitions of collocation

This is not the place for a detailed discussion of various definitions of collocation (see Herbst 1996; Hausmann 2003; Siepmann 2005b). Suffice it to say that the subject of collocation has been approached from three main angles.

Semantically-based approaches (e.g. Benson 1986; Mel'čuk 1998; González-Rey 2002; Hausmann 2003) assume that collocations are typically made up of two constituents which differ in their semantic status: a semantically autonomous base such as *compliment* combines with a semantically dependent collocate like *pay*, in such a way that the collocate takes on a specific meaning ('offer') contingent on the base. In many cases this difference in semantic status allows semanticists to make two important distinctions: a) between collocations and free combinations (semantically autonomous + semantically autonomous: *he likes money*) and b) between collocations and phraseology (i.e. semantically irregular items).

The frequency-oriented approach looks at statistically significant co-occurrences of two or more words. It is therefore alone in providing a workable heuristic for discovering the entire class of co-occurrences, but its exclusive reliance on automatic statistical analysis has sometimes led to the inclusion of chance co-occurrences such as *hotel at, either hotel* (Kjellmer: *A Dictionary of English Collocations* 1994) or *nature because* (Sinclair: *Collins Cobuild English Collocations on CD-ROM* 1995) and to an insufficient consideration of lexico-grammatical and semantic-pragmatic factors. As noted by Klotz (2000, 83), for example, a purely formal analysis of collocations such as *catch + ball* is insufficient to disambiguate the verb, which can be variously paraphrased as 'grab', 'record' or 'hit'.

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<sup>1</sup> It goes without saying that such dictionary use must be supplemented by exposure to input and guided production of correct output.

A third, more recent approach to phrasemes and collocations (Feilke 1996; 2004) might be termed “pragmatic” since it claims that the structural irregularities and non-compositionality underlying such expressions are diachronically and functionally subordinate to pragmatic regularities which determine the relationship between the situational context and linguistic forms. The proponents of this approach take the line that collocation can best be explained via recourse to contextualisation theory (Fillmore 1976). However, they run into difficulties when it comes to explaining a large number of co-occurrences linked by common semantic features (cf. Siepmann 2005b, 424-430).

The problems attendant upon these three approaches can be resolved in all-encompassing approaches to language theory (Hoey 2005) and lexicography (Siepmann 2005b) which take collocation as their starting point. In keeping with neurological evidence on the structure of the brain (Lamb 1999), such approaches assume that, in speakers’ minds, lexical items become progressively loaded with all sorts of information about their typical grammatical, lexical, semantic and pragmatic contexts of use. In Hoey’s terms, words and other units may be “primed” for lexical and grammatical collocation as well as for semantic-pragmatic association. It is the task of the pedagogic dictionary maker to describe such collocational primings in a readily learnable form. To this we now turn.

### 3. Treatment of collocations

Just like individual words in traditional word-based dictionaries, collocations can be grouped and accessed either by purely formal criteria or by semantic criteria. By formal criteria are meant ordering by the alphabet, word class, case marking, clause function or “lexical function”, a term coined by Mel’čuk (see, for example, Mel’čuk 1998). These criteria may be combined in various ways. Thus, Kubczak and Costantino (1996, 22) organize the German section of their “syntagmatic” dictionary according to the form the noun takes within the collocation: collocations where the noun appears in the nominative case are given first, followed by genitive, dative and prepositional uses; likewise, the French section divides each entry into pre-verbal noun phrases, post-verbal noun phrases and prepositional phrases. Kubczak and Costantino (1996, 22-23) argue that this organizing principle greatly facilitates consultation, regardless of whether the dictionary is a book, a CD-ROM or an Internet reference work.

Entries in the *Dictionnaire Explicatif et Combinatoire du Français Contemporain* (DEC) are organized according to lexical functions. Thus, at *blesure*, lexical functions and the corresponding collocations have been grouped in the following way:

Epit	:	morale, psychologique; intime, secrète [...]
Magn	:	grande   antépos, grave   antépos ou postpos, atroce, cruelle, douloureuse < béante, profonde
AntiMagn	:	superficielle
AntiBon	:	envenimée
Oper1	:	avoir [ART ~], porter [ART ~ en Pron = X]; éprouver [ART ~ ] [...]

(DEC, s.v. *blessure*)

DEC is intended to be a “scientific” dictionary, and its symbols and terminology would put off all but the most sophisticated users. Nonetheless pedagogic lexicographers may use DEC as a quarry and its lexical functions as a guideline for structuring entries. They may, for example, juxtapose items that fulfil the same lexical function and/or may follow up specific collocations with their antonyms (e.g. Magn vs. AntiMagn).

*Langenscheidts Kontextwörterbuch Französisch-Deutsch* (LKF) arranges its material firstly by part of speech and secondly by the alphabet, with synonymic collocations added in random order after the first sub-entry:

**demande** f *Antrag, Gesuch*

**accéder, donner suite** à une ~ *einem Antrag stattgeben; einen Antrag genehmigen*: Malheureusement, nous ne pouvons pas accéder à votre ~. / **admettre, agréer, accorder** une ~ *einen Antrag billigen, gutheißen*: Le ministre a admis votre ~. [...]  
(LKF, s.v. *demande*)

The *Oxford Collocations Dictionary for Students of English* (OCD) adopts a similar approach in dividing each entry according to part of speech, but differs from LKF in structuring each division by intuitively plausible criteria. Thus, at *pollution*, the section devoted to verb-noun collocations proceeds from the strongest form of action (*avoid/prevent*) to the mildest (*monitor*). Probably unbeknownst to the editors of OCD, Reum followed the same principle with great ingenuity as far back as 1910 (cf. *Petit Dictionnaire de Style à l'Usage des Allemands* and *A Dictionary of English Style* [DES]). It is interesting to compare the ways in which OCD and DES handle the same content; a good example is provided by the entries for *river*.

DES (s.v. <i>river</i> )	OCD (s.v. <i>river</i> )
E. great, broad, large, long : small, narrow, short, straitened between rocks; deep : shallow; <u>fordable</u> ; <u>rapid</u> , <u>abounding in rapids</u> , navigable for small boats, navigable; <u>rolling</u> , <u>rushing</u> , <u>sweeping by</u> , <u>gurgling</u> , <u>murmuring</u> , <u>purling</u> , <u>babbling</u> Va. a river rises <i>or has its source</i> in the mountains; to <u>precipitate its course</u> ; to flow, to run between, through and over rocks; to <u>work</u> o.s. a <u>channel</u> , a <u>passage</u> ; to <u>wind its way through fields and meadows</u> ; to <u>form</u>	<b>ADJ.</b> broad, great, large, long, <u>mighty</u> , <u>wide</u> ; <u>little</u> , narrow, short, small; deep; shallow; <u>high</u> ; <u>low</u> ; <u>fast-flowing</u> ; <u>slow-moving</u> , <u>sluggish</u> ; <u>winding</u> ; <u>swollen</u> ; navigable <b>VERB + RIVER</b> cross, ford, get across; bridge; dam; dredge; navigate

<p><u>islets; to form rapids, cascades and waterfalls; to turn to the right : left; to take another course or direction; to flow round a hill; to fork, to divide itself in several arms; to meander; to grow big; to increase, swell, become larger, mightier, more rapid and more unruly, to roll majestically along, to overflow, to inundate, overflow or deluge, submerge wide tracts of land; to roll muddy (miry, dirty) water; to freeze, to drift with ice; to fall, to re-enter its bed; to have a strong, mighty, rapid : feeble current; to receive several tributaries; to irrigate or water : drain a country; to flow or run through a town, a country; to pass by N.; to wash the walls of N.; to have or attain a length of a thousand kilometres, a breadth of a hundred metres, a depth of some ten metres; to flow towards the ocean; to fall, run, discharge itself, empty itself into the sea. –</u>  O.S. <u>to go, row, scull, paddle, steer, sail down : up the river (= downstream : upstream); to walk along, to skirt a river; to cross a river; to swim across, to ford a river; to bathe in a river; to skate on a river; to boat it on a river; to throw a bridge over a river; to cross a river on a bridge, by means of a pontoon-bridge; a river is crossed by several bridges; to change, to regulate the course of a river; a brook joins a river; to watch the glinting river with its drifting barges; to admire the trim, well-kept villas on both sides of the river</u></p>	<p><b>RIVER + VERB</b> flow, run, wind; rise; be in flood, burst its banks, flood (sth), overflow sth; dry up</p>
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Table 1. A comparison of the entries for *river* in DES and OCD

As far as adjectival collocations are concerned, it is evident that the two dictionaries cover roughly the same meaning spectrum, albeit with differing collocations (e.g. *rapid* vs. *fast-flowing river*). An interesting exception is the inclusion, in DES, of collocations denoting the sound of flowing water, such as *gurgling river* or *babbling river*. Although the participial adjective *swollen* is absent from the adjective section of DES, it has been entered in infinitival form in the verb section (*swell*).

Nowhere is the difference between the two dictionaries more noticeable than in the section given over to verb-noun collocations in which the noun functions as subject. DES builds up an almost complete panorama of actions and events that may occur as one follows the course of a river from its source to its mouth. These actions and events are clearly sequenced, and there is a wide variety of synonymous collocations expressing each idea. By contrast, the picture provided in OCD is rather sketchy, and the ordering of events is not as intuitive as claimed in the introduction. From a pedagogic perspective, then, the DES entry for *river* has clear advantages over its modern counterpart.

One of the reasons for this is the severe neglect, in OCD, of three-word collocations. Only one such item has been recorded in OCD (*the river bursts its banks*), whereas DES can boast more than a dozen. Most of these triples can be segmented into their component parts, which raises the question of whether to record them at the entry for the first or the second noun involved. Thus, at least theoretically, *have its source* could be recorded at *source*, and *re-enter its bed* could be recorded at a specific sense division of *bed*. This is how a strictly word-based dictionary would proceed. A pedagogic dictionary should strike a compromise by including three-word items at the entries for heavy-duty nouns as opposed to those for infrequent lexical items. For example, the three-word collocation *the river forms rapids*, which is fairly specific to rivers, should be entered at *river* and, space permitting, at *rapids*; it must be recorded at *river* if *rapids* is not given entry status.

At the risk of duplicating information, one should follow the example of DES by recording even seemingly unspecific collocations at *river*. A pertinent example is afforded by *river + take + course/direction* (e.g. *the river takes a southerly course, each river takes its own course*); it would be unreasonable to expect users to learn such combinations by consulting the entry for *river* as well as those for *course* or *direction*, especially since OCD makes no mention of the collocation *take + course* at *course*; the entry for *direction* does inform the user about its collocation with *take*, but the link with *river* is far from obvious, as the only example given is “Which direction do we take?”. Hardly any dictionary user would go to such lengths to look up a collocation, and users of a learner’s dictionary in particular would expect all the useful triples to be listed. Another reason for including three-word collocations is that these may sometimes correspond to two-word items in other languages (e.g. *régulariser un fleuve / einen Fluss begradigen* → *straighten / (dated) regulate [the course of] a river*).

A line should perhaps be drawn at combinations such as *river + attain a width of*, where the verb phrase applies to a vast range of objects, but even here the case can be made that students may gain some advantage from having such phrases ready-made at their disposal. Otherwise they would waste a great deal of time ferreting out such information from other entries. Similar considerations apply to word combinations such as *go/row/paddle down (the) river*. By contrast, *throw a bridge over a river*, recorded at *river* by DES, should be counted among the collocations of *bridge* rather than *river*, as *bridge* is the primary object; bridges can be thrown across ravines, ditches and rocks as well as rivers. Since *bridge* is a high-frequency noun, learners will have to learn its collocations anyway. By the same token, exemplificatory word groups such as *to admire the trim, well-kept villas on both sides of the river* (DES) should be kept apart from entries.

It is clear from this brief comparison of DES and OCD that three-word collocations should have a firm place in bilingual thesauri. It is only with the help of such items that the learner can form a broad picture of an item’s preferential uses and situational embedding.

The projected dictionary of French noun-based collocations (see Blumenthal 2005) goes one better than either LKF or OCD in being based on a more refined syntactic framework:

1.1	ADJ + MOT	( <i>un bon <u>sentiment</u></i> )
1.2	MOT + ADJ	( <i>un <u>sentiment</u> aigu</i> )
1.3	MOT + NOM	
2.1	MOT + de + NOM <sub>subjectif</sub>	( <i>le <u>sentiment</u> de notre peuple</i> )
2.2	MOT + PRP + NOM <sub>objectif</sub>	( <i>un <u>sentiment</u> d'insécurité</i> )
2.3	MOT + PRP + INF	( <i>le <u>sentiment</u> d'être trahi</i> )
2.4	MOT + COMPLÉTIVE	( <i>le <u>sentiment</u> que</i> )
2.5	MOT + PRP + NOM <sub>circonstanciel</sub>	( <i>un <u>sentiment</u> vis-à-vis de</i> )
2.6	MOT + RELATIVE	( <i>l'<u>hypothèse</u> selon laquelle</i> )
3.1	NOM <sub>quantifiant</sub> + MOT	
3.2	NOM + PRP + MOT	( <i>l'<u>ambivalence</u> de ses <u>sentiments</u>, le <u>chantage</u> au <u>sentiment</u>)</i> )
3.3	NOM + MOT	
4.	ADJ/ADV + PRP + MOT	( <i><u>animé</u> d'un <u>sentiment</u></i> )
5.1	MOT <sub>sujet</sub> + VERBE	( <i>un curieux <u>sentiment</u> l'<u>habitait</u></i> )
5.2	MOT + ATTRIBUT	( <i>ce <u>sentiment</u> de responsabilité <u>est</u> essentiel</i> )
6.1	VERBE + MOT <sub>objet</sub>	( <i><u>traduire</u> un <u>sentiment</u></i> )
6.2	VERBE <sub>attributif</sub> + MOT	( <i>la haine est un <u>sentiment</u> beaucoup trop lourd à porter</i> )
7.1	MOT <sub>circonstanciel</sub>	
7.2	PRP + MOT <sub>circonstanciel</sub>	( <i>ils emboîtent le pas à leurs partenaires <u>contre</u> leur meilleur <u>sentiment</u></i> )

Table 2. Entry for *sentiment* in the projected dictionary of French noun-based collocations

With only minor modifications, this framework can be transposed to other European languages such as English. The most important new category which Blumenthal (2005) sets up is category 7; no other dictionary has so far given sufficient consideration to the use of common nouns within adverbials. In line with Hoey's (2005) observation that semantically similar words are normally primed differently, Blumenthal (2005, 277-278) notes that near-synonyms such as French *euphorie* and *enthousiasme* can be distinguished on the basis of their adverbial uses; adverbials containing *enthousiasme* are closely linked to the verb and prefer postverbal positions, whereas adverbial phrases centred around *euphorie* occur more commonly in clause-initial position.

Innovative as it is with respect to syntactic categorization, the dictionary of French collocations has no new policy to offer on semantics. In fact, it abandons semantic considerations in favour of a strictly alphabetical order. This befits its purpose as a reference tool, but, for reasons of learnability, such a policy would not be suitable in a learner's dictionary.

The Bilexicon therefore adopts the comprehensive syntactic categorization of the French dictionary of collocations, while making judicious use of semantic ordering criteria wherever possible. Unlike the procedure followed in OCD, where the reader is left to work out the organizing principles underlying entries, the Bilexicon lays open to inspection the lexicographer's semantic intuitions in the extra column (see the appendix for an example based on the noun *germ*).

#### 4. Treatment of examples

An example can be usefully defined as any stretch of text that contains an occurrence of the entry term or phrase (cf. Martin 1989, 600; Métrich 1993, 122). In collocational dictionaries this stretch of text should, of course, extend beyond collocational units, so that collocations are not deemed to be examples.

This section will investigate three main questions concerning exemplification in bilingual thesauri:

1. Is exemplification always necessary?
2. What are the functions of examples?
3. What should examples look like? Should examples be authentic or simulated instances of language in use?

Let us begin with the first question. As Hausmann (1977, 84) and Zöfgen (1994, 299) point out, sentence-length examples are not always necessary; nor does the informational value of the example necessarily increase as its length increases. This seems to suggest that an onomasiological collocational dictionary does not need to illustrate each entry with an example. Work on the Bilexicon has shown that several cases can be distinguished.

Many of the prototypical items discussed by the proponents of the semantically-oriented approach to collocation do not normally require exemplification. This is especially true when there are no restrictions on verbal or nominal inflection, when a noun-verb collocation has a human subject and when a collocation enters only one pattern, as with *suffer an injury*, *submit an application* or *eligible bachelor*. It is less so with items such as English *set off an explosion* or French *emporter la conviction*, which can take both animate and inanimate subjects, many of which are abstract. They therefore stand in need of illustration: *the advent of realism set off an explosion of categories for fiction*; *aucune de ces opinions extrêmes n'emporte la conviction*. Similarly, collocations subject to inflectional and other restrictions such as *pass judgment* (?*pass judgments*, ?*pass a ADJ judgment*) should be exemplified. Note that, in these and similar cases, onomasiological ordering confers certain advantages: it would record a polysemous collocation such as *set off an explosion* (= 1. cause a sudden loud bursting, 2. cause a sudden large increase) in two or three entirely different chapters of the dictionary (1. general and abstract terms; war 2. quantification); only in the second of these would it be of the essence to exemplify and to specify colligational patterning (*explosion + of + N*, *explosion + in + N*). Sometimes, however, a larger number of examples is needed, especially when a collocation occurs in two

or more patterns. With collocations such as *cause concern*, which admits of divalent and trivalent patterning (cf. Klotz 2000, 189-195), two examples are usually necessary to illustrate each pattern. The same is sometimes true of polysemous collocations, especially when the (usually) two senses of the collocation translate similarly or identically (cf. for example *leave the road – quitter la route*).

Pragmatically-based, situation-specific collocations, many of which are situated on the borderline between what is traditionally referred to as speech formulae and idioms, do not normally need to be exemplified if the lexicographer provides a one-to-one translation belonging to the same situation type. Thus, a chapter on emotions might include the following phrases in a sub-section on the notion of embarrassment: *I wanted the ground to open up (and swallow me [up]) – am liebsten wäre ich vor Scham in die Erde versunken* (synonyms: *am liebsten wäre ich in ein Mauseloch gekrochen / am liebsten wäre ich in den Boden versunken*); *I didn't know which way to look (where to look) – ich wusste nicht, wo ich hinschauen sollte*; *I was as red as a beetroot – ich bin ganz rot angelaufen* (synonym: *ich war rot wie eine Tomate*).

By contrast with collocations, which, if appropriately recorded (e.g. *s.th. causes [s.o.] concern*) automatically reveal their colligational possibilities, colligational patterns should always be exemplified in typical situational contexts. One reason for this is that traditional valency patterns should be regarded as selective abstractions from the reality of language use. Another is that collocation and colligation are tightly interlinked, such that particular patterns have preferred lexical realisations or occur in specific contexts. This makes it necessary to give the broadest possible portrayal of actual language use, especially with heavy-duty verbs such as *drive* or *run*.

It stands to reason that discourse markers, by virtue of encoding cohesion relations between longer stretches of text, require more ample exemplification (cf. Siepmann 2005a, 305); as with speech formulae or idioms, however, illustrative passages may be omitted in an onomasiological bilingual dictionary provided that there is perfect symmetry in usage between translation equivalents.

In sum, it can be said that onomasiological ordering diminishes the need for exemplification, as even pragmatically-based collocations will be immediately clear to the user provided that they are adequately translated and embedded within the relevant situation type. All this militates in favour of the policy of moderate exemplification suggested by the above theoretical considerations.

We now turn to our second question. If we consider the functions that have been posited for exemplification (cf. Siepmann 2005a; Zöfgen 1986; 1994, 185-186; Drysdale 1987; Métrich 1993), we find that most authors identify up to ten different such functions. On close inspection, only some of these functions prove to be relevant to bilingual pedagogic thesauri. Firstly, as Zöfgen (1994, 198) notes, it is not the role of the pedagogic dictionary to attest by example the mere existence of a word or usage. Secondly, and more importantly, the functions of meaning differentiation, definition, metacommunicative comment and guidance on register are all well served by translation. This is nowhere more

apparent than in relation to pragmatically-based collocations. Whereas monolingual learners' dictionaries experience great difficulty in providing suitable and succinct examples of such idioms as *I've put my foot in it* or *will I do (as I am)?*, a good translation easily gets around the problem by offering a perfect equivalent in the appropriate thematic or situational context (e.g. *ich bin in ein Fettnäpfchen getreten; kann ich so gehen?*). Since language learners will be able to retrieve typical contexts from experience of their source culture, there is no need to contrive a lengthy explanatory example. Exemplification will only be required if perfect translation equivalents have slightly different connotations or semantic prosodies (Louw 1993). Unlike *treffende Beschreibung*, for example, *apt description* is often used ironically.

Thirdly, although any example may be deemed to have a pedagogic function in teaching the reader about the uses of an entry word or phrase, the genuinely pedagogic functions of what we might call the "learnability" and "usability" of examples have been largely overlooked. This point will be enlarged upon below.

This leaves us with six main functions of examples in bilingual pedagogic thesauri. Firstly, examples should illustrate the syntactic, semantic and pragmatic patterns typically found in the discourse surrounding the entry word or phrase or, more simply put, to show it embedded in a natural context; the example should exhibit prototypical features of the entry word or phrase (Siepmann 2005a). As already mentioned, some collocations (e.g. *easy prey*), although they may be regarded as examples of individual words, should themselves be illustrated. If a full-sentence example is provided in an onomasiological translation dictionary which includes detailed information on collocation and colligation, this should ideally contain more than just a convenient illustration of collocational, colligational and situational features which are evident from the collocational entries and valency patterns recorded in the entry (cf. Zöfgen 1994, 186, 189). However, this clearly is an ideal that cannot always be achieved in real life. In incriminating the use of illustrative sentences that are exclusively based on collocations, such as *Il a affronté de grands dangers* (*Dictionnaire du Français Contemporain*), Zöfgen (1994, 189) fails to realise that it is almost impossible not to use collocations in examples since language is predominantly collocational (for an illustration of this point, see below); thus, it will be argued that *don't spread your germs among us* (*Dictionnaire de l'Anglais Contemporain* [DAC], s.v. **germ**) is a well-chosen prototypical example even though it makes use of a common collocation (*spread + germs*; illustrative function).

Secondly, examples may provide encyclopedic information. Zöfgen (1994, 187) views this function as being at variance with the aims of a language dictionary, but concedes that occasional forays into the realm of culture may be permissible. Given that cross-cultural approaches have recently come to the fore in language teaching, there are good grounds for systematically incorporating cultural information into examples or the extra column, especially in the case of cross-cultural differences. The aim may be to provide learners with the typical scenarios in which words occur (cf. Hausmann 2005; encyclopedic function).

One of the central functions of examples in vocabulary books is to offer instantiations of language use which can be easily memorized. In other words, examples should be as mnemonic as possible – this brings a new element into the equation, an element that has never been seriously discussed in the literature on monolingual learners' dictionaries. This function imposes a number of constraints on the length of examples (7 +/- 2 chunks), the choice of vocabulary, etc. (see below). It also means that the makers of bilingual vocabulary books cannot always simply copy examples from monolingual learners' dictionaries and translate them (learnability).

Another important function of examples is to provide a critique of the standard translation in cases where such a critique is needed, thus adducing evidence that specific contextual embeddings may result in different translations. Consider, for example, the collocation *spread + germs*, which translates literally into German as *Keime/Bazillen + verbreiten*. This translation will stand the learner in good stead in most situations (e.g. *birds may spread the virus – Vögel könnten das Virus verbreiten*); however, a phrase such as *don't spread your germs around* should be idiomatically rendered as *behalte deine Bazillen für dich* rather than *?verbreite deine Bazillen nicht*. This again shows – if the reader still needs proof – that collocations themselves may be contextually restricted, and this should be richly illustrated by examples. The entry for *butiner* in the projected BILEXICON provides another example of this “critique function”:

une abeille butine une plante	a bee visits a plant (to collect nectar)
<i>Les abeilles qui butinent les champs de tournesol traités au Gaucho sont peu à peu atteintes de paralysie et ne retrouvent plus le chemin de la ruche.</i>	<i>Bees which collect nectar from sunflower fields treated with Gaucho become paralysed and are unable to find their way back to the hive.</i>

Table 3. Entry for *butiner* in the projected BILEXICON

In an ideal world, examples should also entertain and provide food for thought. They should incite the reader to peruse and learn them. The *butiner* example just cited is a neat illustration of this, suggesting, as it does, that bees are an endangered species (motivational function).

Lastly, but equally importantly, examples have the pedagogic function of helping learners to encode meaning. Learners are wont to slur over information provided in pattern formulae and may prefer to model their production on examples. Although the Bilexicon differs from traditional monolingual learners' dictionaries in using both natural-language coding (*s.o. gets germs somewhere*) and symbolic complement frames (V + N + *on/onto/all over N*), learners are still likely to turn to the examples (*you might get the germs on your fingers*) for purposes of encoding and memorization. This is confirmed by suggestions made by experienced language teachers who have written on vocabulary learning (cf. Hill 2000; Hohmann 1999; Gallagher 2006, 79).

This brings us to our third question, namely what examples should look like. Related to this is the question as to whether examples should be authentic or invented. This has been variously answered in the literature. The Cobuild dictionaries have initiated a strict policy of authentication that has come under scathing attack from European meta-lexicographers. Zöfgen (1986; 1994, 183-200), for example, is adamantly opposed to exclusive reliance on corpora; his main arguments are as follows:

1. illustrative quotations may be just as cliché-ridden or stilted as invented examples (Zöfgen 1994, 193);
2. illustrative quotations may be more difficult to understand than made-up examples (Zöfgen, 1994, 194);
3. authentic examples may be strikingly unnatural or highly idiosyncratic (Zöfgen 1994, 194-195);
4. even attested examples may no longer be considered authentic when shorn of their context because their function within the dictionary differs from their original function (Zöfgen 1994, 198).

Although partially well-founded, Zöfgen's criticisms are mainly directed against manually collected examples culled from what must have been a fairly small corpus base (such as "er jagte drei irre blickende klapperdürre Rinder" in Mugdan 1985, 213; an example which clearly betrays its literary origin). Such criticisms are rendered ineffectual by the ready availability of electronic text from the Internet and other sources; there is such an abundance of corpus examples these days that lexicographers can choose the most natural and lively ones while discarding those that savour of contrivedness or affectation. Furthermore, comprehension problems encountered by users of monolingual dictionaries are less severe, if not inexistent, in the case of bilingual dictionaries because the translation provides an aid to understanding (although, for reasons of learnability, examples should not contain too much problem vocabulary). Zöfgen's last point of criticism, which concerns the inauthenticity of corpus examples, may be theoretically valid, but has no practical relevance; since collocations are inextricably connected in speakers' minds with specific contexts, lexicographers need not always reproduce these contexts. Here too the equivalence relation between source and target language items created by a perfect translation will help users to conjure up the right sort of context.

Elsewhere in his opus magnum, Zöfgen (1994, 277) argues that made-up examples may not always fill the bill. He considers illustrative sentences like the following to be empty, meaningless and unimaginative: *je bronze vite, il calcule vite, calmez-vous, la perdrix s'envola*. If we accept, however, that example sentences should exemplify meanings which are commonly encoded by native speakers, the above sentences may be considered well-chosen. This becomes abundantly clear if slight additions are made, even though such additions are by no means necessary: *vu que je suis originaire du sud, je bronze vite; plus la fréquence est élevée, et plus il (i.e. l'ordinateur) calcule vite*. If we also bear in mind that an ideal dictionary should distinguish between collocations and examples of

the headword, then the above examples are quite pertinent although they contain no collocations. The language learner has to acquire typical free combinations as well as typical collocations.

On balance, then, the arguments put forward by opponents of authentication turn out to be less compelling today than they may have been as little as ten years ago. They need to be set against clear evidence that made-up examples may lack some naturalness feature or other (cf. Sinclair 1984). Thus, Sinclair cites the textbook example “Prince Charles is now a husband”, whose colligational patterning is unusual. In similar vein, Fox (1987, 141) shows that isolated, artificial examples such as “the teacher used to cane me when I behaved badly” could not plausibly fit into an extended stretch of discourse. Quite unlike Zöfgen (1994), Sinclair (1991, 4) therefore comes to the valid conclusion that “however plausible an invented example might be, it cannot be offered as a genuine instance of language in use”. Of a piece with such reasoning is Landau’s view on the matter:

using invented examples is like fixing a horse race: the lexicographer invents an example to justify his definition instead of devising a definition to fit the examples. (Landau 2001, 210)

It seems that the main reasons why authentic samples of corpus material may not always be suitable as dictionary examples are in fact quite different from those advanced by Zöfgen. The following stretches of conversation from the BNC, which contain authentic occurrences of the English lexical unit *germ* (= bacillus), will serve to illustrate what is meant.

- (1) to take away all the nasty to kill the germs [...]
- (2) it’ll mask the smell but it’s also basically to kill the germs [...]
- (3) a germ, there’s a germ that floats about in the air and it gets onto [...]
- (4) you don’t want to tip it out on there cause you get germs, darling [...]

These examples make the point that if real speech were incorporated into the dictionary with tape recorder accuracy, some of the resultant illustrative sentences, apart from being unreadable and difficult to memorise, could not be held up as specimens of good usage. Ordinary unscripted conversation is characterized by different kinds of dysfluency and error (cf. Biber et al. 1999, 1052-1066; Carter/McCarthy 1997): silent and filled pauses, repeats, reformulations, grammatically incomplete utterances, slurring, assimilation and syntactic blends. All of these will unnecessarily distract the learner from the essential features of the headword and should not be taken over into the learner’s repertoire. Apart from such performance phenomena, there are other features of authentic speech which may sometimes make it unsuitable for use in dictionary examples (cf. Quirk et al. 1985; Carter/McCarthy 1997; Gallagher 2006, 61-62): general words which are situationally rooted (*that thing’s driving me mad; I don’t want to get involved with that business*; Carter/McCarthy 1997, 16; emphases mine), context-specific deixis, ellipsis, non-standardisms (e.g. *criteria* used as a singular) and pleonasm (*and so therefore* instead of *and so* or *therefore*; *be in a position to be able to* instead of *be in a position to* or *be able to*, etc.).

That said, other features of authentic speech should be actively reproduced in learners' dictionaries so that learners can acquire some sense of the constructional regularities underlying this type of language. Most importantly perhaps, there should be abundant exemplification of prefaces (also known as "heads" or "topics"; cf. Carter/McCarthy 1997, 16), bodies and tags (cf. Biber et al. 1999, 1072-1082): *North and South London* (head), *they are two different worlds* (body), *aren't they* (tag)? Discourse markers (*actually, you know, I mean*, etc.) and vague language (*what with the weather and everything*) are also quite prevalent in spoken language, and their learnability may be increased through frequent use in examples.

From what has been said it should have become clear that a compromise must be struck between genuineness, usability and comprehensibility. Although only few concessions should be made on authenticity, the lexicographer must be allowed some freedom in manipulating corpus examples. Experienced lexicographers like Landau concur with this view:

there are times when for good practical reasons one has to modify a quotation for the particular readership of the dictionary in question, and sometimes even invent a quotation based on what the corpus evidence has told one about the likely context and syntax of the use of the word [...] To make sense of much real language, one needs to look at more than one sentence, but the dictionary editor hasn't the space available to give examples five or six lines. (Landau 2001, 208-209)

To this we might add that the editor of a bilingual thesaurus would not even wish to devote five or six lines to an example because this would severely reduce its learnability; indeed, learners might not even bother to read such lengthy examples. This implies three possible procedures:

- a) the lexicographer may pick authentic examples direct from the corpus – this should be the standard procedure whenever possible;
- b) the lexicographer may choose intuitively appealing corpus examples and modify them in some way;
- c) the lexicographer may construct an example on the basis of his linguistic intuitions and may proceed to consult the Internet to check whether the invented example corresponds to real usage. If, for instance, the lexicographer's corpus does not contain sufficiently simple examples, it may be advisable to make up a simple one and check its plausibility against the Internet.

With all three procedures, the lexicographer must have "quality control" criteria that will enable her to make reasoned choices. The following criteria might be adopted on the basis of our discussion and the research literature:

1. examples should be easy to understand and should therefore be carefully checked for rare or obsolete words;
2. examples should be prototypical, i.e. they should exemplify meanings typically encoded by native speakers;
3. examples should create the illusion of living speech or real writing;

4. examples of spoken language should be fully mnemonic (i.e. not longer than 7 [+/- 2] chunks);
5. examples should be “readable”, i.e. they should not be phrased in hermetic style nor should they contain disfluency phenomena; it may be preferable to use fictional conversations from radio or television drama rather than unscripted ordinary speech, for, as Svartvik (1988, 36) points out, “the very nature of speech is lost in an orthographic transcription”;
6. examples should be “reusable”, i.e. they should not normally be highly idiosyncratic or context-specific;
7. examples should illustrate typical differences between languages (which may not be apparent from patterns or standard translations, cf. for example the entry for *hijack* in the DAC; cf. *drive into the wall* – *gegen die Wand fahren*); learner corpora may be used to detect error-prone areas and examples should be selected accordingly;
8. examples that are clearly representative of a particular geographical variety could be marked accordingly.

With the exception of criteria 4 and 7, all these criteria apply to all learners’ dictionaries. 4 and 7 are peculiar to bilingual thesauri for learners. There is clearly a trade-off between criteria 4 and 3, and there may be a trade-off between 4 and 2; situationality may sometimes be achieved at the expense of brevity. It is worth recalling, though, that adequate translations make for quasi-automatic contextualization, where the monolingual learner’s dictionary often struggles to contrive appropriate embeddings for examples. It is also important to note that function words or phrases such as discourse markers usually require at least three exemplificatory sentences (cf. Siepmann 2005a).

Criterion 1 may be difficult to meet in cases where a word typically occurs in grammatically or lexically complex environments (cf. Fox 1987, 138). According to Landau (2001, 306-307), examples of such words include *residual*, *arbitrary*, *conciliatory*, *contingency* or *respite*. Here too, however, the bilingual thesaurus is superior to the monolingual learner’s dictionary in that the provision of translations is a great aid to decoding examples.

Criterion 2 also merits some further elaboration since it begs the question of how prototypicality can be identified. Of particular interest here are notions such as semantic or pragmatic prosody, isotopy, scenario and collocation. Hausmann (2005) ingeniously suggests that exemplification will take different forms depending on the extent to which the lexical item to be exemplified is collocationally restricted. According to Hausmann (2005, 283), three cases may be distinguished: a) collocation-based items (“mot-collocation”), b) scenario-based items (“mot-scénario”), c) isotopy-based items (“mot-isotopie”). Although these categories clearly have fuzzy edges, Hausmann sets out to show that each category requires a specific treatment; he claims that a scenario-based word such as *badaud* cannot be exemplified simply by citing collocations, whereas a collocationally specific word such as *délabrement* cannot merely be illustrated by means of isotopy.

Criterion 4 takes account of the fact that the bilingual thesaurus is intended to assist learners in memorizing typical chunks of the target language. It also raises the question of the ratio of spoken to written examples. This is, of course, dependent on the purpose and target group of the dictionary; a general-purpose bilingual thesaurus aimed at advanced learners and designed for vocabulary learning should give preference to examples illustrating spoken usage or to ones which are neutral with regard to the spoken/written distinction. This is because speech is the primary faculty, but foreign language learners are normally exposed to writing rather than speech, so that the provision of spoken or neutral examples may go some way towards redressing the balance.

To my knowledge, there are no empirical studies available of the ways in which lexicographers arrive at their examples. For this reason the application of the three aforementioned procedures will now be illustrated with a few concrete examples, which are also intended to show that the interplay of principled procedures and criteria tends to yield better illustrative sentences than the somewhat haphazard policy still being followed in the making of monolingual learners' dictionaries.

Let us first compare some example sentences designed to illustrate the use of different parts of speech: one noun (*germ*), three verbs (*grovel*, *hijack* and *pronounce*), one adjective (*constructive*) and one idiom (*put one's foot in it*). The sentences are from four well-known learner's dictionaries (OALD in two different editions). Collocations which occur in example sentences have been underlined (for the comparison see table 4 on the following pages).

As already mentioned, Zöfgen claims that example sentences should always do more than merely illustrate collocations. This idea is born of wishful thinking. Owing to the pervasiveness of collocation, it is only natural that most example sentences in the dictionaries under review should be based on high-frequency collocations and colligations. Indeed, collocation-based exemplification is required because learners' dictionaries do not normally provide examples or patterns illustrating collocational entries (say, *spread germs*), although such collocations often exhibit specific patterning: V (*spread*) + (poss) + N (*germs*) + N + *to/among/around*). It is true, though, that lexical items of very low occurrence (e.g. *traffic policeman*) or high specificity (*grovel*) generally have a very restricted collocational range so that they can be illustrated more readily without recourse to collocations.

	OALD4	OALD7	CIDE1	Cobuild3	DAC
germ	disinfectant <u>kills</u> <u>germs</u> ; <u>germ warfare</u>	disinfectant <u>kills</u> <u>germs</u> ; dirty hands can be a <u>breeding ground</u> for <u>germs</u>	wash your hands so you don't <u>get germs</u> on the food; <u>germs</u> can be <u>spread</u> by rats	chlorine is widely used to <u>kill germs</u> ; a <u>germ</u> that destroyed hundreds of millions of lives	Hop it! Don't <u>spread</u> your <u>germs</u> among us!; I was reading this article about <u>germ</u> <u>warfare</u> ; <u>appalling</u> , isn't it?; Brown bread contains the whole <u>wheat germ</u> .
grovel (show humility)	you will just have to grovel to the bank manager for a loan	–	I will apologize to him, but I won't grovel; they felt obliged to write grov- elling notes apologis- ing for and explaining their omissions	I don't grovel to any- body; speakers have been shouted down, classes disrupted, teachers made to grovel; a letter of grovelling apology	–
hijack	the <u>plane</u> was hijacked while on a flight to Delhi	the <u>plane</u> was hijacked by two armed men on a flight from London to Rome	A man armed with a pistol hijacked a jet that was travelling to Paris early today and demanded payment of \$125,000; 400 tons of food was stolen when a convoy of trucks was hijacked in the famine-hit town	two men tried to hijack a plane on a flight from Riga to Murmansk; a Chinese airliner was hijacked by two passengers and forced to fly to Tai- wan; the hijacked plane exploded in a ball of fire	Report: "The number of planes that have been hijacked has decreased recently"; well, what would you do if someone hi- jacked your plane <u>into</u> Cuba?; Hijack a few <u>lorries</u> if you're that <u>hard up</u>

pronounce	people pronounce the word differently in this part of the country; how do you pronounce <i>phlegm</i> ?; The 'b' in 'debt' is not pronounced.	very few people can pronounce my name correctly; the 'b' in <i>lamb</i> is not pronounced	how do you pronounce your surname?; she pronounced his name so <u>badly</u> he didn't even recognise it; Sade, pronounced <i>shah-day</i> , is a singer	have I pronounced your name correctly?; He pronounced it Per-sha, the way the English do	Look, don't pronounce <i>heat</i> and <i>bit</i> the same way!; the K in <i>know</i> isn't pronounced; do you understand Peter? – yes, he pronounces everything very clearly
constructive	criticism, proposals, remarks	criticism, suggestions, advice; his work helped hyperactive children to use their energy in a constructive way; the government is encouraging all parties to play a constructive role in the reform process	she criticised my writing, but in a way that was very constructive – I learned a lot from her; If you don't have anything constructive to say, I'd rather you kept quiet; he didn't offer any <u>constructive criticism</u> – just complained he didn't like it	she welcomes constructive criticism; after their meeting, both men described the talks as frank, friendly and constructive; the Prime Minister has promised that Israel will play a constructive role; at least I'm doing something constructive	I can take <u>constructive criticisms</u> , but I hate arguments.
put one's foot in it	–	I really put my foot in it <u>with</u> Ella; I didn't know she'd split up with Tom	I really put my foot in it by asking her when the baby was due and she wasn't even pregnant	our chairman has really put his foot in it, poor man, though he doesn't know it	–

Table 4. Comparison of example sentences in five different learner's dictionaries

With the exception of DAC, most dictionaries display a bias towards the written language (cf. *germ*, *hijack*, *constructive*). This is probably due to the nature of their corpus base. To compound matters further, sentences from different varieties and registers are usually placed side by side without any additional guidance for the learner. DAC alone stands out in explicitly marking one of its written examples by introducing it with a text type label (*report*), a practice that might well be adopted in future learners' dictionaries (see criterion 8 above). The bias towards writing in monolingual dictionaries is probably justifiable since they will typically be used for the purposes of writing and translation. What is perhaps more problematic is that the predominant source of illustrative material is newspaper language; it is doubtful whether learners will have frequent occasion to take over such material into their own text production. On the positive side, there are also a few examples of what has been described above as "neutral" style; such examples are eminently suitable for bilingual thesauri: *chlorine is widely used to kill germs; she welcomes constructive criticism*.

Some of the examples are a long way from reality because they state the obvious or carry too much meaning content. Thus, it is difficult to imagine a real-life context for such sentences as "disinfectant kills germs" (OALD 4 and 7). As Fox (1987, 143) notes, such examples work as isolated sentences, but cannot be fitted into extended texts. Yet minor alterations can produce a perfectly natural example: *this natural disinfectant kills germs (but doesn't leave behind a long-lasting residue)*.

One clear drawback of the monolingual dictionary is apparent from such entries as *constructive* and *put one's foot in it* in CIDE. The examples given at these entries might be referred to as "defining" or "explanatory"; the dictionary makers must have felt the definition to be lacking in concreteness and therefore made up examples that would clarify the meaning. Inevitably, this results in rather lengthy co-ordinate example sentences that, for reasons already explained, are usually unnecessary in bilingual learners' dictionaries: *she criticised my writing, but in a way that was very constructive – I learned a lot from her*.

Examples can provide invaluable guidance in cases where linguistic description is not sufficiently advanced. Thus, the predicative use of adjectives in copular constructions with human subjects (*je serai bref*) and in imperatives (*soyez constructif!*) seems to be more widespread in French than in English or German, but it is difficult to generalise in this area: *?be constructive ->* (more commonly) *try to be constructive; je serai bref → I'll be brief / ich werde mich kurz fassen*. The best way to sharpen a learner's sense of such elusive differences is probably via exemplification coupled with translation.

Also noteworthy is the fact that "bigger" is not necessarily always "better". Thus, DAC, which has some 15,000 headwords, illustrates a colligational feature of the verb *hijack* (*hijack s.th. into [country, place]*) which goes unrecorded in the pattern information and in the examples section of the "big five" learners' dictionaries.

In what follows, the lexical unit *germ* (= bacillus) will be taken up to illustrate how the above procedures and criteria can be applied with a view to ferretting out “ideal” examples. The list below shows some of the corpus hits for *germ* found in my own archives of fictional and spoken English and in the spoken section of the BNC. It would seem to disprove Fox’s judgment (1987, 148) that real language does not contain “neat little sentences” that can be detached from context for purposes of exemplification; this judgment is probably due to the written bias of the initial Cobuild corpus.

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#### Fiction and spoken English

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we have to share a hotel room that probably has more germs than an eighteenth-century brothel  
 we should wash the stuff before we use it; germs and all  
 what do you get when you fall in love? You get enough germs to catch pneumonia.  
 The food in Ma Jo’s kitchen was cooked until it was limp, in case a few germs remained.  
 I don’t know why everyone’s afraid of a few germs.  
 School water. They put chlorine in there to kill germs.  
 Try this. It kills all known germs.  
 Do you know what kind of germs you can pick up on a beach?  
 I don’t want to catch your germs.  
 You’re not helping my chances by getting your germs all over my hand.  
 the troops contracted a germ indigenous to the Gulf  
 grease draws dirt, dirt draws germs and germs kill people  
 we wish her well, as long as she keeps her germs to herself  
 germs that float about in the air  
 it kills all known airborne germs sort of thing  
 to take away all the nasty to kill the germs  
 [...] mask the smell but it’s also basically to kill the germs  
 a germ, there’s a germ that floats about in the air and it gets onto [...]  
 you don’t want to tip it out on there cause you get germs, darling

(pragmatic prosody: people are concerned about germs and their effect on their health)

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#### Academic English

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the cause of typhoid fever is a germ known by the name of bacillus typhosus  
 this disease is caused by a germ, gonococcus  
 The poor had to deal with charity hospitals. If admitted to these institutions, they were housed and fed, but they also shared beds and germs with all the other diseased patients in their wards, and often received little medical help.  
 viruses and germs  
 poisons and germs  
 disease germs  
 the fire had destroyed much filth, many rats, fleas and germs; London had no further plagues

(pragmatic prosody: germs as disease-causing agents)

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Table 5. Corpus hits for *germ* in the BNC and my own archives of fictional and spoken English

Rather than just select examples, the lexicographer should attempt to gain an overall picture of an item's semantic or pragmatic prosody. It appears from the available data that *germ* is imbued with two closely connected prosodies. In spoken English, *germ* typically occurs in environments where there is a preoccupation with the effect of germs on health: germs kill and should therefore themselves be destroyed. In academic English, the prevalent pragmatic prosody is to do with germs as disease-causing agents. Even if the lexicographer wishes to separate examples of one-word entries and multi-word entries, the typical pragmatic prosody should still be captured in the illustrative material; the following sentences are likely candidates:

- (5) The food in Ma Jo's kitchen was cooked until it was limp, in case a few germs remained.
- (6) We should wash the stuff before we use it, germs and all.

The second example could be taken over as it stands. The first sentence could be shortened somewhat in accordance with criterion 4 to give the following "neutral" example:

- (5') The food was cooked until it was limp in case a few germs remained.

Some of the other examples can be adopted as illustrations of particular collocations; most of these illustrate spoken usage:

- (7) (collocation: *get germs*) you don't want to tip it on there cause you get germs, darling; you might get the germs on your fingers
- (8) (collocation: *catch germs*) I don't want to catch your germs.
- (9) (collocation: *kill germs*) School water. They put chlorine in there to kill the germs.

The lexicographer thus ends up with the article shown in the appendix.

## 5. Conclusion

This article has proposed a number of stringent principles which can be applied to the selection and treatment of examples in bilingual thesauri. Most of these principles apply equally to monolingual learner lexicography. It is to be hoped that their application will lead to a stricter distinction between collocations and examples, and that the wording and memorability of examples will be improved.

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## Appendix: Sample article

	<b>the germ</b>	<b>der Krankheitskeim (-e) / der Keim (-e) / der Bazillus (-en) / die Bakterie (-n) / der Erreger (-)</b>	
N	<i>We should wash the stuff before we use it, germs and all.</i>	<i>Wir sollten das abwaschen, bevor wir es benutzen, wegen der Bakterien und so.</i>	
	<i>The food was cooked until it was limp in case a few germs remained.</i>	<i>Das Essen wurde so lange gekocht, bis es ganz weich war, aus Angst, es könnten noch ein paar Krankheitserreger drin sein.</i>	
ADJ + N	<b>an airborne germ</b>	<b>ein in der Luft befindlicher Keim</b>	syn: ein durch die Luft übertragbarer Bazillus
syn: <i>a disease-causing agent, a pathogene</i>	<b>a disease-causing germ</b>	<b>ein krankheitserregender Keim</b>	syn: ein Krankheitserreger, ein krankmachender Keim, ein gesundheitsschädlicher Keim, ein gesundheitsgefährdender Keim
syn: <i>a dangerous germ</i>	<b>a nasty germ</b>	<b>ein gefährlicher Keim</b>	syn: ein übler Bazillus
	<b>a resistant germ</b>	<b>ein resistenter Keim</b>	syn: ein widerstandsfähiger Keim
	<b>a virulent germ</b>	<b>ein bösartiger Keim</b>	
N + N: types of germs	<b>a cholera / flu (etc.) germ</b>	<b>ein Cholera- / Grippe- / (usw.) bazillus</b>	
N + V	<b>germs multiply</b>	<b>Keime vermehren sich</b>	
N + V	<b>germs spread</b>	<b>Keime verbreiten sich</b>	
N + V (+ ADV); syn: <i>germs spread (somewhere)</i>	<b>germs accumulate (somewhere)</b>	<b>Keime siedeln sich (irgendwo) an</b>	
N + V + into/on/onto (etc.) N syn: <i>enter s.th. / be introduced into s.th.</i>	<b>germs get somewhere</b>	<b>Keime gelangen irgendwo hin</b>	syn: Keime dringen irgendwo ein
	<i>The germs will get into the food and give you an illness.</i>	<i>Die Keime gelangen in die Nahrung und machen uns krank.</i>	
N + V + (often poss) N; syn: <i>pick up germs</i>	<b>s.o. catches germs</b>	<b>j-m fängt sich einen Bazillus ein</b>	syn: j-m steckt sich mit einem Bazillus an
	<i>Hop it. I don't want to catch your germs.</i>	<i>Hau ab. Ich will mir nicht deine Bazillen einfangen.</i>	

N + V + N + on/onto/ all over (etc.) N	<b>s.o. gets germs somewhere</b>	<b>Keime gelangen irgendwo hin</b>	syn: Keime geraten irgendwo hin
	<i>You might get the germs on your fingers.</i>	<i>Die Bazillen könnten auf Ihre Hände gelangen.</i>	syn: Die Bazillen könnten auf Ihre Hände kommen.
N + V + N: only if clear from context	<i>You don't want to tip it on there cause you get germs, darling.</i>	<i>Da solltest Du es besser nicht hinschütten, Schatz, sonst entstehen Bakterien.</i>	
N + V + (often poss) N + around; to s.o. / among people	<b>s.o. spreads germs (somewhere / among people)</b>	<b>j-m verbreitet Keime (irgendwo / unter Leuten)</b>	V + (oft poss) N + unter Leuten
syn: <i>keep your germs to yourself</i>	<i>Don't spread your germs around!</i>	<i>Behalte deine Bazillen für dich!</i>	
	<i>Do you want me to spread my germs among the rest of the staff?</i>	<i>möchten Sie, dass ich meine Bazillen an die anderen Mitarbeiter weitergebe?</i>	
N + V + N; syn: <i>destroy germs</i>	<b>s.th. kills germs</b>	<b>etw. tötet Keime ab</b>	syn: etw. erstickt Keime
	<i>School water. They put chlorine in there to kill the germs.</i>	<i>Trinkwasser für Schulen. Man setzt ihm Chlor zu, um die Keime zu töten.</i>	
	<i>It kills all known germs.</i>	<i>Es tötet alle bekannten Keime ab.</i>	
	<i>The Great Fire had destroyed much filth, many rats, fleas and germs; London had no further plagues.</i>	<i>Durch den großen Brand waren viel Schmutz sowie viele Ratten, Flöhe und Bazillen beseitigt worden. Danach trat die Pest in London nicht mehr auf.</i>	
N + V + N; syn: <i>carry germs</i>	<b>s.o. / s.th. harbours germs</b>	<b>etw. enthält Keime</b>	
-> a breeding ground for germs	<i>Dirt harbours germs.</i>	<i>Schmutz ist eine Brutstätte für Keime.</i>	
	<i>Puppies and kittens may harbour the germ.</i>	<i>In Welpen und Kätzchen kann der Keim überleben.</i>	syn: Welpen und Kätzchen können den Keim in sich tragen
	<b>s.o. / s.th. passes on germs</b>		
	<i>It's quite easy for simians to pass on germs and viruses to humans.</i>	<i>Affen können sehr leicht Keime und Viren auf Menschen übertragen</i>	
phrases; -> s.o. / s.th. harbours germs	<b>a breeding ground for germs</b>	<b>eine Brutstätte für Bakterien</b>	

DIANA LEA

## MAKING A COLLOCATIONS DICTIONARY

**Abstract:** This paper seeks to explain the process and principles behind the selection and presentation of collocations in the *Oxford Collocations Dictionary for Students of English*. It argues for a pragmatic interpretation of the concept of collocation, based firmly on the needs of language learners. Thus, the whole range of collocations is included, from the relatively weak to the strongest and most restricted, but with the greatest emphasis on the “medium-strength” collocations between these two extremes. Judgements were not made as to the “predictability” of particular word combinations. The presentation of the collocations in the dictionary is designed to make selection of the best collocate by the user as intuitive as possible. Where possible, grammar is “pre-digested”, with collocates presented in the form in which they are most likely to be used. Collocates are grouped (but not labelled) according to semantic categories. The aim was to make the dictionary accessible not only to keen linguists, but to all who wish to improve their writing in English, whether interested in the mechanics of the language or not.

There are two main challenges facing anyone wishing to produce a dictionary of collocations. The first is selecting the material to include in such a dictionary. The second is how to present that material once selected. It is necessary to be very clear, not only about what exactly we mean by collocation, but also about the needs and expectations of the users of such a dictionary.

I first heard the term *collocation* in 1992, when I was working at a teacher training college in Legnica, Poland. I was introduced to the concept by my colleague, Major Martin, an ex-British army language trainer. He would stick his head round the door of my classroom and bawl, “Auspicious!” at me, and I would have to bawl back, “Occasion!”, and then explain to my students what this was all about. This, by the way, was after I had studied French for seven years at school, got a degree in English, and been teaching English for nearly two years without collocations ever having been mentioned to me.

Native speakers, of whatever language, are masters of collocation almost by definition, but most people, in my experience, outside the fields of language study and teaching, have never heard of the term and cannot begin to guess what it means. Language professionals – unlike myself fourteen years ago – will now almost all have heard of it and most will agree on the importance of collocation in language teaching, but there is still no universally accepted definition of what

collocation actually is. People have been trying to pin it down, on and off, since the 1930s.

Palmer had it that “a collocation is a succession of two or more words that must be learned as an integral whole, and not pieced together from its component parts” (1933, 7), which may be good as a start but is not the whole story. (This definition would include idioms, for example.)

More recently, we have Hill and Lewis (1997, 1) saying that “collocation is the way in which words occur together in predictable ways;” whereas George Woolard “reserves the term collocation for those co-occurrences of words which I think my students will not expect to find together” (2000, 29).

I could rehearse the long debate encapsulated here and point out some of the apparent contradictions, but these will be fairly familiar. We all know the kind of thing collocation is and we can give examples of items that are collocations – such as *auspicious occasion* – undoubtedly a strong collocation, though perhaps of somewhat limited use – but we still don’t have a definition that allows us to say categorically that any given word combination is or is not a collocation. Nevertheless, it was necessary to be quite definitive about each individual word combination: should it be included in the dictionary or not? This decision had to be made well over 200,000 times in the course of compiling the *Oxford Collocations Dictionary*, a project that took around nine years from the initial conception to eventual publication.

The main tool at our disposal to aid us in this task was the British National Corpus. This is a large database containing 100 million words of running English text collected from a whole range of sources – fiction and non-fiction – books, newspapers, magazines, letters, memos, debates and everyday conversation. Exploring this corpus with Keyword-in-Context concordancing tools, compilers of the dictionary were able to check how frequently any given combination occurred, in how many (and what kind of) sources and in what particular contexts. Figure 1 shows part of the concordance for the noun *mist*. The lines have been sorted alphabetically according to the word to the left of the keyword. From this it is easy to pick out *heavy* as an adjective collocater. Sorting right (see figure 2) gives nearly as clear a picture of verbs that immediately follow the keyword. In this section of the concordance, *come down*, *clear* and *cling* can be picked out.

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were up early next morning. A heavy	mist	had fallen, drowning the countryside in
around her blearily through the heavy	mist	that filled the wood. Everything was
sun was beginning to pierce the heavy	mist	. “Like the professional assassin you
the banquet ended. Outside a heavy	mist	obscured everything, and the departing
which, blurred with rain and heavy	mist	, presented a uniform greyness. “Yet
Sick Fund. <p_4> Despite the heavy	mist	Nearly 40 walkers assembled at St
the soldiers were shrouded in a heavy	mist	, suiting their purpose perfectly.
She moved to the door and through her	mist	of pain, Nina saw Joe standing outside,
clammy hands. It was rather a horrid	mist	; you felt as if it might be concealing
sound of Man. Hootings and shouts, hot	mist	and lights ... and I was numb with fear.

had stopped now but an illuminating	mist	Seemed to fill the room with a white
of the mountain periodically hidden in	mist	, but as the sun set we had a magnificent
vertically plunging forest, wreathed in	mist	, and for the most part deathly quiet
vice versa, as you put it. The train, in	mist	, was unable to stop in time. The rail-
continued. Flakstad was drowning in	mist	, backlit from the northern sky.
Ahead of them lay the Nile, bathed in	mist	, like a white sea; behind them lay the
<p_64> “It’s no worse than driving in	mist	, “ I said, to comfort him, though in fact
into the building. She seemed haloed in	mist	, hair wet and tendrilled, clothes drip-
hut was like a dark capsule afloat in	mist	. She walked round and lifted one of the
a field of clover were knee-deep in	mist	. Their voices across the water were
The riverbanks were wreathed in	mist	. The banana groves and the guava
The moon, at its full, was swathed in	mist	. Out of the stillness, a lone nightingale
grey, a scattering of houses shrouded in	mist	. Suddenly, I see a boat weaving its way
looked like a ruined city, shrouded in	mist	. <p_105>The top of the hill was empty

Figure 1. From the BNC Concordance for *mist*, sorted left

Dalseattie, which was nice until the	mist	came down and began to make us rather
days save when heavy rain, snow, or	mist	came down like a curtain over every-
as he climbed higher, a thick damp	mist	came down and covered everything.
there was a night, long ago now, when a	mist	came in off the sea; we slept uneasily
To be raised. <p_86> “Then the	mist	came nearer until it reached a man and
of the clinging mist. <p_64> “Such a	mist	came that grim morning and with it a
bikers. <p_39> But beware! Dartmoor	mist	can blanket everything, and some of the
been sliced off; when it’s cloaked in a	mist	cap, you can almost imagine a cone-
whispering seed and the tenuous	mist	cast a sheen of silver. . PP The oak trees
reminded her of Japanese paintings. The	mist	changed to a warm pink and began to
are frequently enveloped in cloud and	mist	characterized by very low pH values
Hill. As we slowly descended, the	mist	cleared a little, and we found ourselves
up.” <p_10> They waited while the	mist	cleared a little in the valley, and the
The thick, creamy crest and the rainbow	mist	cleared from my eyes that I finally gave
seaward. The weather helped. The early	mist	cleared to a fine October day, and there
come up above the eastern ridge and the	mist	clear like drifting smoke. Out of sight
Him, but he skips backwards, and as the	mist	Clears I see <page=145> his eyes blaz-
to be firing their weapons. Suddenly the	mist	Clears and we are now in a clearing. I
Derry Morning </h1> <poem> <l> The	mist	Clears and the cavities <l> Glow black
Icy fields, furrows of water, leaves of	mist	clinging to the metal branches of the rig
way through the shadows of a forest,	mist	cloaking the branches of the trees
just risen above the mountain. Then the	mist	Closed in again thicker than ever.
There was low cloud, white drifts of	mist	close down on the ice. But yes, I think I
Whistler’s statement that when evening	mist	clothes the riverside with poetry, as with
Down towards Lyndhurst. The ground	mist	clung closely to the hedgerows,
crept over me. The sky was grey, and	mist	clung to the tops of the cliffs. Being late

Figure 2. From the BNC Concordance for *mist*, sorted right

Now *mist* is a medium-frequency word, with a total of 1,195 citations out of the 100 million. Scrolling down 1,200 lines of text, twice, is not too arduous a task. But if we took *occasion*, with nearly 9,000 lines, or *job*, with over 30,000, the work starts to become time-consuming and even somewhat tedious. Further help was provided by a collocation profiling program. Kilgarriff and Tugwell (2001) have described their “Word Sketch” program which extracts collocations from a corpus for use in lexicography. Our corpus engineer developed a similar program, which was able to pick out collocations in particular categories, much as they are listed in the dictionary (see figure 3). These “collocations” are of course no more than words occurring near the keyword in significant numbers, in the relation specified. The lexicographer still needs to analyse the data and accept or reject individual items: in the case of prepositions, many of these co-occurrences were deemed to be coincidental and not really collocational at all. Only *through the mist*, *in/into the mist* and *mist over something* were deemed to be significant.

Adjectives	b4 LHS prep	LHS prep	RHS prep
thick (35)	shroud (21)	through (98)	over (47)
grey (20)	lose (17)	into (68)	across (11)
white (24)	vanish (9)	above (4)	above (11)
early (26)	disappear (9)	in (215)	down (19)
fine (15)	wreathe (7)	from (29)	off (13)
red (14)	peer (7)	over (4)	around (9)
heavy (13)	loom (6)	by (30)	through (8)
thin (11)	hide (7)	up (6)	into (17)
faint (8)	veil (5)	with (31)	before (8)
dense (6)	shine (5)	of (193)	up (17)
slight (6)	emerge (6)	at (8)	from (44)
dark (7)	cloak (4)		
LHS verb	RHS verb	And/Or	Compound Ns
shroud (21)	hang (19)	rain (19)	morning mist (37)
swirl (15)	drift (13)	cloud (17)	sea mist (13)
lose (19)	cling (11)	fog (10)	autumn mist (6)
vanish (10)	rise (18)	drizzle (4)	dawn mist (4)
loom (8)	swirl (10)	smoke (4)	evening mist (7)
disappear (9)	lie (14)		
peer (8)	obscure (8)	<b>PP OF</b>	
wreathe (7)	shroud (7)	tear (5)	
cloak (6)	clear (14)	sleep (4)	
descend (6)	roll (8)	time (19)	
shine (6)	hide (6)		
hide (7)	hover (4)		
obscure (5)	lift (6)		
roll (6)	come (20)		

Figure 3. From the Collocation Profile for *mist*, noun

The profiler makes the verbs appear much more clearly, whether they occur before or after the keyword, with or without an intervening preposition. This is particularly useful for a noun like *mist*, where formulations such as *shrouded in mist* and *lost in the mist* are significant. Figure 4 shows the dictionary entry for *mist*. The correspondence with the collocation profile can be clearly seen.

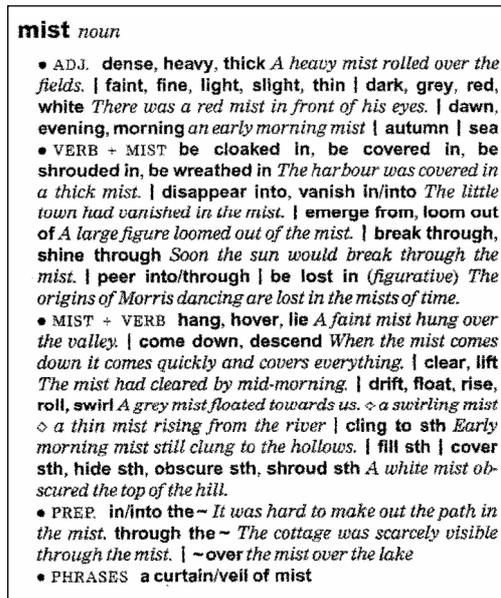


Figure 4. The entry for *mist* from the *Oxford Collocations Dictionary*

Concordances and collocation profiles together were enormously instructive: it was this process of trawling through the whole language to compile the dictionary that ultimately enabled us to arrive at some sort of understanding of what collocation actually is.

“Collocability” – if I can use that horrible term – is not a condition that something either has or has not. It exists on a cline: that is, there are degrees of collocation from the strongest, most restricted combinations at the one end, to the weakest, freest combinations at the other.

At the strong end of the spectrum are combinations like *blindingly obvious* and *grey area*. *Blindingly obvious* is strong because the adverb *blindingly* is scarcely used except in combination with *obvious*. In the case of *grey area*, both elements are very frequent words, occurring in many other combinations, but *grey* does not have precisely this meaning in any other combination. You could call it a compound, rather than a collocation, as indeed the *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary* (2005) does, but it is included in the *Oxford Collocations Dictionary* (with a gloss) because it does fit into the wider meaning of *area* as a ‘subject or activity’. Learners are not necessarily to know that the idea ‘an area of

sth that is not clear' is in fact expressed by an idiomatic compound, so it comes under our understanding of collocation.

In the middle of the spectrum, we have examples such as *make money* and *heavy mist*. Now, these are all very common words, but not perhaps in their most obvious meanings. *Make* here means 'earn' or 'acquire' rather than its core meaning of 'create'. *Heavy mist* may cause no problems of understanding – you can talk about *heavy rain* too – but you can't substitute '*strong*' in either case (though we do, of course, talk about *strong winds*).

At the weaker end of the spectrum, we might pick out examples such as *enjoyable experience* or *cause problems*. No problems of understanding here, and many users would be able to construct these for themselves. But *cause problems* does still need to be in the dictionary, alongside the less obvious *pose problems* and *create problems*, if only to confirm what learners think they already know.

The existence of a cline of collocability is probably pretty well known. But we did make some observations about the distribution of collocations along the cline, which may be less apparent. The first point we observed was that some of the strongest collocations – including some of those that spring most readily to mind when trying to explain the concept of collocation to someone to whom it is unfamiliar – are actually pretty rare. For example, *auspicious occasion* occurs only 7 times in the 100 million word British National Corpus. Similarly, *cushy job* has only 7 citations; *rancid butter* – quoted by Thierry Fontanelle (along with the more frequent *sour milk* and *rotten eggs*; 1994, 42) – has 6, and *arrant nonsense* 5. We also get low scores for *blanket of fog*, *curtain of mist* and *veil of mist*. These are still significant, however, because we do not say \**curtain of fog* or \**blanket of mist*, and this tells us something about the difference, linguistically speaking, between *fog* and *mist*: *fog* lies on a surface, while *mist* hangs in the air.

As far as I am aware, there are no significant verb + noun combinations that are as rare as this. The strongest that I could think of – verbs that combine with only one noun – were *curry favour* and *foot the bill*, with 23 and 106 citations respectively.

Some of these strong, infrequent collocations will be of more interest to learners than others, but there is another important point to be made about them. These strong, but relatively infrequent combinations are in the minority. The less obvious, less interesting, but more frequent combinations are much more numerous.

Let us take the top adjectives that combine with *occasion*, in order of frequency: *other*, *special*, *rare*, *previous*, *particular*, *numerous*, *social* and *different*. Of these, *other*, *particular* and *different* are such frequent, general words that it is very hard to call them collocates of any noun in particular, and indeed they are not included in the OCD entry for *occasion*. If, instead of taking raw corpus frequency, we take a measure of statistical significance that factors in the relative frequencies of the words in the language as a whole, we get a slightly better match with the dictionary. The top six – *rare*, *special*, *numerous*, *ceremonial*, *previous* and *memorable* – are all included. However, *particular* and *other* still score

highly and a conscious decision had to be made to exclude them, just as *numerous* and *previous*, also quite general words, were deliberately included. Also included are quite a number of collocations – *auspicious*, *momentous*, *festive*, *solemn* – which score lower both on frequency and statistical significance.

It was necessary, for each entry, somehow to draw a line between what should be included and what should not. This line could not be based solely on frequency, nor on statistical significance, but was informed by both of these. But it was informed also by editorial judgement about what would be useful to a learner consulting the dictionary.

In deciding what to include in the dictionary, three basic questions were asked: Is this a typical use of language? Might a learner want to express this idea? Would they look up this entry to find out how?

To return, for a moment to a couple of those definitions of collocation: “Collocation is the way in which words occur together *in predictable ways*” (Hill/Lewis 1997, 1). “I reserve the term collocation for those co-occurrences of words which I think my students *will not expect to find together*” (Woolard 2000, 29). The emphases here are mine. There would appear to be a contradiction here – but is there? The first quotation begs an immediate question: predictable to whom? The answer is, surely, to native speakers. So if we combine the two statements we arrive at a definition of collocation as combinations that are predictable to native speakers but not to learners.

But I think there is still a problem: which learners do we mean? (And come to that, which native speakers?) Woolard, in the second quotation, is talking about *teaching* collocations to particular students whom he knows. He can predict, with a fair degree of accuracy, which combinations they will find natural and which will take them by surprise. For the editor of a collocations dictionary it is not so easy. We don’t really know the dictionary’s users, their level of English, their first language, the level and types of interference there will be from the L1, or even what cultural assumptions we can make. Research carried out by Kyohei Nakamoto with Japanese high school and college students showed that word combinations considered to be predictable for European students often cause them problems. The collocation *cause damage*, for example, a “weak collocation” by almost any standards, was rendered by most of Nakamoto’s subjects as *\*give damage* (which is, perhaps not coincidentally, the most literal translation from the Japanese). *Make the bed*, on the other hand, so idiomatic that it merits a sense of *make* all to itself in the *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary*, caused few problems for the Japanese students. Nakamoto’s thesis (1992) therefore argues very strongly for typicality, not predictability, as the central characteristic of collocation.

To answer our second question – Might a learner of English want to express this idea? – we could do little better than look at the ideas that people do express, especially in the kinds of texts – essays, reports, letters, narratives – that learners might want to produce. Analysis of this language leads to the conclusion that Jimmie Hill (2000, 64) has it very much to the point: “The main learning

load for all language users is not at the strong or weak ends of the collocational spectrum, but in the middle – those many thousands of collocations that make up a large part of what we speak and write.” It is these “medium-strength” collocations that make up perhaps the bulk of the language, and also the bulk of the dictionary.

The third question asked – Would a learner look up a particular entry to find a particular combination? – leads on to a third observation on the nature of collocation. The relationship between the different elements of a collocation is not equal. You might think of *rain* and want to know the adjective to use when a lot falls in a short time: *heavy rain*. You would be unlikely to start with *heavy* and wonder what to describe with it – *breathing?* a *cold?* your *heart?* *Heavy* is a very difficult word to define in isolation from its context, except in the most abstract and general terms. It combines with a very wide range of nouns, and means something slightly different in each case (yet in many of these cases, *heavy* is the word to choose). In effect, *heavy* takes its meaning from the nouns it combines with. (This is even more true of certain, almost delexicalized verbs, such as *do*, *make*, *have*, *give* and *take*.)

When framing their ideas people generally start from a noun. Most writers on collocation agree that collocations are made up of a base and a collocator. In the case of noun collocations, the noun is always the base. It was therefore decided not to include noun collocates in the entries for verbs and adjectives in the OCD. This had the happy effect of freeing up a lot of space in the dictionary for more collocations and examples, which proved particularly useful in the light of our final observation on the nature of collocation.

Words that are more frequent overall in the language tend to have many, many more collocations than the less frequent words. This is particularly true of the frequent nouns. The relationship is exponential. A word that is twice as frequent may have four or five times as many collocations, or even more. The most extreme cases list more than 200 collocations for a single word – the word *word* being a prime example. Do learners need to learn all 200+ collocations of *word*? Almost certainly not. But the role of the dictionary is to be a comprehensive resource from which all learners and other dictionary users can make their own selections.

Of almost equal importance with the selection of material to include in the dictionary, was the question of how that content was to be presented. It seemed logical to divide each entry into a number of “slots” according to the part of speech or function of the collocating word. The basic categories for a noun entry are shown in figure 5.

adjective + noun	<i>bright/harsh/intense/strong light</i>
quantifier + noun	<i>a beam/ray of light</i>
verb + noun	<i>cast/emit/give/provide/shed light</i>
noun + verb	<i>light gleams/glow/shines</i>
noun + noun	<i>a light source</i>
preposition + noun	<i>by the light of the moon</i>
noun + preposition	<i>the light from the window</i>
short phrases including the headword	<i>the speed of light</i>

Figure 5. “Slots” for a noun entry in the *Oxford Collocations Dictionary*

The dictionary is quite literal, even unintelligent, about these slots, so that the verb + noun section includes not only simple verb + noun object combinations, such as *hold a conversation*, but also combinations in which the noun is the indirect object – *deny sb compensation* – or where there is an intervening preposition – *whoop with delight*, *engage sb in conversation* – or where the verb is in the passive – *be considered a delicacy*, *be riddled with bullets*.

Another example of the somewhat cavalier approach to grammar, is that we quite cheerfully put into the ADJ. slot items that are actually pre-modifying nouns, such as *tax benefit* and *takeover bid*. There are also some predicative adjectives in the noun + verb slot such as *compensation is payable*. The thinking behind this was that the user is thinking, not of a particular word, but of an idea, which is adjectival, or verbal, even if the realization of that idea is actually a noun or predicative adjective.

There was also the question of how to arrange the collocations within the slots. Alphabetical order is only useful to learners if they already know what they are looking for, which is not the point of a collocations dictionary. Instead, collocations are grouped into “subslots” either according to meaning (*a bright/intense/piercing/powerful beam*) or category (*an electron/laser/searchlight/torch beam*). These subslots may be compared to – and were partly inspired by – Mel’čukian lexical functions (Mel’čuk 1998), but with heavy qualifications. No attempt was made to name or define the subslots. This might have been possible in some cases – brightness or power for the first example above – but much more difficult in others. Nor did we try to apply the same range of subslots to all entries. This might have led to a temptation to try and fill all the slots: just as there are some grammatically possible utterances that no one has ever uttered, there are some combinations of ideas that no one has ever wanted to express. To ask what the correct collocation would be in such a case is to miss the point entirely.

Within each subslot we did fall back on alphabetical order, a reluctant simplification made when it was found impossible to indicate relative frequencies in any meaningful way. Frequency is useful as a blunt instrument – is this a collocation or not? – but less useful for making fine distinctions. What learners really need to know is which collocation is the most appropriate for their purposes, and this will vary with the context. Examples and short notes in the dictionary will help to indicate this. Learners may also need to consult a general learner’s

dictionary such as the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* for further information on register, grammar, usage, and, of course, meaning.

The aim of the dictionary was to be a practical tool, not just – or primarily – for applied linguists, interested in studying how the language works, but for students, academics, business people and everyone obliged to write in English, who may not be very interested in the mechanics of the language, but do wish to be able to express themselves elegantly and precisely in that language. To this end, the theory and grammar behind the dictionary, though, we hope, sound, have been “pre-digested”, so that users do not have to negotiate them but can proceed directly to what they want to say.

Four years on from publication, can the *Oxford Collocations Dictionary* be judged a success? It is not really for me to say, but on the whole I think so: feedback from users has been scarce, but such as we have received has been nearly all positive. Are there any improvements that could be made in a second edition? The most obvious would be to aim to cover American English collocation as well as British English. This would entail certain challenges – not least how to indicate which collocations are British or American only, without turning the page into a sea of brackets and italic labels – but these problems could no doubt be surmounted.

And of course, language changes. We can now *switch our phones on and off* as well as *pick them up* and *put them down*. The last few years have also seen the rise of the *no-frills airlines* offering flights at bargain prices. Better, larger corpora and more sophisticated computational tools may also reveal more about the core of the language – and collocation is very much at the core – but not, I think, to the extent of making either the lexicographer or the language teacher redundant. The more that it is possible to find out about the language, the greater the need to sift that knowledge and carefully select and present what is most relevant to the needs of the individual language learner.

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GAËTANELLE GILQUIN

TO ERR IS NOT ALL:  
WHAT CORPUS AND ELICITATION CAN REVEAL ABOUT  
THE USE OF COLLOCATIONS BY LEARNERS

*Es irrt der Mensch,  
so lang er strebt.*

J.W. von Goethe, *Faust*

**Abstract:** This article studies advanced French-speaking learners' knowledge of *make*-collocations. It suggests that, while an investigation of the errors found in a learner corpus may be enlightening, it should ideally be complemented by two other types of analyses, namely a comparison of the learner corpus data with native data, which highlights phenomena of overuse or underuse, and elicitation tests, which focus on competence rather than performance. Using such a threefold approach, this study shows that, while the learners under study do not make many errors, they tend to underuse *make*-collocations and limit themselves to those which have a direct equivalent in their mother tongues and are therefore safer. When forced to produce certain collocations or judge their acceptability, on the other hand, they reveal their collocational deficiencies and unreliable judgements.<sup>1</sup>

## 1. Introduction

In 1933, Palmer noted the difficulty combinations such as *to ask a question*, *to do a favour*, *to give trouble* or *to have patience* present for learners of English. His remark was intuitive, based on the idea that learners should tend to form such combinations by guess work or by analogy with their mother tongues, producing unusual expressions such as *to make a question*, *to perform a favour*, *to do trouble* or *to keep patience*. Since then, it has been widely recognised that such combinations, now referred to as collocations, are usually difficult for learners to master (cf. Howarth 1998a) and that, next to aspects such as grammar or spell-

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ing, phraseology is a serious issue to reckon with in Foreign Language Teaching (FLT).

This article focuses on collocations with the high-frequency verb *make* and examines how they are used by advanced French-speaking learners of English. In an attempt to get an overall picture of this phenomenon, two sources of data will be exploited, namely corpus data and elicitation data. After briefly discussing the problem collocations with high-frequency verbs pose for learners and how this problem has been dealt with in the literature, more will be said about the multi-method approach adopted here. The results of the study will then be set out in three stages: an analysis of the errors made by learners in free production, an analysis of the collocations that learners favour or avoid in comparison with native speakers, and an analysis of learners' collocational knowledge as emerging from fill-in and evaluation exercises. Finally, the implications of this study for FLT will be briefly discussed.

## 2. Collocations with high-frequency verbs

High-frequency verbs have this particular feature that they “enter into a wide range of Expressions and patterns” (Lewis 1997, 75), or collocations,<sup>2</sup> forming what is regularly referred to as “light verb constructions”, that is, constructions in which the verb has little or no semantic content of its own, and the verbal meaning is expressed by the noun phrase accompanying it (Trask 1993), e.g. *give a sigh*, *have a look*, *make a wish* or *take a walk*.<sup>3</sup> Such expressions are particularly difficult for learners,<sup>4</sup> who are normally familiar with the basic meaning of the verb, but may not be aware of their collocates. This is made even worse by the fact that light verb constructions often exhibit treacherous differences cross-linguistically, as shown for example by Nehls (1991) for English *do/make*, German *tun/machen* and Dutch *doen/maken*.<sup>5</sup> As a consequence, learners often make lexical choices which result in “collocational dissonance” (Carter 1987, Hasselgren 1994), with sentences correct from a grammatical point of view, but still non-native-like.

<sup>2</sup> In Howarth (1996), the verb + noun combinations investigated display an average percentage of 40% of restricted collocations and idioms, but this proportion rises to 69% for *give*, 73% for *take* and 95% for *make*.

<sup>3</sup> The fact that the verbal meaning should be expressed by the noun phrase, rather than by the verb, is the main criterion that was used here for the selection of the *make*-collocations. It was not considered essential that the light verb construction be replaceable by a derivationally related single verb (like *make a decision/to decide*, but unlike *make an effort/\*to effort*). See Langer (2004) for a list of possible tests to identify light verb constructions.

<sup>4</sup> It is interesting to note that collocations can at times be challenging for native speakers too, as shown by Howarth (1998b).

<sup>5</sup> See also Altenberg (2001), who shows that the light verb *make* and its equivalent in Swedish, *göra*, are translated by each other in less than 30% of the cases.

Several studies have provided empirical evidence to highlight the problems encountered by learners when producing collocations. Some of them, especially the earliest ones, were performed within the framework of Error Analysis, observing small amounts of learner writing and pinpointing the errors found in these texts. This is the approach adopted by Lennon (1996), whose study of lexical verb choice relies on 60 English texts written by four German-speaking subjects, from which all the errors were extracted and analysed. On the basis of these errors, he was able to show that, when choosing a verb, learners are influenced by their mother tongues, but also experience more fundamental problems, among which lack of knowledge of collocational probabilities and restrictions. While “spontaneous” errors (i.e. errors found in free, uncontrolled production data) are an important facet of learners’ problem with collocations, they are not all, and by focusing exclusively on errors, one may overlook some crucial aspects of learners’ collocational knowledge.

The appearance of learner corpora (see Granger 1998a) has made it possible to go further into the analysis of learners’ performance. Not only do learner corpora represent large and carefully compiled collections of authentic data, machine-readable and hence automatically searchable, but compared with a control corpus of native language, they can also reveal phenomena of over- and underuse, that is, cases where learners use significantly more or significantly less of a particular linguistic item than native speakers. Kaszubski (2000) is a good illustration of this type of corpus-based approach. On the basis of a corpus of essays written by Polish learners of English, he demonstrates that some collocations occur with a frequency that is significantly different from their frequency in native English, which underlines learners’ strong predilection for some expressions and their reluctance to use others. What corpus-based studies cannot establish, however, is the extent to which collocations which are not produced by a learner are part, or not, of his/her mental lexicon. Because a learner does not produce a particular collocation does not mean that s/he does not know it (s/he may simply not need it in this specific context), but this is a side of the coin to which corpus-based approaches have no access.

Some linguists, using a more controlled method of data collection, have studied the other side of the coin, namely learners’ competence (as opposed to performance). Bahns and Eldaw (1993), for example, use a translation task and a cloze task to test a number of English verb-noun collocations. By having their subjects, advanced German-speaking learners of English, translate specific expressions or fill in particular parts of a sentence, they are able to determine the learners’ actual knowledge of the target collocations, showing that this knowledge lags far behind their knowledge of vocabulary in general and that more emphasis should consequently be placed on collocations in EFL instruction.

Only rarely have both sides of the coin been studied, with an emphasis on performance as well as competence.<sup>6</sup> Yet, Granger's (1998b) collocational analysis of amplifying adverbs, which combines corpus data and elicitation data, demonstrates the usefulness of such an approach. The next section explains how this type of multi-method approach was applied to collocations with the high-frequency verb *make*.

### 3. Multi-method approach

Using a multi-method approach is a way of responding to the remark that "no one method will provide an entirely valid picture of what a learner knows or thinks" (Ellis/Barkhuizen 2005, 49).<sup>7</sup> Here, corpus data and elicitation data were combined to offer deeper insights into the knowledge of *make*-collocations by advanced French-speaking learners of English. The corpus analysis is partly based on Borgatti (2006) and relies on (i) ICLE-FR, a component of the International Corpus of Learner English (Granger et al. 2002) containing essays written by French-speaking learners [202,957 words], and (ii) LOCNESS-US, the American component of the Louvain Corpus of Native English Essays, a comparable corpus of native English [168,314 words],<sup>8</sup> from which all the occurrences of a form of the verb *make* were extracted automatically and the collocational uses among these were selected manually. Although the essays contained in ICLE and LOCNESS had to be written on a particular subject and were thus, to some extent, constrained by the topic, they can still be considered as lying towards the freer pole of the continuum between controlled and uncontrolled production data (see Källkvist 1998).

Elicitation data are, by definition, controlled, since elicitation is aimed at inducing some specific linguistic feature. The test used for this study was performed at the University of Louvain (UCL) in February 2006 and was taken by 19 learners of English, all of them native speakers of French and in their third year of study. It took place during regular classes and consisted of two types of exercises, one of them a fill-in exercise and the other an evaluation exercise. In the first exercise, the students were asked to fill in sentences with a verb of their choice, on the basis of the French translation provided for the sentence, e.g.

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<sup>6</sup> Hasselgren (1994) combines her fill-in exercises with the analysis of students' written work, but the texts analysed are translations and are therefore constrained by the presence of the original text. In Källkvist (1998), the data consist of three written tasks with varying degrees of control, namely free composition, recall of a short narrative and translation tests. The free composition data, however, are better described as a small collection of 17 essays than as a proper corpus.

<sup>7</sup> For the use of such a multi-method approach in native English, see e.g. de Mönnink (1997).

<sup>8</sup> See <http://www.fltr.ucl.ac.be/fltr/germ/etan/cecl/Cecl-Projects/Icle/locness1.htm> (last accessed on 12 November 2006).

- (1) She \_\_\_\_\_ the choice of never seeing her son again.  
= Elle fit le choix de ne plus jamais revoir son fils.

They were also required to indicate their degree of certainty, using a scale ranging from 0 (“don’t know the answer, made a guess”) to 3 (“absolutely sure of the answer”). The 25 sentences of the exercise were all authentic sentences, extracted from LOCNESS and translated by me. Some of them included a congruent collocation, that is a collocation having a direct, word-for-word equivalent in French (e.g. *make an offer* = *faire une offre*), whereas others included a non-congruent collocation, in which the English and the French verbs did not correspond (e.g. *make a commitment* = *prendre un engagement*, literally ‘take’). In the evaluation exercise, the students were presented with 20 sentences and had to decide whether the underlined elements, corresponding to the collocation, were acceptable or not, e.g.

- (2) The candidate had made promises to local groups of voters on behalf of the government.

Again, they had to indicate their degree of certainty, using the same 0-3 scale as in the fill-in exercise. In addition, the students were asked to correct, whenever possible, the sentences they judged unacceptable. The sentences came from LOCNESS for the acceptable collocations and from ICLE (essentially the French component, but also the German and Japanese components) for the unacceptable collocations. The questionnaires distributed to the students comprised both the fill-in exercise and the evaluation exercise. The test items within each exercise were ordered randomly, so that each questionnaire contained the same items but in a different order.<sup>9</sup> While the test included collocations with several verbs (including *make*, *do*, *take* and *give*), only the results for the collocations involving *make* will be discussed here.

Before we turn to the analysis proper, an important caveat is in order concerning the combination of the corpus data and the elicitation data. It should be borne in mind that they have been produced by different populations – the students who wrote the essays included in ICLE-FR and the students who took the elicitation test. While the ideal would be to have an L2-database consisting of free and controlled production data by the same learners, a certain homogeneity is ensured by the fact that the authors of the ICLE-FR essays and the respondents to the elicitation test have very similar profiles: they are all advanced learners of English, native speakers of French, come from the same university and, in part, have been taught by the same professors. This similarity should be enough to guarantee the comparability of the data.

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<sup>9</sup> I thank Marie-Catherine de Marneffe for her help with the randomisation of the test items.

#### 4. The use of *make*-collocations by learners: A three-stage analysis

##### 4.1 Exploring the learner corpus data: Error analysis

The first stage of this analysis consists in examining the learner corpus data for their own sake, identifying the errors made by the learners.<sup>10</sup> A collocation was considered as incorrect if it was judged as such by the native speakers that were consulted. Following Nesselhauf (2005), cases where the choice of the noun phrase was inappropriate (e.g. \**make huge benefits*, instead of *make huge profits*) were also counted as errors.

ICLE-FR contains 469 occurrences of one of the forms of the verb *make*, of which 171 are collocations, as shown in table 1. Incorrect *make*-collocations amount to 12, thus accounting for 2.6% of all the occurrences of *make* and 7% of all the occurrences of a *make*-collocation. While these proportions are higher than in a corpus such as ICLE-DU (Dutch component of ICLE), where incorrect *make*-collocations represent 0.9% of all the occurrences of *make* and 1.3% of all the occurrences of a *make*-collocation, they still point to a reasonably good knowledge of collocations with *make*, since out of 100 collocations, the learners would on average make a mere 7 errors.<sup>11</sup> However, it should be emphasised that collocational errors represent a large proportion of all the errors made by the learners, namely 57.1% (12/21). In other words, the learners may not commit many errors when producing a collocation with *make*, but most of the errors they commit when using the verb *make* are of this type. And in this respect, Dutch learners do not fare much better, with half of their errors being collocational errors.

Occurrences of <i>make</i>	469
Occurrences of <i>make</i> -collocations	171
Errors with <i>make</i>	21
Errors with <i>make</i> -collocations	12

Table 1. Results of error analysis in ICLE-FR (based on Borgatti 2006)

Going further than statistics, we can examine the types of errors that the learners commit when producing a collocation with *make*. Table 2 shows that the most common type of error concerns the choice of the verb (50%). In half of the

<sup>10</sup> The results presented in this section are based on Borgatti (2006). Note that collocations in which *make* should have been used (e.g. *do an effort* instead of *make an effort*) have not been taken into account.

<sup>11</sup> This can be compared with the results obtained by Nesselhauf (2004) for German-speaking learners, whose error rate for *make*-collocations amounts to 31.6%. This higher rate may be due to German students' tendency to be risk-takers (see Biskup 1992, 88).

cases, the learners have mixed up *make* and *do*, as illustrated by (3), which is to be expected given that French has only one verb, *faire*, to cover the meanings of the two English verbs.<sup>12</sup> In the other cases, *make* has been confused with another verb (*put*, *give* or *find*), as exemplified by (4). The other two types of errors, with a proportion of 25% each, are the use of a collocation where a simple verb should have been used, as in (5), and errors on the noun phrase, as in (6).

- (3) In the first part of the novel, another activity takes place: Lily is **making a painting** but she cannot complete it. [ICLE-FR] (doing a painting)
- (4) Progressively, thanks to vivid **descriptions made** in a rich language (...), the picture of a society which is superficial comes before our eyes. [ICLE-FR] (descriptions given)
- (5) On the one hand, some people are still against the idea of Europe, or other people claim they are for union, but actually they **make separations** in their own country. [ICLE-FR] (divide their own country)
- (6) This **reflexion made** by Denis when talking with Jenny one morning is very relevant for the whole meaning of Huxley's novel. [ICLE-FR] (remark made)

Errors on <i>make</i>	6	(50%)
Collocation instead of simple verb	3	(25%)
Errors on noun phrase	3	(25%)
Total	12	(100%)

Table 2. Types of errors in *make*-collocations (based on Borgatti 2006)

Finally, it is possible to discern, among the errors, possible cases of negative transfer, that is, incorrect collocations which seem to have their origins in the learner's mother tongue. Thus, in (4) above, the learner has used the verb *make* instead of *give*. While in French *donner une description* ('give a description') is acceptable, the verb *faire* ('make') is also regularly used in combination with the noun *description* (*faire une description*), which could explain the learner's lexical choice. Similarly, the expression *make abstraction of* (instead of *disregard*), illustrated in (7), is clearly a literal translation from French *faire abstraction de*. Of the 12 errors found in the corpus, 10 are potentially due to negative transfer (i.e. 83.3%). The remaining two errors, shown in (8) and (9), seem to be due to some intralingual factors. It is interesting to note, incidentally, that these two collocations are actually congruent in French and English (cf. *put an end* = *mettre fin*; *find a balance* = *trouver un équilibre*), which appears to confirm Nesselhauf's (2003b) point that errors can also be made with congruent collocations.

<sup>12</sup> Much more frequent, however, is the use of *do* in cases where *make* should have been used. This accounts for over 70% of all the collocational errors with *do*, e.g. *And that is the mistake most people do before committing a crime: they think this is the only way of escape*. [ICLE-FR] (the mistake most people make).

- (7) Instead of taking their human feelings into account, what you have to do in business is to try to solve a problem by means of figures, dollars, subsidies, profits... by counting, calculating and making abstraction of data of any other kind. [ICLE-FR] (disregarding)
- (8) After a series of conflicts between France and Germany, the idea rose at **making an end** to them in order to maintain pacific relationships within Europe. [ICLE-FR] (putting an end)
- (9) We have to **make a balance** between material comfort and pleasures and inner happiness, which, I think, can only be found in our mind, where everything starts. [ICLE-FR] (find/strike a balance)

While the error analysis sheds some light on learners' knowledge of *make*-collocations, it relies on a small number of cases (although the corpus used is of reasonable size), which makes the conclusions somewhat tentative. Moreover, the relatively low error rate gives the impression that French-speaking learners have no major difficulties with *make*-collocations, which, as we will see later, is essentially a wrong impression.

#### 4.2 Comparing the learner corpus data with the native corpus data

While a learner corpus is normally sufficient in itself to pinpoint the errors made by learners, it takes a control corpus of native language to highlight phenomena of overuse or underuse. Such phenomena are important, because they potentially indicate what learners feel confident about, and consequently use over and over again, and what they prefer to avoid.

Opinions diverge regarding the status of high-frequency verbs in learner language. Some linguists claim that learners tend to overuse such verbs (e.g. Källkvist 1998, Ringbom 1998), which one could explain by the fact that (i) learners have a more limited vocabulary and hence are more likely to rely on frequent verbs (saying things like *make a cake* or *get somebody at the airport*, rather than *bake a cake* or *pick somebody up at the airport*, for instance); and (ii) high-frequency verbs, because they display a wide range of meanings, are often a safe bet (they are, in Hasselgren's (1994) words, "lexical teddy bears", words learnt in the early stages which learners tend to cling to, even at an advanced level). Someone like Sinclair (1991, 79), on the other hand, asserts that "many learners avoid the common verbs as much as possible, and especially where they make up idiomatic phrases. Instead of using them, they rely on larger, rarer, and clumsier words which make their language sound stilted and awkward".

The analysis of the ICLE-FR data reveals that in the case of *make*, the tendency is towards underuse, rather than overuse, as appears from table 3. Overall, the verb *make* is used significantly less often by French-speaking learners of English than by native speakers of English ( $X^2 = 37.77, p < 0.001$ ), and the same

is true of collocations with *make* ( $X^2 = 13.95, p < 0.001$ ).<sup>13</sup> This underuse of collocations with *make* among French-speaking learners suggests that they are probably not so comfortable using such expressions and avoid them whenever they can. It also suggests that, were they to use as many *make*-collocations as native speakers, they might actually commit more errors than what the corpus reveals.

	LOCNESS-US		ICLE-FR	
	n	rel. freq.	n	rel. freq.
Occurrences of <i>make</i>	569	338.06	469	231.08
Occurrences of <i>make</i> -collocations	208	123.58	171	84.25

Table 3. Frequency of *make* and *make*-collocations in LOCNESS-US and ICLE-FR (absolute frequencies and relative frequencies per 100,000 words; based on Borgatti 2006)

Not only do learners and native speakers differ in terms of the frequency with which they use *make*-collocations, but they also differ in the types of collocations they use.<sup>14</sup> This can be shown by means of a collostructional analysis (Stefanowitsch/Gries 2003), a method which measures the association strength between a construction and the lexemes occurring in a given slot, in this case between the *make*-collocation and the noun occurring in it. More particularly, the so-called technique of distinctive collexeme analysis (see Gries/Stefanowitsch 2004), applied to the comparison of LOCNESS-US and ICLE-FR, makes it possible to determine the nouns that are more distinctive for one group or the other. Table 4 gives an overview of the results that are statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ). The figure between brackets corresponds to the distinctiveness value (log-transformed  $p$ -value). The higher this value, the more distinctive the noun is for the group of speakers.

<sup>13</sup> This should not be taken as an indication that all high-frequency verbs are always underused by learners. Thus, the verbs *give* and *take* do not exhibit any significant difference in frequency between LOCNESS-US and ICLE-FR, and the verb *give* is slightly overused by Dutch learners, while *do* is slightly overused by German learners (corpus data from ICLE).

<sup>14</sup> In fact, hardly more than 20% of the *make*-collocations found in the corpora are common to native speakers and learners.

LOCNESS-US		ICLE-FR	
Decision	(6.19)	Progress	(4.00)
Argument	(2.66)	Effort	(3.56)
Claim	(2.12)	Use	(3.51)
Case	(1.32)	Distinction	(2.44)
Error	(1.32)	Step	(2.44)

Table 4. Most distinctive nouns in *make*-collocations (LOCNESS-US vs. ICLE-FR)

What is striking in these results is that the collocations that are distinctive for French-speaking learners (i.e. are overused by them) all have a word-for-word translation in French (e.g. *make progress* = *faire des progrès*, *make an effort* = *faire un effort*). Among the collocations that are distinctive for native speakers (i.e. are underused by learners), by contrast, only one has a direct equivalent in French, namely *make an error* (*faire une erreur*). The other collocations resort to a different light verb in French (e.g. *make a decision* = *prendre une décision*, literally ‘take’) or a different type of translation (e.g. *make an argument for* = *plaider en faveur de*, literally ‘plead for’). Some of these distinctive collocations are shown in context in (10) to (13).<sup>15</sup>

- (10) Words are not always useful to create links between people but the important matter is to **make an effort** to try to understand what others may think or feel. [ICLE-FR]
- (11) There are still good programmes, and television can always be a giant source of information, provided we are intelligent enough to **make a distinction** between fiction and reality. [ICLE-FR]
- (12) Another major **claim made** by the proponents of the adoptive families is that there may be an overall psychological effect on the children once they change homes. [LOCNESS-US]
- (13) On the other hand, Fumento **makes a very strong case** about the effectiveness of chasing down drivers who are not really a menace on the road, compared to the really drunken ones. [LOCNESS-US]

Particularly interesting are the results for *decision* and *step*, shown in table 5. Both nouns can be preceded in English by *make* or *take*, but with a difference in frequency. *Decision* is mostly used in combination with *make* (97.1% in LOCNESS-US),<sup>16</sup> and *step* with *take* (100% in LOCNESS-US):<sup>17</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Another difference between the collocations that are distinctive for native speakers and those that are distinctive for learners is that the former, but not the latter, include “speech” or “verbal communication” collocates (e.g. *argument*, *claim*), which confirms a point made by Altenberg/Granger (2001, 178).

<sup>16</sup> This seems to be the case in British English too, though with a smaller proportion. Thus, the percentage of *make a decision* (as opposed to *take a decision*) in the BNC-Baby academic component (BNC Baby 2005) equals 82.6%.

- (14) After **this decision was made**, the number of black students attending schools with white students increased slowly but surely. [LOCNESS-US]
- (15) We need to seek disarmament and continue our technological progress in this direction while **taking practical steps** to reduce nuclear danger. [LOCNESS-US]

The learner data, however, exhibit opposite tendencies, with a majority of *take a decision* (69.2%) and *make a step* (60%):

- (16) To conclude we could say that towards the end Denis partly frees himself of his love obsession but he **takes the wrong decision**. [ICLE-FR]
- (17) **All the steps that are made** in order to reach that aim will first serve a European economic spirit. [ICLE-FR]

It is probably not a coincidence that these combinations have a literal translation in French, viz. *prendre une decision* and *faire un pas*, respectively.

	LOCNESS-US		ICLE-FR	
	n	%	n	%
<i>Make a decision</i>	33	97.1	4	30.8
<i>Take a decision</i>	1	2.9	9	69.2
<i>Take a step</i>	3	100	4	40
<i>Make a step</i>	0	0	6	60

Table 5. Frequency of *make/take a decision* and *take/make a step* in LOCNESS-US and ICLE-FR

Learners' preference for congruent collocations also becomes apparent if we adopt the method of reversed translation, translating the collocations found in ICLE-FR back into French. Borgatti (2006) found that over 90% of the *make*-collocations used by French-speaking learners have a direct equivalent in French. These results suggest that learners tend to use *make*-collocations which sound familiar to them because they correspond to a *faire*-collocation in French.<sup>18</sup> Collocations which do not have such an equivalent, by contrast, are often avoided, which could explain the underuse of *make*-collocations discovered in the learner data.

#### 4.3 Confronting the corpus data with the elicitation data

From what precedes, one could expect that the collocations which learners avoid are precisely those that they would have problems with, since they tend to be

<sup>17</sup> It should be emphasised that this represents three instances only. In a bigger corpus such as the BNC-Baby academic component (one million words), the proportion of *take a step* amounts to 84.6%.

<sup>18</sup> See Granger (1998b) for a similar remark about French-speaking learners' use of collocations with amplifying adverbs.

non-congruent. In order to test this hypothesis and, more generally, to gain a better understanding of learners' competence in terms of collocations, the results of the elicitation test were examined.

In the fill-in exercise, four sentences are of direct interest, as they should normally be completed with the verb *make*. The four collocations are *make a choice*, *make an offer*, *make a commitment* and *make one's escape*, as shown in table 6. Overall, the error rate amounts to 51% (37 errors out of 76 answers) – which is to be compared with the 7% error rate established in the free production data. However, a distinction should be made between the first two collocations, which are completed correctly most of the time (95% and 84%, respectively), and the last two collocations, for which there are very few correct answers (16% and 0% respectively).<sup>19</sup> The influence of the mother tongue is very clear here. While *make a choice* and *make an offer* correspond to a *faire*-collocation in French (*faire un choix*, *faire une offre*), this is not the case of *make a commitment* and *make one's escape*, whose translations into French require the verb *prendre* ('take'). Not surprisingly, many of the errors made by the learners in the two non-congruent collocations involve the use of the verb *take* (79% with *commitment* and 63% with *escape*). It seems, in other words, that learners tend to be guided by the translation of the collocation into their mother tongues when they are not familiar with an expression.

Question	Answer	n	%
She _____ the choice of never seeing her son again. = Elle fit le choix de ne plus jamais revoir son fils.	<b>make</b> do	18 1	95 5
They were not even given time to _____ an offer. = Ils n'ont même pas eu le temps de faire une offre.	<b>make</b> bid go give	16 1 1 1	84 5 5 5
He refused to _____ any kind of commitment. = Il refusa de prendre quelque engagement que ce soit.	take <b>make</b> ∅	15 3 1	79 16 5
As the thieves were _____ their escape, the owner ran out of the shop and started yelling. = Tandis que les voleurs prenaient la fuite, le propriétaire sortit du magasin en courant et se mit à crier.	take do prepare run ∅ <b>make</b>	12 1 1 1 4 0	63 5 5 5 21 0

Table 6. *Make*-collocations in the fill-in exercise

<sup>19</sup> In order to be considered as correct, an answer not only had to be acceptable in English, but also had to correspond to the French translation. Thus, although *prepare one's escape* is perfectly acceptable, it does not translate the idea of *prendre la fuite*.

For the evaluation exercise, the discussion will be limited to those sentences that were (correctly or incorrectly) presented in the test as including the verb *make*. The eight sentences are listed in table 7, together with the French translation (not provided to the subjects) and, where applicable, the correct alternative. The figures in bold correspond to the correct answers. Overall, the error rate amounts to 43% (65 errors out of 152 answers), which is slightly lower than in the fill-in exercise, but still much higher than in the corpus data. Here again, however, the error rate varies from one sentence to the other. As a rule, it is with congruent collocations that the learners have the least difficulties. Thus, a majority of them recognised that *make a promise* (*faire une promesse*), *make a step* (*faire un pas*) and *make a gain* (*faire un gain*) are all acceptable and that *make an end* should be *put an end* (*mettre fin*).

By contrast, most of them did not seem to have any problem with the incorrect collocations *make abstraction of*, which has a direct equivalent in French (*faire abstraction de*), and *make the difference between*, which corresponds to French *faire une différence entre*.<sup>20</sup> The erroneous *make an experience* (in French, *faire une expérience*) was also accepted by a large proportion of the subjects (47%). The only exception to this rule is *make part of*, which corresponds to French *faire partie de*, but which 79% of the subjects were nevertheless able to identify as incorrect.

Question	Answer	n	%
The candidate had <u>made promises</u> to local groups of voters on behalf of the government.	<b>Y</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>100</b>
[Le candidat avait <u>fait des promesses</u> à des groupes locaux d'électeurs au nom du gouvernement.]	N	0	0
Countries now have a feeling that they <u>make part</u> of Europe.	<b>Y</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>21</b>
[Les pays ont maintenant le sentiment qu'ils <u>font partie de</u> l'Europe.] (are a part of/belong to)	N	15	79
All <u>steps made</u> towards unity will serve the economy of Europe.	<b>Y</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>68</b>
[Tous les <u>pas faits</u> vers l'unité serviront l'économie de l'Europe.]	N	6	32

<sup>20</sup> This can be compared with the situation in ICLE-GE (German component of ICLE), where there is only one erroneous use of the collocation *make a difference* (see Nesselhauf 2003a, 282-283). Nesselhauf attributes this to the fact that German has two different collocations, *einen Unterschied machen* for 'make a difference' and *eine Unterscheidung treffen* for 'make a distinction', while French has only one collocation for both meanings, namely *faire une différence*.

They wanted to <u>make an end</u> to these conflicts and maintain pacific relationships within Europe.	Y	6	32
[Ils voulaient <u>mettre fin</u> à ces conflits et maintenir des relations pacifiques en Europe.] (put an end)	N	13	68
The investor would have to <u>make a gain</u> of more than 25% on his new investment.	Y	11	58
[L'investisseur devrait <u>faire un gain</u> de plus de 25% sur son nouvel investissement.]	N	8	42
I <u>made several painful experiences</u> during my visits to the library.	Y	9	47
[J'ai fait <u>plusieurs expériences douloureuses</u> durant mes visites à la bibliothèque.] (had several painful experiences)	N	10	53
In business, one has to solve problems by counting, calculating and <u>making abstraction of</u> any emotional factors.	Y	13	68
[En affaires, il faut résoudre les problèmes en comptant, en calculant et en <u>faisant abstraction</u> de tout facteur émotionnel.] (disregarding)	N	6	32
Children are often unable to <u>make the difference</u> between fiction and reality.	Y	19	100
[Les enfants sont souvent incapables de <u>faire la différence</u> entre la fiction et la réalité.] (make a distinction)	N	0	0

Table 7. *Make*-collocations in the evaluation exercise

What precedes does not take into account the learners' ability to correct unacceptable collocations in the evaluation exercise. If we also consider those cases where the subject was unable, when necessary, to replace the incorrect collocation by an appropriate alternative, the error rate rises to 60% (91 errors out of 152). What this means is that, even if the learners detect an unacceptable collocation, they are not always able to correct it. *Make an experience*, for example, was rejected by 53% of the subjects, but only 10% identified *have* as the correct verb to be used with *experience*. The others did not correct the sentence or proposed another verb (e.g. *undergo*).

Finally, it can be enlightening to examine the degree of certainty assigned by the subjects to their answers. One pattern that emerges is that the degree of certainty tends to be higher for congruent collocations than for non-congruent collocations. In the fill-in exercise, congruent collocations reach an average degree of certainty of 2.05 (out of a maximum of 3), whereas with the non-congruent collocations, the average amounts to 0.95 only. In addition, the learners are sometimes blatantly wrong in assessing their answers. *Make the difference*, for example, which is (incorrectly) accepted by all the subjects, has an average

score of 2.6, with 12 subjects assigning it the maximum degree of certainty. This is even higher than the score for *make a promise*, which is accepted with an average degree of certainty of 2.2. On the other hand, it is not rare to see the learners assign a low degree of certainty to a correct answer. The subjects who judged *make a gain* as acceptable, for instance, did it with an average degree of certainty of 1.3 only (including one guess). A correct answer in the elicitation test, therefore, does not guarantee that the learner fully masters the target collocation.

The results of the elicitation test provide a possible explanation both for the relatively low error rate and the underuse of *make*-collocations, and in particular non-congruent collocations, observed in the corpus data. Learners have great difficulty knowing which light verb should be used with a given noun. Since sense is of little help in this matter (the verb has very little semantic content of its own and the selection is mainly arbitrary), they tend to rely on what they know best, namely the corresponding collocation in their mother tongues, hence the importance of (positive and negative) transfer. As a rule, learners are more familiar with congruent collocations, as appears from the higher average degree of certainty. When writing free compositions, they seem particularly reluctant to take risks and tend to stick to those collocations which they feel safe with, that is, collocations which are congruent in their mother tongues. Not only does it result in few errors, since learners just have to translate the collocation word for word into the foreign language, but it also leads to underuse, since a whole set of collocations are avoided, namely those that are not congruent. Learners' use of collocations, in other words, appears to reflect two important strategies (see Howarth 1998a, 39-41), namely avoidance, when the learner avoids collocations that s/he is unfamiliar with (or unsure about), and positive transfer, when s/he successfully transfers collocations from his/her mother tongue to the foreign language. These two strategies conceal serious deficiencies in terms of collocational knowledge, which can only be revealed to their full extent by means of tests such as those found in Herbst (1996) or Granger (1998b) or the one conducted here, where competence, rather than performance, is investigated.

## 5. Some implications for FLT

It appears from the preceding section that advanced French-speaking learners' knowledge of collocations with *make* is far from being perfect, both from the point of view of performance and (even worse) competence. While, as pointed out by Hasselgren (1994), high-frequency verbs are taught early and become "lexical teddy bears" for learners, this knowledge tends to be rather superficial, learners being essentially familiar with the core meanings of the verbs, but largely ignorant of their collocates. Since "competence in a language involves knowledge about collocation" (Herbst 1996, 389) and given that students, as a rule, do not "simply" acquire collocations but need explicit instruction to do so (Bahns/Eldaw 1993), it is necessary to develop learners' knowledge of collocations with high-frequency verbs or, as Lennon (1996, 23) puts it, to "flesh out

the incomplete or ‘skeleton’ entries which even advanced learners may have for high-frequency verbs”. The first step to this end is to raise learners’ awareness of the phraseological nature of high-frequency verbs (see De Cock/Granger 2004). The next step is to teach them a selection of collocations – since it is quite unrealistic to expect learners to master them all.

The selection of the collocations to be taught should be directed towards those collocations that are most likely to pose problems for the learner. In this respect, we saw that non-congruent collocations seem to be particularly difficult for learners, so that, as advocated by Bahns (1993), it would make sense to focus on such collocations and privilege, wherever possible, approaches that are specific to learners of a particular mother-tongue background. It would be wrong, however, to completely neglect those collocations that have a direct equivalent in the learner’s mother tongue for, as appears from the above analysis, such collocations may also be problematic for learners (see also Nesselhauf 2003b).

## 6. Conclusion

Thanks to the three-stage analysis presented in this article, it has been possible to gain some insight into advanced French-speaking learners’ knowledge of *make*-collocations. The examination of the learner corpus data for their own sake has revealed a relatively low error rate, but also clear evidence of transfer from the mother tongue. Compared with a control corpus of native English, the data have shown that the learners tend to underuse *make*-collocations, essentially limiting themselves to collocations which have a direct equivalent in their mother tongues. From the elicitation test, finally, it has emerged that the learners’ competence in terms of *make*-collocations leaves a lot to be desired – more, in fact, than a simple corpus analysis may suggest. In about half of the cases, the learners are not able to fill in the sentence with an appropriate verb, nor to judge the acceptability of a given collocation – let alone correct it when necessary. The results of the test also confirm the influence of the mother tongue on the use of collocations, both in the form of negative and positive transfer, and highlight the learners’ generally poor assessment of the correctness (or otherwise) of their answers.

More generally, this study has shown that an error analysis of learner corpus data only lifts a corner of the veil. Equally important are indications as to what learners get right, what they underuse and what they overuse (see Leech 1998, xvii). Moreover, next to performance, competence should also be considered, as the question, ultimately, is whether a particular linguistic phenomenon is already part of the learner’s mental lexicon or whether it has yet to be acquired. While to err is certainly human, it is not all. Errors may only be the tip of the iceberg, but when dealing with second and foreign language acquisition, one cannot afford to lose sight of the larger picture.

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## GÖRAN KJELLMER

**A COUPLE HOURS – ON NON-OCCURRENCE OF OF AFTER  
PARTITIVE ENGLISH NOUNS**

**Abstract:** *Of*-less noun phrases like *a couple tons*, *a lot food*, *a pair clogs* are not unusual in modern English. The paper attempts to describe the phenomenon, assess its significance and explain its history. It is concluded that the construction is less of a modern careless defective variant and more of a historically motivated one.

### 1. Introduction

A simple rule tells us that partitive English nouns normally take *of* before a following noun. Or, to put it a little more precisely, a partitive noun normally takes *of* before the noun denoting the whole of which the partitive noun denotes a part.<sup>1</sup> By “partitive noun” is here meant a collective noun, quantity noun or quantifier noun, terms used by various grammarians.<sup>2</sup> Both the head noun involved in “quality partition” (*a kind of paper*) and that involved in “partitive partition” (*a piece of paper*; Quirk et al. 1985, 249) are included under the term “partitive noun”. The phrases referred to are therefore of the type *a bar of chocolate*, *a bottle of wine*, *a flock of birds*, *a board of directors*, *a cup of tea*, *a gallon of petrol*, *a round of applause*, *a couple of weeks*. Biber et al. (1999) distinguish “quantifying collectives” (*flock*, *crowd*, etc.) and “quantifying determiners” (*a lot of*, *a couple of*, etc.), but add “Note the similarity [of quantifying collectives] with forms such as *a number of* and *a couple of* which are treated as quantifying determiners (4.3.8 and 4.4.4.1)” (1999, 248). In this paper they are thus all referred to as “partitive nouns”, or “partitives proper”. (For “pseudo-partitives” and “definitional nouns”, see below.)

However, it not infrequently happens that the “simple rule” just referred to does not seem to apply, as in the following examples:

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<sup>1</sup> See, e.g., Greenbaum (1996, 194), Quirk et al. (1985, 264).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. OED s.v. *of* 21. a. “Connecting two nouns, of which the former is a collective term, a quantitative or numeral word, or the name of something having component parts, and the latter is the substance or elements of which this consists. In Old English usually expressed by the genitive.” (Examples include *flock*, *herd*, *pounds*, *four thousand*, *piece*, *bags*, *chests*, *mass*, *family*, *army*, *reward*, *distance*.)

- (1) [The tanker leaked oil, slowing down from] 120 tons a day soon after the sinking to a couple tons by mid-February.<sup>3</sup>
- (2) ‘Your motive in attending would be ...?’ – ‘To see for myself a couple more experts whose strings Franny Roote is pulling.’<sup>4</sup>
- (3) Denmark produced a lot food every year and the Germans needed food for their soldiers.<sup>5</sup>
- (4) And since then like I’ve been so paranoid I wear a pair steel briefs.<sup>6</sup>

The question then arises whether *of*-less constructions of this type are the result of recent creative activity, where what could be felt as redundant elements are dropped, and what, in such a case, could have caused the phenomenon to occur.

If we look into the matter with the help of a corpus of modern English, in this case the CobuildDirect Corpus, it turns out that there is some variation in this field. Different partitive nouns that are juxtaposed may well behave differently with regard to the occurrence of *of*, as in

- (5) A group of men and a couple women lay down their tools. [S2000920824]

but it is more remarkable that the same partitive noun may be followed by both an *of*-phrase and by one without *of*, even within the same sentence:

- (6) She concedes that she finds Paris ‘very beautiful, with a lot charm and a lot of kinda old vibrations’. [N5000950513]
- (7) and I’ve told them to bring lots tartan and lots of lager. [N9119980610]
- (8) That, plus that generous warranty, will no doubt sway a number customers to a car that may not light up the road but will meet a number of needs. [N5000950811]
- (9) we reflexologists we haven’t got any <ZGY> We only working with this part thumb and this part of thumb. [S0000000032]
- (10) It was quite an odd one really because when I wrote Patsy I had a very different vision of her. <p> I’d envisioned this down-beaten miserable journo, a kind Fleet Street/Daily Mirror kind of idea. [N5000950730]

It may therefore be less surprising that this variation occurs with double partitive nouns (the first of which is *couple*):

- (11) After a couple glasses of wine [B9000000418]
- (12) a couple pounds of sand [B9000001399]
- (13) ‘You’re going to need a couple cases of cigarettes [B0000000345]
- (14) We’ll arrange a barbecue. Yep. Yep. Couple of weeks barbecue? [S9000130909]

That there is genuine uncertainty here can finally be seen from a case like the following:<sup>7</sup>

<sup>3</sup> *Scientific American* April 2003, 10.

<sup>4</sup> Hill, Reginald (2003). *Death’s Jest-Book*. London: HarperCollins: 319.

<sup>5</sup> *Nazi Occupation of Denmark* (1998). Atlanta: Peachtree: 1.

<sup>6</sup> Corpus: ukspok/04. Text: S0000000016.

<sup>7</sup> Transcribers’ notation <ZF1> ... <ZF0> indicates repeated material.

- (15) I got <ZF1> a lot of st <ZF0> a lot students from <ZZ1> company name <ZZ0> third fourth and fifth year. [S9000001328]

This exception to the “simple rule” has been commented on by grammarians. Under *a couple of* Svartvik and Sager (1996, §288B) say that *of* is deleted in very colloquial American English (“a couple days”), and Greenbaum and Whitcut (1988) stress the informality of the *of*-less phrase; s.v. *couple*: “The vague use of *a couple of* to mean ‘a few’ is informal; even more so is **couple** in this sense without *of*, as in *a couple minutes*.” As some of the material quoted above could suggest that the non-occurrence of *of* is not restricted to phrases with *couple*, pertinent questions would be: how widespread is non-occurrence of *of* after partitive English nouns, and, again, what causes it?

## 2. Non-occurrence of *of*

### 2.1 Partitives proper

In order to look into the matter, I searched all the occurrences in the Cobuild-Direct Corpus of the combination “a|an+NN+of+NN|NNS”, i.e., in less abstruse terminology, countable common noun followed by *of* + common noun(s). (The | stands for “or”.) There were more than 250,000 such instances, e.g. *a boycott of conferences*, *a history of struggle*, *a bit of money*. Those where the first NN was a partitive noun (such as *bit*) were listed separately, producing a “search list”. For each of the items on that list a search was made of instances conforming to the pattern NN|NNS+NN|NNS, where the first NN was the item in question, thus, e.g., “bit|bits+NN|NNS”. As a result, a collection of examples was obtained where partitive nouns were directly followed by a singular or plural noun. It should be added that some of those are very likely due to occasional slips, and that the statistics will consequently have to be taken with a pinch of salt.

As is so often the case in corpus work, what initially seemed to be clear distinctions and obvious dividing lines soon became blurred in the light of the corpus material. A number of difficulties emerged.

In some cases it was unclear whether a noun + noun sequence represented a partitive noun (+ a non-occurring *of*) + another noun (as in *a glass water*) or a phrase or a noun + noun compound (as in *a glass jug*).<sup>8</sup> A few examples are:

- (16) she looked a bit tired again by about half one 'cos she sort of couldn't have a morning sleep [S0000000256]  
 (17) Well, she she sold me a pound cake at a bazaar once. [B9000001423]  
 (18) Carbon dioxide ... had dwindled to little more than a trace gas: [B0000000744]

Secondly, the punctuation or spelling may be faulty:

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Quirk et al. (1985, 1332 and 1567-1576). The tricky distinction between phrases and compounds, discussed at length by Warren (1982, 75-76), is not relevant here.

- (19) Businesses are needed to serve the needs of other stakeholder groups consumers, the workforce, producers, or a specific community. [probably for groups: consumers] [N2000960111]
- (20) <M01> And did she have a family children of her own? [probably for family, children] [S9000000477]
- (21) In terms of the number of animals and the amount of suffering it causes, pet overpopulation is one of the most series issues we face in the field of animal protection. [for serious issues][ E9000000417]

Thirdly, homonyms may be at play:

- (22) what we would have done without that kind help [N6000940101]
- (23) I think this is a very dangerous, very disturbing kind development. [N5000950811]
- (24) We saw the kind change when erm er there were very few bicycles and a lot of car [S0000000822]

The indefinite nature of the *-ing*-form also created complications, in that cases like

- (25) Luke and I are going for a week skiing after Christmas [E0000002039]

could be interpreted as ‘... a week *of* skiing’.

In most cases, however, there were no such difficulties, and a substantial number of relevant examples were found. As suggested above, two questions were seen to be important here: which partitive nouns tended to appear without an *of* before a following noun, and why did they do so? We will consider each of those in turn, the second question in section 3.

Which partitive nouns are affected? It would take up too much space to give a full list of all the relevant instances found, but one instance for each word is given in the appendix, list 1.

It was mentioned above that Svartvik and Sager (1996) consider the *of*-less *couple* construction typical of American usage. The CobuildDirect Corpus derives from identified British, American and Australian sources, so a comparison in this regard is possible. The distribution of the material over its sources in CobuildDirect is presented in table 1.

A. Subcorpus	B. Code	C. Size of sub-corpus	D. No of exx	E. No of exx per 1 million words
usephem	E900000	1224710	64	52.3
ukmags	N000000	4901990	217	44.3
oznews	N500095	5337528	200	37.5
ukephem	E000000	3124354	107	34.2
today	N60009	5248302	168	32.0
npr	S20009	3129222	50	16.0
bbc	S10009	2609869	40	15.3
sunnow	N9119980	5824476	81	13.9

usbooks	B900000	5626436	64	11.4
ukspok	S000000, S900000	9272579	95	10.2
times	N20009	5763761	53	9.2
ukbooks	B000000	5354262	37	6.9
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>57417489</b>	<b>1181</b>	<b>20.6</b>

Table 1. *Of*-less partitive nouns in CobuildDirect subcorpora

Columns A and E are relevant here. In so far as the subcorpora are comparable, it appears that the *of*-less construction is consistently more frequent in the American than in the British ones: it is more frequent in “usephem” than in “ukephem” (the “ephemera” subcorpora), more frequent in “npr” than in “bbc” (the “radio” subcorpora), and more frequent in “usbooks” than in “ukbooks”; note, too, that the *of*-less construction is quite frequent in the one Australian subcorpus, “oznews”, more than twice as frequent as in the comparable American “npr” and British “bbc” subcorpora. Incidentally, Greenbaum and Whitcut (1988) emphasise the informality of the construction, but, strangely, the spoken British component “ukspok” occurs among the subcorpora where the construction is least frequent, only marginally more frequent than *The Times*.

The results of the search for the individual items can be seen in table 2, in the appendix, where the first column of figures refers to singular partitive nouns and the second column to the corresponding plural nouns. It is obvious that raw figures such as those in table 2 will be more meaningful when the number of occurrences of the *of*-less construction is related to the number of its potential occurrences. The potential occurrence of the construction is taken to be the occurrence of the full *of*-construction. Table 3, also in the appendix, exhibits relations of this kind.

A few caveats are in order. Some partitives occur only rarely with the *of*-less construction. Such cases could be due to chance and are obviously not very informative from the present point of view. Similarly, partitive nouns where the occurrence of the *of*-less construction is low in relation to the occurrence of the corresponding *of*-construction are of only limited interest. It may well be that the non-occurrence of *of* in such cases is due to a slip of the pen.

In table 3, Columns F and G (the percentage columns), which give the relative frequency of the *of*-less constructions, are the important ones. The table shows that the *of*-less construction is particularly at home in recipes or recipe-like contexts. *Tbsp*, *oz*, *teaspoon*, *pint* and *litre*, which figure prominently in the list, all belong in such contexts; *bunch* is also fairly frequent. However, their presence here is due to a convention followed by recipe-writers, which is not really relevant in this connexion.<sup>9</sup> What is written as e.g. “1 oz salt” is regularly pronounced as “one ounce of salt”, according to information from British

<sup>9</sup> The language of English recipes differs in several respects from the general language. Cf., e.g., Massam (1989) and Culy (1996).

housewives. Such words cannot, consequently, be used to demonstrate the non-occurrence of *of* after partitives.

Finally, the high frequency in the table of the plurals of a few words could be explained by their accidental omission of the apostrophe. “36 weeks gestation” could then represent “3 weeks’ gestation”, where of course no *of* is omitted, whereas no such explanation is available for “one week gestation”. Therefore the first percentage column (with a singular partitive) is much more informative than the second (with a plural partitive).

The above points suggest a restructuring of the material in table 3. The results of that process can be seen in table 4, in the appendix. Partitives with only one instance of the *of*-less construction have been excluded. Similarly, partitives with the *of*-less construction amounting to 1 per cent or less of the combined figure for *of* + *of*-less occurrences have also been excluded. The “recipe-words” are likewise seen as disqualified. The remaining cases have been sorted according to the relative frequency of *of*-less constructions after singular partitives (Column F).

It is difficult to see what is common to the words in this drastically reduced table, apart from the fact that they are partitives. (Whether *combination* is a partitive may be debatable; for *myriad* see the appendix, note 16.) Most of them are quite frequent; their average rank in CobuildDirect is 2337 (out of a total of 234,341), but if the three low-frequency nouns *combination*, *myriad* and *spell* are disregarded, the average rank is 250, i.e. about the same as *yesterday*, *minute* and *city*. Quite a few of them denote rather vague quantities: *myriad*, *spell*, *part*, *bag*, *couple*, *bit*, as in

(26) I do a bit part time work for him [S9000000264]

(27) I haven’t seen him for a couple days. [B9000001059]

The time words *hour*, *week*, *month* may be a little more precise, but not necessarily so:

(28) and then he’ll have a month break or something [S9000001268]

## 2.2 Pseudo-partitives

By partitives are generally meant nouns of the kind just discussed, “partitives proper”. However, there are a few other types of words that normally take *of* before the noun denoting the whole of which the words denote a part. They are quantifiers and numerals and will here be referred to as “pseudo-partitives”. It is interesting to see that there is the same kind of *of*-variation among pseudo-partitives as among partitives proper.

## 2.2.1 Quantifiers

The quantifiers *all*, *both* and *half* regularly vary between *of*-constructions and *of*-less constructions (Estling Vannestål 2004):

- (29) We [...] have come up with all the answers to the questions presented to us [N6000920611]
- (30) I don't say you would have all of the answers to all of the questions [S9000001534]
- (31) Both the boys were very talented – and not just at football and cricket. [N9119980530]
- (32) Both of the boys hated those meetings. [B9000000506]
- (33) He spends half the year on a remote island in the Philippines [S2000910319]
- (34) As publisher and executive editor, she spends over half of the year abroad [S1000901102]

But even those which do not regularly vary in this way show signs of variation. “Whereas we can make a choice between saying *all/both/half the children* or *all/both/half of the children*, we cannot choose between saying *\*most/\*many/\*some the children* and *most/many/some of the children*. Only the latter construction is possible with such quantifiers”, says Estling Vannestål (2004, 66) quoting Langacker, but that this statement is in need of some modification is shown by corpus examples such as those below. (To show that they are not accidental I give rather a full list.)

- (35) Most the carvers, most the artists, they want to carve is gargoyles. [S2000900928]
- (36) Damon candidly confesses that most the lyrics on ‘Leisure’ were made up in the studio [N0000000357]
- (37) And they put anti-graffiti paint on the entrance where most the damage was done was being caused. [S9000000752]
- (38) My mum went with me she held him most the time cos he's more close to my mum than me [S9000001382]
- (39) The delightful love story has been transformed by this all-new production to a stunning ice-skating production, without losing any the charm of its loveable characters [N5000950507]
- (40) But while some the images and techniques may come from Mexico, the artist interpretation of them is strictly based on their experience in this country. [S2000900914]
- (41) Chadwick: Do you find that there are differences between boys and girls in the kinds of questions that they ask, and what they want to know about? <p> Selverstone: Sure. And they – in many ways they tend to parallel some the differences that – that most of us are aware of, in terms of male and female socialization. [S2000920513]
- (42) What the hospitals want fits in with some the president's goals for health care reform, emphasis on preventive care, for example. [S2000930224]

- (43) I like the course a lot and I am pleased about the two rest days. I am going to look at some the stages straight away, before going home to rest and prepare. [N0000000583]
- (44) Er John there was er mentioning some the business aspect and <ZF1> the <ZF0> the uncertainty that's been created in the last well not four weeks but <ZF1> I I'm <ZF0> I'm sure much longer [S0000000769]
- (45) Tell me a bit about the X. Do you mean they found some the X written on something or carved on something? [S9000000338.]
- (46) Okay then what about weaknesses? <F01> Erm <tc text=pause> I would say that erm <tc text=pause> some the way that some tutors approach erm how sort of to get the material across <ZF1> is <ZF0> is somewhat difficult. [S9000000823]
- (47) Well she says er You have two hours to make your mind up. You must collect them tomorrow and view tomorrow. And it was er er just er as some the friends were coming <F01> Mm <F02> from <ZZ1> place name <ZZ0> [S9000001334]

### 2.2.2 Numerals

The numerals *score*, *dozen(s)*, *hundred(s)*, *thousand(s)*, *million(s)*, *billion(s)*, where there is also no regular *of*-variation, occasionally show such variation:<sup>10</sup>

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score	'Ten days Michelle'll give you the full catalogue. Two thousand, about sixty pages. There'll be <u>one score colour plates</u> and <u>three score black-and-white</u> .' [B0000000010] On more than <u>a score of occasions</u> in the last three years ... [N2000951224]
dozen	The same bill would extend for 18 months <u>a dozen special tax breaks</u> , [...] [S2000920617] its half-millionth visitor would receive <u>a dozen of special offers</u> and gifts from Noosa tourist operators. [N5000950319]
dozens	At least 110 people were killed and <u>dozens others</u> injured today when gangs opened fire on two trains leaving Punjab in northern India. [S2000910615] At least three people were killed and <u>dozens of others</u> wounded in northern Albania [S2000910402]

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<sup>10</sup> But compare Huddleston and Pullum (2002, 351):

i a. *dozens of spiders* b. *hundreds of voters* [head noun + complement]  
ii a. *a dozen spiders* b. *three hundred voters* [determiner + head noun]

The head in [i] is *dozens/hundreds*, whereas in [ii] it is *spiders/voters*. The crucial difference is that the plural nouns in [i] cannot be related directly to the noun whose denotation is quantified: they require *of* (cf. \**dozens spiders*, \**hundreds voters*).

hundred	<p>Saint Julian's was one of <u>about a hundred churches</u> the townspeople had become prosperous enough to build. [B9000001110]</p> <p>Among those was the beautiful Acteon I was so proud of, this Servus Sulpitius I had told you and <u>about a hundred of intaglios</u> with barbaric figures and inscriptions as well as some of my most remarkable medals [N0000000758]</p>
hundreds	<p>And buying a car now, rather than in the last days of 1993 means it should be worth <u>several hundreds pounds</u> more when you trade it in. [N6000940107]</p> <p>There are far too many cases being reported where faceless people charge <u>many hundreds of pounds</u>, [...] [N0000000571]</p>
thousand	<p>And if er er just <u>a couple of thousand people</u> who are listening at the moment can do this [...] [S9000000903]</p> <p>I came back with <u>a couple of thousand of GI brides</u>. [N2000960324]</p>
thousands	<p>He said the strike had cost the company <u>hundreds of thousands dollars</u>. [N5000950211]</p> <p>the city government in Niagara Falls is losing <u>hundreds of thousands of dollars</u> from potential taxes. [S2000901019]</p>
million	<p>As the American capital braced for a march by up to <u>a million black men</u> through its streets, [...] [N5000951016]</p> <p>the Federal Government found no very great difficulty, any time during the late war, in inducing <u>a million of Northern men</u> to exchange the security, peace, and enjoyment of their homes for the dangers and privations of prolonged active warfare [B9000001417]</p>
millions	<p>He is alleged to have tried to cheat Lloyds out of <u>six millions dollars</u> he claimed to have lost when coffee prices slumped in 1984. [S1000910801]</p> <p><u>36 Millions of voters</u> – indeed many members of Congress – owned railroad stock [B9000001393]</p>
billion	<p>This <u>billion dollars</u>. [S9000000949]</p> <p>the secure electronic transfer of <u>billion of dollars</u> around the world each day [N5000951209]</p>
billions	<p>More than a decade after the virus was identified, <u>billions dollars</u> spent in research have yet to find either a cure for HIV or a preventative vaccine. [N5000950805]</p> <p>and a large part of the <u>billions of dollars</u> spent arming the mujahedeen went to Hekmatyar's group. [S2000920817]</p>

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Table 5. *Of*-variation with numerals

### 3. Causes of non-occurrence of *of*

#### 3.1 Historical and dialectal factors

The next question to be considered is why the *of*-less construction occurs. A key factor appears to be its historical background.

Partitive nouns were generally accompanied by partitive genitives, denoting the whole of which a part was taken, in the early stages of the Germanic languages.<sup>11</sup> However, “[i]n case of common nouns after indefinite pronouns and nouns denoting weight, measure, extent or quantity, also in case of certain proper names, this gen. has in the language of every day usually gone over into the appositional construction” (Curme 1922, §255.II.1.H.a; similarly §94.3.A). This refers specifically to German but is generally true of the modern Germanic languages. Table 6, in the appendix, indicates that partitive nouns in Germanic languages generally take no *of* or any of its equivalents before a following noun.

Although some variation is occasionally possible in German (*eine Gruppe Kinder/eine Gruppe von Kindern*), there thus seems to be a large measure of agreement among the non-English Germanic languages. But why is English different from her sister languages in this respect? And why does there now seem to be a degree of vacillation on this point in English?

Historically, the partitive construction appears in Old English, as in the other Germanic languages, as a nominal head plus another noun in the genitive case, the “partitive genitive” (Mitchell 1985, 1298). Some examples with partitives are

- (48) *anne drinc cealdes wæteres* [gen. sing.] ‘a drink of cold water’ [*Matt(WScP)* 10.42]  
 (49) *ungerime meniu b̄witra manna* [gen. pl.] ‘a great number of learned men’ [*ÆCHom* ii. 352. 10]

The partitive construction also occurs with numerals (Mitchell 1985, 1299) as in

- (50) *nigontyne wera* [gen. pl.] ‘nineteen men’ [*ÆCHom* 1. 422. 23]

For the Middle English period, Mustanoja (1960, 79-80) shows that “the inflectional partitive genitive is found in the early part of the ME period after numerals which govern a partitive genitive in OE: ... *fele hundred wintre*” (where *wintre* is the genitive plural). However, in late OE and early ME times, *of*-constructions begin to appear alongside the genitive constructions, soon replacing them in large measure. The appearance of *of* in these constructions is tentatively ascribed by the OED to the influence of French *de*:

<sup>11</sup> See e.g. Mossé (1942, 153), Krause (1953, 129-130), Bergman (1968, 57), Pettersson (1996, 103), Curme (1922, §255. II.1.H).

Of far greater moment was its employment [the employment of *of*] from the 11th c. as the equivalent of F. *de*, itself of composite origin, since it not merely represented L. *dē* in its various prepositional uses, but had come to be the Common Romanic, and so the French, substitute for the Latin genitive case. Whether *of* might have come independently in Eng. to be a substitute for the genitive is doubtful. [...] [T]he great intrusion of *of* upon the old domain of the genitive, which speedily extended to the supersession of the OE. genitive after adjectives, verbs, and even substantives, was mainly due to the influence of F. *de*. (OED s.v. *of*)

Mustanoja (1960, 78), however, thinks it unnecessary to attribute too much importance to such Romance influence, since prepositional usage was generally replacing declensional usage with the decay of OE endings at this time. The *of*-periphrasis is in any case used all through the ME period, as in *fif and sixti hundred of hefiene monnen* (Lazamon A 18257).

If the partitive genitive construction developed into an appositive construction in the non-English Germanic languages, as we have just seen, it is only to be expected that there should be traces of an analogous development in the history of English. Here are some examples drawn from the OED:

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courtesy <sup>12</sup>	I haue no bred, but an handfull of floure in a pitcher, & <u>a curtesy oyle</u> in a cruse. [1535 COVERDALE 1 Kings xvii. 12]
deal	Two Cookery-bks. 15 Safroun, & a gode <u>dele Salt</u> . [c1430]
gallon	He that repenteth rathest schulde aysen aftur And greten sir Gloten with a galun of ale [B. <u>a galoun ale</u> ]. [1362 LANGL. P. Pl. A. v. 187] Ther is falle on me swich heuinesse.. þat me were leuere slepe, Than <u>the beste galon wyn</u> in Chepe. [c1386 CHAUCER Manciple's Prol. 24]
pair	Ake euere he hadde <u>ane peire feteres</u> faste him up-on. [c1290 Beket 20 in S. Eng. Leg. I. 107] Out he clippeth also faste Hire tunge with <u>a peire scheres</u> . [1390 GOWER Conf. II. 318]
piece	<u>i pece tawnye buffing</u> xxs. Item <u>ij pece blacke buffing</u> , xxiiij. [1588 Acc. Bk. W. Wray in <i>Antiquary</i> XXXII. 54 Item]
pitcher	For a lof and <u>a picher wyn</u> : Mi wyf me sende ech day. [c1290 S. Eng. Leg. I. 427/247]
score <sup>13</sup>	Wiþ him he brouȝt þritti score Wiȝt kniȝtes him bifore. [c1330 Arth. & Merl. 3099 (Kölbing)] Heo makeþ men misdo <u>moni score tymes</u> . [1362 LANGL. P. Pl. A. III. 118] The taxe and the trebutte of <u>tene schore wynteres</u> . [a1400 Morte Arth. 2344]

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Table 7. Examples of appositive constructions, taken from the OED

<sup>12</sup> 'a mannerly or moderate quantity' (OED s.v. *courtesy* 10).

<sup>13</sup> See about the numerals above.

It is even the case that at least one modern English dialect, Scottish English, has regularly preserved this common Germanic feature with some partitives; cf. Miller (1993, 109):

In phrases containing the measure nouns *bit* and *drop* followed by another noun, there is regularly no preposition between the two nouns:  
[6] a bit paper, a bit steel, a drop water

The OED, which also supplies older examples, agrees; s.v. *piece* 3b:

In this sense *piece*<sup>14</sup> is commonly used in *Sc.* without *of* (cf. Ger. *ein Stück Brod* [sic]) [examples from 1580, 1681, 1787, 1876 and a1906],

and again, s.v. *bit* 9:

In Scotch *bit* is used for *bit of* ('a bit bread'; cf. Ger. *ein Stück Brod* [sic]), and for *bit of a* ('a bit bairn'); in the latter use it approaches the nature of an adj. = little, tiny, small [examples from 1785, 1787, 1816 and 1883].

So to sum up, the original postposed genitive in partitive phrases in Old English and early Middle English took two different routes, the majority one, where the genitive was supplanted by an *of*-phrase, possibly due to French influence, and a minority one, where the noun in the genitive case lost its formal genitival characteristics and hence became an apposition, a development that was the majority option in other Germanic languages. The simultaneous existence of the two routes and their results opened the way for the variation in the modern language.

### 3.2 The analogical factor

Finally, the vacillation between *of*-constructions and *of*-less constructions that we are studying here is likely to be influenced by the occurrence of analogical factors. One such factor is the existence of a non-partitive field where *of*-constructions occur side by side with *of*-less constructions, viz. the field of definitional nouns, a category with two sub-groups. What is characteristic of definitional nouns is that they affix a kind of label to a following noun, which is a geographical name in the first sub-group and a common noun in the second. This second sub-group is discussed by Biber et al. (1999, 255), who call the nouns "species nouns", a group of nouns that are found in patterns which are superficially like those of quantifying nouns, but which are used to refer not to the amount but to the type of entity or mass expressed by a following *of*-phrase. They behave grammatically like ordinary countable nouns. Common species nouns are: *class, kind, make, sort, species, type*. The second element of the noun + noun complex can then be seen as an apposition, with or without *of*.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>14</sup> "A portion or quantity of any substance or kind of matter, forming a single (usually small) body or mass; a bit."

<sup>15</sup> Quirk et al. (1985, 1284). Cf. OED s.v. *of* 22: "Connecting two nouns, of which the former denotes the class of which the latter is a particular example, or of which the former is

## 3.2.1 Definitional noun + geographical name

the city Bologna	the city of Bologna
the Island Hispaniola	the island of Gotland
the mountain Torghatten	the mountain of Kilimanjaro
the prime tourist region Connemara	the breakaway region of Abkhazia
the river Jordan	the river of Jordan
the state Brisbane	the state of Abu Dhabi
the town Podujevo	the town of Agualeguas
the town Petrinja	the town of Drvar
the village Kings Norton	the village of Poudopati

## 3.2.2 Definitional noun + common noun

the concept 'lemon grass'	the concept of 'blame'
the very general concept 'environment'	the concept of 'respect'
the game 'Pooh Sticks'	the game of cricket
the game Buccaneer	the game of Monopoly
the issue abortion	the issue of abortion
the label 'maternity'	the label of 'extremist'
the name Scrabble	the name of 'contemporary gospel'
the name 'chamber of commerce'	the name of 'Importers'
the notion inventiveness	the notion of leisure
those sort events	those sort of issues
the subject Power to the people	the subject of 'mass culture'
the theme 'tolerance'	the theme of 'otherness'
the topic television	the topic of religion
the trick folly	the trick of singularity
these type things	these type of things
the word 'depression'	the word of photography
the word 'dictatorship'	the word of terror

Note here, first, that (some of) the explanations suggested here for the development of partitive nouns could also be relevant to that of definitional nouns, and secondly, that there are points of contact between definitional and partitive nouns, which makes the occurrence of analogical influence very plausible. For instance, *game* in *the game of cricket* is a definitional noun taking *cricket* to the class of games, but *game* in *a game of cricket* is a partitive noun indicating how much of *cricket* is being referred to. Similarly, if less obviously, *river* in *the river*

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a connotative and the latter a denotative term (i.e. genitive of definition or specializing genitive). Often passing into grammatical apposition, e.g. 'the River Thames', formerly 'the River of Thames'; the city of Rome, Old English *Rōmeburg*: cf. Latin *urbs Roma*, *urbs Buthroti*."

*of Jordan* could be a definitional noun taking *Jordan* to the class of rivers, but it could also be partitive noun meaning ‘the river part of (the country of) Jordan’. And lastly, *region* in *the breakaway region of Abkhazia* could be definitional, ‘the region called A. which has broken away’ or partitive ‘that region (part) of A. which has broken away’. When the history of partitives and pseudo-partitives makes variation possible in their use of prepositions, vacillation in prepositional use in other areas, like that in definitional nouns, is therefore liable to lend some support to vacillation in the partitive field.

#### 4. Summing up

The deviant modern partitive constructions of the type *a couple hours* are not as isolated as might have been thought – there are in fact not a few of them in the modern language. Nor are they the result of a recent innovation. It has been seen that prepositionless constructions are in line with those in other Germanic languages, that they go back all the way to Old English genitive constructions, that they have remained in the language although overshadowed by the majority option, the *of*-construction, and finally that they are still recognised as a regular element of a modern dialect, Scottish English. That prepositionless constructions have remained in the language is partly explained by the fact that they have enjoyed a certain amount of analogical support. In other words, with the backing of its own history and of parallels in related languages, the construction stands out as a relatively robust one, far from the careless defective variant it might seem. Viewed in this way, the “informal” or “very colloquial” construction acquires a fair measure of respectability.

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## Appendix

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<i>abundance</i>	nced performers with an abundance clown acts. <p> However, the [N5000950712]
<i>acre</i>	ft. of living space on an acre yard. <c> price </c> <c> telephone [E9000000161]
<i>bag</i>	X> every shop we'll have a bag chips apart from macdonalds. <ZZ1> [S0000000278]
<i>band</i>	s he or she could have: a band ragamuffins making their way through [N5000950112]
<i>bit</i>	id mistake. It was quite a bit impact and I had a slight headache." [B0000000807]
<i>bits</i>	by presenting men as bits penises and bums primarily the woman as consumer may miss out on what she is purportedly seeking, good sex. [N5000951209]
<i>bunch</i>	1 bunch mizuna lettuce washed and dried [N5000951004]
<i>combination</i>	a mixed group frequents a the Brain Wash, which is a combination cafe and laundromat. [S2000930407]
<i>couple</i>	<p> I want to look at a couple apartments. I'm going to live off [B9000000418]
<i>deal</i>	patient and have a great deal stamina and endurance and tenacity. [N5000951016]
<i>feeling</i>	as much as he enjoyed the company of the couple he found himself bombarded with a feeling emptiness every time he left their home. [N5000950205]
<i>gallon</i>	the beginning of 1973 a gallon petrol cost 33p. Then the Arab- [N0000000776]
<i>game</i>	a while since we played a game football. <p> I couldn't fault them [N5000951010]
<i>games</i>	It was one of the fastest games football I've played. [N5000950130]
<i>glimmer</i>	The ball fell perfectly for Lineker, who despatched a volley beyond the Czech goalkeeper from 12 yards. <p> The Hammers might have given themselves a glimmer semblence of hope three minutes later, but surprise, surprise, Slater was wide of the mark again. [N6000920402]

<i>gram</i>	ttes, 150 cigarillos, 400 grams tobacco, 1.5 litres spirits. Danish [E0000002206]
<i>group</i>	POLICE have released an artist's impression of a man who sexually assaulted a small boy and performed indecent acts in front of a group children at the weekend. [N5000950301]
<i>groups</i>	Still, there are some clear political advantages in the Opposition's scheme, particularly as it can be painted as 'family friendly'. <p> It will also clearly appeal to small-business groups others who derive income from investments. [N5000951109]
<i>hour</i>	years. And we do half an hour exercise. And I do every morning my [S2000920824]
<i>hours</i>	He was also given 100 hours community service. Airlie was fined [N9119980404]
<i>inch</i>	He's nearly as big as him there's only <M01> Is he <F01> about an inch difference <M01>Right <F01> between him and that one [S9000001272]
<i>inches</i>	I set this about three inches overdepth, again with no shot on [N0000000481]
<i>kind</i>	It was quite an odd one really because when I wrote Patsy I had a very different vision of her. <p> I'd envisioned this down-beaten miserable journo, a kind Fleet Street/Daily Mirror kind of idea. [N5000950730]
<i>kinds</i>	oose is influenced by the kinds activities they pursue with their [N5000950525]
<i>list</i>	having recently sourced a list potential foreign investors that may [N5000950531]
<i>litre</i>	rvoir holds up to 1 litre water (1 1/2 hrs ironing). The stainless [N0000000144]
<i>litres</i>	, 400 grams tobacco, 1.5 litres spirits. Danish residents who have [E0000002206]
<i>lot</i>	ticed there seemed to be a lot security at this particular affair, [N5000950730]
<i>lots</i>	decide because there are lots factors involved. <p> NAME RULES [N5000950507]
<i>month</i>	President Kumaratunga said last week that she was ready to talks broken off by the Tigers last April following a month truce. [N5000951109]
<i>months</i>	nced last October to six months house arrest. <p> Health Secretary [N6000920623]
<i>morning</i>	sort of couldn't have a morning sleep because <FOX> Mm. <FOX> she' [S0000000256]
<i>myriad</i> <sup>16</sup>	ction of desserts from a myriad countries and cultures. <p> In an [N5000950910]
<i>number</i>	rman Terry Lawler said a number points needed to be clarified and [N5000950531]
<i>numbers</i>	at it doesn't need large numbers university students using it. <p> [N5000951228]
<i>oz</i>	s, 6oz caster sugar, pint water, juice of one lemon, 10 fl oz [N6000920304]
<i>pair</i>	And I recall the hair falling in my face, mingling with my tears, and then a uniform being thrown at me and a pair clogs and pushed outside. [S2000930421]
<i>part</i>	And she does sometimes mention astrological phenomena. It is one part astrology to five parts hoo-ha, but it's fun. [N2000951101]
<i>parts</i>	a trilogy of pure pleasure made up of roughly equal parts zouk, funk, reggae and makossa. [E0000002068]
<i>piece</i>	t in the straw and a note on a piece cardboard Sorry, Big boar Bernie [npr/07]
<i>pile</i>	WE'VE caught Morphin Mania in The Sunday Mail today with a pile Power Ranger giveaways for readers to win. [oznews/01]
<i>pint</i>	pped cream <p> Quarter of a pint Greek yoghurt <p> Preheat the oven [ukmags/03]
<i>pints</i>	occasionally. <p> Add 1 pints stock, bring to boil and simmer [N6000941019]
<i>plate</i>	oon be able to indulge in a plate Fettucine alla Frankie. <p> Sinatra [oznews/01]
<i>pounds</i>	gipsy. <p> Thousands of pounds damage was caused in one hour. [N6000920722]
<i>range</i>	response was to create a range products that can be blended and [E0000002170]
<i>round</i>	ones come back and buy a round drinks it makes up for all the [N5000950319]
<i>score</i>	In both cases a few score weavers we[r]e already operating in 1695. [E0000001522]
<i>selection</i>	Packages including a week's accommodation and a selection tickets to the best attractions and activities in the area cost from about &dollar; 600. [N5000950319]
<i>series</i>	Inspections are conducted scientifically through a series chemical and investigative processes. [N5000950217]
<i>sheet</i>	p> Short - two sides of a sheet A4 paper should normally be enough. [E0000001283]
<i>sheets</i>	ly ground black pepper 4 sheets filo pastry 1 tsp olive oil PREHEAT [N5000950712]

<sup>16</sup> *Myriad* may not belong here; cf. its adjectival use in "Unworthy is opulent and myriad" (ukmags/03. Text: N0000000812).

<i>shot</i>	But I was willing to give it a shot. You know, same with being Louis the smart walrus. I was willing to give Louis a shot laughter [S2000930526]
<i>spell</i>	Glamour </subh> He had a spell training with former boss Alex [N9119980404]
<i>string</i>	this fellow is although we all claim that we don't know him very well he's internationally known he's er written a string books and papers [S0000000025]
<i>succession</i>	Arguably [sic] the best defender Britain has produced in modern times, his career was brought to a premature end by a succession knee injuries. [N0000000650]
<i>tbsp</i>	ream of tartar <p> 4 tbsp water <p> 150ml buttermilk or milk [N2000960217]
<i>tbps</i>	an with lemon juice and 2 tbps water. Cover and simmer for 15 [N6000941210]
<i>teaspoon</i>	sugar <p> 2 fl oz (50 ml) water <p> 3/4 teaspoon salt <p> 1 [N0000000066]
<i>teaspoons</i>	nish <p> STUFFING <p> 2 teaspoons sunflower oil <p> 1 small onion, [N0000000601]
<i>treasure trove</i>	A French archaeological team has discovered a treasure trove "exceptional paintings, reliefs and statues" in cave tombs Saqqara outside the Egyptian capital. [N5000950525]
<i>variety</i>	id. <p> We spoke about a variety things and, at the end of the day, [N5000950724]
<i>varieties</i>	who sells more than 25 varieties vegetables to a regional [N5000951209]
<i>week</i>	Luke and I are going for a week skiing after Christmas with the [E0000002039]
<i>weeks</i>	cies. They already get 17 weeks holiday a year. <hl> I'm only zoo- [N9119980413]
<i>weekend</i>	Our Wild Salmon promotion to win a weekend fly fishing in Scotland attracted record entries. [E0000001076]

List 1. Non-occurrence of *of* after partitive nouns exemplified

Word	(a an+)NN +NN NNS	NNS+ NN NNS	Word	(a an+)NN +NN NNS	NNS+ NN NNS
abundance	1	0	oz	129	0
bag	2	0	pair	3	0
band	1	0	part	16	18
bit	24	1	piece	7	0
bunch	10	0	pile	1	0
combination	14	0	pint	32	7
couple	94	0	plate	1	0
deal	2	0	pound	0	27
feeling	1	0	range	7	0
gallon	1	0	round	1	0
game	1	1	selection	3	0
glimmer	1	0	series	2	0
gram	0	3	sheet	1	3
group	6	4	shot	1	0
hour	5	82	spell	2	0
inch	1	2	string	1	0
kind	4	2	succession	1	0
list	6	0	tbsp	182	15
litre	6	16	teaspoon	58	17
lot	45	2	treasure trove	1	0
month	3	72	variety	4	1
myriad	70	0	week	3	130
number	15	2	weekend	2	0

Table 2. Occurrence of partitive noun followed by *of*-less noun

A. Word	B. (a an+) NN+NN NNS	C. (a an+) NN+of+NN NNS	D. NNS+NN NNS	E. NNS+of+NN NNS	F. %B of B+C	G. %D of D+E
abundance	1	65	0	0	1.5	-
bag	2	102	0	160	1.9	0.0
band	1	39	0	35	2.5	0.0
bit	24	2116	1	313	1.1	0.3
bunch	10	486	0	30	2.0	0.0
combination	14	206	0	538	6.4	0.0
couple	94	4963	0	0	1.9	-
deal	2	850	0	2	0.2	0.0
feeling	1	470	0	468	0.2	0.0
gallon	1	42	0	143	2.3	0.0
game	1	319	1	42	0.3	2.3
glimmer	1	76	0	4	1.3	0.0
gram	0	8	3	38	0.0	7.3
group	6	1792	4	373	0.3	1.1
hour	5	121	82	556	4.0	12.9
inch	1	53	2	105	1.9	1.9
kind	4	8310	2	1280	0.0	0.2
list	6	1719	0	113	0.3	0.0
lire	6	32	16	98	15.8	14.0
lot	45	10783	2	2163	0.4	0.1
month	3	30	72	472	9.1	13.2
myriad	70	46	0	2	60.3	0.0
number	15	7568	2	555	0.2	0.4
oz	129	12	0	0	91.5	-
pair	3	1170	0	284	0.3	0.0
part	16	681	18	119	2.3	13.1
piece	7	2025	0	496	0.3	0.0
pile	1	252	0	103	0.4	0.0
pint	32	154	7	133	17.2	5.0
plate	1	64	0	18	1.5	0.0
pound	0	118	27	145	0.0	15.7

range	7	2892	0	19	0.2	0.0
round	1	506	0	82	0.2	0.0
selection	3	556	0	19	0.5	0.0
series	2	2179			0.1	-
sheet	1	173	3	103	0.6	2.8
shot	1	40	0	36	2.4	0.0
spell	2	43	0	11	4.4	0.0
string	1	473	0	25	0.2	0.0
succession	1	150	0	1	0.7	0.0
tbsp	182	9	15	1	95.3	93.8
teaspoon	58	16	17	11	78.4	60.7
treasure trove	1	16	0	0	5.9	-
variety	4	1633	1	132	0.2	0.8
week	3	187	130	300	1.6	30.2
weekend	2	59	0	2	3.3	0.0

Table 3. Occurrence of *of*-less constructions in relation to potential occurrence

A. Word	B. (a an+) NN +NN NNS	C. (a an+) NN +of+ NN NNS	D. NNS+ NN NNS	E. NNS+of+ NN NNS	F. %B of B+C	G. %D of D+E
myriad	70	46	0	2	60,3	0,0
month	3	30	72	472	9,1	13,2
combination	14	206	0	538	6,4	0,0
spell	2	43	0	11	4,4	0,0
hour	5	121	82	556	4,0	12,9
weekend	2	59	0	2	3,3	0,0
part	16	681	18	119	2,3	13,1
bag	2	102	0	160	1,9	0,0
couple	94	4963	0	0	1,9	-
week	3	187	130	300	1,6	30,2
bit	24	2116	1	313	1,1	0,3

Table 4. Relative frequency of *of*-less constructions

English	German	Dutch	Norwegian	Swedish
a couple of days	ein paar Tage	en paar dagen	et par dager	ett par dagar
a litre of petrol	ein Liter Benzin	een liter benzine	en liter bensin	en liter bensin
a group of children	eine Gruppe Kinder	een groep kinderen	en gruppe barn	en grupp barn
a kind of development	eine Art Entwicklung	een soort ontwikkeling	en slags utvikling	en sorts utveckling
a lot of work	ein Haufen Arbeit	een hoop werk	en masse arbeid	en massa arbete
a pair of clogs	ein Paar Clogs	een paar klompen	et par tresko	ett par träskor
a piece of bread	ein Stück(chen) Brot	een stuk brood	en bit brød	en bit bröd
a series of photographs	eine Serie Fotos	een reeks foto's	en serie fotografier	en serie fotografier

Table 6. Some Germanic partitive constructions compared. [I would like to thank Jürgen Heering, Anne-Marie Simon-Vandenbergen and Kerstin Torvund Bennett for help with this table.]

HANS-JÖRG SCHMID

NON-COMPOSITIONALITY AND EMERGENT MEANING OF  
 LEXICO-GRAMMATICAL CHUNKS:  
 A CORPUS STUDY OF NOUN PHRASES WITH SENTENTIAL  
 COMPLEMENTS AS CONSTRUCTIONS

**Abstract:** The following article discusses nominal constructions with syntactic dependents. The focus lies on so-called “shell nouns”, such as *fact*, *idea* or *problem*, i.e. nouns that can be described as “containers” reducing complex pieces of information expressed by clauses. After describing the relationship between the two linguistic approaches of idiom principle and construction grammar, the article goes on to present a corpus analysis of shell nouns and their respective syntactic complementations, coming to the conclusion that these complementations can be described as constructions, in the sense that the syntactic patterns can be said to convey a meaning that goes beyond the semantic sum of the constituents.

1. Introduction: From idiom principle to construction grammar<sup>1</sup>

It was John Sinclair who encapsulated a central insight of 20th century British corpus linguistics in his now well-known *idiom principle*: “The principle of idiom is that a language user has available to him or her a large number of semi-preconstructed phrases that constitute single choices, even though they might appear to be analysable into segments” (1991, 110). Rather than being constructed anew from scratch every time on the basis of abstract syntactic rules, as suggested by the complementary *open-choice principle*, sentences appear to be made up of lexico-grammatical units larger than single words, which are considered to be stored holistically in the mental lexicon and can be retrieved, as it were, wholesale in on-going language production and comprehension.

The idiom principle and the open-choice principle differ not only with regard to their predictions concerning the storage, retrieval and size of material in the mental lexicon and the operations involved in sentence production and comprehension, but also with regard to their implications for the lexicon-grammar

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<sup>1</sup> I would like to thank Friedrich Ungerer for discussions of earlier versions of this paper, and Sandra Handl, Susanne Handl and Maura Enders for comments on the final one.

interface and the compositionality of meaning. The open-choice principle prevalent in generative and other “traditional” syntactic models considers lexicon and grammar as two distinct modules, with the rules of grammar setting up slots to be filled by lexical elements retrieved from the lexicon. This separation remains valid in principle, even if interaction between the modules is accepted, as manifested, for example, in the theta-component of generative grammars. The idiom principle, on the other hand, requires by definition a close cooperation of grammar and lexicon, as the chunks making up the components of sentences consist of lexical elements pre-arranged in certain grammatical relations.

As far as the meaning of complex linguistic units is concerned, the open-choice principle tacitly assumes the validity of the venerable principle of compositionality. Often attributed to Frege and apparently born from a desire to explain sentence meanings by means of logical rules, this principle states that the meaning of a complex expression “is determined by the lexical meanings of its components, their grammatical meanings and the syntactic structure of the whole” (Löbner 2002, 15). A strong interpretation of this principle entails that the source of all semantic aspects of a sentence can invariably be identified and that there must not be meaning in the sentence over and above the meanings of its parts and the relations between them.<sup>2</sup>

The importance of more or less variable, but still prefabricated chunks for sentence processing has acquired increasing recognition in recent years and gained new impetus through the emergence of various strands of Construction Grammars.<sup>3</sup> In the more cognitively-minded version of Construction Grammar proposed by Goldberg and others, constructions are defined as “learned pairings of form with semantic or discourse function” (Goldberg 2006, 5). More specifically, “any linguistic pattern is recognized as a construction as long as some aspect of its form or function is not strictly predictable from its component parts or from other constructions recognized to exist” (ibid.). According to this definition, constructions are quasi non-compositional per definition.

Starting out with Fillmore’s and Kay’s work (cf. e.g. Fillmore/Kay/O’Connor 1988; Fillmore 1999) and Goldberg’s earlier book on argument-structure constructions (1995) the literature in the framework of Construction

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<sup>2</sup> Interestingly, Frege does not seem to have spelled out this principle explicitly in any of his writings; quite on the contrary, as the following passage shows, he was acutely aware of the gestalt-like tendency of composite expressions to create extra, emergent meaning: “Sieht man so die Gedanken an als zusammengesetzt aus einfachen Teilen und läßt man diesen wieder einfache Satzteile entsprechen, so wird es begreiflich, daß aus wenigen Satzteilen eine große Mannigfaltigkeit von Sätzen gebildet werden kann, denen wieder eine große Mannigfaltigkeit von Gedanken entspricht. Hier liegt es nun nahe zu fragen, wie der Aufbau des Gedankens geschieht und wodurch dabei die Teile zusammengefügt werden, so daß das Ganze mehr wird als die vereinzelt Teile. (Frege 1923/1976, 72; my emphasis).

<sup>3</sup> For recent surveys of and collections of papers on Construction Grammar see Croft and Cruse (2004, 225-290), Fried and Östmann (2004), Östmann and Fried (2005), Fried and Boas (2005), Fischer and Stefanowitsch (2006), Ungerer and Schmid (2006, 244-256).

Grammar has focussed on two types of constructions: on the one hand, rather marginal and specific constructions on the periphery of grammar, e.g. the *let alone* construction (Fillmore/Kay/O'Connor 1988), the *what's X doing Y* construction (Kay/Fillmore 1999) as well as subject-auxiliary-inversion constructions (Fillmore 1999), and basic verbal clause patterns such as Goldberg's argument-structure constructions, on the other. The reason for the latter preponderance is that there is an obvious and grammatically indispensable link between the verb of a clause and its complements, the linguistic description of which has a long, pre-construction-grammar history manifested in Dependency Grammar (Tesnière 1959) and a whole range of valency grammars (cf. Abraham 1978; Allerton 1982; Herbst et al. 2004).

In this paper, the focus shifts to nominal constructions that show dependency phenomena similar to those found with verbs. A set of four interrelated nominal patterns are investigated, all of which consist of an abstract noun and a *that*-clause or *to*-infinitive linked to the noun:

- [a] N + *that*-clause: *the fact that abstract nouns are difficult to pin down ...*
- [b] N + *to*-infinitive: *the idea to illustrate the patterns investigated ...*
- [c] N + BE + *that*-clause: *the problem is that there is a lot to study.*
- [d] N + BE + *to*-infinitive: *the solution is to focus on a bunch of examples.*

Since in patterns [a] and [b] the clauses are immediately attached to the nouns and function as complements governed by the nouns (cf. e.g. Quirk et al. 1985, 1231; Herbst 1988; Biber et al. 1999, 575), patterns of this type are included in Herbst et al.'s (2004) *Valency Dictionary of English* (see e.g. the entries for *failure*, *idea*, *pressure*, *problem*, *talent* and many others). Patterns [c] and [d] are not included, because nouns and clauses are linked by means of the copula, but the semantic relations between nouns and clauses are still very much the same as in patterns [a] and [b]: in both pairs the clauses fill the fairly abstract and unspecific shells provided by the nouns with more specific information (cf. section 2 below).

The aim of this paper is to investigate the contribution of lexical and grammatical meanings to the overall meanings of these patterns. Applying a strictly corpus-based methodology it will be demonstrated that the principle of compositionality is difficult to uphold for these patterns, because there are emergent meaning components that cannot be traced back to the input elements. The argument will be developed in four steps: in the section following this introduction a number of functions shared by the four patterns illustrated in [a] to [d] will be explained; these justify their joint treatment as one construction. The methodological section in 3 will discuss how samples of the patterns in question can be retrieved from corpora and how the reciprocal attraction of nouns and patterns can be measured using the collected data and two simple mathematical tools. Section 4 will provide a cross-tabulation of meanings of nouns and meanings of complements and whole constructions, which demonstrates that it is not always possible to derive the overall meanings of the patterns directly from their parts as suggested by the principle of compositionality. The final section 5 will

present a case study of one type of pattern, viz. N + BE + *to*-infinitive (e.g. *the aim is to ...*), in order to demonstrate how the range of possible meanings and the extent of emergent meaning of these constructions can be determined on the basis of the frequency counts of the material from the corpus. Avenues for the emergence of extra meaning are also discussed in this section.

## 2. Common functions of the patterns: The shell-content relation

In spite of their variability on the syntactic surface, the four patterns illustrated in the previous section share a number of underlying functional characteristics. These are illustrated in figure 1:

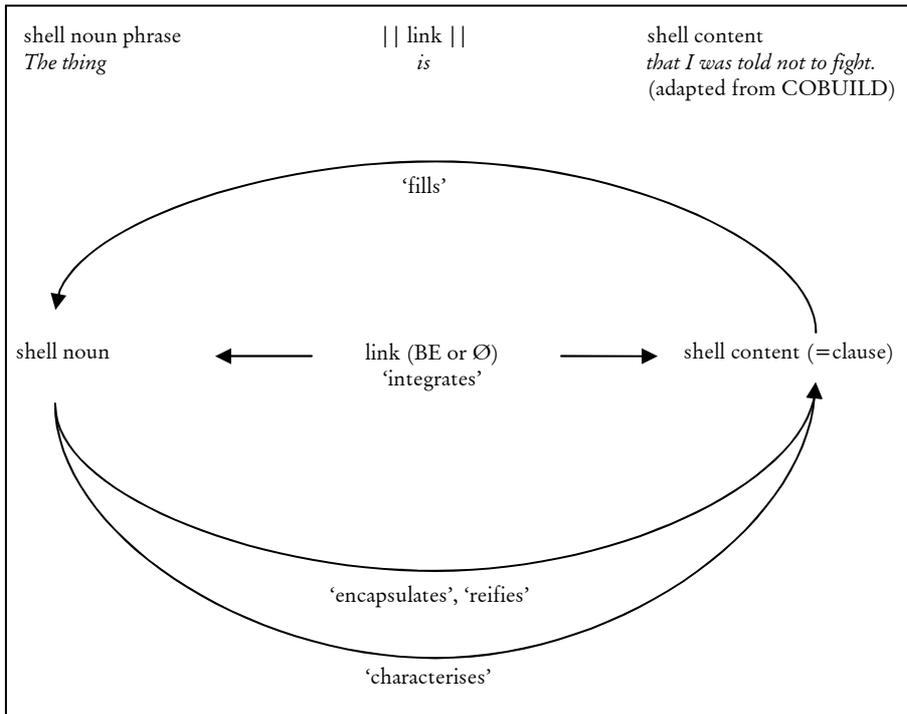


Figure 1. Functions of the shell-content relation illustrated

As already noted by Francis (1986, 36-38) and Conte (1996, 2-4), the crucial cognitive function of the abstract nouns I am concerned with here is to “encapsulate” the complex pieces of information expressed in the sentential complements as nominal concepts. To capture the notion that the nouns serve as containers for the propositions expressed by the clauses, the nouns were dubbed *shell nouns* in Schmid (2000). The result of the encapsulation is that the fact, event or state-of-affairs designated by the clause is conceptually turned into a

“thing” (in Langacker’s Cognitive-Grammar terminology; 1987, 189) or, more technically, *reified* as an apparently neatly-bounded object-like entity. In addition to reification the nouns invariably allow speakers to characterise the content of the clause in a particular way, depending on the choice of noun. Thus the noun *thing* in the example in figure 1, which arguably carries the most neutral characterisation possible, could easily be replaced by other nouns like *fact* (stressing the epistemic status of the shell content), *problem* (attitudinal characterisation), *idea* (characterisation as mental state), or *answer* (characterisation as speech act), to name just a few possibilities. On the other hand, the shell contents, i.e. the complementing clauses, fill the semantically unspecific shell nouns with concrete conceptual content. As already mentioned, the nouns themselves are not sufficiently informative to function on their own, except of course when they are used in anaphoric function, especially as topics in sentence-initial position (e.g. *I was told not to fight. This reminder was absolutely unnecessary*; COBUILD). Shell nouns and shell contents are linked to each other by the copula BE in the patterns N + BE + *that*-clause/*to*-infinitive or by the immediate attachment as NP-postmodifier in the patterns N + *that*-clause/*to*-infinitive. The links guarantee that the nominal and the clausal meanings are integrated and trigger the co-interpretation of the two elements of the relation as one piece of information (for more details see Schmid 2000, 21-31).

In addition to the cognitive and semantic functions of encapsulating/reifying and characterising, shell nouns have qualities that render them extremely helpful tools in the construction of coherent texts. In fact, their textual potential as semantically specific cohesive ties and textual signposts was the main concern of the publications by Francis (1986, see also 1994) and Conte (1996). Since I am concerned with intra-sentential aspects of shell-content constructions here, I will not go further into these aspects (cf. Schmid 2000, 329-359).

### 3. A glimpse of the corpus evidence

#### 3.1 Data source

The data investigated here from a new theoretical angle were originally collected in 1996 and analysed and described in detail in Schmid (2000). The material was taken from the British section of COBUILD’s *Bank of English*, amounting at that time to 225 million running words from the subcorpora spoken conversation, transcribed BBC recordings, ephemeral texts such as brochures and leaflets, books, magazines, quality newspapers, *English Today*, *The Economist* and *The New Scientist*. It should be borne in mind that with a proportion of about two-thirds of the whole material, texts from media sources make up the lion’s share of this corpus.

## 3.2 Data retrieval

Intuition, unsystematic observations and dictionary evidence suggest that such nouns as *fact*, *idea*, *aim*, *problem*, *solution* or *answer* occur frequently in shell-content patterns. However, as it was one of the aims of the study reported in Schmid (2000) to inductively identify a maximum number of shell nouns, it was impossible to use the nouns themselves as inputs for corpus queries. Instead the patterns served as query inputs, with the nominal slots being defined by a part-of-speech dummy. Table 1 gives a summary of the query statements and the number of matching lines in the 225m corpus:

Query statement	Number of matching lines in the 225m corpus
<b>Pattern N-cl with various types of adjacent clauses:</b>	
NN+that/CS (NN = noun, CS = conjunction)	280,217
NN+to+VB (VB = base form of verbs)	560,148
<b>Pattern N-be-to</b>	
NN+is+to	28,463
NN+was+to	12,728
NN+has+been+to	962
NN+will+be+to	960
NN+would+be+to	1,421
NN+would+have+been+to	133
<b>Pattern N-be-that</b>	
NN+is+that	37,155
NN+was+that	9,104
NN+has+been+that	433
NN+will+be+that	178
NN+would+be+that	264
NN+would+have+been+that	19

Table 1. Corpus queries and numbers of matches

In addition, analogous patterns with *wh*-clauses were retrieved, yielding such instances as *the question why he didn't come* or *the problem how to define the task*, as well as anaphoric instances of shell nouns, but neither of these realizations of shell nouns is under consideration here. It should be emphasized that the scores given in table 1 reflect the raw yield in response to the corpus queries; this dataset had to be sifted half-automatically to sort out unwanted hits caused, for example, by insertions between shell noun and complement that were superficially licensed by the target pattern, (e.g. *the energy policy of the government is to have no energy policy at all* [COBUILD] where *government* would wrongly be attributed the status of the shell noun because it precedes the copula).

### 3.3 Assessing the reciprocal association between nouns and patterns

There is a close symbiotic relationship between shell nouns and shell contents. On the one hand, the shell contents require a particular type of semantically unspecific noun to fill the nominal slot in the patterns. Concrete nouns (cf. *\*the boy is that/to ...* etc.) are as impossible in the pattern as are semantically specific abstract nouns like *democracy*, *madness* or *inflation*. Shell nouns, on the other hand, typically tend to have little semantic content of their own and include a specific semantic gap to be filled. This gap is particularly noticeable in the case of many deverbal speech-reporting or thought-reporting nouns such as *answer*, *statement*, *promise* or *belief*, *feeling* and *knowledge*, where the subsequent *that*-clause plays the same role as an obligatory complement-clause saturating the valency needs of the corresponding verbs (e.g. *she promised that she would come* and *her promise that she would come*).

The challenge for a corpus-based approach is of course to capture this reciprocal relation in quantitative terms. In Schmid (2000, 54-55) two simple mathematical measures, dubbed *attraction* and *reliance*, were proposed for this purpose. Their calculation is given in figure 2:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Attraction} &= \frac{\text{frequency of a noun in a pattern}}{\text{total frequency of the pattern} \times 100} \\ \text{Reliance} &= \frac{\text{frequency of a noun in a pattern}}{\text{total frequency of the noun in the corpus} \times 100} \end{aligned}$$

Figure 2. Calculating the measures of *attraction* and *reliance*

As the figure shows, *attraction* is calculated by dividing the frequency of occurrence of a noun in a pattern by the frequency of the pattern in the corpus. The result of this division measures the degree to which a pattern attracts a particular noun. Since the denominator of the fraction is the same for all nouns which occur in a pattern, the scores for this value are directly proportional to the raw frequencies of nouns. The measure facilitates the comparison of the relative importance of individual nouns for a pattern. For example, the attraction score of 18.45% for the noun *fact* in the pattern N + *that*-clause means that this noun accounts for almost one fifth of all instances of the pattern and is thus much more important for the pattern than, for example, *possibility* or *warning*, with attraction scores of 1.58% and 1.03% respectively (cf. table 5 in the appendix).

*Reliance* is calculated by dividing the frequency of occurrence of a noun in a pattern by its frequency of occurrence in the whole corpus. This measure expresses the proportion of uses of nouns in the patterns vis-à-vis other usages of the same noun. High scores for reliance such as 76% for the noun *inability* in the pattern N + *to-infinitive* indicate that the noun depends to a large extent on the pattern for a co-textual environment. The relevance of these two measures will

become clearer with a glimpse of some of the findings provided in the next section.

Compared to more sophisticated recent approaches to measuring the associations of lexical items and constructions proposed by Stefanowitsch and Gries (2003; Gries/Stefanowitsch 2004), the arithmetic applied here may look exceptionally crude and simple-minded. Unlike my approach, Stefanowitsch and Gries's "collostructional analysis" relies on fairly sophisticated distributional statistics known as the Fisher exact test. Essentially, this and other computationally less complex inferential statistical measures like the chi-square distribution are applied to test whether the frequency of co-occurrence of an item and a construction is significantly higher than predicted by chance on the basis of their isolated frequencies (see Kilgarriff 2005 for a critique of this assumption, and Gries 2006a for a follow-up on the critique). The advantage of this obviously lies in the mathematical reliability of these tests (at least as long as the scores, e.g. for the chi-square test, are of the right sizes). However, for a number of reasons the collostructional method is not only less feasible but also less dependable for the aims and data of this study than the measures of attraction and reliance suggested here. For one thing, a considerable number of shell nouns have such high relative frequencies in certain patterns that the Fisher exact test invariably yields a p-value of 0 (as was the case for the verb *give* in Stefanowitsch and Gries's analysis of the ditransitive pattern; 2003, 229). This means that the probability of an accidental association between lexical item and patterns is infinitely low, but it also means that the test does not contribute to a differentiation of the associational strengths of these nouns. Secondly, in order for Fisher exact to be calculable, the total number of constructions in the corpus other than the ones investigated has to be determined in order to serve as a total reference-population. Statistically reasonable as this clearly is, it is not however without its theoretical pitfalls. For example, investigating the construction [N *waiting to happen*] as in *there is an accident waiting to happen*, Stefanowitsch and Gries arrive at the total number of potential constructions in the corpus "by counting the total number of verb tags in the BNC, as [they] are dealing with a clause-level construction centering around the verb *wait*" (2003, 218). This choice of the total reference-population may be somewhat difficult to justify, since it tacitly assumes a potential paradigmatic substitutability of the predicate *waiting to happen* with all verbs in the corpus. Applied to the present study of noun phrases with sentential complements, the same problems arise. The total number of nouns in the corpus would seem just as unsuitable a candidate as, say, the number of all noun phrases or all complex noun phrases. Note that this is not a mathematical problem but a linguistic one. And thirdly, while it has the potential for bi-directional measures of association between words and constructions, collostructional analysis is mainly designed to test the attraction of constructions for certain words (an exception can be found in Gries 2006b, where occurrences of the verb *run* in different patterns are investigated). In the present study, the attraction perspective is quite naturally complemented by the notion of *reliance* which, as ex-

plained above, measures the degree to which nouns depend on the patterns for their occurrence.

### 3.4 Results

A quantitative summary of the nouns found most frequently in the two patterns is given in the appendix to this paper. Each of the four tables gives two lists of the twenty nouns with the highest scores for attraction and reliance respectively. The headers of the four lists contain information about the number of nouns (*types*) that were found in each of the patterns and the overall number of valid matches of the pattern in the corpus (*tokens*).

Quite predictably the attraction lists are dominated by high-frequency nouns, “feeding”, as it were, the patterns. This is partly due to the fact that frequent nouns are of course more likely to occur in any pattern than infrequent ones, but it can also be traced to strong associative links at least for the top scorers heading the lists. Interestingly, the constructions N + *that*-clause (table 5 in the appendix) and N + BE + *to*-infinitive (table 8 in the appendix) show a similar distribution of nouns in that there are two nouns, *fact* and *aim* respectively, which stand out as particularly strong associates of the patterns with attraction scores of 18.45% and 12.10% respectively.

The lists for reliance, on the other hand, tend to include less frequently used nouns which, in turn, exhibit particularly strong symbiotic relations with the respective patterns. The highest degrees of reliance were found for the nouns *inability*, *t Temerity*, *disinclination* and *willingness*, all boasting a reliance score above 70% (cf. table 6). This means that roughly three quarters of all occurrences of these nouns in the corpus are found in the pattern N + *to*-infinitive. Such high reliance scores are not reached in the two patterns including the copula (cf. tables 7 and 8), presumably because the semantic association between nouns and complements is less close for the complements making up a clause constituent in their own right than for the postmodifying complements directly attached to the head nouns.

In general, the four lists in the appendix undoubtedly demonstrate the semantic associations between certain types of nouns and certain patterns. The following discussion of the emergence of the composite meaning of shell-content relations will begin with a closer look at these semantic associations.

## 4. How does the composite meaning emerge?

Essentially, shell-content constructions consist of the shell head-nouns (and their determiners and premodifiers), on the one hand, and the complementing clauses on the other. If the principle of compositionality holds true, then the meanings of shell-content constructions would have to be a function of the lexical meanings of the nouns, the grammatical meanings of the complement types

and the syntactic links between the two components. The links presumably contribute no more than the equation, identification or reciprocal integration of the nominal meaning and the meaning of the complement. So to test the principle of compositionality it seems reasonable to cross-tabulate the meanings of nouns with the meanings of complements and check the results of this comparison against the constructional meanings.

#### 4.1 The meanings of shell nouns

On a fairly high level of abstraction six semantic classes of shell noun uses can be distinguished. These are summarized in table 2:

Class	Examples
Factual	<i>fact, thing, point, problem, reason, difference, upshot</i>
Linguistic	<i>news, message, rumour, report, order, proposal, question</i>
Mental	<i>idea, notion, belief, assumption, aim, plan, decision</i>
Modal	<i>possibility, truth, permission, obligation, need, ability</i>
Eventive	<i>act, move, measure, reaction, attempt, tradition, trick</i>
Circumstantial	<i>situation, context, place, area, time, way, approach</i>

Table 2. Semantic classes of shell noun uses

Speakers use *factual* shell nouns to create conceptual shells for “abstract” states of affairs and facts. The types subsumed in this class include semantically neutral nouns like *fact, thing* or *phenomenon*, causal nouns (*reason, result, upshot*), evidential nouns (*evidence, proof, sign*) and, among others, attitudinal nouns like *problem, advantage* or *irony*. It should be emphasized that some of these nouns have the potential to be used in several classes: *problem*, for example, does not always serve as a factual shell noun, as in example (1), but can also be used as an eventive noun, as in example (2):

- (1) A second problem is that water prices do not simply reflect costs. (COBUILD, originally from *The Times*)
- (2) The problem was to safeguard the many civil radar sites [...] from encroachment by property development. (COBUILD: *The New Scientist*)

While in (1) it is possible to insert *the fact* yielding the paraphrase *a second problem is the fact that water prices ...*, example (2) does not accept this but seems to work better with the insertion of *how*: *the problem was how to safeguard ...* The semantic classes listed in table 2 are thus classes of noun uses rather than classes of nouns as such.

Uses of *linguistic* shell nouns allow speakers to portray linguistic activities and their contents and products in a number of ways: they can focus on the propositional content of the reported utterances (*news, message, rumour*) or on their illocutionary force (*report, order, proposal, question*). Transferring Leech’s (1983)

typology of speech act verbs, illocutionary uses can be divided into *assertives* (*statement, report*), *rogatives* (*question, query*), *directives* (*command, suggestion*), *commissives* (*promise, offer*) and *expressives* (*complaint, compliment*).

*Mental*, i.e. thought-reporting, uses have an analogous distribution, with one sub-class highlighting the conceptual content of a mental state (*idea, notion, theory*) and a second one focussing on the psychological state of the experiencer (e.g. *belief, assumption, aim, plan, decision*). Even the subclasses of illocutionary uses have counterparts in the mental domain, with *creditive* uses (*belief, opinion*) matching aspects of assertives, *dubitative* uses (*doubt, question*) rogatives, *volitional* uses (*aim, plan, wish, dream*) directives as well as commissives, and *emotive* uses (*surprise, fear*) expressives.

*Modal* shell noun uses are nominal means of expressing modal stances. Following Palmer's (1990) classification of modal verbs, modal shell nouns can be divided into *epistemic* uses with different degrees of certainty (*possibility, probability, certainty*), *deontic* uses with different degrees of obligation (*permission, task, necessity*) and *dynamic* uses (*ability, opportunity, tendency*).

*Eventive* shell noun uses encapsulate actions and processes, i.e. physically observable dynamic events. In addition to semantically unspecific *general* eventive uses of the nouns *event, change, action*, there are *specific* eventive uses (*move, habit, option*) and *attitudinal* eventive uses analogous to attitudinal factual uses (*trouble, difficulty, success*).

Finally, *circumstantial* uses subsume nouns referring to situations, times, locations, manners of doing things and conditions for doing things. Typical examples are *situation, place, time* and *way*.

#### 4.2 "Meanings" of complements – Evidence from verb complementation

Attributing meanings to dependent grammatical constructions such as *that*-complements or *to*-infinitives is quite problematical because such semantic analyses inevitably tend to rely on the nature of the items governing the complements. The typical procedure, followed in recent semantically-oriented studies on verb-complementation like Wierzbicka (1988, 23-168), Givón (1990, 517-561), Frajzyngier and Jasperson (1991) and Langacker (1991, 438-449), is to deduce the meanings of complement types from their compatibility and co-occurrence restrictions with the governing verbs. This strategy relies on the assumption that a "systematic isomorphism [...] exists between the semantics of the complement-taking verbs, and the syntax of verb-plus-complement constructions" (Givón 1990, 515). While there is undoubtedly a smack of circularity in this assumption, the convergence of the results of the studies on verbs just mentioned and my own work on nominal complementation is so strong that the procedure may be acceptable.

A summary of the accounts of the meanings of complements/complementizers from various sources is given in table 3.

Source	<i>that</i> -clause	infinitive
Wierzbicka (1988)	SAY, KNOW	volition, future orientation (‘this will happen’)
Givón (1990)	cognition-utterance verbs (perception, cognition, mental attitude or verbal utterance)	manipulative verbs
Frajzyngier and Jasperson (1991)	“de dicto” domain	“de re” domain

Table 3. Meanings of complements according to several sources

In spite of conspicuous terminological differences table 3 indicates a convergent view that *that*-clauses convey meanings having to do with fact-like entities that are perceived, thought about and talked about, while *to*-infinitives operate in the domain of events and actions, with a focus on volition, manipulation and future orientation. The data on nouns clearly support this pattern and yield very similar compatibilities and co-occurrence restrictions of nouns and complements. This is summarized in the next section.

#### 4.3 Compatibility of nouns and complements

Table 4 gives an overview of co-occurrence patterns of noun types and complementation types as emerging from the corpus study of more than 420,000 tokens of shell nouns. The shaded areas indicate ungrammatical combinations, such as the complementation of factual nouns like *fact* by infinitives (*\*the fact to go out* vs. *the fact that he went out*) or of eventive nouns with *that*-clauses (*\*his attempt that he went out* vs. *his attempt to go out*). The central column gives classes of shell nouns whose sub-classes differ with regard to the type of complement they take. For example, in the linguistic domain, nouns expressing the propositional content of utterances or reporting the illocutionary act of asserting combine with *that*-clauses, while nouns reporting directive and commissive speech acts take infinitives. An analogous pattern is found in the mental domain, with conceptual, creditive and dubitative uses taking *that*-clauses and volitional nouns infinitives, and in the modal domain, where nouns expressing epistemic modality take *that*-clauses and those expressing deontic and dynamic modality infinitives.

<i>that</i> -clause	divided classes of shell nouns	infinitive
factual nouns ( <i>thing, fact, phenomenon</i> )		
propositional, assertive nouns ( <i>news, argument, message, report, account</i> )	linguistic nouns	directive, commissive nouns ( <i>order, request, promise, pledge, threat</i> )
conceptual, creditive, dubitative nouns ( <i>idea, notion, belief, knowledge, doubt</i> )	mental nouns	volitional ( <i>aim, goal, plan, purpose, desire, determination</i> )
epistemic nouns ( <i>possibility, probability, certainty, reality, truth</i> )	modal nouns	deontic and dynamic nouns ( <i>permission, job, duty, need, necessity, ability, capacity, opportunity</i> )
		eventive ( <i>event, attempt, effort, priority</i> )
		circumstantial ( <i>place, time, way</i> )

Table 4. Overview of co-occurrence patterns of noun types and complementation types

This pattern supports the analyses of verbal complementation summarized in section 4.2: *that*-clauses operate in the fact- and belief-related epistemic, linguistic and mental domain, infinitives in the event-related domain expressing volition, future orientation, deontic and dynamic modality as well as circumstantial information, especially means. What the corpus data demonstrate, then, is that there seems to be a semantic match of nominal meanings, on the one hand, and meanings of the two types of complements, on the other.

While the cross-tabulation of nominal and complement meanings may not be too spectacular a finding, it is necessary for the following consideration of compositionality, because it defines three types of test cases:

- 1) Nouns which accept either of the two complement types, e.g. *idea, problem* and *answer*;
- 2) Semantically unspecific eventive nouns like *time, place* and *way*, which acquire specific meanings in shell-content constructions;
- 3) Complements that acquire different meanings depending on the nouns combined with them.

These three test cases will now be studied in turn.

## 4.4 Test cases

## 4.4.1 Test case I: Same noun, different meanings

Consider the following set of fabricated examples and their glosses and semantic explanations:

- (3) My idea was to raise money for new books in the library.  
'plan', 'aim' – volition, future orientation
- (4) My idea to raise money for new books wasn't bad.  
'plan' – volition, future orientation
- (5) My idea that books are important is well known.  
'belief' – conceptual, epistemic
- (6) My idea is that books are important for students.  
'view' – conceptual, attitudinal
- (7) The problem was to raise money for books in the library.  
'difficulty' – future orientation, means
- (8) The problem (how) to raise money for new books ...  
'difficulty' – future orientation, means
- (9) The problem is that we haven't got any money.  
'unpleasant fact' – factual
- (10) The problem that we haven't got any money ...  
'unpleasant fact' – factual
- (11) The answer was to raise money for books in the library.  
'solution' – action, volition, means
- (12) The answer is that we haven't got any money.  
'reply' – illocution

In all three sets of examples the nominal (and constructional) meanings seem to be determined, or at least influenced, by the meaning of the two types of complements. *Idea* has a volitive meaning when complemented by the infinitive (3 and 4) and an epistemic meaning with the *that*-clause (5 and 6); *problem* acquires a future-oriented meaning with the infinitive (7 and 8) and a factual one with *that*-clauses (9 and 10); and again depending on the complement, *answer* can either have an action-related, future-oriented meaning (as in 11) or one reporting the illocution of an utterance (cf. 12). These data suggest that the constructional meaning is largely determined by the semantics of the complement. One somewhat surprising finding is the emergence of 'means' meanings in the infinitival uses of *problem* and *answer*. In both cases there is a semantic shade of 'this is how it can be achieved', which was not mentioned as part of the meaning of infinitive clauses and is not part of the nominal meaning either. It follows that 'means' is either an emergent part of the constructional meaning or a hitherto overlooked component of *to*-infinitives. We will return to this question below.

## 4.4.2 Test case II: Unspecific nouns, specific meanings

The second type of test cases seems to support the idea that the nominal and constructional meanings are heavily influenced by the complement meaning. Consider the following three examples of the highly unspecific nouns *time*, *place* and *way* taken from COBUILD:

- (13) The best time to encourage your older child to start caring for a new baby is before the birth.  
'the time when it is best possible to ...'
- (14) The place to make the right contacts – an activity long known as “networking” – will be the Net.  
'the place where it is possible to ...'
- (15) Senior Republicans admit that the economy is undermining their base of voters. Some believe the only way to win is to press home personal attacks on Mr Clinton ...  
'the only way in which it is possible to'

As the glosses suggest, all three examples lend themselves to interpretations in terms of dynamic modality, paraphrasable as 'it is possible to'. The only cues for these modal meanings outside the infinitive complement are the focusing premodifiers *best* in (13) and *only* in (15). The nouns themselves do not seem to have the modal meanings. As regards the infinitives, Quirk et al. (1985) seem to be right in claiming that “postmodifying *to*-infinitive clauses can either have a modal or a nonmodal sense, but the modal interpretation seems to be normal” (1985, 1269). Thus nouns whose meanings can be more or less reduced to single and very general semantic components like 'time' for *time*, 'location' for *place* and 'manner' for *way* seem to acquire modal meanings. This again points to the possibilities given in 4.3, i.e. that the modal meaning is either brought along by the infinitive or emerges from the interaction of head noun and complement (plus perhaps the focusing premodifier). However, if this was the whole story, cases of the type discussed in what follows would be impossible.

## 4.4.3 Test case III: Same complement, different meanings

The question addressed in the third set of test cases is whether the *to*-infinitive has the same effect in similar constructions. As the following examples and their glosses and paraphrases show, this does not seem to be the case:

- (16) The task is to raise money for new books in the library.  
'obligation' – 'What we have to do is raise money for ...'
- (17) The solution is to raise money for new books in the library.  
'means' – 'The way we are going to achieve it is to raise money ...'
- (18) The idea is to raise money for new books in the library.  
'volition' – 'What we want to do is raise money ...'

- (19) The problem is to raise money for new books in the library.  
 ‘means’ + ‘obligation’ – ‘What we have to do is raise money ... but we don’t know how to achieve it’

While all four examples contain *to*-infinitives following the copula, the meanings resulting from the interaction of this complement type with different nouns diverge: *the task is to ...* includes a modal meaning of deontic necessity (‘obligation’), *the solution is to ...* a ‘means’ meaning, *the idea is to ...* a volitive meaning and *the problem is to ...* a combination of deontic necessity and means. Since the overall structure of the construction and the complement type is identical in all four examples, and since, at the same time, the semantic impact of the constructions is not part of the nominal meanings either (e.g. *idea* does not have a volitive meaning, *problem* does not have a deontic meaning), the constructional meaning must be the result of an intricate interaction of noun and complement meanings. The data suggest that, depending on the semantic setup of the noun, different aspects of the semantic complex encodable by *to*-infinitives, i.e. volition, manipulation, and future-orientation, but also obligation and, somewhat unexpectedly, means, can be selected for the constructional meaning.

#### 4.5 Intermediate conclusion

The juxtaposition of shell noun meanings and the meanings of the two types of complements has shown that there is a match between nominal and complement meanings. This results in distinct co-occurrence patterns that appear to be determined by the basic semantic contrast between facts and events, which is reflected in the oppositions factual vs. eventive, epistemic vs. deontic and dynamic modality and propositional content vs. illocutionary act or mental activity. The sequence of test cases presented here provides strong evidence that the constructional meanings are not simply a function of the nominal and complement meanings but include extra semantic elements that emerge from the interaction of the two components of the shell-content construction. The constructional meaning is thus not entirely predictable from the meanings of the construction’s components and the links between them; in short, the meanings of shell-content constructions seem to be non-compositional.

The precise nature of the emergent meaning does not seem to be generally predictable, however. This is due to the fact that both nouns and complement types seem to be open for a range of possible meanings and interact in unpredictable ways which can, however, be explained *post factum*. Whether a construction has emergent modal, means or volitive meanings will depend on the individual combinations of the semantic potential of nouns and complements. The final section of this paper will illustrate how this works for the N + BE + *to*-infinitive construction.

### 5. Case study: Dominant and emergent meanings of the N + BE + *to*-infinitive construction

While the meanings of shell-content constructions do not seem to be predictable from their components, they are not random either. In fact, if we take the view of Construction Grammar seriously that constructions are pairings of form and meanings, then it should at least in principle be possible to determine the meaning or semantic range of the constructions investigated here. I will concentrate on one variant of shell-content constructions, viz. the N + BE + *to*-infinitive, in order to demonstrate the way corpus data facilitate the semantic analysis of such lexico-grammatical chunks.

The analysis will focus on the 20 top scorers with regard to attraction and reliance as compiled in table 8 in the appendix, but also include some more types illustrating the major categories. Taken together, the 20 nouns in the attraction list account for almost 60% of the ca. 21.000 tokens of the pattern recorded in the corpus. Eleven of these 20 nouns can also be found in the list for reliance, so that the whole table includes 29 noun types which can be assumed to bring to the surface the meanings most strongly associated with the pattern.<sup>4</sup>

The most prominent meanings of the N + BE + *to*-infinitive pattern are represented in figure 3:

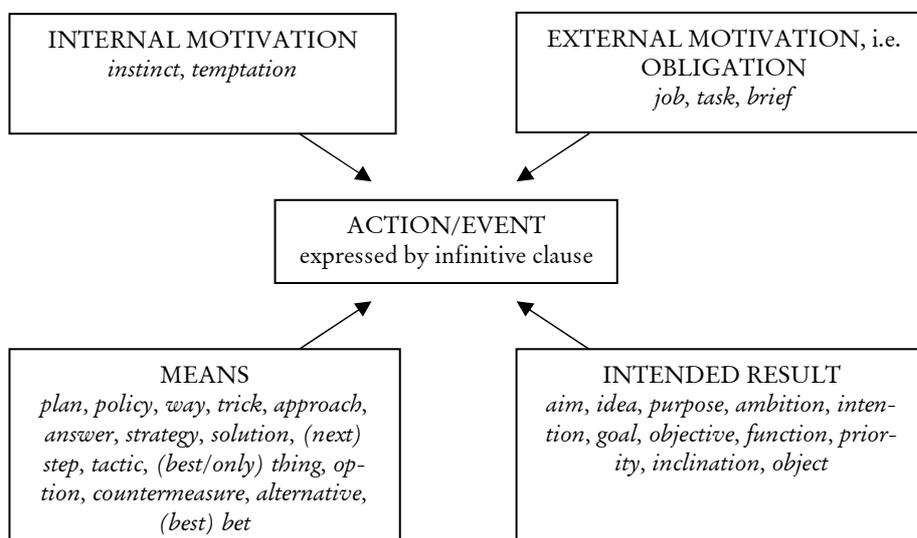


Figure 3. Semantic range of the construction N + BE + *to*-clause

<sup>4</sup> This is based on the common assumption in corpus linguistics, and especially corpus-based cognitive linguistics, that the most frequently used patterns reflect their linguistically and cognitively dominant meanings and functions (for a recent survey see Tummers/Heylen/Geeraerts 2005).

As the figure suggests, the dominant meanings of the construction revolve around the action or event encoded in the infinitive clause, i.e. what I have called the “shell content”. As in all shell-content constructions (cf. section 2), the function of the noun is to reify and characterise the action in some way. These two functions, as well as the linking function of the copula BE, are shared with, or “inherited” by (cf. Goldberg 1995, 72-73; Fillmore 1999; Croft/Cruise 2004, 270-278; Goldberg 2006, 13-14 *et passim*) the general shell-content construction described in section 2.

The corpus data reveal that four types of characterisations predominate in the case of the N + BE + *to*-infinitive construction: the INTENDED RESULT of the action (highlighted by the nouns *aim*, *idea*, *purpose*, *ambition*, *intention*, *objective*, *function* and *priority*); the MOTIVATION for the action, which can either be INTERNAL (*instinct*, *temptation*, the least prominent meaning) or EXTERNAL, in which case it is expressed as an OBLIGATION (*job*, *task*, *mission*, *duty*, *brief*); and the MEANS with which the goal of the action is meant to be achieved (*plan*, *policy*, *way*, *trick*, *approach*, *strategy*, *solution*, *the best/only thing*, *option*, *alternative*, *the best bet*). The boundaries between these classes are by no means clear and rigid, since nouns like *plan* or *policy* share with the group of INTENDED RESULT a distinct mental meaning, but also focus on the way in which a certain goal is to be reached. Viewed together, these four perspectives represent three key elements of a very general cognitive frame of actions: the motivation for the action, the goal as well as the means, instrument or manner of the action. The other conceptual core components of actions are the action itself and, of course, the agent. While the action is encoded in the infinitive clause, the agent can either be backgrounded altogether since it is syntactically unnecessary to express it (cf. example 20), or be encoded by a possessive determiner or genitive noun preceding the shell noun as is illustrated in example (21):

- (20) In Canada a plan to slaughter the largest buffalo herd in the world has triggered off an unprecedented revolt ... (COBUILD: BBC).
- (21) Trackless surgery still has its limitations. It can be used only in ablative procedures, in which the surgeon's job is to destroy a body's rotten fabric. (COBUILD: *The Economist*)

The frequency distribution of the nouns in the corpus data suggests that there are particularly strong associations between the construction and the nouns of the types INTENDED RESULT and OBLIGATION. Thus the noun *aim* is by far the most frequently used noun in this pattern (with an attraction score of 12.10%) and also heads the list for reliance. This noun can be considered an anchor or “leit-noun” of the construction. The association is so strong that it is a fairly safe bet that informants would name this noun first or at least very early if they were presented with the pattern *the N is to ...* and asked to fill in the first nouns that come to their minds. Other members of the *aim* group, e.g. *ambition*, *intention*, *objective* and *purpose* are also among the top scorers, as are the prominent representatives of the OBLIGATION group *job*, *task* and *brief*.

Example (21) does not only illustrate the encoding of agents but also shows how the meanings of INTENDED RESULT and OBLIGATION are related to each other: the infinitive in this example expresses the goal (*to destroy a body's rotten fabric*) in a way analogous to *the surgeon's aim is to destroy ...*, but the noun *job* characterises this goal as something the surgeon is obliged to achieve. Apparently, the semantic complex of INTENDED RESULT and OBLIGATION is so strongly associated with the construction that it has the power to “rub off” on nouns that do not carry these meanings in isolation. Example (22), featuring the general mental noun *idea*, is a case in point:

- (22) It's now been over a month since Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachov cut off all oil and most natural gas supplies to Lithuania. The Kremlin's idea is to bring the country to its knees for having declared independence from the Soviet Union. (COBUILD: BBC)

Despite the unspecific meaning of *idea*, the construction undoubtedly carries the meaning of INTENDED RESULT; *idea* could be replaced by *aim* without any changes in meaning. The idea of “rubbing off” is justified insofar as the *aim* meaning of *idea* is indeed lexicalised, but mainly activated in this pattern (cf. OALD4, s.v. *idea* “AIM/INTENTION [C, U] the aim, intention, or purpose of doing something; *The idea is to teach children to save money*”). Significantly, the *aim*-meaning of the noun *idea* emerged fairly late in the diachronic development of this noun; the first attested occurrence of this meaning in all quotations in the OED, i.e. not just those given for *idea*, dates from the 1830s; substantial numbers of examples do not occur before the 1880s (cf. Schmid 1996, 99).

From the perspective of emergent meaning, the most interesting group is of course the MEANS group, since here the construction meaning is less easy to trace back to any of the construction components. The meaning of MEANS was not attributed to the *to*-infinitive by any of the sources referred to in Section 4.2 above. Looked at in isolation the nouns collected in this group make up a rather mixed bag including nouns actually expressing ‘manner’ or ‘means’, such as *way*, *countermeasure* and perhaps *alternative*. The most frequently used types of nouns giving rise to the MEANS meaning, however, are mental nouns such as *plan*, *policy*, *strategy*, *tactic* and the eventive nouns *approach*, *trick* and *solution*, as well as the illocutionary noun *answer* and the focusing noun phrases *the best/only thing*. In the construction, these diverse nouns all highlight the MEANS of an action and are at the same time influenced by the meanings of INTENDED RESULT and OBLIGATION dominating the construction meaning. Examples (23) to (26) illustrate how this blend of meanings emerges and reveal how the component of MEANS enters the picture:

- (23) To get sturdy seedlings, the trick is to keep the compost slightly on the dry side, never too wet, but make sure that it doesn't dry out fully. (COBUILD: Magazines)
- (24) We are winning against drugs but the only foolproof way is to bring in blood tests. (COBUILD: *The Guardian*)

- (25) Eric's approach is to shoot it in the shade on a bright sunny day, at f/11 and 1/30 sec on Fuji RDP 100. (COBUILD: Magazines)
- (26) The Hankeys were employed until the contracts were finished but were left owing the bank Pounds 88,000. As their overdraft had been secured on their home in South Ferriby, the only answer was to sell. (COBUILD: *The Times*)

Example (23) is fairly representative of uses of the noun *trick* in this construction because this sentence begins with another infinitive in adverbial function encoding the goal of the action, while the shell-content infinitive functioning as subject complement encodes an action representing how the goal can be achieved: in order "to get sturdy seedlings", you "keep the compost slightly on the dry side ...". Semantically similar, but couched in a different syntactic format, is example (24), where the goal is encoded as the first main clause "we are winning against drugs". In (25) and (26) the goals are not explicitly expressed but given earlier in the co-text (not included in example 25). Cases of this type seem to provide the missing link between the INTENDED RESULT meaning of the construction, on the one hand, and the MEANS meaning, on the other, because they show that the shell-content clauses can encode the means or manner of reaching a goal that is not explicitly encoded but understood or presupposed. In (26), for example, the shell content *to sell* encodes an action carried out in order to reach the goal of being able to pay back pounds 88,000 to the bank, and it is the noun *answer* that serves as a linguistic cue for this fairly complex chain of inferences. The semantic impact of the construction thus appears to be influenced by pragmatic aspects linking the event-components of INTENDED RESULT and MEANS (of reaching the intended result).

Example (27), a particularly interesting case already quoted as (2) above, contains the noun *problem* which is not included among the 20 top scorers but appears very soon further down the list (attraction score 1.31%).

- (27) Several years ago I was involved in a project aimed at measuring the reflectivity of metallised glass. The problem was to safeguard the many civil radar sites round Britain from encroachment by property development. Increasing numbers of buildings were being designed then with metallised glass. (COBUILD: *New Scientist*)
- (27') ... the (ultimate) aim was to safeguard ...
- (27'') ... the problem was how to safeguard ...

Here one goal is explicitly expressed in the preceding sentence (... *aimed at measuring the reflectivity of metallised glass*). The *problem*-sentence talks about another goal, *to safeguard the many civil radar sites round Britain from encroachment by property development*, which comes across as being superordinate to the first one: in order *to safeguard the radar sites* it was necessary *to measure the reflectivity of metallised glass* because, and this reason is given in the final sentence quoted here, *increasing numbers of buildings were being designed then with metallised glass*. Even though the infinitive *to safeguard the radar sites* thus encodes a goal, and despite the fact that *problem* does not have a MEANS component, the emergent meaning oscillates between the INTENDED RESULT interpretation

given in (27') and the MEANS one paraphrased in (27''). As before, the semantic complex encoded by the construction seems to emerge from an inferential chain. In fact, as far as textual argumentation is concerned, the *problem*-sentence serves as a justification of the information in the first sentence, yielding a paraphrase like “we wanted to measure X because we had to safeguard Z” – a paraphrase that unveils the OBLIGATION component (*we had to ...*) also hidden beneath the surface of this example.

## 6. Summary and conclusion

In this paper I have studied a set of lexico-grammatical patterns that qualify as constructions since they can carry meanings that are not entirely predictable from the semantics of the component parts, thus violating the principle of compositionality. The final section has focussed on one variant of these shell-content constructions, the pattern N + BE + *to*-infinitive, illustrating some mechanisms of emergent meaning. The overall picture suggested by this corpus study is that the frequent combinations of nouns and patterns are determined by symbiotic matches of the meanings of nouns and complementizers. Thus it is certainly not an arbitrary finding that, for example, *the aim is to ...* or *the fact that ...* are by far the most frequent representatives of the respective patterns, since the semantic match between the notion of *aim* and the semantic range of infinitives and the notion of *fact* and the meaning of *that*-clauses is particularly tight. The meanings that can be attributed to the four constructions are thus motivated by the converging meanings of complementizers and frequent head nouns.

Emergent meaning, not deducible from the component parts, apparently seems to come about as a result of the activation of the construction meaning, even in cases where the nouns contribute very little. The examples discussed suggest two avenues how this evolves: on the one hand, the construction apparently leaves its mark on unspecific nouns (such as *idea*) and has so to speak “rubbed off” its meaning in the course of repeated occurrences. For semantically more specific nouns like *answer* or *problem*, on the other hand, the effect can be explained in pragmatic terms as a result of inferential processes relying on the semantic complex associated with the construction.

It is very likely that this inference-based emergent meaning of the construction is indeed the result of a diachronic diversification of its semantic range. On the one hand, the earliest attestations of the pattern N + BE + *to* which I was able to find in the quotations in the OED and the diachronic part of the Helsinki Corpus all include nouns expressing the prototypical meaning of INTENDED RESULT, viz. *desire* (1571, OED), *aim* (1625, Helsinki), *hope* (1625, Helsinki) and *intention* (1616, OED). So this is not only the most frequent and prominent meaning of the construction, but also historically the original one. The OBLIGATION sense follows fairly soon; it is first attested in the OED in a quotation from the year 1647 featuring the noun *task*. Nouns encoding the MEANS meaning, on the other hand, occur only much later in the construction:

*problem* is attested in the pattern for the first time in 1833, *answer* quite surprisingly not before 1975. The diachronic diversification of the constructional meaning can be accounted for in terms of the fossilization of invited inferences along the lines suggested in section 5 above.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> See Traugott and König (1991) and Traugott and Dasher (2002: 34-40) for an account of the invited-inferences theory of semantic change.

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## Appendix

Noun	Freq. in pattern	Attraction	Noun	Freq. in pattern	Freq. in corpus	Reliance
fact	26,106	18.45%	realisation	820	1,185	69.20%
evidence	5,007	3.54%	proviso	111	250	44.40%
idea	4,812	3.40%	assumption	1,391	3,151	44.14%
doubt	4,010	2.83%	assertion	596	1,492	39.95%
belief	3,696	2.61%	belief	3,696	9,344	39.55%
view	3,532	2.50%	insistence	796	2,069	38.47%
hope	2,727	1.93%	fact	26,106	68,472	38.13%
news	2,572	1.82%	premise	274	765	35.82%
feeling	2,511	1.77%	misapprehension	44	123	35.77%
impression	2,279	1.61%	suggestion	2,033	5,854	34.73%
possibility	2,232	1.58%	dictum	84	249	33.73%
claim	2,194	1.55%	stipulation	48	145	33.10%
suggestion	2,033	1.44%	misconception	91	284	32.04%
speculation	1,922	1.36%	truism	47	150	31.33%
knowledge	1,794	1.27%	reminder	812	2,688	30.21%
sign	1,738	1.23%	notion	1,655	5,713	28.97%
notion	1,655	1.17%	coincidence	627	2,196	28.55%
point	1,511	1.07%	speculation	1,922	6,778	28.36%
warning	1,460	1.03%	supposition	46	164	28.05%
fear	1,432	1.01%	impression	2,279	8,206	27.77%

Table 5. Pattern: N-*that*; total number of types: 350; total number of tokens: 141,476

Noun	Freq. in pattern	Attraction	Noun	Freq. in pattern	Freq. in corpus	Reliance
time	19,496	8.54%	inability	1,843	2,400	76.79%
way	15,194	6.66%	temerity	118	160	73.75%
attempt	13,543	5.94%	disinclination	45	62	72.58%
chance	11,722	5.14%	willingness	1,804	2,493	72.36%
decision	10,089	4.42%	unwillingness	337	470	71.70%
ability	9,830	4.31%	attempt	13,543	20,728	65.34%
right	8,522	3.74%	refusal	2,406	3,892	61.82%
need	8,150	3.57%	ability	9,830	16,957	57.97%
opportunity	7,799	3.42%	urge	918	1,626	56.46%
effort	5,221	2.29%	reluctance	1,158	2,131	54.34%
power	4,194	1.84%	eagerness	285	535	53.27%
failure	4,179	1.83%	readiness	676	1,368	49.42%
desire	4,159	1.82%	opportunity	7,799	17,805	43.80%
plan	3,866	1.69%	inclination	339	801	42.32%
place	3,791	1.66%	propensity	189	449	42.09%
reason	3,499	1.53%	desire	4,159	9,973	41.70%
bid	3,343	1.47%	tendency	1,763	4,297	41.03%
campaign	3,098	1.36%	temptation	859	2,193	39.17%
pressure	2,649	1.16%	obligation	765	2,041	37.48%
position	2,476	1.09%	incentive	969	2,690	36.02%

Table 6. Pattern: N-*to*; total number of types: 200; total number of tokens: 228,165

Noun	Freq. in pattern	Attraction	Noun	Freq. in pattern	Freq. in corpus	Reliance
problem	2,672	8.62%	upshot	105	313	33.55%
thing	1,532	4.94%	snag	250	784	31.89%
truth	1,235	3.98%	drawback	140	735	19.05%
fact	1,218	3.93%	implication	274	1,514	18.10%
trouble	1,034	3.34%	guess	266	1,620	16.42%
point	1,020	3.29%	irony	395	3,085	12.80%
result	977	3.15%	downside	51	512	9.96%
view	933	3.01%	inference	37	375	9.87%
reason	897	2.89%	corollary	19	198	9.60%
idea	790	2.55%	hunch	43	451	9.53%
news	749	2.42%	gripe	17	186	9.14%
difference	642	2.07%	stipulation	12	145	8.28%
answer	633	2.04%	worry	253	3,119	8.11%
theory	561	1.81%	assumption	229	3,151	7.27%
reality	509	1.64%	truth	1,235	17,421	7.09%
hope	482	1.56%	complication	34	484	7.02%
fear	437	1.41%	likelihood	125	1,857	6.73%
argument	430	1.39%	disadvantage	101	1,556	6.49%
danger	395	1.27%	regret	99	1,754	5.64%
irony	395	1.27%	paradox	63	1,149	5.48%

Table 7: Pattern: N-be-that; total number of types: 366; total number of tokens: 30,992

Noun	Freq. in pattern	Attraction	Noun	Freq. in pattern	Freq. in corpus	Reliance
aim	2,646	12.10%	aim	2,646	9,324	28.38%
idea	1,141	5.22%	brief	118	835	14.13%
job	1,041	4.76%	objective	370	2,883	12.83%
task	946	4.32%	countermeasure	1	10	10.00%
thing	758	3.46%	ambition	373	4,678	7.97%
plan	629	2.88%	intention	494	6,484	7.62%
purpose	586	2.68%	task	946	13,439	7.04%
solution	551	2.52%	priority	425	6,055	7.02%
step	515	2.35%	trick	368	6,080	6.05%
intention	494	2.26%	inclination	46	801	5.74%
answer	431	1.97%	tactic	71	1,300	5.46%
priority	425	1.94%	instinct	150	2,853	5.26%
goal	399	1.82%	purpose	586	11,524	5.09%
ambition	373	1.71%	alternative	334	7,046	4.74%
policy	370	1.69%	solution	551	12,161	4.53%
objective	370	1.69%	temptation	82	2,193	3.74%
trick	368	1.68%	option	328	9,913	3.31%
alternative	334	1.53%	bet	95	3,037	3.13%
option	328	1.50%	object	187	6,027	3.10%
way	316	1.44%	function	174	5,651	3.08%

Table 8. Pattern: N-be-to; total number of types: 162; total number of tokens: 21,876

## REVIEWS

*Battistella, Edwin L. Bad Language. Are Some Words Better Than Others?* Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2005. vi, 230pp. £17.99 ISBN-10: 0-19-517248-5.

In his book, *Bad Language. Are Some Words Better Than Others?*, Edwin L. Battistella addresses linguistic usages that some people might label “bad language”. Following the introductory chapter, which outlines the topic and key notions of the book, the second chapter (“Bad Writing”) discusses the question of what can be regarded as “good” writing. After explaining that different types of writing, such as academic essays, job applications or diaries, need to fulfil different criteria in order to be “good” and that evaluative judgements on “good” writing have changed over the centuries, Battistella comes to the conclusion that “good writing is a relative notion” (39) and that the quality of a piece of writing is very much determined by whether this piece of writing fulfils its actual purpose.

Chapter 3 focuses on “Bad Grammar”, i.e. on deviations from usages which traditional or prescriptive grammar would describe as correct. Looking at the justification why certain grammatical choices should be regarded as correct and others not, Battistella rejects the inherent logic of grammatical rules in favour of the social function that the establishment and maintenance of linguistic standards can have. “Bad Words” are the subject of Chapter Four; offensive language, slang and the discussion of political correctness are dealt with in turn. Battistella offers these as a further demonstration of the importance of social function – “badness” can be seen as a result of either the non-conformity of certain expressions or the deviation from established usage.

The book goes on to explore the relationship that is sometimes established between the “right” language and “good” citizenship and evaluates the validity of slogans such as “One Flag – One Language” (Chapter Five: “Bad Citizens”). In this context, Battistella describes the change of attitudes towards Native American languages and sign language in the USA and discusses recent models established to tackle the problem of linguistic pluralism in the classroom.

Chapter 6 then focuses on “Bad Accents”, commenting on attitudes towards and prejudices against foreign accents, regional dialects and African-American English, whereas the last chapter “Images and Engagement” offers a summary of the most important arguments and reflects on the role of linguistics in the public discussion of language issues.

Having outlined the general structure of the book, the following questions are worth addressing: how new is this topic or, put differently, how new are the insights provided by this book? Furthermore, how relevant is this topic and

which readership is addressed? An answer can be found in the book's structure, in its presentation of what constitutes "bad language":

The chapters are well-structured and lucid so that no prior knowledge of the matter is required to follow Battistella's line of argument. This is achieved by providing ample background information, often describing how certain attitudes or linguistic aspects have developed over the centuries, and by using many examples. The discussions of and debates over certain topics, as for example the status of African-American English, are well explained and easy to follow even for those who are not acquainted with the respective arguments.

The chosen cultural context is clearly that of the USA; the few references to British English are limited to descriptions of historical developments. It is therefore the sociopolitical history of the USA that provides the basis for Battistella's outline; the linguistic examples mainly draw on American English or languages spoken in the USA. The choice of topics reflects an US-American perspective, too: apart from obvious cases like Native American languages or African American English, also the discussion of political correctness seems especially relevant for the US-American community.

But Battistella does not restrict himself to outlining the different attitudes towards "good" and "bad" language usage, he also reflects on them from a linguistic point of view. This linguistic point of view is decidedly descriptive and advocates a relativist approach to language phenomena, preferring the notion of appropriateness to that of correctness. Furthermore, he stresses the importance linguistic description should have in all of these discussions, demanding that the public pay closer attention to linguistic findings, but also that linguistics make a substantial contribution to these issues.

In short, the book is best suited for an introductory exploration of sociolinguistic topics, including attitudes towards certain linguistic varieties. The intended readership is assumed to have little or no prior linguistic knowledge, so that for such an audience the book offers new and interesting insights into sociolinguistic topics in general and linguistic stereotypes in America. For a linguist or a reader with profound linguistic knowledge, "Bad Language" might be seen as preaching to the converted. However, what it does offer also to this kind of reader is a collection of a large amount of background information and a useful synopsis of the phenomenon of linguistic stereotyping. To sum up: this book can certainly be seen as "good writing", fulfilling the criteria that Battistella himself establishes for it: "[...] all good writing requires a discernable logic and degree of organization, cohesion, unity and clarity appropriate to the subject and audience" (39).

*Katrin Götz-Votteler (Erlangen)*

*Baker, Paul, Hardie, Andrew and McEnery, Tony. A Glossary of Corpus Linguistics.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006. 192pp. £9.99. ISBN 0-7486-2018-4.

*Alan Cruse. A Glossary of Semantics and Pragmatics.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006. 208pp. £9.99. ISBN 0-7486-2111-3.

*Alan Davies. A Glossary of Applied Linguistics.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005. 160pp. £9.99. ISBN 0-7486-1854-6.

*Geoffrey Leech. A Glossary of English Grammar.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006. 144pp. £9.99. ISBN 0-7486-1729-9.

The four volumes under review are the latest publications in the series *Glossaries in Linguistics* by Edinburgh University Press, launched in 2003 with Trudgill's *Glossary of Sociolinguistics*. The glossaries are intended as pocket-guides to topics in linguistics which define key terms of the respective fields (EUP catalogue *Language & Linguistics 2006-7*, 7). All of them provide concise definitions (usually a few lines, sometimes up to a page) of a few hundred items, arranged in alphabetical order and with a layout that makes for easy access. The definitions are preceded by a few pages of introductory remarks and followed by a short section of references and/or suggestions for further reading. Although the similarity of the titles suggests uniformity, the individual volumes, each authored by one or several specialists in the respective fields, differ from each other in several important respects and therefore warrant individual consideration.

The most easily noticeable differences are the type and scope of the topics and the number of entries. Whereas both Cruse's and Leech's volumes deal with levels of linguistic analysis (semantics and pragmatics on the one hand, and grammar on the other), Davies' covers what might be considered as a subfield of linguistics (applied linguistics) and Baker et al.'s volume covers a method of performing linguistic analyses (corpus linguistics). In addition, Leech's volume on grammar is explicitly limited to the English language. The other three, although this is nowhere made explicit, also focus on English, but make occasional reference to other languages. While the average length of the entries is similar across volumes (with Leech's definitions being particularly concise), the number of entries varies quite considerably, with Baker et al.'s *Glossary of Corpus Linguistics* containing the greatest and (perhaps somewhat surprisingly) Davies' *Glossary of Applied Linguistics* the smallest number of terms. Further differences include the function of the short sections preceding and following the body of entries, the ways of indicating the origin of the information given in the definitions, and, most importantly, the consistency in the selection of entries.

Leech's *Glossary of English Grammar* is "a revised, updated and much expanded version of the author's *Introducing English Grammar* (Penguin, 1992)" (4). The introduction serves to give a fairly detailed account of the principles on which the selection of terms is based, as well as of the origin of the examples in the definitions and the rationale behind the reference lists provided at the end of

the book. The entries focus on terms that are largely theory-neutral and widely used. The principal basis of the terminology covered in the glossary is Quirk et al.'s *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language* (Longman, 1985), but some terms from other grammars, in particular Huddleston and Pullum's *Cambridge Grammar of the English Language* (CUP, 2002) have also been included. The selection appears very careful indeed, and the glossary reads like a list of terms the undergraduate student of English linguistics ought to know, from **abstract noun**, **accusative case** ("An alternative term for **objective case**."), **active voice**, **actor** ("see **agent**") to **zero article**, **zero plural**, **zero relative clause** ("see **relative clause**; **cleft**, **cleft construction**") and **zero relative pronoun** ("see **relative clause**; **relative pronoun**"). Clear language is used throughout, as indeed in all the volumes reviewed here. In the *Glossary of English Grammar*, most definitions are additionally illustrated by examples, which are consistently well-chosen. They are partly based on intuition and partly adapted versions of authentic language extracted from computer corpora of Present Day English. A particularly useful feature of this glossary is that the individual definitions often include information on the approach or theory in which a certain term is (usually) used (e.g. **continuous**: A term used instead of **progressive** in many pedagogical treatments of grammar [...]; 27). At the end of the glossary, suggestions for further reading are provided, first in the form of a bibliography, and then in the form of a list stating which of the books cited are useful to whom and/or follow which approach. The lists, and supposedly also the glossary as a whole, are intended "for students or people without a specialist knowledge of [...] grammar" (132). Although it naturally only contains a small part of existing grammatical terminology and certainly does not (and is not intended to) replace a grammar, this book is a useful complement, in particular for the beginning student of linguistics.

Cruse's *Glossary of Semantics and Pragmatics* is aimed at the same target group, as stated explicitly in the introduction, and at "more advanced students who are beginners as far as semantics and pragmatics are concerned" (1). The introduction also briefly provides some information on the selection and length of the entries. Terms have been selected for inclusion if they are likely to be encountered by those beginning with the study of the fields in question and have been taken from all "main theoretical approaches" (4), and an entry typically gives a bit more information than is usually found in an encyclopaedia entry. Most of the introduction, however, is devoted to outlining the fields of semantics and pragmatics, as well as semiotics, which the glossary also covers to some degree. The outline includes brief explanations of different approaches and major concepts in the respective fields and is highly accessible. The same is true for the definitions given in the entries, despite the fact that these often deal with fairly abstract concepts. Whenever possible, examples are provided. As in Leech's volume, information is frequently given as to where a particular term originates and/or which theory primarily uses it. As is to be expected considering the main research interests of the author, semantics, and in particular lexical relations and

Cognitive Semantics, receive particular attention in the book. The central terms of pragmatics are, however, also covered (such as terms from speech act theory or conversation analysis). Unfortunately, there is no information on which work(s) the definitions in the glossary are primarily based, but at the end a bibliography is given, which lists those works which are referred to by author's name in the definitions. The final section also provides suggestions for further reading, nicely ordered according to level and subfield or approach, and with comments on each publication cited (as to its coverage and level of difficulty). This glossary is therefore a useful, and unique, complementation to introductory textbooks in the fields of semantics and pragmatics.

While Cruse's glossary is unique in that definitions of terms in the fields covered up to its publication only appeared in general dictionaries of linguistics, the *Glossary of Corpus Linguistics* by Paul Baker, Andrew Hardie, and Tony McEnery, is not only unique but also fills a real gap, as terms relating to corpus linguistics have not been systematically compiled at all before and hardly appear in general linguistic dictionaries. The greatest part of the introduction is taken up by a long list of acronyms (and their full forms), which the field has brought forth in abundance. Information on the selection of terms is provided on the back cover, where it is stated that entries focus on six broad areas, namely important corpora, key technical terms in the field, key linguistic terms relevant to corpus-based research, key statistical measures used in corpus linguistics, key computer programs used in the construction and exploitation of corpora, and standards applied in the field of corpus linguistics. Also to be found in the glossary, though not listed as a separate area, are several names of associations devoted to the field, for example organisations devoted to the distribution of corpora. All of the areas listed are well-represented, though a number of widely-used terms pertaining to the third category are missing, for example *span*, *node* or *chunk*. But as there was no previous work to draw upon in the compilation of terms, this is forgivable. More importantly, for the first time, terms such as *semantic prosody* or *colligation*, which are widely used in corpus linguistics and only rarely by researchers not familiar with the field, can be looked up. In addition, for most corpora and corpus software with a separate entry, information is also provided on where they can be obtained (which in many cases means downloaded or accessed). As in the other glossaries under review here, definitions are easily comprehensible throughout, even those explaining statistical measures. Of the glossaries reviewed, it is the only one providing references throughout the definitions and, as a consequence, an extensive reference list. An additional (shorter) list of suggested further readings (ideally with comments), is, however, not provided, and would be a welcome addition for a potential future edition. As the glossary covers a large number and wide range of relevant terms, it is useful not only for corpus users but also for corpus compilers, and suitable for both students and researchers who are beginning to explore the methodology as well as for more advanced corpus linguists.

The fourth volume under review, Davies' *A Glossary of Applied Linguistics*, does not quite reach the standard set by the other three. Partly this is due to the fact that applied linguistics is an ill-defined and potentially large field. In the introduction, this problem is addressed, and two different definitions of applied linguistics contrasted, one that largely limits the field to language teaching (Corder) and one that includes all investigations of real-world problems in which language is central (Brumfit). It is claimed that the glossary follows Corder's definition, "by targeting language teaching" (2), but at the same time Brumfit's definition seems to be considered the more accurate one. While this already shines through in the introduction (where linguistics is said to deal "with idealisations"; 1), it becomes obvious in the selection of entries. It is true that many entries focus on language learning and teaching, but there are also many entries which are not from these fields, such as general core-linguistic terms such as **phonology**, **phoneme**, **grapheme**, **semantics**, **lexicology**, **reflexivity** (as a grammatical term), as well as terms from areas of linguistics such as pragmatics, socio-linguistics and variety studies, for example **Australian English**, **Bokmal**, **Brown corpus**, **colloquial**, **gender**, **turn-taking**, and numerous others. While the inclusion of some of these, in particular the core-linguistic terms, might have been justified if reference to the field of applied linguistics had been made in the definitions, this is mostly not the case (e.g. "**grapheme** The smallest unit of a writing system capable of causing a contrast in meaning. In English the 26 units of the alphabet are the main graphemes. See also **phoneme**"). What is more, the inclusion of terms from fields other than language learning and teaching often seems rather random. One example is the inclusion of **Bokmal** (defined as "One of the two officially recognised standard forms of Norwegian [...]"), whereas the focus otherwise is on English; another example is the inclusion of **Brown corpus** as a headword (but not of any learner corpus or indeed the concept of learner corpus, which is highly relevant to the field of language learning and teaching). In view of the inconsistency in the selection of items, it seems somewhat ironic when it is claimed on the back cover that the glossary helps define the field of applied linguistics. On the positive side, many terms central to the field of language learning and teaching have been included (e.g. **acquisition**, **CALL**, **error**, **hypercorrection**, **immersion**, **language aptitude**, **learning strategies** etc.), though naturally not as many as can be found in other dictionaries of applied linguistics and/or language teaching (as for example those published by Longman). The terms are defined in the clear and concise style common to all the volumes. The final section presents a short reading list ordered as to type of publication (dictionaries, handbooks etc.), without further comments, however. A list of authors on whose works the definitions are based is also provided (in the preface), but the complete references are not.

To sum up, *A Glossary to English Grammar* and *A Glossary to Semantics and Pragmatics* can be recommended to beginning students in the respective fields, as useful supplements to grammars and textbooks on the topics. *A Glossary of Applied Linguistics* is only of limited use, and only for beginning students in the

field of language learning and teaching, and *A Glossary of Corpus Linguistics* is most useful to anyone interested in the field, be they beginning or more advanced students or researchers.

Nadja Nesselhauf (Heidelberg)

Mair, Christian and Heuberger, Reinhard, eds., in collaboration with Josef Wallmannsberger. **Corpora and the History of English. Papers Dedicated to Manfred Markus on the Occasion of His Sixty-Fifth Birthday.** Heidelberg: Winter, 2006. 358 pp. €54.00. ISBN 3-8253-5158-0.

As is indicated by its subtitle, this book is a *festschrift* for Manfred Markus, Professor of English Linguistics at the University of Innsbruck – one of those colleagues who appear so juvenile and energetic that one is surprised to find he is of *festschrift* age. Typical features of this genre in the book include a very nicely written preface and dedication by the editors, two of his former students; a photo of the smiling jubilee; a Tabula Gratulatoria; and an Appendix with his list of publications. Markus is perhaps best known internationally for having compiled ICAMET, an electronic corpus of historical English texts, and so it is fitting that this book revolves around the interface between “Corpus Linguistics”, the fashionable application of data processing techniques to machine-readable texts, and the historical text documentation and investigation of English.

There are twenty-one papers in the volume. Some of them are actually rather marginal to the volume’s topic, or fail to relate to it at all. Leona F. Cordery points out select topics to be found in medieval texts on the crusades, largely from a historical and literary perspective. Heidemarie Ganner muses on how to translate the words *boy* and *black*, used in a New Zealand Maori narrative, adequately into German. Horst Weinstock discusses some aspects of the Middle English text *Vices and Virtues*.

Conversely, a few papers are absolutely to the point in that they provide investigations of historical processes based on electronic corpora. In a small-scale but sophisticated study which employs online versions of the *Dictionary of Old English* (DOE) Corpus and the *Middle English Dictionary* (MED) as well as ICAMET, Hans-Jürgen Diller impressively traces the demise of lexemes which contain the morpheme *mod* in Middle English. Marina Dossena zooms in on a detail of corpus compilation, the choice of annotating tags in a corpus of nineteenth-century Scottish correspondence. Udo Fries screens the development of the abbreviations *'tis* and *it's*, with or without an apostrophe, in the Zurich English Newspaper Corpus of the late seventeenth and eighteenth century. Maurizio Gotti compares the uses of *shall* and *will* for third-person future reference in the major types of pertinent speech acts, based on an Early Modern English subsection of the Helsinki Corpus; he finds them distributed in a more complex

fashion than described in earlier grammars. Also using the DOE and MED corpora, Thomas Kohnen tackles and illustrates a core methodological problem in historical corpus linguistics, namely that of identifying occurrences of a topic under investigation (in his case manifestations of the speech act “directives”), given the problem of lexical and orthographic variability. Christian Mair uses his Freiburg 1990s updates of the classic 1960s corpora of British and American English to investigate the putative comeback of the ’s-genitive as against the postnominal *of*-phrase and finds rather complex constraints in effect, and above all a continuing reluctance of inanimate nouns to adopt the inflectional ending. Lilo Moessner looks into the uses of the subjunctive in Early Modern English corpora.

Some contributions use not electronic text files but other collections and sources (“corpora” in a broader, non-technical sense) to investigate issues in the history of English. Uwe Böker surveys earlier scholarship on and aspects of eighteenth-century cant (secret vocabulary of marginal groups), with the long-term goal of building an electronic corpus of such texts from old lexicographic sources and court proceedings; he thus contributes an interesting perspective which oscillates between cultural history and methodological issues in corpus compilation. Manfred Kienpointner promises to analyze semantic change in verbs and nouns in the word field of *love-hate-anger* over the last 300 years, based on data from the electronic *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) and recent dictionaries, but essentially he rehashes familiar tenets of word field theory and then throws in a few word lists and select examples. Gabriele Knappe uses Rogge’s *Thesaurus* and other early dictionaries as evidence for nineteenth-century phraseology. Hans Peters uses dictionary evidence and applies a cognitive framework to track the semantic changes of the adjective *smart* since Old English. Akinobu Tani looks into select quasi-synonymic word-pair conjoints in the *Thesaurus of Old English* and in a Middle English text, though the rationale of this study is difficult to see.

Some papers discuss aspects of modern English, with or without an explicit corpus base. Using the British component of the International Corpus of English and the British National Corpus as evidence and employing complex programming tools, Jürgen Esser searches but fails to identify age-related differences, i.e. language development in a lifetime, in syntactic complexity, defined quantitatively (as words per sentence or frequencies of certain types of constituent embedding). Reinhard Heuberger documents word frequency information, the use of authentic language samples, and the inclusion of self-contained corpora in CD-ROM versions as innovative features of recent British dictionaries for foreign-language learners which reflect their origins in electronic text databases. Productive processes of lexical change (primarily word-formation) in present-day English are systematically listed and illustrated by many examples in a contribution by Raymond Hickey – an article which is interesting and certainly useful but somewhat marginal to the volume topic. Based upon the voluminous

Mannheim electronic Corpus of German, Bernhard Kettemann shows that, contrary to widespread claims, recent anglicisms in German are both morphologically integrated (using the examples *recycelt*, *gelayoutet* and *outgesourct*) and serve to introduce semantic differentiations (as in the cases of *shoppen*, clearly a leisure-time activity unlike laborious *einkaufen*, or, similarly, *cool* vs. *kühl* and *Event* vs. *Ereignis*). Based on a rather narrow, purely formal definition of “anglicisms”, Alexander Onysko discusses methodological questions of identifying them in the magazine *Der Spiegel*. Wolfgang Viereck introduces his project of setting up an atlas of English family names (which does include a diachronic component as well), emphasizing methodological problems like sources and mapping procedures and presenting some early results in the form of maps and tables.

As in any such collection, there is of course a certain unevenness in the quality and focus of the individual contributions; some are more central to the topic than others; and quite a number fail to contribute to the cross-over which should give it its distinctive character. Perhaps this is indicated by the fact that, regrettably, the papers are ordered alphabetically rather than by thematic subgroups. Overall, however, no doubt this is a fine collection, with a few very interesting and innovative and some outstanding and highly valuable contributions. It is a welcome indication of the recent trend that *festschriften* are no longer planned as collections of next to anything but that they are intended to come out as thematically coherent volumes which make a significant contribution to a field. As such it constitutes a fitting gift to and appreciation of the work of the honoree.

*Edgar W. Schneider* (Regensburg)

*Skandera, Paul*, ed. **Phraseology and Culture in English**. Berlin/New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 2007. ix, 511pp. €98 ISBN: 978-3-11-019087-8.

The phenomenon of phraseology is one of the key topics in current linguistics. As its title indicates, this volume tries to examine the relationship between phraseology and cultural perspectivization, tackling the question which role (semi-)preconstructed items play in the context of the linguistic relativity principle: following the assumption that linguistic expressions are reflections of conceptual dimensions on the one hand and influence perception on the other, the volume seeks to explore how cultural identity manifests itself in linguistic usage, especially in (semi-)preconstructed items.

The articles in this volume are grouped into different sections, according to their focus of interest: the first section concentrates on particular lexemes. Anna Wierzbicka, for example, examines the phrase *reasonably well* and, drawing on corpus analysis, the Anglo history of Enlightenment, the semantic change of *reasonable* and a comparative analysis with French, is able to demonstrate that

this phrase can be described as “a whole cloud of culture condensed in a drop of phraseology” (paraphrasing Wittgenstein; 50). Bert Peeters focuses on the importance of weekend in Australian culture; but whereas this claim is certainly uncontroversial, its proof is not always linguistic (e.g. the fact that a jury voted for the song *Friday on my mind* being the most important Australian song or that it is not unusual for university departments to hold weekly sessions called *Thank God it's Friday*), and if it is, it is not necessarily restricted to semi-preconstructed items (e.g. the derivation *Mondayitis*). Using the *Bank of English* Monika Bednarek and Wolfram Bublitz analyse colligations, semantic preferences and collocations of the imperative *Enjoy...!* (as in *Enjoy your meal!*), coming to the conclusion that “[e]verything in the data embodies and proclaims the simple message: ‘having fun’ is good” (129), an implicit meaning of *Enjoy...!* that is for example exploited by the persuasion and advertising industry. Doris Schönefeld takes a cross-linguistic perspective, comparing the collocations of English *hot*, German *heiß*, and Russian *gorjachij*. Her findings suggest that in the literal sense, *hot*, *heiß* and *gorjachij* have a quite similar semantic range (even though English *hot* seems to be used for lower temperatures than German *heiß*); differences in usage can however be found on the metaphorical level.

The second section discusses the role of idioms for cultural conceptualization. It starts with the contribution by Charles Clay Doyle, which mainly provides a historical overview of collections of proverbs and proverb dictionaries. Only in the last section of the article (“gendered’ proverbs”) it is attempted to establish a connection between proverbs and conceptual attitudes. This, however, is done with a tendency to stereotypical generalizations: it can for example be read that “[c]ollege-aged women, with their ‘body-image issues’ and their proneness to eating disorders, say ‘A moment on the lips, forever on the hips,’ and ‘It’s better to look good than to feel good’” (197-198), whereas “[c]ertainly men are capable of satirizing the stereotype of themselves as sexist pigs” (199). At least for the author of the present review it was not easy to see the relevance of statements such as: “Maybe there is even something redemptive in the indiscriminating attraction to all women; after all, how different, in its ‘meaning,’ is the wholesome proverb ‘Beauty is only skin deep’ from the newer male proverb ‘It’s all pink on the inside’? At least *that* is not the sentiment that gives rise to anorexia in young women” (199). Wolfgang Mieder investigates American proverbs and especially those used in New England. A categorization of various New England proverbs leads him to the conclusion that “[t]here certainly is a lot of practical wisdom in these common-sensical proverbs that are definitely part of the worldview or mentality of the people in New England” (228). Quite similarly, by investigating similes and other evaluative idioms in Australian English, Pam Peters identifies certain topics that seem to be prevalent in Australian experience. In the last article of that section, Svenja Adolphs takes a close look at the modality cluster *definitely maybe*; but even though the linguistic analysis and its result that the meaning of this cluster conveys a certain idiomatic quality are

convincing, it is not easy to see how this cluster exerts an influence on or is influenced by cognitive schemata.

The contributions by Melina Magdalena and Peter Mühlhäusler, Andrea Gerbig and Angel Shek, and by Karin Aijmer focus on registers: environmental language, or “greenspeak”, is the topic of the article by Magdalena and Mühlhäusler. Drawing on texts published between 1993 and 2003, the authors investigate aspects such as e.g. length of expressions, resources, derivation, or word-formation processes in greenspeak and are able to shed some light on how environment is talked about and therefore conceptualized in different contexts. Gerbig and Shek compare several keywords connected with the concept of tourism and analyse their linguistic usages in the *Lancaster-Oslo-Bergen Corpus*, the *Freiburg-Lancaster-Oslo-Bergen Corpus* and the *British National Corpus*, observing “shifts in cultural practices; from travelling as a privilege for the aristocracy and the rich to holidays as seasonal movements of the masses, to globalisation and travelling as a prerequisite to professional success” (318). Aijmer explores the development of text-type specific routine formulae, as they have come to be used with answering-machines. Her data reveals that messages on answering machines follow a specific sequence allowing for structural variation, and that the routine formulae are borrowed from various other registers, such as face-to-face communication, telephone conversation, letter writing and radio communication.

The last section of the volume is concerned with phraseology in dialects and ethnolects. The first variety presented in this section is Tristan da Cunha English, with Daniel Schreier investigating the symbolic value of the greeting formula *How you is?* His recordings reveal that at least some Tristanians regard this greeting as part of their own cultural identity. Discussing multiword units in Aboriginal English, Ian G. Malcolm and Farzad Sharifan show that “[t]he vernacularization of English by Aboriginal people has (...) involved the use of English lexical items with semantic shift” (380) and that the differences between Aboriginal English and Australian English can be accounted for by different conceptualizations of life and environment. Similarly, Hans-Georg Wolf and Frank Polzenhagen convincingly demonstrate that cultural schemata prevailing in African communities find their reflection in linguistic usage, the African English usage conveying different linguistic patterns than British and American English. Last but not least, Christian Mair examines collocational choices made by writers in different varieties of English, describing these choices as “complementary approaches to the same phenomenon, culturally motivated lexical variability in world Englishes” (442). As follow-ups to his findings he addresses the question of collocational density in learner language in comparison to second language varieties as well as the suitability of the Web as a source for extensive corpus analysis.

The four sections are introduced by a prologue by Andrew Pawley, which offers a valuable summary of the development of phraseology in the last decades, bringing together results and insights of various disciplines regarding the status

of preconstructed items. The concluding contribution to the volume, the epilogue written by Penny Lee, stresses the central role of phraseology for the understanding of the nature of language and sums up the findings of the preceding articles.

As can be seen from the outline above, the articles address various facets of phraseology and culture in English on the one hand, and use different approaches to investigating the problem in question on the other. In order to ascertain whether “a language, especially its lexicon, influences its speakers’ cultural patterns of thought and perception in various ways” (v), some of these methods prove to be more suitable than others. If conceptualization and the perspective on our surroundings are to be influenced by the way these surroundings are encoded by our language, there are two sides of the coin to be taken account of: the semantic nature of the linguistic expression used to refer to certain concepts, objects or situations can reveal how these are perceived; but it is probably only in a certain quantity that these linguistic expressions actually influence our way of perspectivization. One approach with which these two lines of investigation can be combined is corpus linguistics, as it is able to provide information on both aspects. The articles using corpus linguistic methodology can therefore be said to make a valuable contribution to the topic of the volume, always provided that a link between corpus findings and their implications for cultural conceptualization is established. Furthermore, comparative analyses examining the usages of (near-)equivalents can reveal how in different languages or varieties the realizations of so-thought same semantic concepts can form part of quite different (semi-)preconstructed items. To find an answer to the question asked in the preface of the volume, the direction to take is therefore first to have a look at the linguistic material and then draw conclusions for the cultural implication, but not vice versa.

Summing up, it can be said that the question whether the lexicon of a language exerts influence upon our way of thinking can only be answered by analysing large amounts of data. As is the nature of articles in such a volume, the present contributions can only focus on details; but taken together, they add up like pieces of a puzzle, suggesting indeed that cultural conceptualization finds its reflection in linguistic expression and that the semantic side of linguistic expression is responsible for cognitive categorization.

*Katrin Götz-Votteler* (Erlangen)

*van Gelderen, Elly. A History of the English Language.* Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2006. xviii, 334 pp. €33 / \$39.95. ISBN 90-272-3237-7 (paperback), €110 / \$132 ISBN 90-272-3236-6 (hardback).

This new textbook, by a respected language historian, is said to be intended for advanced undergraduate and graduate students. Characteristic textbook features include lists of key words and topics for discussion and exercises at the end of each chapter (with a key to possible answers in an appendix) and rich illustrative material, including cartoons, pictures, graphs, and, above all, many text samples, including facsimile reproductions of old texts. The appendix also has useful sections with a chronology of English language history and on how to use the OED online. One special feature mentioned to justify yet another textbook in this battled area is the explicit integration of the internet: there are many URLs quoted which lead to further materials (e.g. audio samples of readings of historical texts), and there is a website supporting the book (nicely done but with very little additional information of any value). Another one is a purported emphasis on internal changes – more on this below.

Four core chapters, largely similar in structure, cover the main historical periods of English. Chapters 4 on Old English, 6 on Middle English, 7 on Early Modern English, and 8 on Modern English provide information on textual documentation and spelling conventions, “sounds” (the notion of phonemes is not employed), morphology and syntax, the lexicon, and dialects, in their respective periods. Many text samples are integrated (some of them glossed); and each of these chapters is followed by lengthy appendixes in which about a handful or more of texts from the respective period, of several pages length each, are reproduced. Some of the Old English texts are translated or glossed; most of the others are not.

The other chapters, while addressing an extremely wide range of topics, are less clearly focused. Chapter 1, “The English language”, discusses early settlement history, the notion of euphemisms, sounds and grammatical words, topics of sociolinguistics, types of language change, prescriptivism, identity markers in Canadian English, external history, and the Battle of Hastings, roughly in this order. If this chapter “explored defining English” (10), it is definitely more of an exploration than a definition. Chapter 2 combines “English spelling, sounds, and grammar”, covering topics which range from basic articulatory phonetics via notions like epenthesis or metathesis to a preview of the Great Vowel Shift, and, similarly in grammar, from elementary terms like inflection and case to grammaticalization. This, I feel, provides less of a helpful “background” (26) than a collection of all kinds of issues which are distantly related to each other, from the maximally simple to the highly complex. Chapters 3 and 5 will be discussed below. Chapter 8, interestingly enough and certainly welcome in principle, opens the perspective to “English around the World”, discussing the external history of the expansion of English and select peculiarities of new varieties of English on

the levels of pronunciation, spelling, grammar, and vocabulary; it also mentions pidgins and creoles and English as a threat to the world's language diversity. Whether these grammatical properties can and should be presented as a continuation of earlier internal trends of English, as is done in the end (273), seems highly doubtful, however. Finally, Chapter 10, the "Conclusion", promises to "review the major changes in English" (281), which, in all fairness, it does, in two or three brief paragraphs, while most of the space is spent in a discussion of theories of language change in very abstract terms, and the Sapir-Whorf-Hypothesis.

No doubt there are lots of valuable facts and a whole range of interesting details presented in this book. Any reader who takes the time to work through all of it will profit from this and is likely to find something of interest and something new, and students who really digest all of these texts and examples will command a thorough familiarity with English and its history. But is it a suitable textbook? As is implied in my notes above I find it confusing and illogical in both its macro- and its micro-structure. All kinds of fashionable topics in linguistics are mentioned in passing, and details are presented which are totally irrelevant for the history of English, while some essential facts and, more importantly, explanations are missing. What follows are some illustrations of these concerns.

As to the overall structure, let us look at what Chapters 3 and 5 offer. In the chapter "Before Old English" we get discussions of the following topics: archeology; migrations of early man; Egyptian logograms (nicely reproduced); the comparative method; Grimm's Law (now we are there after all – but there is no word on Verner's Law, the important sideline); the Second, High German Consonant Shift (I fail to see what the relevance of this is for the history of English); case systems of Sanskrit and Hindi (with examples); and ideological issues in recognizing or denying any relatedness between Japanese and Korean (!). The fact that there are distinctive properties of Germanic languages, like weak verbs and adjectives, is mentioned very briefly, but there is no word on the Germanic Main Stress Rule or on vocalic changes leading from Indo-European to Germanic. In Chapter 5, its title, "From Old to Middle English", is, quite simply, a misnomer. It discusses loan words in English, from practically all periods: Celtic, Latin (both pre-OE and modern), Scandinavian, and French (notwithstanding their much later intrusion). Sections on the mixed-origin lexicon of English as a means of deception (105) or a rehash of the notorious creole origins thesis of Middle English, long refuted (unless one subscribes to a totally nontechnical understanding of "creole" as broadly influenced by any kind of contact) do not contribute to the clarity of this chapter. Similarly, the Middle English chapter ends with a list of all "internal changes" in English, regardless from which period (138).

This rather chaotic line-up of topics can be found on the micro-level of the text in many chapters as well, I'm afraid; subsequent statements and topics are

frequently only very distantly related to each other, while a reader is likely to search for a cohesive connection. For example, on a single page (3) the text jumps from the Roman occupation of Britain and early European slavery via an illustration of difficult Latin-derived loans in a modern text and, in passing, the native origin of the English plural *-s* to the notion of euphemisms. Where is the logic behind this?

Many details are mentioned which to a student of the history of English are simply superfluous and distracting, while, surprisingly, some facts which I would consider essentials are missing. In the first category: cartoons are always fun, of course, but I wonder what the learning effect is of reproducing one with a sign “Key poof” at the edge of a cliff, unexplained and uncommented (6)? When the terms *sounds*, *vowels* and *consonants* are introduced, readers are told the number of consonants in Hawaiian and Finnish (8 and 13, respectively, in case a reader of this review is interested ...); similarly, elementary notions like *word order* and *grammatical words* are illustrated by mentioning the lack of endings in Chinese and multiple prefixation in Navajo (5-6). There are lots of details in this book – some which are relevant but of questionable necessity (like endless Old English paradigms), others which are just distracting and irrelevant (like, for instance, a long listing of “literary figures” in the World Englishes chapter – with all due respect to authors like Tsitsi Dangarembga and others of equal standing; 254). Furthermore, the wording in detail sometimes is such that certain facts come out a little infelicitously. For instance, did English really “officially start” in 449 (2)? Or, on the same page: mentioning both Latin being spoken in Britain before 410 and the existence of early Latin loan words like *wine* in Germanic in the same paragraph will automatically imply to the uninformed reader that this is where and when these words entered English, which is a characteristic erroneous assumption of many students. A similarly misleading statement much later: Australia was certainly not, next to America, one of “the first” world regions to be affected by the global spread of English (250). Or, from the modern English chapter: assuming that a textbook writer usually proceeds from the most to the less important, stating that the twentieth century is “characterized by revolutions in art (e.g. Cubism, Surrealism, [...]), two world wars, and many technological and medical advances as well as changes in political and social ideas” (205) makes me wonder whether priorities are right here.

Conversely, in the discussion of the sounds of Middle English changes in vowel length are mentioned briefly (119), but no principles, explanations, or sound changes are offered (although this is an important topic with substantial consequences in the pronunciation and spelling systems of modern English!). The Great Vowel Shift is covered only very briefly. Strangely enough, while the book claims to emphasize internal change and the restructuring of English from a synthetic to an analytic language as its core topics, the most important of all likely, purely internal reasons for this grammatical change, the fixing of stress in Germanic which led to the phonetic weakening and ultimately loss of endings, is

not mentioned at all (and the change of the character of English is tentatively accounted for by language contact, a purely external factor; 98).

In sum, it is perhaps a bit unfair to sound so critical, given that, yes, there is a whole lot of material in this book which makes it worthwhile reading: many relevant statements and details, and many discussions of examples that a reader will profit from. But from a textbook I would expect clarity of structure and presentation, systematicity, guidance as to what is important and what isn't, and a consistent and possibly increasing level of difficulty, and all of these qualities I miss here. Teachers who consider adopting this book as course reading should be warned that a lot of additional efforts will be required from them, explaining and accounting for some facts, and, above all, providing connections and a structured context, all of which the book largely fails to provide.

*Edgar W. Schneider* (Regensburg)

*McH. Sinclair, John and Mauranen, Anna. Linear Unit Grammar. Integrating Speech and Writing.* Studies in Corpus Linguistics 25, Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2006. xxi, 185pp. €33 ISBN 978-9027222992 (paperback), €95 ISBN 978-9027222985 (hardback).

John Sinclair's and Anna Mauranen's book *Linear Unit Grammar* presents a challenge to much conventional thought in linguistics. It investigates the perspective of how readers or listeners make sense of a text. One of the claims of the book is that the approach described applies equally to all varieties of a language, thus, as indicated by the subtitle, *integrating speech and writing*.

The central issue of the book is chunking. It is argued that in some form or other chunking takes place whenever a sentence of English is encountered by a reader or listener, although different speakers would not necessarily identify identical chunks in a given stretch of language. The ability to chunk a text is seen as an intuitive skill (54), as "a natural and unavoidable way of perceiving language text as it is encountered" (6). The role of chunking is effectively demonstrated in a preamble in which the reader is presented with four lines of text in the following form (xxx):

(1) theheadmasterofharrowtellsannmcferranwhyhehas ...

Focussing on the analysis of chunks means a concentration on the linear aspect of language: "Our policy is to maintain linearity until we combine elements so as to be closer to the requirements of a natural grammar" (6). This policy has a number of interesting consequences for the analysis: on the one hand, of course, the model is able to deal without difficulty with such phenomena as false starts etc. typical of spoken discourse. On the other hand, it provides a justification for rejecting categories like "ellipsis" or "words understood" (150). Notions such as

acceptability, grammaticalness or well-formedness obviously play no role in this approach (49).

The term chunk as used in the book is described as “pre-theoretical term” (130). Although the enormous role of recurrent chunks such as formulaic wholes is underlined with reference to current linguistic and psychological models, these are not the kinds of chunk that are in the centre of this book. Rather, the chunks concentrated upon here are linear sequences of usually not more than four or five words, although this is not to be taken as an absolute upper limit. It is obvious that the chunks identified in this bottom-up type of grammar are not identical with the constituents of, say, phrase structure grammar. In fact, it is one of the main attractions of this book that it forces the reader to question traditional or established categories or principles of grammatical description or to find additional evidence for questioning them. Thus the fact that the sequence

(2) i haven't | i didn't see anything | because | it was during the night

is chunked in this way (in a slightly different graphic representation) leads to a interesting discussion about the status of the conjunction *because*, which is analysed as belonging to neither clause, which is a break from conventional grammar in which such conjunctions are generally seen as part of a subordinate clause which as a whole functions as an adverbial in the main clause. Although of course there are good reasons for such classifications, rejecting “the argument that our texts must all be divided into clauses” (18) seems very attractive for a number of reasons, as is demonstrated in the discussion of the role of phrases such as *and then* or *first of all*, which are often described as conjuncts or disjuncts (75).

The approach which is outlined in this book, making use of a large number of different types of text examples, consists of several steps, which cannot all be described here. A first step consists of identifying a PUB (provisional unit boundary), which separates one chunk from another. Then, a distinction is made between two basic types of elements: message-oriented elements (M), “which are concerned with that which is being talked about”, which “increment the shared knowledge of the speakers”, and organisation-oriented elements (O), “which are primarily concerned with managing the discourse” (59), the latter being subdivided into text-oriented (OT) and interactive-oriented (OI). These distinctions may be easier to draw in theory than to apply in practice. The analysis of the occurrence of these types of chunk reveal interesting differences between different text samples (ranging from spoken language to Joyce).

A further important distinction that it is introduced is that between message fragments (MF), which are not continued, M--elements, which are not complete but continued, and +M-elements, which continue M--elements (xxx):

1	A: erm	OI
2	if you have a direct contact	M-
3	with the people	+M
4	and	OT
5	you don't have	M-
6	s-	MF
7	efficient Estonian	+M

There seems to be a certain inconsistency in the model in that elements are classified as M- if they are followed by a +M; if chunk 4 were missing, 2 would presumably be classified as M. Here, structural properties of lexical items, in particular valency properties in terms of optional or obligatory complementation, could provide a useful elaboration of the model. The classification of elements as M- opens up interesting parallels with the strategies described by Clark and Clark (1977).

This kind of chunk description – with a few more types of chunk such as MS (message supplement) and MR (message revision) – is then used to arrive at a revised kind of analysis, in which OI-elements and message fragments are removed from the linear stream and M--elements are reconciled with +M-elements, for example, to provide a basis for further descriptive analysis (91). However, it is debatable whether all of the adjustments of texts toward written norms are really necessary. Thus it is difficult to see why a stretch such as (xxx)

4	it was an article i read
5	it was a famous Estonian television re- porter
6	he went on hunger strike

should lead to a “revised version” which “is close to the norms of coherent written prose” (101):

- (3) *It was an article I read about a famous Estonian television reporter who went on hunger strike.*

This is rather surprising because it suggests superiority of the written medium after all. It might seem preferable to keep the surface-orientation of the analysis and develop a system for expressing the relations between the different chunks.

While sections A and B set out the background and system of the analysis, the chapters in section C provide a detailed analysis of a number of text extracts and an attempt to position Linear Unit Grammar in the linguistic scene. In the introductory section Nida's immediate constituent analysis, Brazil's *Grammar of Speech*, and construction grammar receive particular attention. In many respects, the approach outlined can be seen as plea for a shift in emphasis. This does not only apply to models of syntactic analysis, but also to discourse analysis, where it is argued that while in the past differences between conversation and written

texts and the analysis of the competitive aspect of the participants in a conversation were emphasized, it may now be time to look at complementary aspects. In the final chapter, the authors discuss questions of alignment with other grammars and outline its use “as a novel kind of shallow or partial parser” (147) or possible applications in language and information science or in language teaching and interpreting.

Room for further research obviously concerns the psychological aspects for chunking. While many references to current approaches in psycholinguistics and cognitive linguistics and also to Thom’s catastrophe theory are made, the approach outlined in *Linear Unit Grammar* is not immediately related to experimental evidence. Rather, the book can be seen as preparing the ground for such research and for opening up the right kind of research paradigm: “The possibility of experimental confirmation is, however, a live issue, and if our general approach and thesis finds approval then the expenditure of time and effort to substantiate our supposition could be justified” (7). The model sketched out by Sinclair and Mauranen – with its emphasis on real text, on the syntagmatic and linear aspects of language and on the need to question the validity of the categories with which we tend to describe language – provides many interesting insights into language text and opens up many fascinating research paradigms.

Since this is John Sinclair’s last book, it must be added that this book contains many of the features that are typical of John Sinclair’s approach to language and that this book is another example of the immense inquisitiveness and originality of his valuable contribution to the subject.

*Thomas Herbst* (Erlangen)

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## LIST OF AUTHORS

- Dr. Gaëtanelle Gilquin, Centre for English Corpus Linguistics, Université catholique de Louvain, Collège Erasme, Place Blaise Pascal 1, 1348 Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium.
- Katrin Götz-Votteler, Lehrstuhl für Anglistik, insbesondere Linguistik, Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg, Bismarckstraße 1, 91054 Erlangen, Germany.
- Prof. Dr. Franz-Josef Hausmann, Lehrstuhl für Angewandte Sprachwissenschaft, Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg, Glückstr. 5/2, 91054 Erlangen, Germany.
- Prof. Dr. Thomas Herbst, Lehrstuhl für Anglistik, insbesondere Linguistik, Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg, Bismarckstraße 1, 91054 Erlangen, Germany.
- Prof. Dr. Göran Kjellmer, English Department, Göteborg University, Renströmsgatan 6, Box 200, 405 30 Göteborg, Sweden.
- Diana Lea, Oxford University Press, Great Clarendon Street, Oxford OX2 6DP, Great Britain.
- Dr. Nadja Nesselhauf, Anglistisches Seminar, Kettengasse 12, 69117 Heidelberg, Germany.
- Prof. Dr. Dirk Siepmann, Fachbereich Sprach- und Literaturwissenschaft, Universität Osnabrück, Neuer Graben 40, 49069 Osnabrück, Germany.
- Prof. Dr. Hans-Jörg Schmid, Lehrstuhl für Moderne Englische Sprachwissenschaft, Institut für Englische Philologie, Department für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München, Schellingstraße 3/RG, 80799 München, Germany.
- Prof. Dr. Edgar W. Schneider, Lehrstuhl für Englische Sprachwissenschaft, Universität Regensburg, Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, 93040 Regensburg, Germany.

GERD BAYER

## Traveling Urban Utopias and the Birth of Suburbia

**Abstract:** This article argues that the development of American-style suburbia is related to the European utopian longing for openness as expressed in William Morris's *News from Nowhere*. This European desire is here shown to be a reaction to an American utopian literary tradition, exemplified by Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward*, a novel that celebrates dense urbanity. After having traveled back and forth across the Atlantic and reversed their respective visions of urbanity, utopian writings ultimately materialized as dystopian urban spaces.

America at the turn of the millennium is suffering the woeful consequences, largely unanticipated, of trying to become a drive-in utopia. (Kunstler 2001, ix)

James Howard Kunstler's assessment of the state of the contemporary city increasingly proves to be an accurate prediction. His "drive-in utopia" describes the result of a development that had been gathering momentum throughout the last three decades of the twentieth century and into the twenty-first. While I basically agree with Kunstler, I would like to take issue with his claim that this process was "largely unanticipated." Assuming that Kunstler uses "anticipate" in its meaning "to realize beforehand," I would like to focus on a textual tradition that does anticipate with great insight at least some of the more recent developments, namely the nineteenth-century urban utopian novel. First and foremost amongst that genre are Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward: 2000-1887* from 1888 and William Morris's *News from Nowhere*, first published in 1890.

Kunstler's claim that later developments were not anticipated may sound convincing at first, but reveals itself to suffer from a simple geographical confusion which, once resolved, shows that the dystopia of American cities around the turn from the twentieth to the twenty-first century goes back to utopian European thinking of at least one hundred years earlier. The historical irony in the urban vision of early utopias rests in the fact that it was the density of European life that created the longing for open and impersonal spaces, which over time led to the drive-in dystopias of present urban spaces. This longing for openness finds its aesthetic realization in the anti-urban spatial visions of Morris's novel; that is, in the European revision of Bellamy's utopia. If Bellamy's novel can be taken as a representative text of America's spatial desire at the time, then we notice a substantially different direction in his text, one that favors community and density over sprawl and impersonal spaces. Whether such longings for dense

urbanity grew out of the early settlers' phobia of open spaces, as described by Roderick Frazier Nash in the first chapter of *Wilderness and the American Mind*, has to remain a matter for speculation. However, it is worth pointing out that the contemporary dystopia of American-style urban planning is a realization of European utopian writing and architectural visions having traveled back and forth over the Atlantic.

In other words: The often depressing urban spaces of contemporary America are the result of a European rewriting of an American literary longing for European cities. They are the outcome of only one of two distinct urban visions that have developed under very different traditions on both sides of the Atlantic around the turn from the nineteenth to the twentieth centuries: On the one hand, a European longing for open space and, on the other hand, an American desire for urban density. By following Morris's European distrust in the city, suburbia ignores Bellamy's American longing for urban density, itself an expression of the Romanticist 'City Beautiful Movement' that reaches back through Frederick Law Olmsted to preservation of natural landscapes.<sup>1</sup> Morris's own negation of the past city grew out of the problems that the city had to overcome as a result of industrialization. The city at the time, as described by Walter Creese in *The Search for Environment*, was "evolving more from an accretion of difficulties than from a successful formulation of new principles" (Creese 1966, 69); it was exactly this formulation of new principles that the utopian writers had in mind when they wrote their own urban spaces into literary existence.

That recent criticism increasingly understands cities as the imaginary constructs they are, on a level with nations or gender identity, is an important development in the discussion of urban visions. Phillip Wegner combines readings of the nation and the city in his *Imaginary Communities*; John Hannigan's book *Fantasy City* presents the contemporary city as a themed experience. It is therefore anything but surprising that literary voices took it upon themselves to envision the Modernist city in the late nineteenth century, when actual urban spaces were determined by such squalor that few would have thought of the city as an attractive place to live. In order to reverse this, it had become necessary to reinvent the city from the ground up. As Lewis Mumford notes, this process was defined by a negative conceptualization of the past problems: "[F]or the urbanist, its [the industrial city's] chief lesson was in what to avoid" (Mumford 1961, 446). In other words, the implied negativity of a utopian project fitted the plight of urban planning very well. Having stated this, it also becomes clear that any literary utopian urban space will work as the uncanny other of the actual spatial reality of the kind of city its author inhabited. The urban utopias of Bellamy and Morris each in their own way thus reveal much about the specific problems that cities

<sup>1</sup> Wilson points out that for the City Beautiful Movement "the city was the arena of the future" (Wilson 1989, 78) and that far from restructuring the existing cities the aim was to beautify and less to regulate social life. A similar tendency characterizes Camillo Sitte's largely aestheticist response to the troubling question of the future of urban form in his book *Der Städtebau* (1901).

were facing in the US and the UK in the late nineteenth century. The answers they gave in turn have their own prehistory.

## 1. Bookish Towns

The search for the two novelists' predecessors in the imagining of physical space leads to Prussia during the early decades of the nineteenth century and, more specifically, to Johann Heinrich von Thünen (1783-1850), a landowner and agriculturalist. In 1826, Thünen wrote an influential theory on the relationship between the location of agricultural production and the proximity to urban centers entitled *Der isolierte Staat in Beziehung auf Landwirtschaft und Nationalökonomie*, first published in English as *Isolated State* in 1966.<sup>2</sup> What marks this text, despite its late date of translation into English, as a precursor to modern urban planning is that it attempts to designate certain areas for specific use, in a similar fashion to how the planning boards of American cities disentangled mixed-use urban spaces into the repetitive wastelands described by Kunstler in *The Geography of Nowhere*. Thünen's model is remarkable for the extent to which it subjugates geography to the interests of production, going so far as to assume a uniform terrain around the center, thereby completely disregarding all inherent qualities of landscape and environment.<sup>3</sup> The geography of Thünen's *The Isolated State* thus stands at the beginning of modernity's 'triumphant' assault on sovereign space.<sup>4</sup> It confirms, a century and a half before it was made, Lefebvre's claim that "(physical) natural space is disappearing" (Lefebvre 1991, 30). When Lewis Mumford notes that "in the New World, towns were built as late as 1906 (Gary, Indiana) with no respect for any physical features except the location of the industrial plant" (Mumford 1961, 470), he implicitly gives credit to a kind of thinking that dates back to Thünen's geographical imagination. Thünen's almost complete disregard for the tradition of spatial organization and imagination as it had developed through previous centuries was soon to be followed by Morris and others. These subsequent literary and utopian thinkers especially, and most tragically, overlooked the important role that diversity and density play in the functioning of urban spaces as the locus of critical enunciation. Instead, they set out to disentangle, or even deconstruct, the complex network of urban life and subsequently compartmentalized it into individual units that lack most of the attrac-

<sup>2</sup> See also William Cronon's study *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West*, which focuses on Thünen's agricultural ideas from the point of view of production.

<sup>3</sup> The tradition of the English park shows a similar disregard to natural spaces. It can stand as a precursor to virtual realities that gains additional importance through the fact that the intention of the park was to create a sense of naturalness that was heightened by the fact that the borders of the 'virtual' park landscape blended into the surrounding natural scenery, thereby enforcing the claim of its own naturalness.

<sup>4</sup> Along similar lines, Lynn White Jr. argues in "The Historical Roots of our Ecologic Crisis," initially published in *Science* in 1967, that the Judeo-Christian scriptural demand that mankind dominate the natural environment contributed significantly to the role that the physical environment was to play in the future, turning it into a tool for human happiness.

tive features of an actual, or 'natural,' urban structure. In short, they disbanded urbanity.<sup>5</sup>

Continuing in Thünen's direction, Morris's contemporary Ebenezer Howard, in *Garden Cities of To-Morrow* (1902, previously published in 1898 as *Tomorrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform*), developed his model of city life that abandoned all pretensions to the idea of urban centrality. As a consequence, his pseudo-urban or what I would like to call sub-urban entities (in the sense of 'a lesser kind of urban,' akin to the usage of 'sub' in sub-standard) lost their function as serving as center for the rural hinterland. In fact, despite their relatively high population density, they themselves were designed to be peripheral spaces, connected to other garden cities and also to metropolitan centers.<sup>6</sup> The renderings of Howard's Garden Cities often show at their very centers a park, thereby making almost impossible any form of urban centrality. The flâneur, a cultural phenomenon of about the same time, would have looked in vain for the city center but instead encountered at the heart of the Garden City an imitation (or simulacrum) of rural and manorial life. In the words of W.A. Eden, Howard's "Garden-City is a by-pass town" (Eden 1947, 138), a place at the periphery, protected from the dangers and risks of urban life. Given Howard's declared antipathy of urban life, it is hardly surprising that he wanted to get beyond what in his preface he quotes Lord Rosebury describe as "the awfulness of London" (Howard 1984, 42).

It is somewhat ironic that a major inspiration for Howard's vision was Bellamy's novel.<sup>7</sup> Even though he was very familiar with the American situation, having lived both in a rural and an urban American environment for much of the 1870s, Howard nevertheless missed Bellamy's longing for urban density as expressed in *Looking Backward*. Indeed, his own experience of American life Eden aptly calls "a failure" (Eden 1947, 133), in particular when considered from an economic point of view, which might explain the focus of his utopian vision on industry, wages, rent, and other financial issues. Despite his enthusiasm for Bellamy's American novel, Howard's urban vision developed in different directions. Indeed, Howard was more than willing to move beyond Bellamy's vision (cf. Osborn 1984, 21). His major influences apart from Bellamy's novel were, tellingly, political treatises, as W.A. Eden and Peter Batchelor have shown. One of these, James Silk Buckingham's vision of a utopian city is striking insofar as it provides very tightly controlled spaces that find their reinterpretation in Howard's own designs.

<sup>5</sup> In his comprehensive case study of the urban history of New Haven, called simply *City*, Douglas Rae describes the end of "urbanism," taking a slightly more economics-cum-municipal-politics approach. Ultimately, though, Rae diagnoses a loss of diversity that corresponds very closely to the devaluing of "urbanity" I describe here.

<sup>6</sup> The promise of the Garden City as an urban space in its own right never quite materialized. Nevertheless, the promising plans led to positive reception into the second half of the twentieth century. See, for instance, the treatment in Mumford, *The City in History*.

<sup>7</sup> See Creese, in particular chapter 6, for a detailed account of the relationship between the two authors. The intellectual precursors as well as the town-development outcomes of Howard's visions are discussed by Peter Batchelor.

Buckingham's town model, outlined in *National Evils and Practical Remedies, with the Plan of a Model Town* (1849), combines the heteroglossic pluralities of urbanity with rather strict rules about the respective rights and responsibilities of the individual groups living in his utopian Victoria. Throughout his description of the physical plan of this city, chapters 4 and 6 in Part II, words related to "regulate" crop up at a high rate. With a maximum population of 10,000 people, Buckingham's town is also rather small, hardly the size to allow for the necessary richness in life-styles and opinions that a true metropolis would offer. While he proposes complete freedom of religion (Buckingham 1973, 144), the ban on all intoxicating substances and the very strict moral code show that Victoria in no way aspires to be a politically liberating place. Indeed, unwanted practices are threatened with "immediate detection and suppression" (Buckingham 1973, 193). Buckingham's project focuses predominantly on the economic side of urban planning. To him, the city was a state in miniature, run by a central (and hopefully wise) administration. His influence is noticeable in both Howard's Garden City design and in the social structure as well as societal stratifications of Bellamy's novel. It comes as no surprise that in describing his plan, Buckingham lists as his primary rationale that he wanted to achieve "the greatest degree of order" (Buckingham 1973, 183). In what follows, Buckingham develops a highly rectilinear city, organized in rows upon rows of mostly identical houses. The model town clearly does not encourage individualism or creativity, which is just as easily learned from the included illustration of the city plan. Around the central town square, Buckingham groups churches, museums, and concert halls. Tellingly, the university, the library, and a public meeting hall are below these buildings, located underground: While the passive enjoyment of a concert or religious service may occur in bright daylight, the dangers of reading and discussing are relegated to subterranean localities. In short, the city hardly encourages the active perusal of personal ideas. While the Central Square is compared to the Forum of ancient Rome (Buckingham 1973, 191), no mention is made of the participatory democracy of cities in antiquity. Even though Richard Sennett points out in *Flesh and Stone* that in antiquity only between 5 and 10% of the (male) population were able to participate fully in the public political debate (Sennett 1994, 52), he nevertheless acknowledges the importance of the agora as a location for the public exchange of opinions. Important decisions, such as the forcing into exile of potentially dangerous citizens, were decided upon at a time and place where "all citizens met" (Sennett 1994, 55). Buckingham's view on urban space hardly makes room for such public expressions of opinion.

There can be little doubt that the rural utopianism of Thünen, Howard, Buckingham, Morris, and other early visionaries inspired subsequent urban thinkers such as Frank Lloyd Wright and his plan of Broadacre City, initially presented in 1934 as an alternative to "the fragmentation of technopolitan consciousness" (Dougherty 1981, 244), as well as some of the more left-leaning doyens of the Bauhaus and International Style architects. The ideas also find their way into the geometric urban fantasies of Le Corbusier's visionary "radiant cities" (1935). It

is precisely in this context of modern city planning that the spirit of utopian living reaches both its apex of abstraction and its own demise. As early as 1932, the car enthusiast Frank Lloyd Wright, in an uncanny moment of vision in *The Disappearing City*, foresaw in a gloomy tone that the megalopolis was destined to disappear, and that the new city would spread, almost invisibly, across the whole nation. The title of *The Disappearing City* today sounds indeed prophetic. Let it be added, though, that his own contribution to the spatial structure of the suburban lifestyle helped significantly to bring about the realization of his vision.<sup>8</sup> As Moshe Safdie correctly states in his visionary *The City after the Automobile*, "Broadacre City anticipated the new automobile cities" (Safdie 1997, 15).

All these thinkers, notably, shared the belief that the old cities had to be overcome. Howard, Wright, and Le Corbusier, each in his individual manner, imagined an ideal city that, in Robert Fishman's words, "best expressed the power and beauty of modern technology and the most enlightened ideas of social justice" (Fishman 1991, 3). Their visions of social change, usually in the form of a more egalitarian distribution of wealth à la Charles Fourier, are utopian in the negative sense of the word, that is, they were abstract, idealistic, and ultimately unrealistic. This failed vision rests in the utopianists' joint failure to understand the basic principle of cities, namely urbanity. The lack of urbanity of many post-war cities, as described in 1961 by Jane Jacobs in *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, can be understood as a result of anti-urban tendencies in many of the city-visions of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries like Morris, Howard, and Wright, who were basically trying to reinvent the city but were, in the process, neglecting its long success-story.<sup>9</sup> Their views on life were often based, rather revealingly, on an intellectual and artistic concept of an elitist *vita contemplativa*. And it is not without justification – at least in the sense of dramatic irony – that James Howard Kunstler returns to Morris's choice of word when he describes the plight of American suburbia as a geography of nowhere, altering the meaning of nowhere, u-topos, from the utopian to the dystopian.<sup>10</sup> The corresponding change

<sup>8</sup> For discussions of this problematic legacy of Wright and the modernist urban utopianists see Peter Blake, *No Place Like Utopia*, and Richard Twombly, *Power and Style*. As F.J. Osborn points out, Howard did not pay any attention to the rise of the automobile when writing about his vision of Garden Cities (Osborn 1984, 15).

<sup>9</sup> As Fishman concludes: "Howard, Wright, and Le Corbusier hated the cities of their time with an overwhelming passion" (Fishman 1991, 12). In the tradition of the Enlightenment and the Age of Invention, they put all their trust in the healing powers of technological invention and progress.

<sup>10</sup> The English version of Thomas More's foundational utopian book *Utopia* appeared in 1551. The city as locus of utopian thinking finds an early realization in Tommaso Campanella, *La Città del Sole* (1602), whose autocratic state, however, leaves little room for the kind of heteroglossic urbanity described here. His city represents an entirely structured and controlled space. The concentric circles of its outline strongly resemble Jeremy Bentham's panoptic control fantasy. The development of literary urban utopias finds itself closely related to the history of both the city and the state. Prior to about 1700, the approximate turning point in the rise of the state (Tilly 1989, 4), most urban utopias were visions of a form of governance, since the city had mostly the function of a state. It is, hence, only in much more recent writ-

in the characteristics of cities has found its expression in the oxymoron Edge-City,<sup>11</sup> which tries to unite, semantically, what has never grown together extralinguistically, that is, the center and the periphery. The more appropriate term "nowhere" denotes not so much the co-presence of these two principles, but rather their mutual absence.

## 2. Urban Literature

The two novels by Bellamy and Morris provide extensive insights into their views on and understanding of the workings of cities. At the same time, it needs to be pointed out that their vision was predominantly social, and not urban. But since both chose the format of the novel to envision future urban life – and not, like Corbusier or Howard, a theoretical or scientific treatise – they could not but help to include in their descriptions of a blissful future scenes of urban life. These scenes differ significantly between Bellamy and Morris, and it is to these differences that their successors, in the fields of both literature and urban planning, owe their divergent views on the role and responsibilities of cities.

Bellamy's *Looking Backward* for the most part consists of conversations between Mr. West, the time traveler and central narrative voice, and his host, Dr. Leete. Their topics range from the organization of labor to the education and training of the young, as well as to the rights and privileges of each citizen. Overall, political and economic questions dominate the novel. However, on numerous occasions Bellamy has his characters move through the futuristic Boston he invented for his utopian fiction, and it is in these moments of detailed or casual description of the physical outline of the city that he reveals his hopes for the future of urban spaces. What characterizes the city in his politically revolutionary book is its strong adherence to traditional formats of urban life.

The strong focus on economic concerns explains why the novel so often defines parts of the city by the financial status of their inhabitants, as when Mr. West's original 1887 neighborhood is called "a part chiefly inhabited by the rich" (Bellamy 1986, 41). While the social discrepancies are noticeable in the old Boston, the new town, seen first from the rooftop of his hosts' house, strikes Mr. West as a very different place:

At my feet lay a great city. Miles of broad streets, shaded by trees and lined with fine buildings, for the most part not in continuous blocks but set in larger or smaller enclosures, stretched in every direction. Every quarter contained large open squares filled with trees, along which statues glistened and fountains flashed in the late-afternoon sun. (Bellamy 1986, 55)

ing that 'modern' urban utopias *per se* appear, namely books written at a time when the city at its heart had ceased to be a state.

<sup>11</sup> Tellingly, the concept of living on the edge of cities is not at all seen negatively by Joel Garreau, who endowed the neologism with plenty of publicity in his book *Edge City: Life on the New Frontier*.

Later, when Mr. West walks through the town, he finds it has undergone “a complete metamorphosis” (Bellamy 1986, 79). And yet, the changes are never structural. At best, the ‘modern’ Boston is a smarter, more elegant, decidedly more comfortable place, epitomized by the “continuous waterproof covering” that protects pedestrians from the weather (Bellamy 1986, 122). The main differences, beyond the replacement of the widespread poverty of the former town by comfortable wealth, are the redistribution of all commercial space into regularly spread-out “distributing establishments” (Bellamy 1986, 92) that service each and every part of the city as well as the establishment of a “general dining house” in each ward (Bellamy 1986, 118). Far from being a great equalizer, the egalitarian social system of the year 2000 allows for a “great variety in the size and cost of the houses” (Bellamy 1986, 96), thus emphasizing the need for diversity as a crucial component of the makings of urbanity. The purpose of the lavish public spaces is to entertain and provide opportunities to meet other citizens (Bellamy 1986, 126). The provision of culture and the arts is a necessary companion to the general emphasis on education (Bellamy 1986, 162-3).

Both the arts and learning thus characterize urban life for Bellamy. His view of the future of cities relies heavily on its traditional role as the center of a diverse and open society. The centrality of the city finds its echo in the increased centralization of the economic system of Bellamy’s utopia. His hope for the future, clearly, is that the project of urban life be followed to its full strength. For Bellamy, the city is not in need of reinvention but rather in need of reinforcement. However, as John Mullin has argued, Bellamy’s optimistic vision of the future of the city had changed drastically by the time he completed his sequel, *Equality*, in 1897. While Mullin also sees the Boston of *Looking Backward* characterized by its “strong historic continuity” (Mullin 2000, 53), he finds that in his follow-up work Bellamy “focuses upon agricultural production” (Mullin 2000, 55). Under the influence of his own community of Chicopee Falls going through the process of industrialization, turning it into “an ugly factory city crowded with industry, tenements, and Catholic millhands struggling to survive” (Cantor 1988, 23), Bellamy, in effect, abandons the project of urbanity.

In his rewriting of Bellamy’s vision, William Morris created a utopian view of future societies that is quite different from his precursor. While the mediaeval arcadia of *News from Nowhere* may never have been much more than an artistic dream, a variety on a then fashionable literary theme, his work nevertheless marks an important point in the long and still enduring development of the contemporary urban landscape, in particular in its North American variety. Both Morris’s *News from Nowhere* and Bellamy’s *Looking Backward* mark a fundamental turning point in the history of utopian writing since they both address questions related to the spatial organization of modern life in a way that earlier utopian texts were unable to do, namely by incorporating concepts of modern urbanity in what previously was a predominantly political, religious, and generally social discourse. With the sad and sorry situation in which many cities find themselves it seems appropriate

to wonder what the origins are for a scenario that Kunstler describes as “wound to our urbanism” (Kunstler 2001, 249).

Morris’s project differs in a number of ways from Bellamy’s, most noticeably in how it tries to envision an alternative to the overcrowded and unhealthy city. As Walter Creese points out, “Morris distrusted the dependence of Bellamy’s scheme on the great metropolis” (Creese 1966, 149). As a consequence, he envisioned a rural utopia that was not so much an alternative to urban spaces but, in taking the place of London, was going to supersede all urban spaces. In a review published in *The Commonwealth* on 22 June 1889, Morris accused Bellamy’s vision of being too strictly organized and incapable of envisioning an “idea beyond existence in a great city” (Morris 1936, 505). The conflict, typical for this historical moment, is between an anarchist and a socialist model for a future society, struggling over the role that central political organization should play in a post-revolutionary political model of the future. In contrast to Bellamy’s rather centralistic attitude, Morris follows in his utopian narrative the general direction that Richard Jefferies had developed in *After London* (1885), a novel that describes life in England after the breakdown of (urban and industrial) civilization, dwelling on the ensuing return to an almost mediaeval code of chivalry. Both Jefferies and Morris – along with other precursors, including William Cobbett, Elizabeth Gaskell, Thomas Spense, Feargus O’Connor, and Charles Dickens – reacted to the terrible problem that the city was facing in Europe as a result of tremendous growth and insufficient investment into the hygiene of its population and other everyday needs. Even though Eric Hobsbawm detects in the mid-Victorian city “a distinct improvement on the town of the 1830s and 40s,” he concludes that “the British city nevertheless remained an appalling place to live in” (Hobsbawm 1990, 158). It is only appropriate, then, that while Bellamy felt he could use Boston as “an adequate setting for his version of utopia” (Parssinen 1972, 261), Morris could not bring himself to follow this path.

Morris was ready to give up on urbanity out of his sense of frustration with the city. While Morris’s anarchist leanings would make him suspicious of the tight control that Bellamy’s city held over its citizens, he was at the same time blind to the fact that the city is also host to those fascinating features of metropolises here called urbanity, namely the possibility to create (and the good-hearted patience to indulge) other forms of life and different points of view. To Morris, reacting to the physical destitution of late nineteenth-century London, the urban utopia was first and foremost a physical project which would receive its human touch through a generous application of art into daily life. Indeed, the novel has been described as being little more than “an extension of the aesthetic principles” that determined Morris’s own interior design company (Kirchhoff 1979, 129). His Marxist belief in the necessity of revolution would have further encouraged his view that the city, host to the worst excesses of capitalist exploitation, would also have to be superseded as a locality. His focus on the reform of labor and aesthetic culture necessitated a “historical transformation of social spaces” (Lloyd / Thomas 1998, 156). In *News from Nowhere*, Morris pushes the discussion of

divergent politics to the periphery. The old man on the river described in chapter 22 lives a miserably lonely life, shunned by his environment due to lack of proximity. Whereas urban density would provide him with fellow thinkers, the low-density vision of Morris turns the disgruntled man into an alienated and lonely hermit; and his political views, into oblivion.

Early on in Morris's novel, the time-traveling "guest" sees King Street and other formally urban spaces transformed into "sunny meadows and garden-like tillage." Houses are few and far between and "each surrounded by a teeming garden." The narrator also mentions that the buildings are "countrified in appearance," stressing, implicitly, the absence of urban features (Morris 2003, 20). One of the few remnants of urban living is the theater,<sup>12</sup> but even that potentially critical space is now solely treasured for providing entertainment. It is, in Herbert Marcuse's sense, affirmative of the social situation. The city, and urbanity, has thus either entirely disappeared or blended into something rather different. The anti-technological side of Morris's novel derives from the author's overall nostalgia for the pre-industrial age. Both in his architectural designs and in his literary vision, Morris looked into the past for remedies of the future and he firmly believed in "the idealization of the rural society of the past" (Parssinen 1972, 265).

Despite this predominantly backwards glance at historical precursors, the utopian writing of the late nineteenth century had a profound effect on the future of urbanity. Since I argue in this essay that Bellamy's and Morris's textual experiments function as what Foucault in "What Is an Author?" terms "founders of discursivity" (Foucault 1984, 114), here related to the discourse of modern urban design, I shall, in what follows, outline what characterizes this discourse as well as speculate on the question of how Morris's blissful vision could have turned into such a bleak reality. (Such reversals are not at all surprising: Foucault defined founders of discursivity by the fact that they "made possible a certain number of divergences" [Foucault 1984, 115]). The specific discourse of Morris's making is, of course, that of the modern city as a utopia of the imagination, or, in Henri Lefebvre's words, a "logico-epistemological space" (Lefebvre 1991, 11-2).

It is crucial to note that Morris's utopia significantly contributed to a specific way of distributing space that continues to this day to shape the structure and way of life in the western world. At its center, this tradition subscribes to the ideas of decentralization and spatial specialization. It furthermore attempts to combine the advantages of urban and rural living by decreasing both the size and the density of communities through 'urbanizing' the rural space. As Morris describes this type of utopian society in *News from Nowhere*, it has the potential to provide for both sophisticated and leisurely styles of living. Kunstler, and a host of

<sup>12</sup> Morris seemed to be aware of the radical change that he proposed for the shape of the future city. In rare moments he adopted a more conciliatory tone, for instance when he allowed for a high-density area of living in the former business quarter of town (Morris 2003, 56-7). Ironically, he takes another subtle stab at the in his opinion overemphasis on economic questions.

other cultural critics such as Richard Sennett or Naomi Klein, seem to reflect on society in a far more dystopian fashion.

Sennett's rather elegiac view on the increasing loss of civic spaces in *The Fall of Public Man* (1992) relies on a historical reading of the development of cities that points to the growth of narcissism as the cause of the interior corrosion. Sennett's observation that in cities during early modernity there existed a tendency "to exclude those who are much different in terms of class, politics, or style" (Sennett 1992, 263) is another way of saying that urbanity's ideal of heteroglossic counterdiscourses suffered a major set-back. Naomi Klein follows up on this development in *No Logo*, focusing on the very end of the twentieth century. In her analysis, the almost complete take-over of formerly public space as a marketing platform for brand items leaves people with literally "no space," the heading of her book's first section. For Klein, the consumers' pseudo-choice between at heart identical retail objects has taken center stage in the public consciousness. It is only a logical consequence that the full-scale branding of everyday life will not stop at the re-invention of living spaces. In the "branded worlds" of Disney's artificial town Celebration and similar developments, Klein finds "the genuine thrill of utopianism, or the illusion of it at any rate" (Klein 1999, 157). With the appropriation of a society's dreams and visions, the erosion of the idea of public space has reached its sad apex.<sup>13</sup>

### 3. The Modern City Invented

It should be clear by now why Morris's, and not Bellamy's, text can claim a prominent position as founding father of the development that ended in the chagrin commonly known as Suburbia. While Bellamy, an American, embraced urbanity, Morris, a European of privileged background, clearly had little more than contempt for it. Or rather, he was too concerned by the implication of the city in the problem of the class struggle. Following an argument presented by Kunstler in *The City in Mind*, one might speculate whether Morris's distrust in the relevance of the city might not to some degree relate to the tradition amongst the English aristocracy of living away from the city, in effect creating a rural myth that is based on the assumption that there is such a thing as non-urban urbanity. At least in part, the initial flight of the English aristocracy to the countryside was caused by fear of precisely the type of social unrest described in Morris's *News from Nowhere* and explained by Marshall Berman in his *All That is Solid Melts into Air* as a common phenomenon within the public spaces of cities at the beginning of modernity, spanning from Petersburg to Paris. The city, in this view, was unstable, a potential threat to the status quo of the prevailing class system. More

<sup>13</sup> Others, however, see nothing fundamentally wrong with the more recent developments of cities. Joel Garreau presents in *Edge City* (1991) a rather optimistic reading of the future of urban living in the sterile commercial malls of remote office parks. It is hardly a surprise, therefore, that he cites a gloomy description of London by Dickens as some sort of apology for the greatness of his Edge Cities (Garreau 1992, 9).

importantly, this instability derived from the very diversity and discursive openness that is so noticeably lacking not only in Morris's utopian novel, but also in the recently invented, and erroneously named, projects of New Urbanism, itself a spin-off of Ebenezer Howard's Garden City ideal.<sup>14</sup> In other words, what both developments misunderstand is the concept of urbanity. The city as a place of dissent relies on the juxtaposition of differences. As a reaction to the modernist design of Brasília, Berman makes it very clear that for democratic societies it is crucial that their cities provide "democratic public spaces where people can come and assemble freely" (Berman 1988, 7). When zoning laws (or shopping habits in cyberspace) prevent the creation of communal spaces, the democracy-building aspect of urbanity has been rendered impossible. The type of "one-class community" that Mumford describes as typical for suburbia also characterizes the end of urbanity understood as a heteroglossic space (Mumford 1961, 493). A whole range of critics and artists have voiced similar concerns: for Mumford, this development leads to "anti-cities" (Mumford 1961, 509-11); Edward Soja notes that "the post-metropolis has become an archipelago of carceral cities, islands of enclosure and anticipated protection against the real and imagined dangers of daily urban life" (Soja 2001, 45); Wim Wenders provides a cinematic realization of the omnipresence and potential for political abuse of urban surveillance in his movie *The End of Violence* (1997);<sup>15</sup> Alex Proyas's *Dark City* (1998) allegorizes the spatial arrangement of the city as the secret to human civilization. In the postmodern spaces of hyperreality it increasingly becomes more accurate, then, to speak of sub-urban spaces that only seem to replicate the urban geography of the traditional city but do no longer serve the same civic function; a phenomenon that Soja describes with his neologisms "exopolis" and "simcity" (Soja 2001, 43 and 45).

#### 4. The Modern City Segmented

In *The City in Mind*, Kunstler argues that London's Regent's Park, commissioned by the Prince Regent (the later George IV) and built between 1817 and 1828 by John Nash, was designed in the hope that it might entice the timorous aristocracy to live, part of the year, close to the city. Though no longer on their remote estates, they would still be able to enjoy "rural" flair nearby:

The animating idea behind the project, never explicitly articulated by Nash or the prince, was the ruralization of urban life for the well-born, so that the city might conform to the terms and norms of country living that the aristocracy has grown used to. (Kunstler 2001, 238)

<sup>14</sup> For this view, and a thorough introduction to this movement, see Robert G. Shibley's essay "The Complete New Urbanism." Much of the geometric layout of these developments derives from Rob Krier's book *Stadttraum in Theorie und Praxis*.

<sup>15</sup> On the latter, see the insightful article by Allen Siegel, "After the Sixties: Changing Paradigms in the Representation of Urban Space."

The building of this park was not at all a singular event: Within a short time, London saw the creation of Victoria Park (1846) and Battersea Park (1858). The deliberate blending of the rural and urban that characterizes this park design period signals the beginning of the crisis in urbanity that is still very much with us today.

The fallacy of the argument that there can be urban life without urbanism was pointed out by, of all people, Robert Moses, the man who, starting in 1920, single-handedly created the beltway system around New York City that made suburban living not only possible but a model for other cities to follow. Moses conceded in an essay entitled "The Spreading City" that "civilization flourishes only in concentrated urban communities" (Moses 1962, 61; my emphasis). The irony of Moses propagating urban density can hardly be greater; and yet, his statement raises the question of how oblivious (or, to echo Kunstler, unable to anticipate) planners must have been to the long-term consequences of their projects. In his essay, Moses picks up Howard's concept of the Garden City when he expresses the idea that it is his greater aim "to make the city and country one" (Moses 1962, 367). This spatial miscegenation appears under the hybrid heading "Rus in Urbe" (a concept notoriously derived from the park landscapes of Nero's Rome) and functions as an almost seamless continuation of Howard's ideas on de-centered cities. In its distrust of the project of urbanity, abandoned for corporate profit as much as for racial biases, Moses's city follows the transatlantic vision of Howard and Morris; and it abandons the urban utopia of Bellamy.

By dropping the distinction between the urban and the rural, Moses, like Howard and Morris before him, laid the foundations for the seemingly endless sprawl of the great American suburbia. The uncanny resemblance between Howard's model of the center-less Garden City and contemporary rust-belt cities like Detroit or Cleveland, which have indeed lost their urban centers, is far from coincidental. However, from the point of view of poetic justice, one can almost celebrate the sterile offspring of the hybridization of such mutually exclusive species as town and country. While it would be an exaggeration to claim a direct causal or inevitable progression from the literary and utopian predecessors to the actual spatial realization, one can certainly, in the sense used by Foucault and Nietzsche (see Foucault 1984, 76-100), trace back the origin, or *Ursprung*, of this praxis to this textual tradition.

What has been lost in the process is the diverse space of authentic urbanity, as a both spatial and social entity. It is precisely this density and multiplicity of use that Jane Jacobs praises in *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* when she describes Boston's North End; and one can only reconfirm her assessment today. There seems to be something peculiarly fascinating about the various building materials, about the time that has elapsed since the last time a façade received a new coat of paint, and all the other markers of an 'authentic' urban structure. In their lack of uniformity, they provide allegories for spaces of resistance. The city, seen in that light, becomes a dense network of heterotopic possibilities. Whereas the urban, real city thus signifies a Bakhtinian heteroglossic space of counterdiscourses, this critical potential is noticeably absent in the projects hailed under the

banner of the 'New Urbanism.' On the contrary, its simulation of authenticity and variety appears to be little more than a giant practical joke that Freud would describe as 'unheimlich,' being at the same time familiar and yet clandestinely strange. A pessimistic response to this realization might well be to claim that urbanity can only grow, and can never be decreed or designed.<sup>16</sup> From this point of view it is hardly surprising to find David Harvey in *Spaces of Hope*, his book on Baltimore, using the phrase "degenerate utopias" (Harvey 2000, 168) to refer to cities that have lost almost all aspects of urbanity.

The move from urbanity to conformity has by now arrived at a moment of capitalist materiality. As Steven Miles argues, "our cities are no more and no less than sites of consumption" (Miles 2003, 71). What started with Thünen's concept of de-spatialized commercial territory has now come full circle and has spawned an omnipresent commercial space. The city has lost much of its civic function, only to replace it with corporate interests.

## 5. The Postmodern Future of Urbanity

The advance of the late-capitalist system with its particular logic of growth and its belief in the ethos of "neomania" (Barthes 1972, 88) has by now fully perverted the original plan of Bellamy's urban utopia. At some point in time, Bellamy's dream of future cityscapes and Morris's vision of utopian living changed locations, turning Morris, the city-worn European, into the prophet of American-style anti-urbanity. As a consequence, contemporary city spaces have developed into a reality about which Francesca Turchiano can proclaim that it is in need of an "un-malling of America" (Turchiano 1990). The slightly cynical call for a need to un-mall America suggests a possible culprit for this development; and sure enough, the mall, i.e. the spatial embodiments of corporate America, is reacting with great severity to attempts from grass-roots movements to reclaim and reinstall urbanity.<sup>17</sup>

The loss of urbanity referred to repeatedly in this article includes the loss of dissent and diversity, both of which are so central to the enlightenment dream of democracy. In Berman's discussion of the city during modernity, he celebrates the street as a locus of "passionately intense encounter and conflict and dialogue" (Berman 1988, 286), writing in effect both an homage and an obituary to public space.

<sup>16</sup> Spiro Kostof shows that even picturesque mediaeval cities like the Italian Siena, often considered to have grown organically over the centuries, were indeed very strictly planned and regulated urban spaces; see his *The City Shaped* (1991), especially pages 70-1.

<sup>17</sup> Various US court decisions address the question whether malls are indeed public space, for instance in Colorado (Nelson Bock and Patricia Lawless-Avelar versus Westminster Mall Company, 1991). For further thoughts, see Kevin Mattson's article "Reclaiming and Remaking Public Space: Toward an Architecture for American Democracy" (1999); see also the section "How Public Is a Mall" in Frieden and Sagalyn, *Downtown, Inc.* (1989, 227-33), as well as Klein in *No Logo*.

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DANIEL LEA

## “Parenthesis” and the Unreliable Author in Julian Barnes’s *A History of the World in 10½ Chapters*

**Abstract:** This paper focuses on the ambiguous status of the half-chapter in Julian Barnes’s novel *A History of the World in 10½ Chapters* (1989). “Parenthesis” stands in contradistinction to the other ten chapters in that it offers a concerted riposte to the provisionality of postmodern history by installing love as a structuring logic by which the terrifying randomness of the past can be negotiated. Much of the distinctiveness of “Parenthesis” derives from the intrusion of an authorial-narratorial figuration of Julian Barnes which, it is argued, lends the half-chapter a degree of authorial privilege and narrative stability that is not evident elsewhere. By reading the ‘honesty’ of Barnes’s discourse on love as a postmodern strategy of seduction, it is claimed that the redemptive potential of love as a way of making meaning from chaos is compromised. To recognise this is to face the prospect that Barnes lulls his readers into believing that “Parenthesis” offers an escape from the scepticism of postmodernism only to confront them with their own naïve desire for order in narrative as in history.

In the shattered aftermath of the events of September 11th 2001, the British novelist Ian McEwan wrote a movingly reflective article about the indigestible reality of what had occurred. McEwan’s piece strives to grasp the ungraspable human cost of History writ large without politicizing either victims or perpetrators. His tone is uncharacteristically emotional, his theme, the failure of empathy that has enabled humans of a particular historical, political and cultural persuasion to murder humans of divergent (and even possibly sympathetic) persuasions. What has happened, he demands, to purge the attackers of the ability to identify with the suffering of others; how can we, who have been forced only to watch an unfolding tragedy, bridge the empathetic gap to feel the passengers’ unimaginable wrench from everyday normality into the surreality of their final moments of life? McEwan’s response is curiously heartfelt: “There is only love, and then oblivion. Love was all they had to set against the hatred of their murderers” (McEwan 2001).

That a writer of impeccable postmodernist pedigree should retrench to such sentimentality throws an interesting light on the relationship between love and late postmodernism, but the problem of what to do with sentiment has been a consistent feature of postmodern writing.<sup>1</sup> British fiction of the mid-1980s to the

<sup>1</sup> There is a precedent in McEwan’s own fictional writing for the unleashing of love in the face of trauma. *Enduring Love* (1997) opens with the death during a ballooning accident of a bystander, an act of random catastrophe that cannot be contained by the meaning-making faculties of the protagonists and initiates a downward spiral into madness and obsessive love.

mid-1990s engages repeatedly with the “waning of affect” (Jameson 1991, 10) that Fredric Jameson sees as characteristic of postmodern cultural production. Whilst the love that is presented in texts such as Jeanette Winterson’s *The Passion* (1987), Kazuo Ishiguro’s *The Remains of the Day* (1989), A.S. Byatt’s *Possession* (1990), Pat Barker’s *Regeneration* (1991) and Graham Swift’s *Ever After* (1992) cannot, however, be said to be a straightforward romanticism, neither can it be dismissed as inauthentic or *ersatz*. As Catherine Belsey has claimed, love “occupies a paradoxical position in postmodern culture: it is at once infinitely and uniquely desirable on the one hand, and conspicuously naïve on the other” (Belsey 1994, 73). In the historiographic metafiction cited above, love is the tantalising object of a search for inter-subjective connection at the same time that it is reduced to a faint echoing presence that no longer accrues to itself an efficient network of symbolical associations.<sup>2</sup> In most cases it is located instead in the horizonless postmodern past to be excavated, analysed or deconstructed but felt only through its obliquity. Love is as much an artefact as history itself and equally as contradictory; it is for Byatt and Swift the ‘thing’ itself, sought but recognised only by its fleeting reverberations. It thus stands as a symptom of a much greater mystery: the impenetrability of the emotional past. Whilst Byatt and Swift distance affect through the papers of their nineteenth-century quarries, Barker and Ishiguro condemn it to the silence of the unspeakable; even Winterson, for whom desire is characterised by its urgency and intolerance towards barriers, regards love as the paradoxical consummation of and bar to coherent subjectivity. Only Julian Barnes’s *A History of the World in 10½ Chapters* seems to gesture towards a desperate need for the presentness of love under postmodernity. Like McEwan, Barnes argues in the novel’s enigmatic half-chapter that only love can make the random provisionality of history meaningful. Whereas McEwan’s dumbfounded retreat to an affective empathy in the face of a quintessentially postmodern act of spectacularity is revealing in its simplicity, however, Barnes’s parenthetical discourse on love’s power to combat chaos is disconcerting in its complexity. In what follows I shall argue that only by recognising the centrality of “Parenthesis’s” discussion of love to the descriptions of history’s mutable operations can we come to a judgement about the authority of the half-chapter’s embedded authorial voice in “Parenthesis.” To paraphrase Barnes: Does how we say ‘I love you’ govern how we see the history of the world?<sup>3</sup>

### 1. “Parenthesis” and Narratorial Privileging

*A History of the World in 10½ Chapters* is a strangely neglected text and seems to have become increasingly marginalised within criticism of Barnes’s work. It is, for instance, granted only a paragraph-length discussion in two recent critical overviews of Barnes’s writing (Bedgood 2005; Head 2006) and is not mentioned

<sup>2</sup> I use the term ‘historiographic metafiction’ here as it has been employed by Linda Hutcheon (1988).

<sup>3</sup> The phrase borrowed from Barnes here reads: “How you cuddle in the dark governs how you see the history of the world” (Barnes 1990, 241).

at all in John Brannigan’s *Orwell to the Present: Literature in England, 1945-2000*. Until the publication of *Arthur and George* in 2005 however, it was considered by many to be Barnes’s defining output and a landmark in British postmodern writing. To claim that its chief preoccupation is with the problems inherent in the interpretation of the past seems quaintly self-evident at this late stage of postmodernism’s evolution, but it is perhaps the most explicit example of recent British writing’s engagement with the politics of history-telling. The novel interrogates the discursive forms through which history is produced and received, and seeks to subvert the autocracy of official Histories by installing challenges to those doctrinaire narratives which offer coherent and totalised visions of the past. Barnes questions the validity of any historiographical metanarrative which claims to offer a complete and inclusive history of the world, proffering instead a paradigm of history based upon fragmentation, discontinuity and contingency.<sup>4</sup> His ‘history of the world’ – which by its titular definition as ‘a history’ is only one of many possible accounts – is characterised by its anti-linear formulation and by its scepticism towards any progressivist vision of history. The narratives contained within the novel all represent an incompleteness within history and intimate the impossibility of containing its randomness within a single unifying system of interpretation. For Steven Connor this incompleteness is an issue of the incommensurability between the subject and the form: “The book’s title teases its reader with the ludicrous failure of fit between the largeness of world history and the crass smallness of the ten and a half chapters in which it is to be condensed” (Connor 2004, 75). The reader is forced to engage with an approach to historical narrative based less upon aetiological sequences of events than upon the representational process by which those events have been generated and perpetuated.

The novel deliberately problematises its own interpretation through this anti-chronological and dislocating structure, but it is more overtly problematised by the apparent arbitrariness with which the stories are ordered within the text. Structurally the novel consists of ten short stories loosely connected by the theme of a Darwinian ‘survival of the fittest’ history and by the motifs of Noah’s Ark, water and voyaging.<sup>5</sup> The half-chapter is distinguished from the surrounding stories by its ostensibly non-fictional qualities allied to an authorial ‘sincerity’ that Brian Finney describes as “didactic, mildly professorial with no apparent hint of irony or humor” (Finney 2003, 49). The ruminative monologue on the metaphysical

<sup>4</sup> As Claudia Kotte (1997) has shown, the novel posits diverse historical models, primarily Marxist, Hegelian and Darwinian, in order to establish whether a totalised history of the world could be encompassed within any of these systems. Kotte claims that ultimately the novel rejects all forms of unifying historical systems, as they are considered too inflexible and ideologically specific to incorporate the complexity of past events.

<sup>5</sup> Whether *A History of the World in 10½ Chapters* is a novel or a collection of short stories is a moot point. Undoubtedly the whole amounts to more than the sum of its parts, and the interconnections between the stories are sufficiently robust to suggest their interdependence, but this is not a novel in the purest sense. Gregory Salyer (1991) has decisively claimed that to read the book as a collection of stories is ‘wrong’ and in employing the term novel throughout I draw upon the precedents set by Kotte (1997, 107), Isabelle Raucq-Hoorickx (1991, 47) and Andrzej Gasiorek (1995, 58).

randomness of existence and the arbitrariness of history's processes takes the form of a familiar nocturnal darkness of the soul, but the madness of the insomniac contains its own method in the way the narrative pulls together threads from the surrounding stories. The thematic continuity that is undermined by the disassociated narrative strands is partially recuperated in "Parenthesis" by its narrator's mingling of motifs, borrowed phrases and images from the other ten chapters and their mobilisation to explain, or at least illustrate the contingency of history. Thematic contiguity is undermined by the fracturing narrative and connections between the stories become dependent upon sporadic moments of self-referentiality. Allied to this disjointed structure is the problematical relationship between "Parenthesis" and the narrative as a whole.

Despite its anomalous status within the text as an explicit intervention by an authorial presence that lays down a tempting expository framework for the text as a whole, the centrality of "Parenthesis" has excited less critical comment than might be expected,<sup>6</sup> particularly given the curious thrust of its argument that the history of the world can only be understood through love's palliation. Critical approaches have tended to emphasise the importance of Barnes's 'honesty' and transparency at this point, contending that, because Barnes dispenses with the convention of authorial invisibility, his narrativised presence somehow endows the chapter with the weight of extra-textual authority.<sup>7</sup> Even when critics choose not to accept the integrity of Barnes's metafictional gambit, they appear shy of questioning the sincerity of the authorial voice: Finney describes "Parenthesis" as a "rare moment of truthfulness" (Finney 2003, 50), whilst Keith Wilson stresses the "readily recognizable authorial voice" (Wilson 2006, 363). Recognisable, one wonders, from what? It is surely the case that the intrusion of the 'figure' of the author into the text creates a palpable division between narrative as fabrication (the surrounding ten chapters) and the parenthetical discursus of the authorial *deus ex machina*, but should such a blatant self-disclosure unproblematically invite the reader into a method of interpretation founded upon the author as organising consciousness and generator of meaning? I would argue that depending upon how ingenuously we are prepared to accept Julian Barnes as a character in *A History of the World in 10½ Chapters*, we are led into conflicting interpretative positions. "Parenthesis" prompts the reader either to accept the integrity of the half-

chapter to the 'meaning' of the book as a whole, or challenges us to read the novel as a ludic, but ultimately self-negating parody.

The question seems to be one of the trustworthiness of the narrator of "Parenthesis" but such an indeterminable quality is surely redundant when the status of narration is considered across the novel as a whole. Throughout, Barnes normalises narrative instability sited upon unreliable narrators ("The Survivor," "Upstream!"), or manifest in the competition between narratives for pre-eminence ("The Stowaway," "Shipwreck," "The Visitors"). The accounts of the privileged narrators are characterised by their singularity of perspective, yet claim the authority of truth, and, in the case of Noah's history, in "The Stowaway," claim the authority of Divine truth. Barnes counterpoints the self-assurance of these accounts with the acknowledgement that beneath the veneers of self-claimed authority are competing narratives which history has not privileged. It is the interplay between these conflicting histories that exposes the instability of both. Given the preponderance of subjective and specious histories in these stories, it is realistic, and indeed essential, to question the basis upon which Barnes as narrator is considered to be more reliable.

Privilege closely attends narratorial control in this text and, as Gregory Salyer argues, combines with that singular perspective to constitute an empowered reality that in turn informs claims of historical truthfulness.<sup>8</sup> Domination of the past is derived from the monologism of the narrative voice, but Barnes's point is not that history offers up a Marxian reading of the victor's right to reinscribe the record, but rather that the poststructuralist acknowledgment of history's competing voices renders each of them equally reliable and unreliable, truthful and fabricated. Which "fabulation you choose to believe," Salyer suggests, "is the same as saying whose history and whose reality shall you believe" (Salyer 1991, 226). Whereas in the chapters entitled "The Visitors," "The Survivor," "Upstream!" and the first and third of the "Three Simple Stories" the fabular histories that temporarily abut each other are political, ideological but above all material, in "The Stowaway" – the novel's position-piece opening story – the narrative of the woodworm upon Noah's Ark competes against the grander narrative of spiritual exclusivity.

The woodworm's perspective on the Ark story is that of the outsider, a counter-history that derides the arbitrary policies of selection. He is alienated not only from the systems of power, as personified by the bullying, irascible figure of Noah, but also from a sense of automatic inclusiveness that derives from not being officially numbered amongst the creatures to be saved. His narrative represents the voice of those elided from the historical record and functions as an interpolation in the dominant narrative of biblical legend in order to reveal the authoritarian and exclusive nature of that narrative. By focusing upon the materiality of the Flood legend, cutting away in the process the doctrinal licence that protects the story from narrative consistency, Barnes sets it up against the other (hi)stories in

<sup>6</sup> Kotte (1997) acknowledges the problems raised by the position of "Parenthesis" in the text, but tends to deal with the half-chapter itself only in a cross-referential way, as an enlightenment of the presentation of history in the other chapters. In *Understanding Julian Barnes*, Merritt Moseley dismisses "Parenthesis" as "an apparently straightforward discussion of love spoken to the reader by Julian Barnes" (Moseley 1997, 113), whilst responses by Raucq-Hoorickx (1991), Maria Lozano (1995) and Steven Connor (1996) have adopted limited approaches to this section.

<sup>7</sup> Moseley is particularly culpable of reading "Parenthesis" as an 'honest' confession by Barnes. As he claims: "Barnes comes as close as possible, for a novelist, to *speaking as himself*, without the distancing of narrator or implied author: he says it is himself and calls himself Julian Barnes" (Moseley 1997, 121). Gregory Salyer also installs an interpretation which accepts Barnes's presentation of love's triumph over doubt and confusion (Salyer 1991).

<sup>8</sup> Salyer also notes that Barnes's "presentation of history as power has affinities with the work of Michel Foucault" (Salyer 1991, 225) and provides a valuable assessment of the extent to which knowledge and power construct reality in the novel.

the volume as open to challenge and refutation. Explicitly and gleefully exploring such elisions from the biblical account as how the Ark's human population sustained themselves and how the animals were discouraged from eating each other demands of the narrative a level of internal, diegetic coherence of which it is incapable and ultimately reduces it to bathos. Noah, as the representative and vehicle of God's will on earth, is conveniently positioned as the first historian of the new world, and Barnes emphasises the principles of selectivity which constitute his vision of acceptable history. The separation of the clean from the unclean leads occasionally systematically, but more often indiscriminately, to animals being excised from the historical record, either by being eaten, being thrown overboard, or being slaughtered as victims of Noah's unpredictable temper. His wilfulness makes him a dubious chronicler but equally a powerful claimant of narrative authority and manufacturer of history. Within the terms of the novel, Noah becomes the first unreliable author-narrator.

That the subaltern history of the woodworm is equally as partial as the 'official' account should be obvious from the conviction with which he claims its veracity: "When I recall the Voyage, I feel no sense of obligation; gratitude puts no smear of Vaseline on the lens. My account you can trust" (Barnes 1990, 4). As whimsical as "The Stowaway" is in tone, the bastardised Darwinian struggle that leads to the survival of the luckiest recounted by it is a serious opposing of authorial positions; that both Noah and the woodworm end up as questionable historians draws attention to the malleability of the authoritarian voice in any narrative and by implication must throw into question the singular perspective offered in "Parenthesis." Elsewhere we encounter similarly unreliable author-narrators whose realities are manufactured in support of their individualised world-views. Kath Ferris's belief in the ecological holocaust that afflicts the planet in "The Survivor" brings her into direct opposition with an institutional lobby of doctors and psychiatrists equally persuaded of her delusional disorder. The narratives of entropic inevitability and psychotic instability oppose each other across a space of contested rationality with neither position ultimately able to discredit its opponent. What takes place here is not a dialectical negotiation of comparative truth-systems, but an endurance test in which the most belligerently adaptable narrative survives. Authority, Barnes implies, in no ways demands immanence, but is an outcome of accident and contingency, but most importantly, presence.

Such is also the case in "Shipwreck" where the sinking of the "Medusa" in 1816 and the subsequent portrayal of the stranded survivors by Géricault enables Barnes to revisit the notion of the mutability of artistic truth-telling. "Shipwreck" acknowledges Hayden White's contention (White 1973) that the fields of historical and artistic discourse are intimately related and that the representation of the past constitutes a continual interplay between fabulation and facticity, between empirical and artistic truths. The compositional decisions involved in the production of "The Raft of the Medusa" (or "Scene of Shipwreck" as the narrator prefers) are motivated by an impulse for internal artistic consistency that incorporates but is not overshadowed by events from the field of recorded history:

"Truth to life, at the start, to be sure; yet once the process gets under way, truth to art is the greater allegiance" (Barnes 1990, 135). Art supports its own logic which, although informed by material contexts, is ultimately self-sustaining. The truth-narratives of artistic and historical discourses are interdependent but not co-terminous, and whilst Barnes's description of Géricault's painting suggests the co-existence of dual realities, both descended from the same event and both feeding upon the other, their relationship is one of direct competition for the authority of posterity. By focusing upon the paintings that ultimately failed the test of time, and by highlighting the conflictual inter-penetration of art and life, Barnes dismisses the totalising truth-claims of any singular narrative. Instead he offers artistic and historical palimpsests of impermanent authorities whose univocality is challenged and eventually superseded by alternative, and similarly fallible truth-narratives. That which appears most substantial within history and culture is presented in this novel as insubstantial and its continued relevance is dependent upon its ability to recognise and adapt to that insubstantiality.

Clearly the 'historical' chapters of this novel consistently problematise the stability of authority and authoriality and reject the symbolic fixity of individual truth in favour of a Darwinian competition for narrative survival. Yet, in returning to "Parenthesis," Barnes proffers – albeit as a case of *faute de mieux* – a single, coherent counter to history's randomness founded upon the central authority of the authorial/narratorial voice; "Parenthesis" consequently appears to contradict the assumptions of narrative instability which have been established in the surrounding stories. However disingenuously, it sets down an author-authorized framework for the novel as a whole, self-referentially indicating the metafictional intent by incorporating elements of other stories, but whilst it privileges Barnes's perspective (as author and narrator), it elides the competing narratives which are, elsewhere, so aggressively pervasive. Such sleight of hand subtly distances "Parenthesis" from its surrounding narratives and distinguishes it with a sincerity that would elsewhere be highly dubious, yet in seeking to contextualise that distinction in *A History of the World in 10½ Chapters* it is illuminating to recognise that the deliberate privileging of a specific viewpoint has a precedent within Barnes's writing, namely, his earlier recuperation of the past: *Flaubert's Parrot* (1984).

In *Post-War British Fiction: Realism and After* Andrzej Gasiorek claims that the quest of Geoffrey Braithwaite for Flaubert's parrot becomes a search for an authentic voice from the past, an objective and empirical truth living through history. The novel contains the epistemological framework of a detective fiction, involving the reader in the problematical search not only for the genuine parrot, but also for the ambiguities within Braithwaite's own studious motivations. However, whilst it "discusses the difficulties of its own interpretation [it] also informs the reader how to interpret it" (Gasiorek 1995, 159). The novel depends upon that which is not articulated in history, those areas of the past which are inaccessible to the present, or, as Gasiorek neatly puts it, "the faint presence of the parrot's voice but the regrettable absence of the bird itself" (Gasiorek 1995, 160). Braithwaite's eventual acceptance that the notion of objective truth is illusory leads

him to create within his narrative a multiplicity of possible Flauberts, all existing simultaneously within history, and all of equal 'truth' to the eyes of the present. The novel thus becomes less a search for veracity and more a contemplation on the process of endless fracture which denies the past to the present. More importantly however for the current discussion is Gasiorek's contention that the narrative deliberately problematises interpretation through Braithwaite's resistance to the reader's autonomous construction of meaning around Flaubert's life. As he says:

He [Braithwaite] carries out his own interpretation, setting the novel up to be read in a certain way. He structures the narrative in such a way that the reader's approach to it is effectively forestalled because it is directed down certain paths. He impedes interpretation by anticipating the moves by which it might proceed and by setting up his own protocols for how his narrative should be read. (Gasiorek 1995, 161)

The conscious presentation of a privileged way of reading the narrative of *Flaubert's Parrot* could be seen as a direct precursor to the implicit privileging of Barnes's perspective in "Parenthesis." As Braithwaite attempts to forestall an independent readerly analysis of his evidence, so "Parenthesis" may be seen as a similar diversion by which Barnes extends a comforting rationalisation of the novel's disparate subject-matters. "Parenthesis" does not stand as an epiphanic revelation to the reader's search for hermeneutic logic, but it does openly address and connect recurrent tropes and motifs within the novel with an apparent clarity, which provides the reader with an interpretative entrance into the text.

## 2. Unreliable Authoring and the Wondering I

The openness and accessibility of the half-chapter is principally engendered by the self-representation of Julian Barnes as a character who directly addresses the implied reader. Conscious of the translucence of the authorial/narratorial veil and equally aware of the postmodern reader's intolerance towards the mystified 'I' of any first-person narrative, Barnes strives to disavow his role in the hoodwinking of the reader, deliberately confronting the identity of his narratorial self:

Poets seem to write more easily about love than prose writers. For a start, they own that flexible 'I' (when I say 'I' you will want to know within a paragraph or two whether I mean Julian Barnes or someone invented; a poet can shimmy between the two, getting credit for both deep feeling and objectivity). (Barnes 1990, 227)

To write about history and love, he suggests, demands not simply different literary protocols, but distinct narrative personae: the former dominated by objective clarity, the latter by subjective sentimentality. How can the two be reconciled? Ironically the answer lies in the coy self-exposure that appears in parenthesis in the above quotation: The introduction of the author's name acts as a marrying point of the public and private, offering up the text as both an artificial fabular construct and as having a material place in the real world in the hands of the reader. In the process the objective thing-ness of the text and the fact of its production by a subjective consciousness are united and legitimise the task that Barnes as

author/narrator sets himself: to collocate history and love as comparable structures for understanding the world. Having teased us with the possibility of his self-revelation and having openly highlighted our desire for an anchoring presence in the text, Barnes frustratingly retreats behind the narratorial mask failing to inform us categorically as to his identity, thereby directing even greater attention to the borderline between the text's ontological incarnations. Thus this parenthesis in "Parenthesis" appears crucial in establishing the complex relationship between what is inside and what is outside, and as secondary as parenthetical additions may be to sentence structure, here they are endowed with a central explicatory function.

That which appears most innocuous in this novel carries greatest freight and in 'opening' himself up as its producer Barnes deliberately establishes the sharp division between the fabulation of the ten stories and the apparently sincere discursiveness of the essay on love. I would argue strongly against those critics that regard Barnes's metafictional intervention here as sincere, honest or ingenuous: Barnes does not "come out from behind the narrative mask and speak to the reader as if they were discussing the novel over tea in the study" (Salzer 1991, 226) but instead stays firmly behind the mask whilst making its presence resoundingly obvious. Barnes is not seeking an *entente* with the reader any more than he is seeking a momentary respite from the sickening merry-go-round of history as it appears in the stories; instead his soliloquy is designed to lure the reader into an acceptance of the privileged interpretation by virtue of its perceived visibility at this juncture. As in *Flaubert's Parrot* Barnes invites us to read his novel through his eyes and the soft seduction of his method is ultimately nothing more than that: seduction.

As with all seductions its purpose is abandonment, in this case the abandonment by the reader of convictions about narratorial unreliability that have been established and reinforced by the preceding eight stories. Though he never explicitly lays claim to the composition of the stories in the volume, it is clear that Barnes as author/narrator intends the interlude to reflect back (and forwards) upon the surrounding material. Repeated intratextual allusions are made to "The Stowaway," "The Wars of Religion," "The Survivor," "Shipwreck," "The Mountain" and "Three Simple Stories,"<sup>9</sup> connecting them all within a network that implicitly places all the stories of *A History of the World in 10½ Chapters* within a coherent and uniform pattern, designed as a commentary on the nature of history. Yes, history may be random and senseless, Barnes suggests, but there are sufficient similarities between its stories to bring them within a codifying system. In "Parenthesis" the reader witnesses a form of pre-emptive hermeneutic summation, a drawing together of the disparate elements of the text into order. That that order is arbitrary and fragile in the extreme is immaterial in the context of "Parenthesis" where the primary tasks are recuperation and the establishment of frameworks within

<sup>9</sup> Page references to these allusions are as follows: "The Stowaway" (Barnes 1990, 231, 236, 241), "The Wars of Religion" (245), "The Survivor" (241, 242), "The Shipwreck" (243), "The Mountain" (237), "Three Simple Stories" (242).

which the randomness of the past can be understood. Given that the previous eight chapters have undermined the credibility of any such framework, it is difficult to read "Parenthesis" as anything other than an ironic condemnation of such projects, but Barnes suggests that the failure of previous models of history has led in the late-twentieth century to a retreat to an affective paradigm, that is, love as the answer to history's unanswerable questions.

Love stands alongside art and religion as a triumvirate of signifying systems that have the potential to transform the mundane everydayness of the everyday into the meaningful and the transcendent. Throughout the stories their claims to explicate, or at the very least palliate, the inexplicable and indiscriminate vicissitudes of history are put to the test. Art (particularly in "Shipwreck" but also in "Upstream!") and religion (in "The Stowaway," "The Wars of Religion," "The Mountain" and "Project Ararat") prove inadequate to the task of creating structures of understanding that could foster a totalised account of human history. They offer at best only a broken resistance to history, their internal logics too resolutely focused on maintaining their own sea defences against doubt and contradiction. In "Parenthesis" Barnes derides religion as "wimpishly workaday, or terminally crazy, or merely businesslike" (Barnes 1990, 244), whilst art, which professes a transcendence of the temporal, is accessible only to the relative few, and thus cannot be said to extend an all-encompassing asylum from the random contingency of the past. "So religion and art must yield to love" (Barnes 1990, 245), the narrator pronounces, for love is the sole defence of humanity, having the potential to be endlessly created and recreated in every single individual. Love represents an answer to the meaningless and stands in its glorious unpredictability and indiscriminacy as a riposte to history. It mimics history's lack of system, its ebullience and continual symbolic surfeit; it is "anti-mechanical" and "anti-materialist" (Barnes 1990, 244) and reminds us that reason need not always provide the best schema for describing reality or history:

I can't tell you who to love, or how to love [...]. But I can tell you why to love. Because the history of the world, which only stops at the half-house of love to bulldoze it into rubble, is ridiculous without it. The history of the world becomes brutally self-important without love. Our random mutation is essential because it is unnecessary. Love won't change the history of the world [...] but it will do something much more important: teach us to stand up to history, to ignore its chin-out strut. (Barnes 1990, 240)

If history offers us only indifference, the argument goes, then all we can offer in return is something equally non-negotiable and illogical. The weight of human frailty is laid on the narrow shoulders of love, our inability to rationalise the provisionality of history into a digestible form is countered only by the offering up of a comparably irrational affective poultice. But, Barnes suggests, the efficacy of love's antidote is immaterial when what it reminds us is that "[t]here is more to us than us" (Barnes 1990, 245). Love enables us to reach out to that in others that is mystified, it speaks to our humanity in ways which religion and art cannot and though happiness is not guaranteed by love (quite the opposite in fact) it is "our only hope" (Barnes 1990, 245).

Such at least is the emotive plea of the textualised Julian Barnes, and the apparent artlessness with which love is declared as the 'answer' to history encourages the reader to suspend her/his cynicism towards any totalising logic. The argument could be made that Barnes is not offering love as an overarching master signifier, only as an impoverished but genuine defence, but one is forced to ask whether the evidence of the stories supports the redemptive potential of love and, I would argue, the answer has to be no. According to Brian Finney, love in this novel is "cannibalistic and highly unpredictable" (Finney 2003, 68) and where it does appear in the ten chapters (such as in "Upstream!" And "The Mountain") it is neither fulfilling nor ennobling. In fact the stories are characterised by their coldness and lack of empathetic identification leading Jonathan Coe to state that he could not remember "reading a novel which showed so little interest in the politics of everyday relationships – or one, at any rate, which isolated them so ruthlessly from the realm of speculative ideas" (Coe 1989, 27). With what credibility can we then read the lesson in love provided by "Parenthesis"? Surely it is misleading to locate history's signifying system on and around love when love itself is so dismissively marginalised elsewhere, rendering "Parenthesis" indicative only of its aporetic status. Love is no more the overarching meaning-maker of history than art or religion and it is no more the next best thing. The excursion into affect is readable as potentially redemptive (though with a resigned sense that this is the best that we are going to get) or potentially deconstructive (why should we believe Barnes here more than elsewhere?), but it offers only instability and thus works against the self-comforting narrative of the half-chapter. "Parenthesis" simultaneously draws attention to itself (as a stand-alone addendum) and away from itself (by suggesting that its parenthetical status is little more than a development of points made extra-parenthetically), and its treatment of love is similarly equivocal: Love both is and is not the cohering framework for history's long, dark night of the soul.

### 3. True Love and Love's Truth

Further evidence of Barnes's ironic intentions in "Parenthesis" emerge from his consideration of truth. The consequence of an embracing of love as a challenge to history is that truth is made visible:

Love and truth, that's the vital connection, love and truth. Have you ever told so much truth as when you were first in love? Have you ever seen the world so clearly? Love makes us see the truth, makes it our duty to tell the truth. (Barnes 1990, 240)

As idealistic as this may seem in such a cynical novel, such a bold statement demands to be tested against the material that Barnes lays before us. What does Barnes mean by truth here and how does such a position correspond with his subsequent assertion in "Parenthesis" that "objective truth is not obtainable"? (Barnes 1990, 245). The truth in the singular that is invoked here is a form of intuitive undertow that bypasses cognition or dialectic by speaking to fundamental

human needs. "Tell the truth with your body" (Barnes 1990, 240) we are instructed, and to do so is a moral duty: "Sex isn't acting [...] sex is about truth. How you cud-dle in the dark governs how you see the history of the world. It's as simple as that" (Barnes 1990, 241). That emphatic final sentence draws fully upon the authority of the author-narrator and thus, within the interpretive terms the novel has set for itself, should be regarded with suspicion. Nothing is simple or straightforward here and to cut across the vagaries of his post-metahistorical ruminations with such bald affirmation persuades neither rationally nor as a plea from the heart. That "the heart isn't heart-shaped" (Barnes 1990, 232) points towards the novel's confounding of desire and anti-idealistic stance and brings sharply into contrast the marriage of love and truth that is essayed in "Parenthesis." Yet how are we therefore to interpret the later and increasingly desperate conclusion that:

We all know that objective truth is not obtainable, that when some event occurs we shall have a multiplicity of subjective truths which we assess and then fabulate into history, into some God-eyed version of what 'really' happened. (Barnes 1990, 245)

Barnes initially constructs this cul-de-sac as a depressing acknowledgement of an epistemological breakdown but subsequently proposes a positive reading that opposes knowledge with belief:

But while we know this, we must still believe that objective truth is obtainable; or we must believe that it is 99 per cent obtainable; or if we can't believe this we must believe that 43 per cent objective truth is better than 41 per cent. (Barnes 1990, 245-6)

The diminishing returns that characterise this relativistic envisioning of objectivity increases the scepticism with which the reader regards truth: What does truth mean when it is only 43 per cent true? What value or transcendence can be claimed by such qualified objectivity? Bypassing the oxymoronic unobjectivity of objective truth in favour of an ill-defined faith in absence, Barnes suggests that without some grounding in metaphysics we are vulnerable to accept "one liar's version as much as another liar's" (Barnes 1990, 246). Setting aside the obvious confusion of truth and lies, it is clear that "Parenthesis" offers nothing more stable in the way of 'explanation' of history's processes than any of the stories. Admittedly the section is cast as a diversionary and dislocated trawl through nocturnal anxieties, but its privileged position in the text, its uncharacteristic openness and self-revelatory narrator and its impassioned argument for love as an organising principle promote it as, in some ineffable way, more clear-sighted and coherent than its surroundings. This is evidently not the case; "Parenthesis" is a hermeneutic aporia, offering nothing to combat the randomness of the stories but its own randomness.

That there is a consistency in the argument about love creates a subtle, but distinct distance from the other chapters, meaning that "Parenthesis" becomes an authorial exposition by dint of its internal logic; its value, however, is dependent upon the continuing desperation of the reader for stable meaning. I would argue that Barnes intentionally draws the reader into a privileged reading of the text in order to reveal the desire of that reader for order and sense in narrative.

Although Barnes's novel develops from the acknowledgement that 'truth,' whether it be historical accuracy, universal verity or artistic transcendence, is, at best, an unattainable ideal, he simultaneously recognises the inherent need in human beings for order and meaning. As Alasdair MacIntyre has argued: "[M]an is in his actions and practice, as well as in his fictions, essentially a story-telling animal" (MacIntyre 1981, 201), and though this novel displays a collision between random, nonsensical action and systematised, coherent reaction, it stresses the importance of story-telling as a means of substituting order and form for the vacuum in meaning and purpose. Models of narrative, whether historical or fictional, provide a grammar for the control and signification of those random impulses, but they are essentially artificial structures, arbitrarily placed over a patternless chaos. If "Parenthesis" is positioned as an ironic mimicking of order, then the reader becomes a victim of a futile search for meaning and pattern. The novel has been meticulously structured to show that all certainties such as truth, meaning and value have been eroded and become the subjects of change, contingency or politics. Having established that all narratives are constructed from a mêlée of competing demands, it is inconceivable that Barnes would present a single interpretative position from which *A History of the World in 10½ Chapters* should be read. He therefore ironises the process of interpretation by which the reader seeks meaning in the novel and inverts that search back onto the reader, interrogating the pre-set paradigms by which s/he recognises a novel or a history of the world.

The qualities that make "Parenthesis" anomalous within the novel demand an interpretative strategy which addresses the relationship between the ten full chapters and the half-chapter, and which engages with the problems raised by the claims of the metafictional narrator figure. The novel's title draws attention to the importance which is placed upon the incompleteness of this chapter and reflects a pervasive sense of the 'unfinished' nature of history. Because events in the historical field are characterised, in Barnes's view, by their intrinsic lack of process and narrative consistency, textualised history necessitates the application of a structure and methodology to that which is fundamentally accidental and unpremeditated. A completion of the incomplete is effected which brings the past within a symbolic teleology and which makes 'visible' the causal connections that underlie the chaotic jumble of events that constitute the past. *A History of the World in 10½ Chapters* deliberately emphasises the crassness of its own simplifications and limitations; the stories it includes are not metaphorical exempla of a multi-faceted historicity, but tales plucked at random from past tides – they are the flotsam of history pieced together in an attempt to make a whole. The impossibility of fit that renders postmodernism's version of history incompatible with representation allows Barnes playfully to reinterpret the form of a 'world history' as a series of unstable and discontinuous historicisms. The instinct for order that is imposed by a linear view of history derives from the need for stories and a desire to impose coherence over that which is not understood. History without pattern is unbearable, but equally unbearable, the novel implies, is a novel without meaning. "Parenthesis" functions as a simulacrum of

orderly structure and sense that masks a central absence, but in so doing it reveals the reader's desire for these qualities. To accept unquestioningly the 'honesty' of Barnes as author-narrator problematises the relationship between "Parenthesis" and the other stories, for they do not point towards the history of the world as a simplistic reduction of the triumph of love over time. But Barnes's lecture on love as an instinctual and intuitive riposte to the terrifying chaos of history renders vulnerable the cynicism with which his reader is likely to regard his interventionist strategy. Postmodern love may exist within parentheses as an ironic raised eyebrow to the status of 'genuine' feeling, but nonetheless the call of its simplicity is difficult to ignore. Love offers answers to history's imponderables just as it offers answers to the novel's problems, but the echo of sentiment that is so difficult to grasp in Byatt, Ishiguro, Swift or Barker's buried love, is too conveniently mobilised here to imply that 'meaning' can be achieved by application of the author's guiding prompts to the rest of the text. None of us wish to believe that love under postmodernity has been reduced to the fading squawk of a disappearing parrot, but to believe otherwise in this text is deliberately to read counter to the evidence. As Barnes has stated in one interview: "[T]he desire to reach conclusions is a sign of human stupidity" (Barnes 1987, 23) and to clutch the straw that "Parenthesis" extends is to fall headfirst into the trap of seeking what is palpably not there. "Parenthesis" is so important to this novel precisely because it is not important.

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JÜRGEN JOACHIMSTHALER

“the spaces between the columns”:  
Die Text-Räume und Raum-Texte des Samuel R. Delany<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** Inspired by Allan Kaprows performance *18 Happenings in 6 Parts* (1959), the Black American writer Samuel R. Delany created his own mode of ‘narrative spaciality.’ Spaces to him are primarily systems of signs, conventions, and power. These ‘semiospheres’ determine all modes of cognition and provoke the fundamental question of whether and how human beings can escape the semantics of their respective culture. This article traces the metamorphoses of Delany’s spacial concepts in his literary, essayistic, and autobiographical oeuvre and thus also reconstructs the intellectual development of one of the most idiosyncratic American postmodernists.

Jerk a man from one world; fling him into another. It will take him the same time to realize where he is as to remember where he has been. (Delany 1966b, 13)

### 1. Ein-Gang

1959 lud Allan Kaprow in New York zu jener Veranstaltung ein, die unter dem Titel *18 Happenings in 6 Parts* als initiales Uereignis der neuen Kunstform(en) *happening* und *performance* in die Kunstgeschichte eingehen sollte: “In drei durch halb durchsichtige Plastikfolie abgetrennten Räumen,” auf die das Publikum verteilt worden war,

fanden simultan die sechs (insgesamt also 18) Material-Licht-Geräuscheereignisse, denen die Besucher ausgesetzt oder von denen sie ausgeschlossen waren, statt. [...] Filme, Diaprojektionen, musikalische Klänge und Alltagsgeräusche waren Bestandteile der inszenierten Ereignisse, ohne Handlung, ohne in sich schlüssige Struktur. (Damus 2000, 287)

Jeder Besucher konnte nur einzelne Ausschnitte der Gesamtszenierung direkt miterleben, und doch erhielt jeder Gast durch die nur dünne Abschottung der Räume voneinander eine diffuse Vorstellung – weniger davon, was in den jeweils anderen Räumen, als dass in ihnen überhaupt etwas geschah. In der Wahrnehmung überlappten die einzelnen Räume sich mit nur vagen Vermutungen über das Geschehen in den jeweils anderen; es handelte sich bei dieser Inszenierung um eine mit ästhetischen Mitteln erzeugte räumliche Verwirrung. Zu den nachhaltig überraschten Besuchern gehörte auch der angehende Schriftsteller Samuel R. Delany,

<sup>1</sup> Für Vor-Ort-Recherchen nach Originalausgaben in Amerika danke ich Herrn Thorsten Suck.

der nur zufällig auf die plakatierten Ankündigungen aufmerksam geworden war. Dessen Verarbeitung (und Deutung) dieser "new areas of conceptual space" (Delany 1994b, 165) ist für unsere Zwecke – das Thema Raum – bedeutsamer als die *performance* selbst: "Suddenly there was a new space to deal with. Then you inject a great deal of lyrical language into this particular area and see, what happens to it, happens in it" (Delany 1994b, 165).

Delany deutete dieses *happening* später als ein erstes Zeichen der "transition between the modern and the postmodern in cultural development" (Delany 1990, 179). So wichtig war ihm dieser "clash that begins our reading of the hugely arbitrary postmodern" (Delany 1990, 186), dass er ihm noch 30 Jahre später acht Seiten in seiner Autobiographie widmete. Statt eines erwarteten dramatisierten zeitlichen Ablaufs hatte er die räumliche Erfahrung von Isolation, zerbrochener Einheit und Simultaneität erlebt:

No two groups had seen the same ones. No group was even sure what the other groups were seeing. [...] Nor could the audience be sure of any authoritative statement about it [...]. Beginning with the separate chambers, the unity of the audience had been shuttered as much as any other aspect of the work. (Delany 1990, 186)

Nachträglich versuchte er, den Beginn gleich einer ganzen Ära namens 'Postmoderne' mit dieser künstlerischen Herstellung einer räumlichen Verstörung in eins zu setzen. Dies ist zumindest für ihn selbst insoweit nachvollziehbar, als "the ideal postmodern intellectual" (Tucker 2004, 1) Delany in seinen Romanen und Erzählungen bereits seit den frühen 1960er Jahren mit von Kaprows Inszenierung inspirierten Strukturen arbeitete: "the multichambered computer, the macrosocial structure, the fragmentary social portraiture" (Delany 1990, 186). Er verstand dieses *happening* "as a representation and analysis of the situation of the subject in history" (Delany 1990, 186) und leitete daraus die Notwendigkeit ab, auf jede vereinheitlichende Zentralperspektive in den Künsten zu verzichten. Sein eigenes Raummodell beruht darauf. Dessen Entwicklung lässt sich in einige (einander natürlich vielfach überlappende) Werkphasen einteilen: Noch ganz im Bereich der literarischen Fiktion erfindet er während der 1960er Jahre als mit Preisen überschüttetes, kommerziell äußerst erfolgreiches Wunderkind der *new wave* (vgl. Keim 1983) von Kaprow inspirierte Räume (und wird nebenbei zu einem der Erfinder des *cyberspace*); diese beginnen sich rasch in die narrative Struktur seiner Texte selbst hinein abzubilden und erzwingen so eine permanente poetologische Selbstreflexion. Die Frage nach der Funktion derartiger Fiktion führt ihn zum Versuch einer systematischen Erklärung auch der außerliterarischen US-amerikanischen Wirklichkeit – insbesondere der stadträumlichen Strukturen New Yorks – anhand des von Kaprow inspirierten Raummodells. Und schließlich mündet diese Gleichsetzung ästhetischer Strukturen mit außerästhetischer Wirklichkeit in das Bemühen, auf städtebaupolitische Maßnahmen direkt Einfluss zu nehmen und mit dadurch verstärktem Wirklichkeitsbezug eine visionäre Stadt-Literatur autobiographisch neu zu schreiben.

## 2. Samuel R. Delany

If Samuel R. Delany did not exist, we would have to invent him. (Tucker 2004, 1)

Samuel R. Delany gilt als ein Schlüsselautor der Postmoderne (vgl. Fox 1987 und Joachimsthaler 2005a) und wird von der Kritik gerne mit James Joyce verglichen (z.B. Goldberg 1996 und Sallis 1996). Er ist "a writer and thinker whose work has had an enormous influence across a startling range of literary and paralyterary genres, including science fiction, autobiography, pornography, historical fiction, comic books, literary criticism, queer theory, and more" (James 2000, ix). – "[T]hat his prose has enriched the language is recognized, albeit sometimes grudgingly" (Samuelson 1996, 169). Er interessiert hier in erster Linie als paradigmatischer Indikator, als Diskursschnittstelle poststrukturalistischen und postmodernen (Raum-)Denkens während der Jahrzehnte, in denen in Deutschland das Thema 'Raum' aufgrund der vorausgegangenen Indienstnahme eines stark ideologisierten 'Raum'-Begriffs durch den Nationalsozialismus weitgehend tabuisiert war (vgl. Köster 2002). Theorieentwicklung und Narration gehen bei Delany in einem sonst kaum gekannten Maße Hand in Hand. Poetologische Reflexion und deren Umsetzung erst in phantastische und dann zunehmend in autobiographisch gefärbte realitätsnahe Erzählwelten paaren sich mit ausführlichen soziologischen und philosophischen Erläuterungen, die vom Standpunkt identitätspolitischen Interesses aus Anschluss an die jeweils aktuellen Diskurse und Theoreme suchen. In seinen in sich gezielt widersprüchlichen öffentlichen Selbstdarstellungen markiert er sich als ethnisch und sexuell mehrfach codierter 'Anderer' nahezu jeden denkbaren Diskurses (schwarz *und* fast weiß, homosexuell *und* bisexuell, aus dem 'Ghetto von Harlem' stammender outlaw *und* Kind der 'black bourgeoisie,' sozial engagierter ehrenamtlicher Helfer einer Kirchengemeinde *und* literarischer Nachfolger des Sades). Seine durchaus einflussreiche Position als mehrfach preisgekrönter Bestsellerautor, multifunktionale Kult-Figur gleich mehrerer verschiedener amerikanischer *undergrounds* und langjähriger Professor für Vergleichende Literaturwissenschaft, Anglistik und Kreatives Schreiben an verschiedenen amerikanischen Universitäten ermöglicht ihm dabei breitenwirksam didaktisch umgesetzte *Politics of the Paralyterary* (so der Untertitel von Delany 1999a). Schon sein bloßer Besuch von Kaprows *performance* wird von seinen schwarzen Lesern heute, 35 Jahre später, interpretiert als befreiende Grenzüberschreitung eines Schwarzen noch vor den großen Erfolgen der Bürgerrechtsbewegung um Martin Luther King (Tucker 2004, 151-4). Eigentliches Ziel seiner überaus ambivalenten öffentlichen Identitätskonstruktionen ist aber, exemplarisch verkörpert in der Figur des Autors, die Infragestellung jeglicher identitätszuschreibenden Substantialisierung von Eigenschaften: "[Y]ou are neither black nor white. You are neither male nor female. And you are that most ambiguous of citizens, the writer" (Delany 1990, 368).

Sein exzessiv zitierendes und diskutierendes Eindringen in praktisch alle aktuellen Diskursräume seit den 1960er Jahren könnte aus dieser Sicht als auch stellvertretend erhobener politischer Anspruch eines intellektuellen Repräsentanten

mehrerer Minderheiten gleichzeitig gedeutet werden. Nicht umsonst vermittelt er, dessen Werk "often tended toward the didactic" (James 1996, xix), einer theoretischen Leserschaft eskapistisch wirkender kommerzieller Genres Zugang zur Philosophie der Postmoderne: Erläuterungen etwa über "Deconstruction, Structuralism, Poststructuralism, and Semiotics for SF Readers" (Delany 1999a, 141-85) erscheinen nicht nur in literaturwissenschaftlichen Fachzeitschriften und seinen vorwiegend an akademische Kreise gerichteten Essaybänden in der Wesleyan University Press, sondern auch in *fanzines* und seinen auflagestarken fiktionalen Werken in den Genres *science fiction* und *sword-and-sorcery*. Erläuterte und narrativ angewandte Theorie ist struktureller Bestandteil bereits seiner frühen Romane. In *Babel-17* (Delany 1966a) etwa wird die Sapir-Whorf-Hypothese über die Abhängigkeit der Welt- und Raumwahrnehmung von sprachlichen Strukturen erläutert am handlungsreich spannenden Beispiel einer als Waffe gegen die Menschheit eingesetzten außerirdischen Sprache rätselhaften Ursprungs; in einem dem Genre *sword-and-sorcery* zugeordneten Roman (aus der Erzählserie *Neveryon*) heißt ein Kapitel "Of Survival, Celebration, and Unlimited Semiosis" (Kap. XIII), ein anderes "Of Family Gatherings, Grammatology, More Models, and More Mysteries" (Kap. XI). In der Maske seines weiblichen *alter ego* K. Leslie Steiner bezeichnet Delany selbst diese *Neveryon*-Serie im Vorwort zur Neuveröffentlichung schließlich als "a child's garden of semiotics" (Steiner 1993, 15).

Bei all dem ist Delany nicht nur ein Rezipient und Vermittler (post-)modernen Denkens, in einigen Punkten (etwa der *gender*-Debatte) läuft er den Debatten zeitlich teilweise um Jahrzehnte voraus: Bereits in seinem Roman *The Einstein Intersection* (1967) wird mit einer Sprache experimentiert, in der es mehr als nur zwei Geschlechtsbezeichnungen gibt. Dieser Zirkelschluss zwischen literarischem Werk und Poststrukturalismus geht dabei so weit, dass es zu einem wechselseitigen Selbstbestätigungskreislauf des Diskurses und seiner Teilnehmer kommen kann: In der Verlagswerbung wird Umberto Eco mit dem Urteil zitiert, "I consider Delany not only one of the most important SF writers of the present generation, but a fascinating writer in general who has invented a new style" (University Press of New England) – während Delany sich umgekehrt in der Danksagung am Ende eines seiner Bücher (Delany 1983) ausdrücklich auf den Einfluss Umberto Ecos auf sein Schreiben beruft.

"[T]he ideal postmodern intellectual" Delany hat eine Schlüsselrolle zwischen Theorie und Narration, didaktischer Vermittlung und eigenständigem Entwurf inne. Er kann deshalb mit einem seiner Lieblingsbilder als ein intertextuelles Prisma bezeichnet werden, in dessen verwirrend bunten Text-Mustern sich synkretistisch so ziemlich alles zusammenfindet, was unter 'postmodern' verstanden wird – nicht zuletzt postmodernes Raumverständnis: Die grundlegende Struktur in Delanys erzählerischem, autobiographischem und essayistischem Werk ist räumlich und zwar in deutlicher Anlehnung an seine Erfahrung von Kaprows *performance*. Nahezu alle Texte Delanys lassen sich in ihrer strukturellen Anlage auf die räumliche Erfahrung des Kaprow-Erlebnisses zurückführen. Sie alle sind von dem raumtheoretischen Schluss geprägt, dass es in einer komplexen Welt keinen vollständigen Überblick

über dieselbe geben könne. Die mentalen Karten der Individuen sind nicht in der Lage, ein vollständiges Abbild der Welt herzustellen, in der sie sich bewegen. Das (post-)moderne Individuum lebt, wie Delany eine seiner Figuren charakterisiert, in "a world he'd known only from the most impoverished perspective, a world whose coordinates in the Web's encyclopedia of habitable worlds he had never even heard" (Delany 1984, 61).

### 3. Das Prinzip Vielfalt: Narrative Räume

Delanys literarische Anfänge sind ganz den Gesetzmäßigkeiten eines kommerziellen Genres verschrieben und deshalb selbst im Nachhinein schwer einzuordnen: Er arbeitete in den frühen 1960er Jahren mit längst schon etablierten Ausdrucksmitteln der klassischen Moderne, übertrug diese aber in das Genre *science fiction*. Das ist traditionell eher konservativ und steht literarischen 'Experimenten' aus Rücksicht auf das anvisierte Massenpublikum oft ablehnend gegenüber, selbst wenn diese 'Experimente' in der 'hohen' Literatur seit Jahrzehnten keine mehr sind. Immerhin gab es in der *new wave* der 1960er Jahre (zu deren wichtigsten Autoren Delany gehört) eine vorübergehende Offenheit auch für stilistische Neuerungen. Im Zuge der allgemeinen Aufbruchsstimmung dieser Zeit wurde das Genre *science fiction* als Medium utopischer Hoffnungen und als narrative Projektionsfläche für psychedelische Experimente durch akademische, 'progressive' und künstlerisch interessierte Leserschichten quasi neu 'entdeckt.' Diesen verdankt Delany seine Verkaufserfolge.

Exemplarisch für den frühen Delany kann hier die *Toron*-Trilogie *The Fall of the Towers* (geschrieben 1961 bis 1964) stehen: Eine verkaufsträchtig spannungsgeladene *science fiction*-Handlung wird angesiedelt in einer fiktiven Zukunft, in der (vermutlich) nur noch ein kleines, von einem undurchdringlichen Strahlengürtel umgebenes, in *einem* Staat um die Stadt Toron zusammengefasstes Territorium auf der Erde bewohnbar ist. Was sich jenseits des Strahlengürtels befindet, bleibt Gegenstand unüberprüfbarer Vermutung. Diese Ungewissheit wird innenpolitisch dazu genutzt, einen jederzeit angriffsbereiten Feind hinter den Strahlengürtel zu projizieren, der solidarisierende Besorgnis in der Bevölkerung auslöst. Handlung und Szenerie werden analog zu Kaprows *performance*, aber auch nach dem literarischen Vorbild von Dos Passos' *Manhattan Transfer* (und bis in zentrale Motive wie dem Schiffsverkehr hinein von Dos Passos inspiriert) aufgesplittert in zahlreiche simultan an verschiedenen Orten, in rasch wechselnden Räumen sich abspielende Szenen. In ihrer Vielfalt liefern sie ein (deutlich an die USA gemahnendes) soziologisches Gesamtbild der Stadt Toron. Kaprow könnte von hier aus lediglich als verspätete performative Umsetzung narrativer Simultanität in der Tradition Dos Passos' erscheinen. Der entscheidende Unterschied zwischen der Tradition der Moderne und Kaprow besteht jedoch darin, dass Dos Passos noch die Möglichkeit eines umfassenden Überblicks bei ausreichend großer Zahl der simultan sich abspielenden Szenen evoziert, während Kaprow (in Delanys Interpretation) genau diese Möglichkeit eines umfassenden Überblicks ausschließt.

Nun wird aber jeder Rezipient, jeder vom Autor einplanbare 'Modell-Leser' bemüht sein, jene Zusammenhänge herzustellen, die ein entsprechend angelegter Text ihm verweigert. Narrative Simultanität provoziert gerade mit ihrer programmatischen Offenheit den Eindruck zumindest der Erahnbarkeit eines Überblicks. Diese Erzählweise fördert damit genau das, was sie nur auf den ersten Blick zu zerstören scheint. In *The Fall of the Towers* sieht man Delany – vergeblich – mit diesem Paradox kämpfen: Er versucht, Simultanität noch durch Meta-Simultanität zu übertrumpfen. Hart am Rande des metaphysischen Kitschs unterlegt er die auf der Erde spielende Handlung mit einer zweiten Handlung, dem Kampf zweier kosmischer Mächte, einem Prinzip der Vielheit und einem Prinzip der Einheit. Die Sympathie des Erzählers gehört trotz aller betonten Gleichwertigkeit der beiden aufeinander angewiesenen Kräfte deutlich jenem Prinzip der Vielfalt, dem er auch seine eigene Erzählweise unterwirft. Die beiden Prinzipien nun suchen sich auf jeder Welt Vertreter, die dort für sie gegeneinander kämpfen. Dadurch erhalten die Auseinandersetzungen in Toron kosmisches Gewicht. Ihre irdischen Vertreter sollen die Kämpfe zwischen den beiden Prinzipien, wo immer im Kosmos sie stattfinden, zusätzlich unterstützen. Einige der Protagonisten werden deshalb, egal durch welchen irdischen Raumsplitter sie sich gerade bewegen, immer wieder unversehens in äußerst fremdartige Wahrnehmungs- und Bewusstseinsräume geschleudert. Delany ermöglicht es sich dadurch, das Erzählprinzip von *Manhattan Transfer* auf einen ganzen Kosmos mit seinen möglichst anderen Wesen und ihrer möglichst anderen Wahrnehmung ihrer jeweiligen Umwelt auszudehnen – und durch die Unvermitteltheit der Raumwechsel Verwirrung im Leser auszulösen. Delanys Umgang mit dem Leser gleicht so dem Kaprows mit seinem Publikum. Als endlos potenzierbar erscheint die Serialität aneinandergereihter Szenen. Die Unterfütterung der Erzählung mit zwei kosmischen Prinzipien impliziert jedoch die Möglichkeit eben jenes zentralperspektivisch geordneten großen Gesamtüberblicks, den zu verweigern Delany später als Kaprows großes Verdienst herausstellen sollte.

#### 4. Exkurs: Eine Erfindung des Cyberspace

Aus innenpolitischen Gründen scheint es in der *Toron*-Trilogie der Regierung schließlich ratsam, gegen den nur möglicherweise existierenden Feind hinter der undurchdringlichen Strahlenbarriere einen realen Krieg zu führen. Der auktoriale Erzähler zeigt diesen – analog zu Dos Passos und Kaprow – in zersplitterten einzelnen Szenen aus der Sicht einfacher Soldaten. In unübersichtlichem Gelände stehen diese einem bestenfalls schemenhaft erkennbaren überlegenen Gegner gegenüber, dem es immer wieder gelingt, ihnen empfindliche Verluste beizubringen. Erst gegen Ende des zweiten Teiles wird nach einem politischen Umsturz die Wahrheit über diesen Krieg enthüllt: Die Soldaten kommen nach der Grundausbildung gar nicht an die Front, sondern in Metallsärge, die mit einer Nährflüssigkeit gefüllt sind. Die Kriegsszenerie, die sie dann zu erleben glauben, ist eine von einem Computer gesteuerte virtuelle Welt, in die jeder seine Phantasien,

Vorstellungen und Empfindungen mit hineinnehmen kann. Sie kommunizieren dort miteinander und glauben, ihr reales Leben – nur eben jetzt an der Front – fortzusetzen. Ein Zufallsgenerator sorgt schließlich noch für reale Todesfälle in Höhe der politisch gewünschten Opferquote.

Delany arbeitet bereits in den frühen 1960er Jahren gerne mit dem Motiv nur vorgetäuschter, irrealer Räume, die Menschen in eine Wirklichkeit versetzen, die nichts als Schein ist, und ihnen doch als die einzig denkbare Realität erscheint. Im Genre *science fiction* liegt die 'technische' Konstruktion nahe, solche Vortäuschungen von Computern koordinieren zu lassen. An die Stelle klassischer 'realer' Attrappenlandschaften potemkinscher Art treten dadurch mental erzeugte kollektive Vorstellungsräume. Deren Übertragung in das menschliche Bewusstsein erfolgt an prothesenähnlichen Schnittstellen zwischen Mensch und Maschine. Nicht umsonst beschäftigt das Thema *cyborg* Delany auch theoretisch (Delany 1996, 87–118). Dies ermöglicht es ihm, nicht mehr nur negativ zu bewertende virtuelle Räume zu erfinden, die als interstellare Kommunikationsräume, imaginativ begehbare Wissensräume, kollektive Vorstellungsräume u.ä.m. dienen.

Delany gehört mit diesen Einfällen zu den Vorvätern der literarischen Fiktion *cyberspace*. Nicht umsonst hat William Gibson, Autor des Schlüsselwerks zur Fiktion *cyberspace* (Gibson 1984), ein Vorwort zu einer Neuausgabe von Delanys Roman *Dhalgren* (2001) geschrieben (Gibson 2001). Eine Handbuch-Definition von *cyberpunk*-Literatur, die die Geburtsstunde des *cyberpunk* auf 1991 festlegt, liest sich fast wie eine Beschreibung der narrativen Strukturen des Frühwerks von Delany: Gekennzeichnet sei

Cyberpunk-Literatur von abrupten Szenen- (bzw. Bildschirm-)Wechseln, von einer räumlichen statt einer zeitlichen Anordnung der Ereignisse, von Verletzungen der Linearität der Erzählung, von Unklarheiten über den Realitätsstatus des Erzählten u.v.m. (Klepper 1996, 272)

So ist Delany nicht nur ein Vordenker und Mitgestalter der Fiktion *cyberspace*, "the cyberpunks [...], without Delany, could not have existed" (Sallis 1996, 95).

#### 5. Eine Poetologie des Raumes

Delanys "worlds out of words" (Barbour 1979) sind, den Illusionen virtueller Räume durchaus ähnlich, um die Innenperspektiven einzelner Individuen herum konstruiert. Der Realitätsgehalt der Welt, in der sie leben, erscheint den Figuren selbst als zweifelhaft – was erlösend, was beängstigend wirken kann. Mehr noch als bei seinen Figuren will Delany jedoch bei den Lesern den Eindruck einer gewissen Irrealität oder zumindest Einseitigkeit der jeweiligen Wahrnehmungsräume hervorrufen. Diesem Zweck dienen in *The Fall of the Towers* die sich widersprechenden personalen Perspektiven, die sich in ihrer Vielzahl wechselseitig relativieren, im Gegensatz zum späteren Werk aber noch die Möglichkeit eines panoramartigen Gesamtüberblicks erahnen lassen. In anderen Fällen beschränkt er sich auf eine zentrale Figur, deren Blick auf ihre Welt in sich brüchig und widersprüchlich ist. Bei der Lektüre von *Triton* (1976) etwa muss sich der Leser, will er die

Handlung verstehen, eigenständig das Psychogramm eines sich selbst nicht verstehenden Großstadtneurotikers voller Wahrnehmungsblockaden (re)konstruieren. In *Dhalgren* (1975) leidet die Hauptfigur an Gedächtnis- und Identitätsverlust, ihre verschiedenen Aufzeichnungen über die Stadt, in der der Roman spielt, passen nicht zueinander.

Alle diese Figuren sind unterwegs. Im Laufe der Werkgenese reduziert sich die im Frühwerk erfolgreich spannende Handlung zunehmend auf Reisebewegungen durch eine meist urbane Umwelt, ein narratives Austasten von Räumen, eine Art iteratives *spacing*. Dessen erklärtes Ziel ist die Auflösung festgefügtter Bedeutungskosmen, eine schrittweise Umprogrammierung, eine Entkrampfung der Wahrnehmung durch das Medium des Expeditionsromans. Delany setzt Leser und Figuren vielen Raum-Wechseln aus. Dabei geht es weniger um geographisch 'andere' Räume als um den Wechsel von Bedeutungsräumen, Sinnwelten, kulturellen Kosmen und Semiosphären (vgl. Lotman 1990 und Joachimsthaler 2005b). Jeder Eintritt in einen anderen Raum ist dabei ein Eintritt in eine andere Welt mit anderer Kultur, anderen Tabus, anderer Aufteilung der Geschlechter, anderer Ökonomie, anderer Hierarchisierung von Werten und Verhaltensweisen. Raum-Wechsel implizieren Bedeutungs-Wechsel. Da Delany im Genre *science fiction* relativ problemlos mit verschiedenen Welten (im Sinne etwa von Planeten) arbeiten kann, kann er narrative Raum-Wechsel zielstrebig zur Verunsicherung von Figuren und Lesern einsetzen. Dabei beruht seine *auktoriale* Beschränkung der *personalen* Perspektive auf einem aus Figuren- und Lesersicht uneinholbaren Abstand zwischen auktorialer und personaler Position: Figuren und Leser erhalten nie den Gesamtüberblick über die vom Autor erst vollständig entworfene und dann nachträglich in eine Vielzahl fragmentarischer Ausschnitte aufgesplitterte narrative Welt. In Delanys Schreibanweisungen heißt es explizit:

[T]he way to write a vivid scene is for the writer first to visualize every aspect of the scene [...]. Then do *not* describe it. [...] the writer should move his or her character [...] through the scene [...], mentioning only those details that impinge on the character's consciousness. (Steiner 1996, 101)

Der Autor stellt sich selbst also sehr wohl jene *ganze* Welt vor, deren Gesamtanblick er – analog zu Kaprows inszenierter räumlicher Verwirrung – Figuren und Lesern verweigert. Primär erhöht diese Technik den Eindruck subjektiv gebrochener Anschaulichkeit jeder Schilderung, die jeweils dargestellte Welt wird konsequent mit der individuellen Sichtweise der jeweiligen Figur durchfärbt. Darüber hinaus ermöglicht diese Technik dem Schriftsteller wie dem Schreiblehrer Delany abweichend originelle Blicke auf scheinbar Vertrautes. Seinen Studenten befahl er während eines Seminars:

I want you all to look around the room – get up and walk around if you'd like. Observe the people in the room with you, very closely. Keep looking until you notice something about one of your classmates that you've never noticed before. Now examine this thing about him, this aspect of her behavior or appearance, until you see something about it different from the way anyone else you've ever seen exhibits this feature of appearance or behavior. Then write down what you've seen in a sentence or two. (Delany 1977, 158-9)

Gewohntes soll verfremdet werden, um scheinbar festgefügte soziale, aber auch geographische und kosmische Räume zu relativieren. Ihre immanenten Selbstverständlichkeiten, Zuordnungs- und Ausschlussmechanismen werden hinterfragt, der Raum radikal subjektiviert, "difference" (bereits 1967) bei Wahrnehmung und Beschreibung von Lebenswelten eingefordert:

At Branning-at-sea difference is a private matter. Difference is the foundation of those buildings, the pilings beneath the docks, tangled in the roots of the trees. Half the place was built on it. The other half couldn't live without it. But to talk about it in public reveals you to be illmannered and vulgar. (Delany 1970, 116)

Dabei geht es um eine grundsätzliche Gleichberechtigung aller am selben Ort gemeinsam anwesenden verschiedenen sozialen und individuellen Wahrnehmungsräume. Der Raum erscheint dabei als eine das Individuum umschließende semantische Hülle, die mit gesellschaftlichen Unterscheidungen und Bedeutungen angefüllt ist. Diese müssen von den Figuren zuerst verinnerlicht werden, damit sie sich in ihrer jeweiligen Umgebung überhaupt bewegen können – das Medium Raum wird von Delany als eine Ansammlung von Zeichen mit Sprache gleichgesetzt: "An environment becomes the medium for the inscription of human actions upon it, constituting a sign system, a language, or 'landscape'" (Tucker 2004, 81). Nachdem man gelernt hat, sich in ihnen zu bewegen, gilt es aber, diese Räume wieder zu relativieren, will man nicht ihr Gefangener werden, der sich fortan nur noch in ihren Bewertungsmustern ausdrücken, der fortan nur noch innerhalb ihrer Vorgaben denken und handeln kann.

*Science fiction* erscheint dabei in ihren (seltenen) besten Momenten als die Möglichkeit des Entwurfes alternativer Räume, die nicht besser oder schlechter sein sollen als die Realität, sondern nur anders genug, um das Vorstellungsvermögen des Lesers so weit zu erweitern, dass ihm das Selbstverständliche als nicht mehr selbstverständlich erscheint. Die Funktion der figurennahen personalen Perspektive besteht denn auch darin, die Vorstellungsfähigkeit des Lesers um fremde, um 'andere' Wahrnehmungsweisen fremder Umgebungen zu erweitern. Die narrativen Räume in ihrer Vieldeutigkeit sind "a construct in which no social group is central" (Barbour 1979, 102).

Fiktionale Sprachwelten sind immer Parallelwelten zur Vorstellungswelt der Leser. Delany nun splittert diese Parallelwelten ihrerseits auf in eine Vielzahl sprachlicher "paraspaces – from cyberspace to outer space itself" (Delany 1994b, 170). In der scheinbaren Selbstverständlichkeit des den Leser umhüllenden "ordinary space" sei dieser nämlich in Gefahr "to lose the sense of its rhetoricity" (Delany 1994b, 170). Diese "rhetoricity" des "ordinary space" wieder bewusst zu machen, sei Aufgabe der "paraspaces." Als logisch und substantiell zusammenhängend erscheine im Alltag, was doch nur durch den Kitt der Gewohnheit und der Floskelhaftigkeit zu selbstverständlich wirkender Gesamtheit zusammengemüht werde. Doch die Rhetorizität, die eingewohnte Geschlossenheit syntaktischer und topischer Folgen, könnte, so zumindest Delanys Hoffnung, aufgebrochen werden – und zwar durch Brüche und Leerstellen zwischen Worten, Zeichen und Bedeutungen,

also zwischen den semantischen Elementen des Raumes. "Paraspaces" nennt Delany die zu diesem Zweck erfundenen alternativen und parallelen Räume:

Paraspace would really be a better term than subspace. If we're going to explore this idea further we have to note that our paraspaces are not in hierarchical relation [...] to the narrative's 'real,' or ordinary, space. What goes on in one subverts the other; what goes on in the other subverts the one. They change their weights all the time, throughout their stories. A paraspace, or even an alternative space. (Delany 1994b, 168)

Diese alternativen Räume unterminieren die scheinbare Ausschließlichkeit und Geschlossenheit eines jeden Raumes und öffnen ihn für eine Poetik der gleitenden Zeichen und entgleitenden Bedeutungen, der Übergänge und der Entfestigung.

## 6. Die Grenzen der Räume

Delanys narratives Raum-Konzept kämpft mit einem Paradoxon: Für die in ihnen befangenen Figuren (und die Leser) sind sie nie wirklich überblickbar, während der Autor diesen Überblick zwar hat, ihn aber seinen Figuren (und Lesern) verweigert. Dabei erwartet er von ihnen, diese von ihm entworfenen Räume, den Kosmos der scheinbar gesicherten Bedeutungen, zu verlassen – ohne dass es ein stabiles Außerhalb oder gar einen zentralperspektivischen Meta-Standpunkt gäbe, der als Flucht- und Zielpunkt dieser Distanzierungsbewegung dienen könnte. Die Entfestigung der Räume soll nicht in neue feste Bedeutungskosmen führen.

Da die zu verlassenden Räume zugleich auch immer sprachliche Räume sind, arbeitet Delany auf zwei Ebenen: Die erzählten geographischen Räume werden als unübersichtlich und undurchschaubar inszeniert, während auf sprachlicher Ebene ihre semantische Dimension gerade dadurch aufgebrochen und der Reflexion zugänglich gemacht werden kann. Das Verlassen dieser Räume wird innerliterarisch deshalb auf beiden Ebenen inszeniert: Geographisch konventionell als das Überschreiten von Grenzen zu anderen Räumen, darüber hinaus und schwieriger aber auch als das Verlassen der raumkonstituierenden Beschreibungssprache mit all ihren sozialen und individuellen Konnotationen und Verankerungen im jeweiligen Bewusstsein. Das Motiv weniger der Grenze als ihres Überschreitens ist bei Delany (wie in der phantastischen Literatur überhaupt und seit jeher) denn auch von Anfang an zentral. Er verfügt jedoch auch über die kritische Einsicht, dass die oft redundanten Vorstellungswelten der *science fiction* nur diejenigen Stereotypen, Wertungen und Klischees in möglichst bunte exotische Phantasien exportieren, die auch in der Realität schon vorherrschend sind und die wir wie "Erfahrungsbegriffe nutzen, um uns von intelligibelen Dingen, von denen wir an sich nicht die mindeste Kenntnis haben, doch irgend einigen Begriff zu machen" (Kant 1974, 511). Die Entwicklung seines Werks ist geprägt von einer zunehmenden Skepsis der Möglichkeit gegenüber, mit der bloßen Vorstellung räumlicher Veränderung tatsächlich einen Erfahrungszuwachs gewinnen zu können.

In der *Neveryon*-Serie (Delany 1980, 1983, 1985, 1987), seinem hochreflektiert ironisch-kritischen Abschied vom Genre, wird der narrative geographische Gesamt-Raum mit seinen Grenzen deshalb selbst zum darstellungstechnischen Problem.

Dies verdeutlicht die Figur von Lord Vanar (in Delany 1985), der in jungen Jahren auf den Spuren eines legendär gewordenen Architekten und Erfinders durch ganz Neveryon reist. Aus anderen Handlungssträngen weiß der Leser von diesem Erfinder wiederum zwar nicht viel, aber doch genug, um zumindest einen Teil der Rekonstruktionen Vanars als falsch erkennen zu können. So wird sich Vanars Reise am Ende als unausführbar erwiesen haben. Schon auf Figuren- und Handlungsebene verfremdet Neveryon sich dabei zu einem undurchschaubaren Zeichensystem. Das Ende seiner gescheiterten Reise führt Vanar schließlich an die (für ihn) unüberschreitbaren Grenzen von Neveryon. Wenn Räume aber derart dicht gefügte Zeichensysteme sind, können sie durch rein räumliche Bewegungen nicht mehr vollständig verlassen werden, da der Bedeutungs-Kosmos, als Bewertungs- und Beobachtungsschablone im Kopf des jeweiligen Reisenden angelegt, mit ihm mitreist. Das Überschreiten geographischer Grenzen ist nicht identisch mit dem Verlassen semantischer Herkunftsräume.

Lord Vanars Versuch, die Grenze Neveryons zu überschreiten, scheitert denn auch an einem übergroßen, geisterhaft amorphen Etwas, das jeden Übertrittsversuch verhindert, dessen Gestalt aber (möglicherweise) nur Vanars eigener Schatten ist, die ihm nicht zugänglichen sozialen Konstituenten seiner Persönlichkeit. Die zu überschreitende Grenze verlagert sich so aus dem geographischen Raum in den Raum sozial präformierter Bezeichnungen, von denen aus ein 'Anderes' nicht mehr wirklich vorstellbar, sondern nur noch ersehnt ist.

## 7. Raum-Texte und Text-Räume

Delany ist nicht nur von Kaprows *performance*, Delany ist als Erzähler auch von Artauds dramaturgischen Überlegungen inspiriert: "Theater-in-the-round; a revival of political street theater; theater in unexpected places; multiple theaters in great centers built especially to display all of theater's myriad forms; light shows; improvisations" (Delany 1996, 17). So gibt es im Roman *Triton* eine Theatermacherin, die mit aufwendig improvisierten Inszenierungen auf offener Straße ihr spontan ausgesuchtes Ein-Mann-Publikum überfallartig verstört und aus seinen Selbstverständlichkeiten heraus-dramatisiert; mit ähnlichen Techniken versucht auch der Erzähler Delany, seine Leser zu verwirren und aus ihren Verständnisräumen herauszuschreiben und hinauszutreiben. Ihr lesendes Durchwandern seiner Raum-Texte sucht er in ein wanderndes Durchirren verwirrender Text-Räume zu transformieren. Das Buch, der gelesene Text, das körperlich-räumliche Medium Buch wird selbst zum erfahrbaren Raum, zum Text-Raum. Die mit nahezu schon lyrischen Sprachmitteln betriebene zunehmende Intensivierung der personalen Perspektiven führt den Leser immer wieder neu in körper- und wahrnehmungsnah intim beschriebene überraschende Empfindungsräume ein, deren exotisch bunte Fremdartigkeit zunehmend unwichtiger wird gegenüber der individuellen Eigenwilligkeit der jeweiligen Figuren-Perspektive. Gleichzeitig aber werden diese subjektiven Wahrnehmungsräume immer wieder systematisch aufgebrochen. Gesah dies im Frühwerk noch vorrangig durch eine Vielzahl einander sich ergänzender Perspektiven in

simultan voneinander abgesplitterten Teil-Räumen desselben Kosmos, desselben narrativen Gesamt-Raumes, so betont Delany spätestens seit *Dhalgren* die Textualität der von ihm beschriebenen Räume, indem er die Teilperspektiven, auf verschiedene Para-Räume, Textebenen und/oder Personen verteilt, mit kleinen absichtlichen Unvereinbarkeiten ausstattet. Die erlauben es dem Leser nun nicht mehr, sie zu einer in sich widerspruchsfrei geschlossenen Einheit zusammenzufügen. Es gibt kein wie auch immer geartetes transzendentes 'Anderes,' keine Meta-Welt, keinen übergeordneten narrativen Raum, in den der Leser hinübergeleitet wird. Es gibt stattdessen eine systematische Auflösung der sprachlichen Gesamt-Räume mit Hilfe literarischer Mittel. Der Leser landet nicht in einem stabilen Außerhalb, er strandet in leeren Lücken zwischen den Text- und Raumsplittern, von denen aus deren Irrealität überdeutlich spürbar wird.

Literarisch inszenierte Inkonsistenz wird zum konstituierenden Merkmal von Texten, die dies aller Erwartung zuwider (sogar noch auf dem Büchermarkt) gerade dadurch verkraften, dass diese Unvereinbarkeiten so auffällig in Szene gesetzt werden, dass sie im Leser, quasi als Ersatz für die immer bedeutungsloser werdende Handlung, die etwa über die gesamte Fortsetzungsserie *Neveryon* hinweg durchgehaltene spannende Frage nach den Zusammenhängen zwischen den disparaten Text- und Raumsplittern auslösen. Aufgelöst werden diese Widersprüche jedoch selbst am Ende nicht, sie sollen gar nicht aufgelöst werden. Im paradigmatisch postmodernen Raum- bzw. Stadtraum-Roman *Dhalgren* (1975), "the definitive novelistic representation of the experience of the 60's counterculture" (James 1996, xi) geschieht dies auf einer ersten Text-, auf der Handlungs-Ebene schon dadurch, dass die schreibende Hauptfigur nach einem Gedächtnisverlust zurückkehrt in 'die Stadt' Bellona, in der alle Ordnung zusammengebrochen ist. Der getextete Weg durch die forschend durchirrte Stadt wird zur geschriebenen Suche nach einer verlorenen urbanen Identität, zum Stadt-Text in der Text-Stadt. *Dhalgren* ist "a labyrinth with many dead ends" (Fox 1987, 97) und besteht aus Fragmenten von – innerhalb der Erzählwelt – ungeklärtem Realitäts- bzw. Fiktionalitätsstatus, brüchigen Schreibversuchen des an Wahrnehmungsverzerrungen leidenden Protagonisten, (fiktiven) Zeitungsberichten, die den Stadt-Raum-Text mit kommerzialisierten und politisierten falschen Bildern der kollabierenden Stadt überschreiben und dabei wiederum ihre eigene Wirkung zu entfalten beginnen. Die Unterschiede im textuellen Status der einzelnen fiktiven, innernarrativ 'realen' oder metatextuellen Textabschnitte verschwimmen (ohne zu verschwinden) dabei ebenso wie ihre zeitliche Reihenfolge, ihre logischen Zusammenhänge, ihre syntaktische Hierarchie oder die Differenz zwischen dem Erzähler, der Hauptfigur und deren aus wechselnder Perspektive sich selbst immer wieder neu erscheidendem erzähltem Ich. Die Textstruktur wird bis in die Kapitelüberschriften hinein als prismenhaft in verschiedene, miteinander nicht mehr wirklich vereinbare Stadt-Ansichten zerbrochen gekennzeichnet: Bereits das erste Kapitel heißt *Prism, Mirror, Lens*. Es gibt für den Leser keine Möglichkeit, eine Perspektive auf die Stadt als die einzig richtige zu privilegieren; der narrativ inszenierte Zusammenbruch der Großstadt

Bellona fällt in eins mit dem gewollten Zusammenbruch des stadt-zentrierten Schreibprojekts der Hauptfigur.

"[I]nside the city all myths/fictions/signs – literary and social – are shattered, revalued, and recombined" (Steiner 1989, 65). Diese strukturelle Verwirrung führt Delany über in eine auch optisch sichtbare Verwirrung des Text-Raumes selbst: Erstmals in *Dhalgren* arbeitet er im Schriftbild teilweise mit zwei (oder drei) Spalten, die den Satzspiegel, den jeweiligen Text-Raum immer wieder mit Parallelräumen, alternativen Raumansichten oder gleichberechtigt alternativen Bewusstseinszuständen konfrontieren. Die moderne Technik des simultanen Erzählens wird von ihrer größten Problematik, der unausweichlichen Sukzessivität der Schreib- und Lesebewegungen, befreit: Der simultane Text wird visualisiert und verräumlicht zu tatsächlicher Gleichzeitigkeit, dem räumlichen Nebeneinander paralleler Text-Räume auf Papier in mehr-, meist zweispaltigem Satz. Natürlich sind auch dieser Visualisierung Grenzen gesetzt: An insgesamt nur einer Stelle arbeitet Delany mit dreispaltigem Satz, damit aber immerhin zumindest andeutend, dass der Leser diese Mehrspaltigkeit sich als ins Unendliche potenzierbar vorstellen muss – mit den Mitteln des Buchdrucks lässt sich diese nur zeichenhaft andeutbare Unendlichkeit freilich nicht mehr einholen. Immerhin gelingt es Delany damit auch, die Textualität und damit die Artifizialität, die Gemachtheit des erzählten Stadt-Raums deutlich zu machen – ergänzt und zusätzlich betont durch die Aufnahme von Korrekturstrichen und Textänderungen in den Text selbst.

Doch damit nicht genug: Jede Möglichkeit einer zeitlich und logisch in sich geschlossenen Sukzessivität des Textmaterials wird in *Dhalgren* unterlaufen durch die Zirkularität des Textes: *Dhalgren* beginnt mitten in demselben Satz ("to wound the autumn city"), in dem der Roman (ohne Punkt) endet. Der vielfach korruptierte Text kennt ebensowenig ein Außerhalb wie die in Auflösung sich befindende Stadt – und ist doch voller Lücken und Brüche. In der *Neveryon*-Serie schließlich sind die ersten 54 (!) Seiten des ersten Bandes (Delany 1980) Wort für Wort identisch mit den letzten 54 Seiten des letzten Bandes (Delany 1987). Wiederholungen dieser Art evozieren nicht so sehr stereotype Serialität des immergleichen, die wiederholten Textfragmente werden durch den sich verändernden Kontext so variiert, dass ihre Bedeutung sich verschoben oder gar umkehren muss. Es handelt sich dabei eigentlich um einen – man denke nur an die Antonius-Rede in Shakespeares *Julius Cäsar* – durchaus traditionellen rhetorischen Mechanismus. Delany setzt ihn systematisch ein, um mit seiner Hilfe die Kontext-Gebundenheit aller Bedeutungen, Ordnungen und Werte zu verdeutlichen. Aber auch der Text-Raum als solcher wird durch solche Techniken für den Leser im Zuge des Lesens erfahrbar als verstörend begehbares Labyrinth, der Rezipient erlebt die Bewegung der Wörter im Raum, ihre Fluktuation durch den Text-Raum und in wechselnden Kon-Texten, Umgebungen und Milieus, ihre sich wandelnden Wirkungen und Kräfte im Bewusstseins-Raum des lesenden Ich.

In der *Neveryon*-Serie wird aus all diesen Techniken ein perfektioniertes System: Die von Brüchen, Lücken, variierten und verfremdenden Wiederholungen und Inkonsistenzen gekennzeichneten Text-Räume werden zusätzlich durchbro-

chen und durchsetzt von langen Motti aus den Klassikern der Postmoderne, von reflektierenden Anhängen, Danksagungen, fiktiven Briefwechseln über den Text und seinen Autor, inner-, zwischen- und außerfiktionalen Reflexionen, die noch ergänzend begleitet werden von Erläuterungen, die Delany und/oder sein weibliches *alter ego* K. Leslie Steiner in literarischen und wissenschaftlichen Zeitschriften veröffentlichen. Die Brüchigkeit der erzählten Welt ist hier nicht mehr wie noch in *Dhalgren* Ergebnis nur einer brüchigen Beobachtungsperspektive, sondern wird in Weiterentwicklung der Simultan-Technik des Frühwerks gezielt abgeleitet aus der Serialität der Serie: “[T]he dozen-odd *Nevèryon* tales represent a dozen cross sections through a continuing, progressing dialogue with the world, not a complex synchronous position” (Delany 1990, 553). In verschiedenen Erzählungen werden verschiedene Figuren durch dieselbe fiktive Welt geführt, einige begegnen einander auch, manche hören voneinander, doch die verschiedenen Wahrnehmungen desselben ergeben kein einheitliches Bild, sollen ausdrücklich kein einheitliches Bild ergeben. Wahrnehmungsverschiebung, Diversität und Differenz werden zum strukturellen Kern des Textes.

Hinzu kommt eine eigenartige Technik, dem Text einen doppelten Schluss, gleichsam eine doppelte Text-Raum-Grenze zu geben, ohne ihn andererseits wirklich enden zu lassen: Der Zirkularität der ‘Serie’ *Nevèryon* entspricht die der handlungs- und zeittechnischen Gesamtkomposition. Abgesehen von allen Rückblicken und Erinnerungen einzelner Figuren folgen die ‘Handlungen’ der ersten drei Bände prinzipiell durchaus der Chronologie, während dann der vierte Band rückwärts wieder immer tiefer in die Vergangenheit zurückführt, um schließlich exakt dort zu enden, wo die ‘Serie’ begann – endlose Wiederholbarkeit ist diesem Schluss eingeschrieben. Doch daneben gibt es noch das Ende des dritten Bandes, jenen Kulminationspunkt, von dem aus dann erst wieder ‘zurückgezählt’ wird. Dieser dritte Band besteht zu 50% aus einem Anhang. Durchbrochen von Reflexionen über Literatur im allgemeinen und die *Nevèryon*-Serie im besonderen mischen sich darin Erzählsplitter aus *Nevèryon* und aus New York. Der Text-Raum *Nevèryon* wird so erweitert um weitere Para-Räume, kleine Erzählungen, oft aber auch nur reportagehafte Straßens- und Marktszenen aus *Nevèryon* und aus New York (die New Yorker Szenen finden sich dann teilweise wörtlich in Delanys 2000 veröffentlichten Briefen aus dieser Zeit wieder).

Fiktion und Realität gehen ineinander über und relativieren sich wechselseitig, beide Welten offenbaren voneinander ihre Lücken, brechen auf; das New York, dessen Straßensplitter Delany hier Straßensplittern aus *Nevèryon* zuordnet, ist das New York der damaligen Schreibgegenwart, das New York der frühen 80er Jahre, das New York der eben ausgebrochenen AIDS-Epidemie zu jenem Zeitpunkt, da es noch keine medizinische Erklärung für die Krankheit gab und die Öffentlichkeit beherrscht wurde von hysterischen Vermutungen und hilflos panischen Reaktionen. Bis zu diesem Zeitpunkt konnte (und musste) Delany in seinem fiktionalen Werk seinen Figuren und Lesern gegenüber jenen auktorialen Überblick einnehmen, den er ihnen verweigerte. Er sperrte sie auf diese Weise also quasi autoritär in eine ihnen zugeschriebene Unfreiheit ein, aus der sie dann frei-

zusetzen sein erklärtes literarisches Anliegen war. Durch die Integration der realen Unüberblickbarkeit von AIDS (zu diesem Zeitpunkt) in den literarischen Kosmos *Nevèryon* stellte er sich jedoch nun in eine Reihe mit seinen Figuren und Lesern. AIDS, nicht die Krankheit, sondern das öffentliche Gerede, Wissen und Nichtwissen darüber, bricht den Text-Raum *Nevèryon* so auf, dass alle seine Brüche zugleich Brüche der (innertextuell) ‘realen’ Lebenswelt New York sind. AIDS wird so zur poetologischen Metapher eines (hochliterarisch) von seiner eigenen Literarizität sich verabschiedenden Textes, eines (fiktiven) Durchbrechens der Grenze zwischen fiktiven und realen Text-Räumen und Raum-Splittern. Spektakulärer Höhepunkt dieser Text-Raum-Beendigung (nach der dann im vierten Band wieder ‘zurückgezählt’ wird) ist der Durchbruch Gorgiks, einer der fiktiven Gestalten aus *Nevèryon*, nach New York. Natürlich kann dieses von Gorgik erreichte New York selbst nur wieder ein fiktional erzähltes sein. Doch so absurd dieses narrative Experiment auch ist, so sehr verdeutlicht es doch die Grundfrage von Delanys Raum-Texten und Text-Räumen: Wie (und wohin) lassen Räume sich überhaupt verlassen?

*Nevèryon* ist immer auch sein eigener Meta-Text. Der Heraus-Tritt Gorgiks aus dem Raum-Text *Nevèryon* bedeutet den Versuch, das Verlassen eines Raumes nicht mehr zu inszenieren als Übertritt einer *geographischen* Grenze, sondern als das Verlassen eines (literarisch) *semantischen* Raums – die Freisetzung dieser Figur aus dem narrativen Kosmos befreit sie auch vom Autor, aus der von ihm um sie herum konstruierten virtuellen Sinn- und Bedeutungs-Welt. Sie landet in der Unübersichtlichkeit der Welt des Autors. Insofern ist es nur konsequent, wenn dieses (eine) Ende von *Nevèryon* einhergeht mit einem inszenierten Scheitern des Autors an der Unabbildbarkeit von AIDS.

## 8. Übertragung auf reale Räume: Raum-Politik

Armed with the critical tools of modernist *flâneurs* (Baudelaire, Benjamin) and more contemporary theorists (Foucault, Derrida), Delany traverses a landscape shot through with popular signs of the times. (James 2000, xviii)

Gerade als Zeichenlandschaften, als Text-Räume voll arbiträrer, in ihrer Bedeutungs-Unsicherheit offengelegter Zeichen, fordern Delanys narrative Räume die Frage nach ihrer Referentialisierbarkeit heraus. Die Aufhebung der Grenzen zwischen New York und *Nevèryon* kennzeichnet denn auch den Höhe- und Wendepunkt einer Entwicklung, die sich in Delanys Romanen und Erzählungen von Anfang an angedeutet hat: Seine phantastisch fiktiven Welten sind voller referenzieller Verweise auf die USA und speziell New York, das Aufbrechen seiner Zeichen- und Text-Räume meint immer auch ein Aufbrechen der Bedeutungs-Kosmen New York und USA. Kein Wunder, dass insbesondere die New Yorker Kritik sein gesamtes Werk tendenziell als ein Werk über New York betrachtet, in all seinen urbanen Räumen New York wiedererkennen will.

For Delany, who navigates cultural and class spaces with a confidence that has become legendary, New York is an endlessly inviting heterotopia, a social space under perpetual construction, collapse, and provisional reconstitution. (James 2000, xviii)

Insbesondere *Dhalgren* repräsentiere "present-day cultures in future literary worlds" (Weedman 1979), der Roman spiegle das Zerbrechen der sozialen Strukturen urbanen Lebens in den USA während der 1960er und 70er Jahre wider und sei voller "fictive analogues to the Dionysian impulses of the 1960s and of the perennial underside of labyrinthian urban complexes like New York" (Fox 1987, 99). Unter der Maske von K. Leslie Steiner schreibt Delany selbst, "the deliquescent and quintessentially American cityscape of Bellona" repräsentiere eine reale städtische Wirklichkeit, "duplicated in how many photos of burned-out central Harlem, depopulated Buffalo, dying Detroit and half a dozen other towns" (Steiner 1989, 58). Der Roman muss denn auch gelesen werden vor dem Hintergrund der sozialen und der Rasseunruhen dieser Zeit, die amerikanischen Leser fanden in ihm und im "countercultural Mecca" (Fox 1987, 96) Bellona eine problembewusste Darstellung ihres zerrissenen Landes wieder: "The experience of America is one of the experiences of *Dhalgren*" (Bray 1984, 59). Und über die vordergründig in einer archaischen Frühzeit, in einer Art bronzezeitlich erster Globalisierung angesiedelte Fantasy-Serie *Nevèryon* schreibt Delany selbst: "Clearly the *Nevèryon* series is a model of late twentieth-century (mostly urban) America" (Delany 1994a, 286). Schon im Namen drückt sich dies deutlich genug aus: N und Y, die Initialen New Yorks, sind die auffälligsten Buchstaben in einer Bezeichnung, deren wörtliche Übersetzung wiederum bezeichnend genug U-Topos, Utopia, Nicht- oder Nimmer-Ort lauten könnte.

Diese durch das gesamte Werk (mit steigender Tendenz) sich hindurchziehende Referentialisierung verweist darauf, wie konkret, wie politisch unmittelbar Delanys Raum-Poetik mit ihrer Aufforderung zur Relativierung alles als selbstverständlich Geltenden auch gemeint ist. Deutlich wurde diese Dimension seines raumnarrativen Werks aber erst wirklich durch seinen Versuch, nach Beendigung der *Nevèryon*-Serie mit der Macht des Wortes Einfluss auf städtebaupolitische Maßnahmen in New York zu nehmen. Das Forty-Second Street Development Project (dem u.a. auch die Walt Disney Company angehört) plante über Jahre hinweg eine systematische Umgestaltung der Umgebung des Times Square. Delany hielt mehrere Vorträge dagegen, Marshal Blonsky, Hauptredner der vom Bell Architecture Center gesponsorten Konferenz *Times Square: Global, Local*, verteidigte die geplanten Veränderungen und griff Delany scharf an. Delanys Vorträge erschienen daraufhin als Buch und zwar in exakt der Form, mit der er die Stadtlandschaft in *Dhalgren* in eine Vielzahl möglicher Parallelräume, Para-Räume, aufgelöst hatte: Er arbeitet hier häufig mit weispaltigem Druck, dem systematischen Nebeneinander-Stellen alternativer Perspektiven, verstärkt durch die Hinzunahme fotografischen Materials. Entsprechend bunt werden in diesem Buch die Diskurse gemischt: Architektur, Politik, Ökonomie, Soziologie, Psychologie, Sicherheit, *gender*, Sex, Öffentlichkeit und – Freundlichkeit, um nicht zu sagen Höflichkeit sind seine eng miteinander verflochtenen Themenkreise. Die Tradition der Stadt-

planung in New York wird polemisch zurückgeführt auf vereinheitlichende, stratifizierende Traditionen der viktorianischen Gartenstadt: "[W]e hide the small, the poor, the dirty, the grubby – shrugging them off the edges, putting them behind a veil of park land or public greenery" (Delany 1999b, 166). Diese nicht nur optische, diese soziale und ökonomische Verdrängung werde verstärkt durch einen Hang zum alles überdeckenden Kolossalen und Monumentalen. "They function entirely to keep different kinds of people, different kinds of business, different kinds of income levels and social practices from intermingling" (Delany 1999b, 167). In Anlehnung an Jane Jacobs' stadtsoziologischen Klassiker *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961) entwirft er die Stadt als komplexen sozialen Raum und beklagt die Zerstörung von gemischten Nachbarschaften, kleinräumigen Lebenswelten und Ökonomien zugunsten einheitlich luxuriöser Appartementhäuser und großräumiger Repräsentationsanlagen (Delany 1999b, 148-9); der Vergleich mit Haussmanns Paris wird nicht gescheut. Zahlreiche kleine Theater verschwinden und mit ihnen nicht nur die kulturelle Atmosphäre, sondern auch zahlreiche Einkommensmöglichkeiten für kleine und kleinste Geschäfte. "Big business drive out small business" (Delany 1999b, 172).

Das narrative Konzept der Para-Räume wird hier plötzlich aktuell als ein städtebaupolitischer Gegenentwurf:

Certainly [...] build for large commercial spaces along the street level. But intersperse them with smaller commercial spaces [...] to make sure that there is a variety of housing not only nearby but intermixed with such undertakings. And that means housing on several social levels. (Delany 1999b, 168-9)

Begleitet wird diese stadt(teil)räumliche Utopie von einem ganzen Erziehungsprogramm, dem Entwurf eines urbanen Ethos, der sich für Delany quasi von selbst aus der von ihm befürworteten städtebaulichen Struktur ergibt: Höflichkeit und Toleranz, Aufmerksamkeit füreinander, Verständnis und Weltoffenheit seien das Ergebnis einer Mischung der Milieus und sozialen Räume, Solidarität stärke das Verantwortungsgefühl aller und damit die öffentliche Sicherheit (ein Schlagwort der Projektträger) auch ohne verstärkten Einsatz von Sicherheitskräften. Bürgerbeteiligung auch in Sachen Stadtplanung unterstütze solche Tendenzen, Investoren müssten deshalb auch in ihrem eigenen Interesse zum Respekt vor kleinen städtischen Strukturen erzogen werden:

Large and small must be built side by side. Living spaces, commercial spaces, eating establishments, repair spaces, and entertainment spaces must all be intermixed. Large businesses and offices must alternate with small businesses and human services, even while places to live on all levels, working-class, middle-class, and luxurious, large and small, must embroider with them into a community. (Delany 1999b, 178)

In der Verteidigung des Viel- und Kleinräumigen gegen vereinheitlichende Großprojekte greift der narrative Dekonstruktivist Delany am Ende sogar auf jenen Bilderschatz eines organischen Gewachsenseins und damit einer 'Natürlichkeit' alles kulturell Gegebenen zurück, das seinen eigenen Entwürfen zufolge auf Stadt-Räume ebensowenig anwendbar sein dürfte wie auf Text-Räume: "principles of socio-economic diversity through which those pleasant, various, and stable neighbor-

hoods that were never planned grew up naturally. Purposely we must reproduce those multiform and variegated social levels to achieve like neighborhoods as ends” (Delany 1999b, 178-9).

## 9. (Auto-)Biographische Räume

Doch letztlich ist ihm abseits solch wohl auch polemisch notwendigen Sprachgebrauchs etwas anderes wichtig, Vielräumigkeit als die Gleichzeitigkeit einander überschneidender sozialer Räume, ein Modell integrationsoffener sozialen Miteinanders, des Zusammenkommens des Verschiedenen, wie es nur die städtebaupolitisch nicht stratifizierte Großstadt bieten kann:

Walter Benjamin notes in his work on nineteenth-century Paris that, with the new size of cities and the advent of public transportation necessary to get about in them, for the first time in history a sizable number of people were now spending comparatively long periods of time every day on horse-drawn trolleys and rattling trains, sitting across from and surreptitiously looking at people they did not know and to whom they were not going to speak. (Delany 1996, 33)

“[T]his new, innatural, and (at first) wholly urban experience” (Delany 1996, 33) ist für Delany grundlegend bis in die Gestaltung seiner Autobiographie und seines seit dem Abschluss der *Neverjon*-Serie vorwiegend autobiographisch gefärbten Erzählens hinein. Zwar verzichtet er in der Autobiographie *The Motion of Light in Water* (1990) darauf, noch einmal und wieder mit mehrspaltigem Satz schon auf der Textoberfläche zu arbeiten, doch bezüglich der narrativen Tiefenstruktur betont er ausdrücklich “the spaces between the columns” (Delany 1990, 56), aus denen dieses Buch besteht: Es setzt sich zusammen aus in sich (relativ) autonomen Zeit- und Erinnerungssplintern, die nicht chronologisch angeordnet, sondern thematisch verdichtet werden, aus quasi parallel zueinander erzählten (und mehr oder weniger simultanen) Zeitkontinua. Die Darstellung seines eigenen Lebens folgt dadurch ebenso den Vorgaben Kaprows wie denen jenes raumtheoretisch gesättigten literarischen Werks, dem er die formalen Vorgaben für die Darstellungsweise seiner selbst entnimmt.

Die Bedeutung der von Walter Benjamin mitinspirierten Stadtkonzeption Samuel R. Delanys zeigt sich insbesondere in der für schwarzes Selbstbewusstsein zentralen Erzählung *Atlantis: Model 1924* (1995). Mit der Ankunft seines Vaters Sam im New York des Jahres 1924 fiktionalisiert sie exemplarisch zugleich einen zentralen Moment aus der Geschichte von “one of the more famous families in African-American history” (Tucker n.d.). Wie nun in Benjamins *Passagen-Werk* Paris zum Mittelpunkt aller warenförmig angehäuften Phantasmagorien einer ganzen Epoche wird, wird das New York des Jahres 1924 zum “Atlantis” unabsehbar rätselhafter Verheißungen für einen jungen schwarzen Außenseiter aus der Provinz, der zudem Vieles einfach nicht versteht – und deshalb umso mehr vermuten und hoffen darf. Der Erzähler, der hier eine vergleichsweise große (respektvolle) Distanz gegenüber seiner Figur einnimmt, füllt den – wiederum oft mehrspaltigen – Raum-Text aus gegeneinander verschobenen Text-Blöcken mit intertextuellen Bezügen,

literarischen Reminiszenzen, Referenzen und Zeichen geradezu übertoll an. New York wird von einem andeutungsreich geheimnisvoll zweiten Text überschrieben, zu dem neben Zitaten aus Bibel und klassischer Antike, ja aus der gesamten Weltliteratur, aus allen Sprachen und allen Zeiten auch die Phantasie-Räume exotischer und archäologischer Berichte oder phantastischer Erzählungen aus diversen ‘billigen’ Magazinen gehören – den Vorläufern der *science fiction*. Hinzu kommen auf die Familiengeschichte herabgebrochene Erinnerungen aus der Geschichte der Schwarzen in Amerika seit der Aufhebung der Sklaverei und insbesondere die Geschichte der räumlichen Trennung zwischen Schwarz und Weiß und der Aufhebung dieser Trennung. Der Raum-Text wird zum umfassenden Text-Raum einer – ausdrücklich – nicht vom Rest der Menschheit abtrennbaren schwarzen Bildungsgeschichte; entlang der Hautfarbe voneinander unterschiedene (‘diskriminierte’) Para-Räume werden ineinander übergeführt und erweisen sich nachträglich als historisch verifizierbares Ur-Bild für Delanys bereits Jahrzehnte ältere Schreibweise. Sams rassistische Teil-Raum-Grenzen überschreitende Ankunft in New York erinnert wohl nicht umsonst an jene Interpretation schwarzer Leser, derzufolge Delanys Besuch von Kaprows *performance* ein befreiender Schritt aus künstlich um die Schwarzen herum errichteten gesellschaftlichen Isolationsräumen gewesen sei. Der Ein-Tritt in den vielräumigen Stadt-Raum New York wird (wie für jenen Gorgik aus *Neverjon*) zum ebenso verunsichernden wie befreienden Aus-Tritt in eine zentralperspektivisch nicht mehr erfassbare Multispacialität.

Fokussiert auf die Ankunft und die erste Zeit Sams in New York verdichtet der Text sich so zu einem bedeutungsreichen Zeichengewebe, das paradigmatischen Wert für die Geschichte (nicht nur) der Schwarzen beansprucht. Dabei projiziert es diese Geschichte auf die vielräumig ‘offene’ Stadt, den interpretationsoffenen Stadt-Text New York mit all seinen oft auch bedrückenden (Über-)Lebensmöglichkeiten. Diese assoziierende Überblendungstechnik bündelt sich in der zukunfts-gläubig hoffenden Perspektive Sams auf New York. Dadurch zerfällt New York nicht nur in zahlreiche Teil-Räume, es entsteht neben dem einen New York nicht nur das eine oder andere parallele New York, sondern, und dies ist nun neu in diesem Buch, ein (irreal) besseres, von Sam ersehntes New York, eine von noch keiner Wirklichkeit eingeholte “idea of a city” (Delany 1995, 27). Sams erster, nächtlicher Anblick von Wolkenkratzern erstaunt ihn: Sie scheinen im Dunkeln nur aus hoch über der Erde schwebenden Lichtern zu bestehen. Dieses visuelle Raum-Erlebnis gleicht auffällig dem, das auch Gorgik bei seinem Über-Tritt aus der fiktiven Welt *Neverjon* in die (fiktionale) ‘Realität’ New York hatte. Dieser Anblick versetzt Sam ins Träumen, wird zur Vision: “Sam seemed to be looking across some black and insubstantial river to another city altogether – a city come apart from New York, drifting in fog, in air, in darkness, and wholly ephemeral: the idea of a city” (Delany 1995, 27). Dieses anfangs rein optische Motiv steigert sich zur Utopie, als Sam auf der Brooklyn Bridge dem Lyriker Hart Crane begegnet, der New York zu Atlantis poetisiert – und die Brooklyn Bridge als den Weg dorthin. Die Brooklyn Bridge wird dadurch assoziativ auch an eines von Delanys symbolträchtigsten fiktionalen Bauwerken, an die “Bridge of Lost Desire” aus dem

*Neverjon*-Zyklus, angeglichen. Zentraler noch aber ist die Bedeutung, die ihr Crane in Delanys Erzählung verleiht: Sie wird zum Symbol eines politischen und sozialen Begehrens nach einem "Atlantis," in dem ein Schwarzer wegen seiner Hautfarbe nicht mehr auffällt: "In Atlantis, when I stand on the corner and howl my verses, no one looks at me and asks 'Whatja say?'" (Delany 1995, 92).

"Atlantis" ist die Vision eines idealen New York, von dem im Jahre 1924 ein eben dorthin gekommener Schwarzer geträumt haben mochte; es ist der Ort, an dem die vielen sozialen Para-Räume alle gleichzeitig möglich sind. Sie finden hier zusammen zu einem (jeder zentralperspektivischen Ordnung widersprechenden) großen 'everywhere,' einer (erträumten) Gleichzeitigkeit, einer Simultanität aller Räume und Welten, in der es keine Unterschiede, keine Grenzen mehr gibt und jeder sich in jedem Teil-Raum, in jedem Milieu, in jeder Geschichte, in jeder Identität beheimatet fühlen kann:

I'm going to originate everywhere ... from now on. [...] I come from all times before me – and all my origins will feed me. Some in Africa I got through my daddy. And my momma. And my stepdaddy. Some in Europe I get through the library: Greece and Rome, China and India – I suck my origins in through my feet from the paths beneath them that tie me to land, from my hands opened high in celebration of the air, from my eyes lifted among the stars [...]. (Delany 1995, 114)

## 10. Aus-Gang

Die in den künstlich beschränkten Teil-Räumen herrschende Enge ist nur auflösbar durch eine Verfremdung, eine semantische Verschiebung. Figuren wie Leser soll sie aus den ihnen selbstverständlich erscheinenden Räumen herauslösen, ohne sie in einen neu hierarchisierten eindeutigen Bedeutungskosmos hinüberzuführen. Ergebnis dieser Verunsicherung soll im Gegenteil die Freiheit zumindest der Leser sein, sich im 'everywhere' zu bewegen, in jedem Raum, durch die unüberblickbare Vielheit aller nur erdenklichen Räume, in denen alles mit allem sich begegnen und vermischen kann, sich vervielfältigen, vervieldeutigen, ins Endlose potenzieren. Bereits in einer erstmals 1966 veröffentlichten *science fiction story* heißt es (damals noch ohne jeden expliziten autobiographischen oder gar politischen Bezug):

In this vast multiplex universe there are almost as many worlds [...] as there are places called Brooklyn Bridge. It's a beginning. It's an end. I leave to you the problem of ordering your perceptions and making the journey from one to the other. (Delany 2004, 213)

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BRUNO ARICH-GERZ

## Cato Jaramillo's (Un-)“True Story” of Holocaust Survival

**Abstract:** Taking its cue from the debunking of Benjamin Wilkomirski's Holocaust memoirs *Bruchstücke* as a fake and the resultant problem of categorizing it generically, the article focuses on Cato Jaramillo's equally questionable US-autobiography *Too Stubborn to Die: A Child of Nordhausen* about the alleged survival of the Nazi concentration camp Mittelbau-Dora. The reconstruction of the 'Wilkomirski case' illustrates how the demasking of *Bruchstücke* in 1998 at the same time uncovers the text's resemblance with fairy tales, and as such provides the reading strategy for the analysis of Jaramillo's "True Story" (subtitle): A detailed investigation provides evidence of its missing authenticity – which has so far remained unnoticed in literary or cultural studies – and reveals its *Hänsel und Gretel* subtext. The discovery of both the story's fictitiousness and its fairy tale elements helps to demonstrate how the text as a whole splits into a victimized-child and a perpetrator-adult part: It is at once a narrative of suffering and of imaginary sadism whose focalization exhibits both the Hänsel and Gretel and the witch's point of view.

In the field of Holocaust remembrance in general, and Holocaust literature in particular, one of the more recent and much debated phenomena is that of faked memoirs. A case in point are the allegedly authentic childhood memories *Bruchstücke* by Benjamin Wilkomirski: Three years after its first publication in Germany in 1995, the events described in *Fragments* (as the English translation of 1996 was entitled) as well as the identity of the childhood survivor Benjamin were discovered to be inaccurate in an article in a Swiss newspaper – the charge was that of a “borrowed Holocaust biography” (Ganzfried 1998, n.p.). The ensuing debate mainly tried to look at the case, or affair, through the prism of the particular personality of the book's author: While some have estimated it as a cold-blooded fake, others highlighted the story as an expression of the author's difficulties to come to terms with his unclear identity as an adopted child, which might have driven him more or less unconsciously to an over-identification with real Holocaust child survivors and their similarly problematic and often not correctly remembered (and therefore, for them, ‘traumatic’) past.<sup>1</sup> Going beyond these necessarily speculative

<sup>1</sup> Cf. the assessment by Stefan Mächler who was “asked to investigate, as a historian, the book's claims of authenticity” by the Swiss literary agency that had assigned the rights to *Fragments*. Mächler concludes: “The experiences from his [‘Wilkomirski's’] early years have the dimensions of a cumulative trauma that eludes all understanding and yet is all the more determinative since it occurred during the phase when the child was developing an ability to speak, to think symbolically, and, finally, to shape experiences into stories. *Fragments* is an attempt of the adult Bruno Grosjean [thus the birth name of the later adopted child] to assemble elements from humanity's remembrance of the Shoah in order to find a means of expressing experi-

assessments about the underlying motivation for 'Wilkomirski' to write and offer for publication *Fragments*, the 'scandal' has also revealed a lot about today's memory culture. For one, there seems to exist in the reader a strikingly reduced critical attitude toward tales of the sort of 'Wilkomirski's.' The public will less readily question or even doubt the accuracy and authenticity of memorized events if they appear in many ways 'unbelievable.' Apart from the "unique relationship between the Shoah's factuality and the very fact that it is beyond belief" (Mächler 2001, 285), receptive credulity is further warranted by the often noted psychological resistance to disbelieving a victim of the Shoah, or the rational explanation that traumatic memories (and childhood memories at that) necessarily contain a grain of inconsistency without rendering the whole account as such untrustworthy. The inclination of the public to identify with the victimized 'Binjamin' has been considerable – an observation which in the present case brings to light the fundamentally double-edged nature of reading and receiving victim literature. Much as "[e]mpathic reading can make possible emotional experiences that prevent how we deal with the Shoah from degenerating into a pointless ritual," the "public's reverent pose [which] is one of the most striking hallmarks of the book's reception" contains precisely this unreflected ritualization because any "sympathy displayed in this fashion has little to do with the needs of the victim" (Mächler 2001, 287-8).

While it would be beyond the scope of this article to answer the question whether there is a causal connection between a 'booming' memory culture and the 'trauma' of the Shoah on the one hand, and the appearance of false testimonies on the other – whether the first invites or provokes the emergence of the second –, the disclosure of the testimonial account as a faked Holocaust document nevertheless effects a radical change of its status from an insurmountably serious autobiographical non-fiction to a piece of pretentious, yet precisely because of this pretentiousness all the more annoying, fiction. The work is now, 'after the fall,' consequently conceived of as banal, kitschy and trivial: "Read as autobiography, the text is enlarged by the Shoah; but read as fiction, it is no match for the especially high demands of that subject. What previously carried with it the weight of the century now founders under the burden of its subject and seems merely banal" (Mächler 2001, 285-6).<sup>2</sup>

## 1. Between the Genres

The consequences resulting from the disclosure of the book as a fake do, however, not end with the diagnosis, seemingly conclusive and therefore reassuring,

ences that were not verbally retrievable either when they occurred or later, and which for that reason cried out for a narrative that would give them meaning" (Mächler 2001, vii and 269).

<sup>2</sup> "Once the professed interrelationships between the first-person narrator, the death-camp story he narrates, and historical reality are proved palpably false, what was a masterpiece becomes kitsch" (Mächler 2001, 281). Mächler concludes that "once this assumption of authenticity falls away, [...] all that is left is the world of trivialities." The historian, however, notes, too, that the text might be authentic in an altogether different context, viz. as a document of "the traumatized little Bruno Grosjean" (282) and his toiling with his identity as a child who was abandoned by his mother, and adopted by another family.

of a drastic change in the status of the document from previous autobiography of the heaviest kind to, now, mere trivial fiction. Moreover, the abrupt change of status invites reflections on the depiction of violence against the victims when all this is not, or no longer, based on first-hand experience. More specifically, the question may be posed how the contextual knowledge – that a document replete with scenes describing atrocious crimes committed against concentration camp prisoners is after all 'mere fiction' – subverts the story of victimization encoded in the text. If a split or fissure runs through the text, and if the representation of violence tips over into "a pornography of violence" (Mächler 2001, 277), it remains to be asked how strongly the victim's story is infested with precisely those elements it otherwise, namely on the level of content, seeks to expose as symptomatic of the bottomless inhumanity of the perpetrators.

A helpful hint at this point is the observation that once it is identified as a fake, *Fragments* bears striking resemblance to one fictional genre in particular:

[T]he text has all the elements of a fairy tale about a small child who strays into the clutches of evil, but survives. The most innocent and fragile of victims overcomes humanity's most horrible crimes. He suffers unutterable torments. He loses the power of speech, which distinguishes man from the animals, and yet maintains his humanity and his fearlessness, so that in his outrage at the slaying of another child he bites deep into the arm of a uniformed villain. He survives not only this rash act but also a massacre that spares no one else, and especially not the children. Even the traumatizing blindness of postwar society cannot touch his innermost core. This child hero is indestructible, and once he has grown up, he makes of his life, as [a] letter-writing reader says, "something good, something creative." Generations of readers have been moved by Anne Frank's diary because they know what the girl herself only suspected and would never be able to describe: her end in a death camp. At the point where Anne Frank left us, we take up the path and go farther with Binjamin. He goes through horrors, but survives and returns. The story really does have a happy ending. (Mächler 2001, 290-1)

The analogy with the genre of fairy tales does, however, not (yet) account for the peculiar and strikingly ambivalent quality of *Fragments* resulting from its disclosure as a fake: that the *text* deals with the crimes perpetrated against an innocent child whereas the *context* reveals an adult author who creates (instead of distortedly recalls) these scenarios of sadistic cruelty in the first place. Precisely this ambivalence has, with regard to the fairy tale genre, been noted by Maria Tatar in her studies *The Hard Facts of the Grimms' Fairy Tales* and *Off with Their Heads! Fairy Tales and the Culture of Childhood*. Tatar highlights the element of castigation afflicting the children in the fairy tales, and sees the same element at work in the mediation of the inherent conflicts: Adults, in other words, do not only appear as hostile characters in fairy tales themselves, but moreover as real people who use frightening stories to discipline rather than support young listeners in their psychological development.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Tatar argues against Bruno Bettelheim at this point, who opines that by providing "encouragement of growth toward a higher plane of psychological and intellectual existence" fairy tales are of invaluable use for the development of the child listeners, helping them to overcome, through vicarious identification with the children heroes, their "oedipal difficulties, [...] oral anxieties" or "those of [their] cravings which cannot be satisfied realistically" (Bettelheim 1976, 165).

The negative role ascribed to adults within the fairy tale (bad stepmothers, evil witches) is thus mirrored in the act of communicating these tales. The faked documents of Holocaust survival can be demonstrated to obey the same pattern, although the assumed age of the readership will differ from the classical target group of fairy tales (testimonies like *Fragments* will hardly be consumed by children) and though their authors will insist that they are identical with the child victims in the tale, and will strongly reject any intimation of the contrary as well as, of course, any suspicion of a complicity, as far as their frame of mind is concerned, with the very perpetrators.<sup>4</sup> Under the premise *that they are fakes*, memoirs of the Holocaust thus reveal a quaint indeterminacy concerning the self-image of the memorizing person: He or she wishes to present herself as a child victim, and usually there is a grain of truth to it as the problematic childhood of 'Benjamin Wilkomirski' shows. But the testifying person employs at the same time a strategy of writing, reminiscent of fairy tales, which strikingly reiterates the violence he or she assigns to his torturers. Taken together, the oscillation is thus one between two distinct generic writing modes: the victim memoir and the fairy tale.

Another prime example of this particular kind of generic instability is provided in an autobiographical report launched on the US book market in 1995. It is the fairy tale of *Hänsel und Gretel*, which conspicuously pervades the book by Cato Jaramillo, a Dutchwoman who later immigrated to the United States, and who claims to have been interned in the Dora main camp from 1943 until its liberation in the spring of 1945. The following analysis will pinpoint this subtext, and will at the same time scrutinize Jaramillo's story in order to identify its numerous inconsistencies with historical truth.

## 2. *Hänsel und Gretel* and Cato Jaramillo

The approximately 200 pages of *Too Stubborn to Die* are subdivided into twenty-four chapters; these are framed by a "Dedication," some "Acknowledgements," a "Foreword" and an "Introduction" at the beginning as well as, at the end, an "Epilogue." In this rather abundant paratextual apparatus Cato Jaramillo explains her motivation for going public with her "true story [which] I had to tell the world" (Jaramillo 1995, v),<sup>5</sup> displaying all the while a keen awareness of the late effects of childhood traumatization. The tone is openly pathetic and missionizing: "I told my story again this morning," the introduction begins, "[t]he students stayed at silent attention and didn't want to let me go, even after two hours of talk. As always,

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Mächler's "Afterword" at the end of his rigorously critical *Study in Biographical Truth: Wilkomirski sent me – as had been agreed on before my research began – a written statement in response to my findings. In every sentence – beneath the wounds, the anguish, and the insecurity – one could hear the voice of a person who had become very aggressive, who felt willfully misunderstood, offended, and belittled by almost every page of my report* (Mächler 2001, 309).

<sup>5</sup> In the following, references to Jaramillo's text are given solely with page numbers in parentheses.

there were those few who waited for the crowd to leave and told me through tears of their own suffering." After a short digression to the post-traumatic late effects of the ordeals she allegedly had suffered ("I will have nightmares again tonight. And probably tomorrow night and the next night. The hated faces will appear. I will be a helpless child fighting an enormous, terrifying enemy. The screams will be there. And the flames and the fear. I will wake in panic to find myself far away from those memories" [ix]), Jaramillo reveals the motives for telling her story to young Americans: "I must show young people what lies down the path called hatred. Follow the path of hatred to the end, and life has no meaning. There is unimaginable and hideous degradation. Many of my young friends are on that path." At the same time, Jaramillo has "a message for those who have been the victims of hatred. I know your pain. I, too, have suffered at the hand of others" (x). The lesson to be learned from the self-declared moral instructress – or, for that matter, the benefit of psychological growth that young listeners can have from listening to the "true story" told by the adult Cato Jaramillo – is revealed at the end of the introduction:

I will never stop remembering and talking and urging you to fight for a better world. The only fate worse than being a victim of the hatred I have known is to be the one who perpetrates. I would rather die than become as monstrous as the Nazi guards at Nordhausen were. So would you – I promise. (xi)

Another part of the paratextual setup are the mottos (usually quotations from Holocaust-related literature) preceding the main text of the chapters. It remains unclear whether it was Jaramillo herself who selected these mottos (four of them by Anne Frank, and three assigned to Adolf Hitler), or whether they were chosen by Ann Florence, a hired ghost writer "who could help me tell my story" and "see my own experiences for what they were" (v).<sup>6</sup> In the case of the "Foreword," the motto was probably selected by Blaine H. Passey, MD, the author of the two-page preface. Passey "was a captain in the Medical Administrative Corps of the Army [...] serving in Germany" in 1945; his "unit was involved in the release of some of the prisoners of the Nordhausen camp on the southern fringes of the Harz Mountains." By accident, Passey and Jaramillo met in Salt Lake City in 1988 where "Cato told me of her experiences – of her arrest as a child in wartime Holland and of her transfer to a concentration camp [that] was at Nordhausen [and] I explained to her that we may have met before" (vii-viii).<sup>7</sup> It remains unclear whether they really did meet in 1945; in any case Dr. Passey's preface is obviously supposed to further 'authenticate' the ensuing 'true' story.

<sup>6</sup> Gold Leaf Press, the publishing house, had engaged Ann Florence for that task after finally accepting Jaramillo's story for publication. The title range of Gold Leaf Press is strikingly wide; other publications include the best-selling near-death experience account *Embraced by the Light* by Betty J. Eadie, a mystery thriller set in a virtual reality world entitled *CyberDeth*, and *Good-Bye, I Love You*, a collection of Mormon poems by Carol Lynn Pearson about her experiences with her husband's SSA (Same-Sex Attraction).

<sup>7</sup> Peter Branton, webmaster and historian of the 104th Infantry Division whose troops liberated among others the Dora main camp, has confirmed that Dr. Passey had been a member of the mentioned Division nicknamed "Timberwolves" (e-mail to the author, September 26, 2002).

The first twelve chapters narrate Cato Jaramillo's difficult childhood in her hometown: "It was a sad day when my mother gave birth to me. I was never allowed to forget that it was an accident. Each morning's light brought no happiness to my house, only another day to be told by my parents that they had no use for me." The girl "was born in 1931, in that run-down house on a narrow little street in rainy Amsterdam" (1) and grows up with a mother who is clearly overtaxed by an alcoholic husband and the duty of raising three children. She soon gets exposed to the grim and hostile aspects of the lower-class environment she was born into: Her father abuses her, and when turning to her mother, she gets rebuked for making up the incident:

"Pa told me to sit on his lap and he put his fingers inside my bathing suit. I don't like what he was doing." I tried to struggle up next to her, but she pushed me away. "Cato, you're lying. Your Pa wouldn't do anything like that. Get your butt into bed and go to sleep." "But Ma," I begged. "Aren't you going to talk to him?" "Cato! Shut up. Get downstairs and tell your Pa you're sorry for thinking what you did." (17-8)

As early as here, a certain resemblance with the *Hänsel und Gretel* story can be detected: "my parents had no use for me," which finally leads, in the fairy tale, to the two abandonments of the children in the forest. Moreover, the abuse of the child by a close family member is mentioned: an instance which early Freudian theory identifies as central for the emergence of a traumatic memory.<sup>8</sup> It remains debatable whether the abusive treatment by her father had in fact had such a traumatic impact on the psyche of the girl – after all, she seems to recall it quite clearly, which forecloses the idea of the abuse as traumatic, that is, as something impossible or at least difficult to retrieve. Nevertheless it is conceivable that such an abuse, doomed as it is to pass unnoticed by anyone outside her familial or domestic confinements, co-effected the subsequent, incomparably more spectacular turn of the narrative: the deportation to the Dora camp. Stefan Mächler plausibly argues with regard to 'Wilkomirski's' memoirs (and it seems possible to transpose his conclusions to the present case):

A fabricated narrative about a concentration-camp victim has the advantage of being understood and accepted everywhere, because the remembrance of the Shoah has established itself as collective knowledge beyond the German-Jewish context, and in the last decades, memoir literature has grown ever more extensive. The chances for unconditional acceptance of such a narrative are far greater than they would be for the story of an unhappy [...] working-class child. (Mächler 2001, 278)

While the girl Cato grows increasingly callous and shrewd – she takes revenge on her father by filling his gin bottle with a dead eel and playing tricks on teachers – "Germany invaded Holland in the spring of 1940. German army trucks filled the streets of Amsterdam" (Jaramillo 1995, 51). Her father "joined a group that helped Jews who had been forced to live in the ghetto behind high brick walls" (85) and later hides Jews "in a small alcove" in the family's house (99). Then, during a famine in the winter of 1942, he and his daughter steal food from a German depot: "I hate

<sup>8</sup> For Freud's role in the emergence of the concept of psychic trauma cf. Leys 2000, 19.

teaching you how to steal [...]. I hope you know that if things weren't this bad, I would never have you do this.' Pa's words resounded with Dutch pride and determination" (100).<sup>9</sup> The booty does not prevail for long though, "as the hunger was inescapable." Left to her own devices again, Cato follows an invitation by her twin sister friends to a "Hitler Youth Party" with a huge food banquet (110):

Enormous red-and-black swastikas lined the walls. What was I doing here with these traitors, I thought with revulsion. If my stomach hadn't been so empty, I would have thrown up. There was more food than I had ever seen assembled in one place – rolls, apples, oranges, potatoes, beef roasts, hams, turkeys, pastries, and pies – all the things we thought we would never taste again. (113)

The protagonist's revulsion to be fed from the hands of those she immediately identifies as the enemies slightly varies from the setup of the *Hänsel und Gretel* fairy tale; by the same token, she is caught in the act of stealing food for her parents (which, however, mirrors Hänsel's stealing of valuables at the end of the fairy tale) and gets arrested instead of following voluntarily the witch's luring voice from inside the house. The element of following her hunger instinct in this scene is, however, as much reminiscent of the fairy tale as the Hitler Youth banquet itself: Hiding a trap beneath its surface, this corresponds with the witch house's façade of delicious gingerbread:

[T]wo soldiers caught us and wrestled us to the ground. [...] I felt caught in the iron jaws of the trap [...]. One guard held up a canvas flap as the other tossed [Cato and her brother Piet] like trash into the back of a truck already teeming with sobbing children. (114)

The forced entrance into the gingerbread house's interior, or for that matter the deportation to the Nordhausen concentration camp, begins on "August 4, 1943" (112) in Amsterdam. Since the end of the imprisonment is equally given an exact, if historically inaccurate, date ("I found out it was the US Third Armored Division who had set us free on the fifteenth day of April in 1945"<sup>10</sup> (168)), and because

<sup>9</sup> As Jerry Meents, an Amsterdam-born citizen of Ogden, Utah, announced in an e-mail to the director of the Gedenkstätte Mittelbau-Dora about Jaramillo's story, "not only her part of Dora is fictitious but also the part of Amsterdam. Here are some facts. Amsterdam never had a Jewish [sic] ghetto with or without a high brick wall around it. [...] The hunger winter was in 1944-1945 not 1942-1943." Meents adds that "I have been after Cato Jaramillo for 7 years. She took me to court and wanted 1 million dollars for damage to her good name, however she dropped the case because she has absolutely no evidence." The author is indebted to Jerry Meents and to Jens-Christian Wagner for the additional information.

<sup>10</sup> Compare for the exact date of the liberation of Nordhausen and the Mittelbau-Dora camps the *History of the 104th Infantry Division*, the unit which conquered the town and discovered the concentration camps. Although "the eastward drive of the 3rd Armored paused briefly on Corps order on 11 April," it was still on the same day that "the 415th completed clearing its zone up to and including Nordhausen." The eyewitness account of Sergeant Ragene Farris, quoted in the *History*, confirms that "Nordhausen fell before air-armor and night attack on 11 April." On the same day "we were needed to evacuate patients from a concentration camp in one of the large factory areas of the city." The camp was the Boeleke Kaserne, one of the sub-camps of Mittelbau-Dora located (unlike the main camp of Dora) within the Nordhausen city limits, and used by the SS camp authorities as a *Sterbelager*, or literally 'dying camp,' for prisoners in utterly hopeless physical conditions. "Lying among the multitudes of dead were reported to be a few

Jaramillo after her liberation and repatriation home to the Netherlands mentions that she had “for nearly twenty months” been puzzling over what had become of the twin sister friends she lost sight of after the round-up at the banquet, it seems possible to reconstruct the duration of the transport from Amsterdam to Nordhausen: a month at least, but hardly more than two.

This reconstruction based on the data given in the story reveals, at closer inspection, contradictions with other elements from the text; by the same token, the arrival in the Nordhausen main camp of Dora as described in chapter fifteen cannot possibly be made to match with other preserved sources. “Before long, the truck stopped,” chapter fourteen sets out, and the children “were herded in a flat-bottomed boat floating by a dock” (116) in an unidentified harbor. The passage lasts “for two days and three nights,” killing two thirds of the young deportees, among them a five-year-old boy who dies in Cato’s arms. When the boat “landed and we got out in an industrial area of a city” (121), the immediate continuation of the transport is interrupted by a bombing raid in which Cato gets injured by a bomb splinter. After the all-is-clear signal, the children “walk in rows of five to the train depot,” and the horrors continue inside the boxcars: “We were packed so tightly we couldn’t sit down. Rosie [a fellow girl prisoner] and I stood on something that felt soft and discovered to our horror that it was a man’s body. [...] Little ones died fast – they couldn’t get any air and some were trampled when they fell.” The exact duration of the train passage remains conspicuously unclear, last but not least because the narrator claims a temporary blackout. “My mind couldn’t grasp what I was witnessing” (125), she describes the incident, yet her memory seems to return at the end of the day: “The train slowed. I don’t know how long we had been standing there, but the sun had gone down and our throats were parched. When our boxcar was opened, we were ordered to get out” and “marched through the gates of hell. Walking skeletons stood inside the long fences of barbed wire” (126) – the child prisoners had arrived in the Nordhausen concentration camp.

The duration of the deportation transport as derived from the information given in chapters thirteen through fifteen thus adds up to four days. Even if one concedes that the traumatic circumstances of the passage might have affected the girl witness’s capacity to remember and narrate the course of events correctly and for that reason allows for a slightly longer duration of the passage, a striking inconsistency with the estimated four to eight weeks deduced from other passages of the story remains to be observed. By the same token, the time (or times) of arrival(s) in the concentration camp reconstructed from the story’s own specifications, ranging from mid-August 1943 until September, stands in open contradiction to the historical facts and, more specifically, to the existence of an open-air camp with barracks surrounded by barbed wire fences at that time. After the Peenemünde *Heeresversuchsanstalt* had been air-raided by Allied bombers on August 17, 1943, the Nazi regime decided to move the production facilities for the V-1 and

V-2 weapons to the unfinished underground tunnel system in mount Kohnstein; for that purpose, 107 internees from concentration camp Buchenwald were transported to the Kohnstein near Nordhausen on August 28.<sup>11</sup> The first prisoners of camp Dora as well as those that followed were initially put up *inside* the damp, dusty and cold tunnels. It was only at the beginning of 1944, hence months after Cato Jaramillo’s alleged arrival in the open-air camp, that the prisoners were moved to barracks outside the tunnels.<sup>12</sup> These inaccuracies are all the more bewildering if one juxtaposes them with the exact and historically correct information given in those passages where the story switches from the subjective first-person singular perspective to a more detached, quasi-omniscient mode of narration. Presumably the most outstanding example is the paragraph in which the girl narrator describes how “[b]it by bit over the next several weeks, I picked up information about the camp we had been dumped in.” The passage reads as if it had been taken from historically authentic material:

It was called Nordhausen and located in the Harz mountains three miles from the town of Nordhausen in eastern Germany. Until October 1944, it was a Buchenwald satellite camp and was also called camp Dora. It then became an independent camp under its own name. Most of the men prisoners were put to work underground in tunnels where V-2 missiles were secretly manufactured. The prisoners who worked in these tunnels had to live in caves dug out from the mountain. Many times dead bodies were brought up from underground. (134)

Moreover, the following sentence – narrated again in the first-person singular mode – allows for an unambiguous identification of the specific camp (of the approximately thirty in the Mittelbau-Dora complex) in which Cato Jaramillo pretends to have been imprisoned: “Once in a while I caught a glimpse of a missile being loaded on a truck” (135), which was possible only from main camp Dora.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> “KL Buchenwald überstellt nach Nordhausen 107 Häftlinge. Abgang des Transportes: 28.8.1943 um 5.00 Uhr” [Concentration camp Buchenwald dispatches 107 prisoners to Nordhausen. Departure of the transport: 28 August, 1943, at 5 a.m.], reads the *Transportbefehl* [transportation order] issued by Buchenwald camp commander Pfister on August 27, 1943 (rpt. in Pachaly / Pehny 1990, 238).

<sup>12</sup> “As of December 1943, prisoners were gradually being moved from the sleeping tunnels to the barrack camp, which was at that time still under construction. The moving to the barrack camp lasted until the beginning of June 1944 – some prisoners thus had to spend up to nine months in the darkness [of the tunnels]” (Wagner 2001, 193). [“Ab Dezember 1943 wurden die Häftlinge schrittweise aus den Schlafstollen in das im Bau befindliche Barackenlager verlegt. Der Umzug in das Barackenlager zog sich bis Anfang Juni 1944 hin – manche Häftlinge mußten somit bis zu neun Monate in der Dunkelheit verbringen.”]

<sup>13</sup> The name attributed to the “independent” camp is misleading, mixing up the name of the adjacent town, Nordhausen, with the official denomination of the concentration camp complex: Mittelbau-Dora. A possible reason for this inaccuracy is the – similarly misleading – title of a US newsreel broadcast immediately after the liberation of the camps. For snips from the film footage cf. Klemke and Köhler’s *Anything Was Possible: Dora Concentration Camp and the “V” Weapons Factory*. Another passage, containing more reliable information, describes the arrival of evacuation transports from Auschwitz and Groß-Rosen in the Dora main camp: “Train after train rumbled into camp. Many of them packed with prisoners from other camps. After days without food or water, few were still alive. The walking dead were forced to toss out the bodies of their friends who had perished in the boxcars” (Jaramillo 1995, 160-1).

living ‘beings,’ and with quick medical attention some might be saved,” the account continues. “Colonel Taggart called into action, early 12 April, the litter bearers and medical technicians” (Hoegh / Doyle 1999, 329-30). Dora main camp was liberated on the same 11th of April.

Passages like these are, however, the exception to the rule. Throughout the more than forty pages describing her experiences in the camp, the narrator radically downplays the presence of adult male prisoners, and creates the impression that Dora was mainly a camp for children of both sexes: "After we were counted," she claims, "I could see that there were many, many children in the camp."<sup>14</sup> Together with the "[k]ids from our barracks," she is soon assigned to a detail whose task is "to sort clothes" in a "large room" with "long tables with conveyor belts in the middle" (132).<sup>15</sup> Here and elsewhere, the narrative evokes the idea that Dora was mainly a Nazi camp founded for the extermination of Jews, and not so much a concentration camp established for political and criminal prisoners of various nationalities whose forced labor should contribute to the construction of underground armament facilities. As a result of this misleading assumption, the camp is being presented as equipped with gas chambers. For example, a young fellow prisoner admonishes Rosie, who unlike Cato herself is "part Jew," to stay alert because otherwise, the guards might send her to the showers: "It's not water that comes out of the spigots," he explains, "[i]t's gas. They kill the Jews who aren't strong enough to work" (128-9).<sup>16</sup>

Compare the historical studies by Wagner 2001, 267-8, and Sellier 2003, 272-6; for a testimony of a survivor of these transports cf. Frankenberg 1999, 82-7).

<sup>14</sup> On the presence of children in the Mittelbau-Dora camps compare Wagner 2001, 419-21, and Pachaly / Pelyny 1990, 113-5. A notable increase of the number of young prisoners took place when transports with Hungarian Jews arrived in May 1944 ("About 37% of these deportees, coming from Auschwitz via Buchenwald, were younger than 21 years; a couple of dozens of these even as young as 12, 13 or 14 years" [Wagner 2001, 419] ["Über 37% dieser von Auschwitz über Buchenwald in das Lager Dora deportierten Häftlinge waren unter 21 Jahre alt, einige Dutzend sogar erst 12, 13 oder 14 Jahre"]). Pachaly / Pelyny (1990, 113) mention the testimony of Wolfgang Groß in which the former prisoner recalls columns of children that "could at most have been seven, eight or nine years old" ["höchstens sieben, acht oder neun Jahre alt sein konnten"]. Many children were also among the prisoners of the evacuation transports from Auschwitz and Groß-Rosen (Wagner 2001, 421). These transports also brought a considerable number of women to the Mittelbau camps. "Some of these prisoners were particularly young still, three of them were only 15 years old and a larger number were aged 16 and 17" (Wagner 2001, 415) ["Zum Teil waren diese Häftlinge noch sehr jung, drei waren erst 15 und eine ganze Reihe gerade einmal 16 oder 17 Jahre alt"]. The sum total of female prisoners amounts to some 850 of the approximately 60 000 internees of the whole Mittelbau-Dora camp complex from August 1943 until April 1945 (Wagner 2001, 417). It remains to be stated, though, that these larger numbers of woman and child prisoners arrived only at the end of the camps' existence, most of them in early 1945.

<sup>15</sup> In Auschwitz, where such working details indeed existed, they were commonly called "Canada commando." According to Dori Laub, they consisted of "a group of inmates chosen to sort out the belongings of those who had been gassed, so that those belongings could be recuperated and sent back to Germany" (Laub 1992, 60). Another term for the assignment was *Rotkäppchenkommando*, which is borrowed from another fairy tale "Red Riding Hood."

<sup>16</sup> Other instances in the text include the "selection scene" resembling the procedure at the ramp in Auschwitz-Birkenau ("A Gestapo officer stepped forward and looked everyone over, telling some of the kids to stand in a row on the side. These were the children that were of no use to the soldiers, who would be sent immediately to the gas chambers" [Jaramillo 1995, 123]) and the speculation about what the perpetrators would report at home ("What did they tell their wives and children? Did they make up bedtime stories about [...] how many children they had

The boy "with dark curly hair" who "told us his name was Martin" (128) soon slips into the role of a brother-like friend for Cato, replacing her real brother Piet in that function.<sup>17</sup> Like Hänsel and Gretel in the gingerbread house, the two sustain and reassure each other practically and morally. Martin for instance shares his cunning strategies with the girl while her notorious stubbornness at one point wipes away his hopelessness: "Now it was my turn to be strong for Martin. I stopped crying and held him until he fell asleep" (157). The analogy continues when "a guard yelled at several rows of five to follow him" before he leads the children "across the field toward the ovens, which were actually in camp Dora" (159).

Ovens and crematoriums, along with barracks, barbed wire fences and watch-towers, undoubtedly belong to the standard equipment which cultural memory will associate with Nazi concentration camps. By the same token, the threatening existence of the oven in the gingerbread house is certainly one of the outstanding and most memorable features of the *Hänsel und Gretel* tale. As a matter of fact, the oven and the gingerbread house as well as the invocation of an evil female figure resembling the witch is, in the case of graphic representations of the Mittelbau-Dora camps, a recurrent theme. For example, the drawings by Otokar Marek, who had been interned in sub-camp Ellrich, or by Maurice de la Pintièrre, a prisoner from France, make strong use of this kind of imagery. Marek's series of sketches illustrates the *Hänsel und Gretel* tale itself, blending it, however, with features from the camp such as a roofed oven-house in the open with a smoke-stack ascending from a chimney – the oven depicted here seems to have its model in that of the camp crematorium (which in the case of Ellrich was installed as late as March 1945).<sup>18</sup> De la Pintièrre's watercolor drawings, though they contain no direct reference to the fairy tale itself, expand the issue as they allude to cannibalism – a central element too in *Hänsel und Gretel* – and anthropomorphize the camp of Dora by using its conspicuous female name. Another example is the title-giving drawing of the *Dora – La Mangeuse d'Hommes* cycle, which combines the conventional allegorical visualization of Death with the aspect of femininity. "Dora" is depicted here as a skeleton wearing a black cloak and holding a scythe; at the same time, it (or she) has the features of an old, witch-like female that wears a brooch made of a gallows with four hung prisoners dangling from it.<sup>19</sup>

If these drawings employ elements that refer in one way or another to the *Hänsel und Gretel* tale in an allusive or allegorical and therefore deliberately non-factual way, the case is different in Jaramillo's story. *Too Stubborn to Die* similarly moves away from the historical facts – not, however, by means of an artistic intervention that lifts the text as a whole onto a different level of meaning, but through

marched into the gas chambers that day and how many limp and lifeless bodies they had carried out?" [Jaramillo 1995, 138]).

<sup>17</sup> It remains unexplained how Martin managed to keep his curly hair, given the procedure that each of the newly arrived prisoners had to endure: "A gruff looking woman guard came by and shaved the hair off every part of our bodies" (Jaramillo 1995, 126).

<sup>18</sup> For two examples of Marek's cycle of sketches cf. the illustration part in Pachaly / Pelyny 1990, between pages 160 and 161.

<sup>19</sup> Maurice de la Pintièrre 1993, drawing no. 3 (n.p.).

a strikingly inauthentic detail in the just-mentioned climactic scene with the guard leading her and other children to the crematorium. The narrating girl wants to have seen a “long row of ovens” (159) in the camp – later on, she mentions “ten ovens [that] burned around the clock” (161) – which threaten to put an end to Martin’s and her lives.<sup>20</sup> “Oh, help me, Martin, I thought,” the narration goes on, building up tension.

You are the only one who can save us, but how I do not know. [...] Knowing this was the final moment of my life, I kept my eyes on Martin’s beloved face, so that my last memory would be of him. A soldier stepped toward us brandishing his whip. Take us together, I thought. Don’t let me die without Martin. (159)

The soldier, functionally analogous to the witch here because he appears to execute the burning of the children, soon afterwards abandons the camp before the advancing American troops. The dramatic scene itself similarly resolves in a double happy ending: Instead of getting burned alive, the children are supposed to clean out the ovens. Shortly after, American soldiers liberate the camp and “loaded us on a truck with other Dutch kids and sent us to Amsterdam” (169). The deportation part of the story ends like the fairy tale with the children returning home.

### 3. “With the mind of an adult:” Toward a Conclusion

The analogy of a “survivor story” with the fairy tale necessarily comes to a close here. The remaining forty pages of the book deal with the reception by her parents, the nightmares that begin to haunt her, and the emigration to the United States where she takes up work as a nurse and finally starts a family. The parallel continuation of her real, outside-the-book life into adulthood must include, at one point, the decision to write and publish her fake childhood memoirs. Psychological explanations of how and why such memoirs come into being have been given above, for example that of an utterly unsuccessful familial integration of an adopted child in the case of ‘Benjamin Wilkomirski.’ These might help to elucidate the present case as well – what comes to mind is for instance the abuse by the father described early in the book. What remains to be stated for an observer who lacks extra-knowledge about Cato Jaramillo’s actual frame of mind<sup>21</sup> is the phenomenon, datable in the time of Cato Jaramillo’s adulthood, of a self-depiction in the role of a victimized child. More specifically, the discovery of the text as being not authentic reveals the fantasy of an adult writer as the original source of the alleged violent acts committed against herself as a child. Jaramillo’s statement, made after her return to Amsterdam, that after all the hardships endured in the camp she feels like “living in a child’s body with the mind of an adult” (176)

<sup>20</sup> Compare Wagner, who relies on preserved documents and eyewitness accounts here: “[I]t was not until the beginning of April 1944 that the crematorium, equipped with one oven, was taken into use in camp Dora.” In a footnote, he specifies: “Shortly before the evacuation of the camp, another oven was installed but never taken into use” (Wagner 2001, 498, footnote 509).

<sup>21</sup> Two attempts of contacting Cato Jaramillo directly via e-mail have failed – the letters, dated May 25 and September 11, 2002, have remained unanswered.

gains an altogether new meaning as it exhibits the vicissitude of the child victim she fantasizes to be on the one hand, and the mind of an adult that engenders this fantasy in the first place on the other.

This, in turn, shifts Cato Jaramillo into the position of the adult teller of fairy tales seeking to frighten her (indeed often young) audience. Moreover, the documented results of her imagination are reminiscent of that frame of mind which the narrative otherwise ascribes to the Nazi perpetrators themselves. A prominent example is the excessively violent incident that begins with the arrival of “a transport truck filled with babies” (151). Much as the event might bear a certain resemblance to factual incidents in other concentration and extermination camps, neither the main camp of Dora nor its sub-camps had ever been the final destination of large-scale transports of newly born children.<sup>22</sup> Puzzled about what the German guards might be up to, the narrator, who together with Martin and others had been summoned to the scene,

watched the soldiers light a fire. Once the fire was blazing high enough, they ordered us to throw the babies into the flames. I couldn’t move. I just stared at the emaciated little bodies. With his whip poised in the air ready to strike, a soldier marched toward us. Martin bent over to pick up a lifeless infant and threw it into the fire, where the flames instantly engulfed it. The German stepped toward me, screaming. I saw the threat of my own death in his face. I picked up a body [...]. The baby boy’s eyes were closed, and I was quite sure he was dead. The soldier raised his whip again. In utter agony, I released my hold on the infant and threw him into the inferno. The hellish light and scorching heat seared forever into my memory the sight of the flames devouring him. (152)

The description continues for another two pages, culminating in the grossly hyperbolic scene in which the narrator strangles a newborn before she tosses it into the flames (“I twisted its neck and mechanically threw the limp body end over end into the fire”) and realizes that this act of mercy might not have had the desired effect (“Through the flames I saw the little baby’s arms and legs twisting in the heat. And I heard its cries. No! The baby could not be screaming! I squeezed the life out of it. I broke its neck. Still I heard the deafening screams of a little baby” [153]).

The scene is remarkable not only for its atrociousness, but also for another, more hidden congruence with the *Hänsel und Gretel* fairy tale. Cato Jaramillo imaginatively executes and therewith concretizes what is also in (and on) the witch’s mind, but which the fairy tale, otherwise the drastic genre par excellence, in fact spares its listener or reader: the detailed narrative representation of the burning of a child. In terms of a very cautious conclusion, therefore, there is reason to assume that certain uncanny parallels exist in the mindset of the author of *Too*

<sup>22</sup> Historical sources testify to the presence of one single baby in Mittelbau-Dora. Wagner as well as Pachaly and Pelyn unanimously refer to the birth of a child during the evacuation transport from Auschwitz: “Two days before the arrival in camp Dora, the 26-year-old seamstress Sara N. gave birth to her son Herbert.” [“Die 26jährige Schneiderin Sara N. gebar auf dem Transport zwei Tage vor der Ankunft im Lager Dora ihren Sohn Herbert”]. The child was registered in Dora; its place of birth was changed to “KL Mittelbau” (Wagner 2001, 415). Pachaly and Pelyn (1990, 116) add the exact date: January 26, 1945, thus one day before the liberation of Auschwitz by the Red Army.

*Stubborn to Die* on the one hand, and those of the sadistic Nazi perpetrators or, for that matter, of the evil-minded witch in the *Hänsel und Gretel* tale on the other hand.

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ELLIOTT BERGMAN

## A Glimpse at Dylan through Biermann

"I'm in the kitchen with the tombstone blues"  
(Bob Dylan's "Tombstone Blues")

"aus grauem Granit da, sein Grabstein paßt grade  
für Brecht nicht schlecht"  
(Wolf Biermann's "Der Hugenottenfriedhof")

**Abstract:** In 2003 the German songwriter-poet Wolf Biermann published *Elf Entwürfe für meinen Grabspruch* (Eleven Sketches for My Own Epitaph), a textual encounter that places Biermann's free-form translations in counterpoint to "Eleven Outlined Epitaphs," Bob Dylan's Beatesque poem that originally appeared in the liner notes of *The Times They Are A-Changin'* (1964). Donning the identities of poet and folk singer interchangeably, both Bob Dylan and Wolf Biermann have pursued successful careers straddling the high/low art divide since their arrival on the respective pop music scenes of Germany and the US. As cultural documents, however, Biermann's translations not only articulate his poetical affinity to Dylan's art, but they also underscore the challenges of mediating the ambiguous tropes of Dylan's vernacular contextuality to a German audience. This article sets out to examine how the reception of Bob Dylan's music in 1960s Germany comes to bear on Biermann's Grabsprüche vis-à-vis Dylan's epitaphs to argue that, despite the concerted German feuilleton criticism, Biermann's translations promulgate great understanding of Dylan's poetry and song.

### 1. Introduction

Nearly thirty-seven years later one can hardly imagine the raucous and general controversy that Leslie Fiedler's "Cross the Border – Close the Gap" lecture (Fiedler 1971) must have awakened in Freiburg in 1967. His polemic against hermetic high culture and an academic establishment overly invested in the modernist tradition resounded with his audience to great avail. Needless to say, there was already a burgeoning student movement afoot in Germany, much like the US, that would hear Fiedler's assault on the status quo in letters as a rallying cry against the canon of post-WWII German authors (Weiss, Grass, Benn, et al.). At the time, these authors' works were typical fare on university syllabi; in this case much to the exclusion of the emerging avant-garde literature of the 1960s. At this point, I will turn to the state of American literature and transatlantic border crossing in the emerging 1960s counterculture.

It was not just Fiedler's call for a reevaluation of cultural practices that found resonance in Germany at this time. Also, Dylan's discordant voice from the Midwest sounded afar and was heard by fans on the other side of the Atlantic in the same time period. Around the time of his *Don't Look Back* tour of England in 1965, his records were released in West Germany, and they roused the interest of Wolf Biermann, an up-and-coming poet-songwriter in his own right who saw himself, like Dylan, trapped in a stifling cultural milieu, in his case on the other side of the Iron Curtain in former East Germany. It would be no coincidence that Biermann would start finding his own lyrical voice at this time with the publication of two poetry collections: *Sonnenpferde und Astronauten* (1964) und *Die Drabtharfe* (1965). As Biermann reveals in *Elf Entwürfe für meinen Grabspruch*, his recent book, he was struck by the similarity of attitudes in his socialist society as compared to American-style capitalist society. In his appraisal of Dylan, Biermann states as follows: "[E]s zeigen sich auch urkomisch die gleichen Posen eines früh vollendeten Anfängers, der den Ehrgeiz hat, der ignoranten Welt eins zu machen" (Biermann / Dylan 2003, 104). Thus, it would be the uncompromising socio-critical edge of Dylan's early work that would, in part, inspire Biermann both to develop his own songwriting art and to adopt critical poses in the cultural landscape of former East Germany.

Given the aforementioned background, this article will focus on Wolf Biermann's *Elf Entwürfe für meinen Grabspruch* (2003), a textual encounter that places Biermann's free-form translations in counterpoint to Bob Dylan's "Eleven Outlined Epitaphs," a Beatesque poem that originally appeared in the liner notes of *The Times They Are A-Changin'* (1964). Donning the identities of poet and folk singer interchangeably, both Bob Dylan and Wolf Biermann have pursued successful careers straddling Fiedler's high/low art divide since their arrival on the respective pop music scenes in the US and Germany. As cultural documents, however, Biermann's translations not only articulate his poetical affinity to Dylan's art, but they also underscore the challenges of mediating the ambiguous tropes of Dylan's vernacular contextuality to a German audience. After an introductory section on the status of American popular music in divided Germany of the 1950s, I will examine how the reception of Bob Dylan's music in Germany comes to bear on Biermann's Grabsprüche vis-à-vis Dylan's epitaphs and to argue that, despite the concerted German feuilleton criticism, Biermann's translations promulgate great understanding of Dylan's poetry and song.

## 2. The German Reception of Bob Dylan

In a rare work of comparative Dylanology, Anderson's *The Hollow Horn* (1981) describes the social milieu of post-WWII Germany in which Dylan's music first appeared. At the time, the major factors affecting German-American relations and, consequently, transatlantic cultural migration were as follows: the flow of American investment into Germany, denazification, re-education, and the presence of American military units in the West (Anderson 1981, 81). Nazi eugenics played out in the sphere of culture during the war and led to the repression of so-called

'degenerate' forms of Western music, in this case from presumed 'inferior' groups such as African Americans. Anderson discerns a key difference when he points out that the television age started earlier in the US than in Germany, as the standard of living in the US allowed most middle-class American households to afford a black-and-white television in the 1950s, while, in contrast, radio programming was still the mainstay in both Germanies until the 1970s. As one might expect, this enduring emphasis on radio and popular music created a sustained demand for American music in Germany.

At the same time, dramatic changes began to take place in American popular music that would, in turn, be received by German audiences overseas. These changes in popular music elicited remarkably similar reactions in the US and Germany. In the US, rock-n-roll received mixed reviews; many Americans reacted with fervor, attempting to discredit what was seen as the devil's music. The fact that bluesmen such as Robert Johnson had reveled in Faustian mythos garnered support for these positions. Anderson describes the belated arrival of rock music in Germany and the accompanying attitudes: "[I]t was considered a crude and aesthetically unrewarding form of music with dubious social and moral implications" (Anderson 1981, 82). Consequently, although Germans could access it on American-run radio stations such as the American Forces Network (AFN), many of the tax-supported, non-commercial stations devoted little airtime to it. Although the German reaction appears to have been contingent on different factors, more importantly, both reactions emanated from the same basic premise: Popular music could have a pernicious influence on young people and society.

In discussing the late 1950s, Poiger underscores the arrival of Elvis's music in Germany as the turning point in the transatlantic migration of rock-n-roll. In the case of both Germanies, the pragmatic fears of the day rose to prominence, namely "worries about uncontrolled female sexuality and male aggression and racial difference" (Poiger 2000, 168). Here the prevailing image of Elvis that emerges in *Spiegel* articles from 1956 onward is both sex symbol and threat to the social order, or the rival hegemonies of communist East and capitalist West. According to the sensationalist rhetoric of the day, reminiscent of Freud's hysterical patient Anna O., young teenage women could be provoked into orgasmic hysteria by Elvis in much the same way that young adolescent males were incited by Germany's inner-city Mod/Beatnik culture. The rebel image engendered by American films such as James Dean's *Rebel without a Cause* and Marlon Brando's *The Wild One* had already been blamed for the riots of Halbstarke, a sub-culture of 1950s punks in West Germany identifiable by their fashion, leather jackets and Levi's jeans (Poiger 2000, 82). How did this play out in East Germany?

Although G.D.R. officials attempted to censor Western music and film in the Reconstruction period and only six American films ever achieved commercial release in the East, young Germans still flocked across the border to see American films, such as gangster films and Westerns. Soviet films were considered "too serious, or too militaristic for German audiences" (Poiger 2000, 33). In short, thwarting access to American popular culture in the G.D.R. seemed an impossible task, since audi-

ences of the day had a keen interest in American cultural exports. Like West Germany, the G.D.R. experienced similar uprisings of adolescent men in 1953, many of whom donned American cowboy fashions and were labeled by Communist officials as “fascist provocateurs” (Poiger 2000, 63). From the viewpoint of SED ideologues such as Prime Minister Otto Grotewohl, the deviance of these men was driven by fascist leanings, covert American imperialist efforts, and homosexuality (Poiger 2000, 63). The genderization and sexualization of revolt convincingly mirrors the alleged mania of female Elvis fans in Germany.

Essentially, American popular culture had become the site of cultural-political turmoil and grandstanding in the case of both Germanies in the late 1950s, and even more so in the East where the state exercised considerable dominance over such matters. In West Germany, the presence of American soldiers also played a major role in disseminating American pop culture and the reaction to American popular music was dismissive, albeit tempered. Ironically, while America attempted to contain Communism at the apex of Cold War hostilities in the late 1950s and early 1960s, American pop music proliferated throughout Europe, seemingly unencumbered by the descending Iron Curtain and ubiquitous ideological difference. As Poiger’s reading of 1950s German society suggests, regardless of which side of divided Germany one stood, critics and politicians alike associated American pop music with youth subcultures and their style-conscious revolts against hegemonic social forces.

German critics on the Left during the 1960s were also greatly influenced by the Frankfurter Schule that – by and large – rejected the possibility that popular culture could articulate dissent against the dominant order. Influenced greatly by Marxist thought and the experience of Nazism, Theodor Adorno sought a new critical theory to address the exigencies of post-war social realities and come to terms with, among other things, the new culture industry that permeated both Germany and the US. Adorno’s foundational article “Resume über Kulturindustrie” argues that the products of the culture industry are capitalist and utilitarian in nature: “In all ihren Sparten werden Produkte mehr oder minder planvoll hergestellt, die auf den Konsum durch Massen zugeschnitten sind und in weitem Maß diesen Konsum von sich aus bestimmen” (Adorno 1967, 61). According to Adorno’s line of reasoning, the masses consume cultural products that emanate from the class-specific interests of the superstructure and are duped in the process, the dominant motives of which are the pursuit of profit and the inculcation of the masses with good will.

Given the views enumerated above, it is no surprise then that Adorno wrote scathing reviews of jazz music, a form of American popular music. According to Adorno, “jazz [showed] itself to be utterly impoverished” (Adorno 2000, 270), a devaluation grounded in a general lack of substance and repetitiousness. Moreover, he undermines the idea of jazz being an original avant-garde idiom. His derision of jazz, although consistent with his pejorative assessment of culture industry products, betrays a high-art bias and a miscomprehension of American popular music in the 1950s, much of which derived its influences from spirituals and African rhythms. His attempt to “locate the authentic Negro elements in jazz” (Adorno 2000, 269)

is misguided, as his engagement with the music is technical and his motion inward. In the liner notes of *Freewheelin’ Bob Dylan* (1963), Bob Dylan, in an excerpted interview with Nat Hentoff, states as follows: “[M]any young singers are trying to get inside the blues, forgetting that those older singers used them to get outside their troubles.” For Dylan and other aficionados of the early 1960s, blues and jazz were embodied by an outward movement toward catharsis and had little to do with the ideological issues that preoccupied Adorno.

Considering the lukewarm and, at times, controversial reception of American music by the Left in both Germanies, what kind of debut did Bob Dylan’s music make on the German music scene of the early 1960s? Biermann makes no overt mention of his first experience with Dylan’s music in *Elf Entwürfe für meinen Grab-spruch*. Attempting to address this question, Anderson mentions failed attempts to acquire information from CBS music in Frankfurt and references an interview with Peter Mordo, a radio journalist from Süddeutscher Rundfunk who premiered Dylan’s music to German audiences on his program *Club 19*, sometime between 1963 and 1965, and later in his folk music fanzine *Hootenanny Plattenschrank*. The commercial release of Dylan’s early folk LPs, including the album of Biermann’s fascination, *The Times They Are A-Changin’*, did not occur until 1965, a delay that may have placed undue emphasis on his acoustic songwriting in Germany at a time when Dylan had already gone electric (Anderson 1981, 84-5). The enthusiasm that greeted Dylan’s protest songs in West Germany is best illustrated by the folk song contests at stations such as Süddeutscher Rundfunk. Young people were encouraged to compose their own songs and, for the first time, German interest in the message of an American popular artist was piqued, which was never the case for Dylan’s American predecessors in the late 1950s.

According to Anderson, Andreas Schwarz was the first German radio personality to translate Dylan’s lyrics. He compiled a radio portrait with translations of eleven songs and interpretive commentary for Westdeutscher Rundfunk (Anderson 1981, 85). From this point onward, Dylan reception became a textual affair in Germany and the focus concentrated on the ideas underpinning the song lyrics as opposed to the music. In this way, German reception parallels American responses of the time with the exception that Dylan’s message required mediation in Germany by spirited DJs such as Schwarz. Beatniks in the US at the time were clinging to Dylan’s early acoustic songs, too. The songs gave voice to the doom-and-gloom *zeitgeist* that arose in response to escalating military tensions in the Bay of Pigs and Cuban Missile crisis. In this historical context, songs such as Dylan’s anti-war anthem “Masters of War” evoked anger against the “military industrial complex.” In blistering lyrics such as “you might say that I’m young” and “you hide in your mansion as the young people’s blood flows out of their body and is buried in the mud” the singer-poet positions himself as a marginalized youth, excoriating profiteers and armchair generals who sacrifice the young to the war-machine. Using this song as an example, dissent was the message of Dylan’s songs in this period, shedding even further doubt on Adorno’s reductive

views of the *Kulturindustrie*. As a major-label commercial artist, Bob Dylan released numerous fiercely anti-establishment songs in the early to mid-1960s.

It is exactly this politically charged message that led Biermann to identify with Dylan at the start of his career. In an interview with Biermann at a colloquium for political poetry in Ohio from 1983, Biermann mentioned his main influences, Hanns Eisler and Bertolt Brecht and, of course, Bob Dylan:

Schmidt: Ja, aber hier fehlt uns eine Tradition der politischen Lyrik.

Biermann: Glaube ich nicht! Ich finde Bob Dylan hochpolitisch, ein großer Dichter. Und ein Land, das eine Tradition wie Woody Guthrie, Leadbelly, Holly Near hat – diese Tradition ist noch sehr lebendig.

As the interview progresses Biermann furthermore stated:

Biermann: Also ich wünschte mir im Idealfall, daß ein Mann mit dem Kaliber von Bob Dylan sich der Strafarbeit unterzöge, meine Lieder zu übersetzen. Einer der weiß, was ein Lied ist. (Schmidt / Biermann / Fehervary 1984, 271-8)

Unfortunately, Dylan never translated Biermann's lyrics in the US and, nearly twenty years after this interview, Biermann finally found an opportunity to engage with Dylan's poetry and lyrics in his *Elf Entwürfe für meinen Grabspruch*. Why epitaphs, and what kind of themes does Dylan's original poem inscribe?

### 3. Epitaphs/Grabsprüche

First of all, decoding the word "epitaph" in this particular context may assist in the thematic exegesis of the poem. "Epitaph" traces its etymology to "epitaphium" in Latin, a funeral oration; its modern usage connotes "an inscription on or at a tomb or a grave in memory for the one buried there," or "a brief statement commemorating or epitomizing a deceased person or something past" (*Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary* 2005). The German equivalent "Grabspruch" preserves the spontaneous quality of the Latin utterance, aptly capturing the tenor of this poem. As to why a young singer-songwriter would compose such a morose poem in his early 20s, the rationale is dubious. Perhaps Freudian *Thanatos* is the muse and the young poet longs for death, a psychological drive eternalized in German literature by Goethe's Werther: "[M]ir wäre besser, ich ginge" (Goethe 1986, 121). Biermann interprets the epitaphs in his afterword as follows:

[...] Bob Dylan als junger Kerl [wollte] natürlich ein Epitaph für seine eigene Beerdigung fabrizieren [...], der Poet hat da für seinen Tod vorgearbeitet. Es ist lebensklug, wenn man den verbalen Schlußstein fürs eigene Grab, also das letzte Wort, frühzeitig formuliert, und das bedeutet: in einer Lebensphase, in der jeder gemeine Sterbliche sich noch für unsterblich hält." (Biermann / Dylan 2003, 97)

For Biermann, inscribing death in the epitaph can signify its related opposite, life and mortality. This reverse coding of an epitaph is not surprising since the poetic code is quite often slippery and a love poem can, for example, serve as an ideal occasion to signify mortality, as in T.S. Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" in which he writes: "I have measured out my life with coffee spoons" (Eliot 2003, 5).

Turning to the texts now, Dylan's original poem is written in a stream-of-consciousness style and imbued with a sense of perpetual motion. In this regard, it resembles talkin' blues, a form of songwriting pioneered by Woody Guthrie. The singer talks over guitar strumming: narrating biographical anecdotes, discussing contemporary issues, and quite often improvising the lyrics. Use of this form is logical since Dylan's influences, like Biermann's, are the poets and the folk bards of the past, harking back to the traveling folk singers in America and the *Minnesänger* in medieval Germany respectively. The formalistic aspects of Dylan's epitaphs are clear in contrast to their serpentine language that, in formalistic terms, transforms the talkin' blues into a literary odyssey of sorts. As part of this odyssey, the poem transports the reader from "the early evening" of its opening stanza on a thematic itinerary through rapidly changing temporal and geographical destinations: his hometown "south Hibbing," "in the hungry thirties[,] an' blew in like Woody t' New York City," "the underground," "the ruins and remains of the model T past," "crowded valleys," "the New Jersey night" and, finally, stopping its peregrinations in a self-reflexive moment wrought by "strong loncliness" (Biermann / Dylan 2003, 65-95). The destination topos, connoting both "place" from ancient Greek and theme in its literary-theoretical parlance, constitutes the central poetological focus of Dylan's epitaphs, all of which generally adumbrate the artist's movement through shifting destinations of the self, a process that, for Dylan, involves the poet in constant metamorphoses. For this reason, the lyrical voice of his epitaphs, ultimately, arrives nowhere – not even at the finality of all finalities, death. Instead it reaches only the ephemeral repose of melancholy, an aspect of his epitaphs that serves to remind us of our own transient *Dasein*.

Biermann's task of translating Dylan's epitaphs is, therefore, a formidable one that inevitably addresses itself to the following question: How can the destination topos and Dylan's American vernacular contextuality be mediated in German? In addition to the linguistic challenges, Dylan's archive of metaphors and references, a diffuse collection of images and personages from American history, folk music and politics, presents further challenges to the translator. Somewhat to the benefit of Biermann's endeavor, Dylan's archive, although primarily oriented toward the lexicon of Americana, most notably includes references to German history and culture:

I talked with one  
of the songs of Germany  
while walkin' once on foreign ground  
an' I learned that  
he regards  
Adolf Hitler  
as we here in the states  
regard Robert E. Lee (Biermann / Dylan 2003, 82)

These lines inscribe metaphors of national trauma and Dylan makes a comparison between the reception of Nazism (Hitler) and the American Civil War (General Lee) in the grand narratives of national histories. In a nod to German literature

and song, Dylan also mentions “the lost cigars of Bertolt Brecht” and “Marlene Dietrich” (Biermann / Dylan 2003, 93).

Upon close reading, Biermann’s version of these lines discloses new meanings. For example, in his translation of the Bertolt Brecht reference he conveys more than the image of cigar smoking. He narrates an episode from the author’s stay in the US and conveys his outspoken proletarian attitudes:

Ich stolper über Zigarrenstummel  
die Brecht als Emigrant in L.A.  
mit proletarischer Gebärde  
auf Bürger-Steige spuckte (Biermann / Dylan 2003, 58)

In Biermann’s *Grabsprüche*, Brecht’s appearance evokes both the transatlantic cultural exchange inspired by German exiles in post-WWII America and Biermann’s lifelong interest in Brecht’s socialism. In the case of the singer / femme fatale Marlene Dietrich, he writes “Marlene Dietrich, die ewig Geheimnisvolle” (Biermann / Dylan 2003, 58). Once again, he has extended Dylan’s reference in order to impart a new meaning, i.e. Dietrich’s mysterious ambiance in German music. Does Biermann’s tendency to appropriate and alter Dylan’s metaphorical language then make his translation problematic?

On this point German feuilleton critics appear to agree, as Biermann’s interview with *Spiegel* in 2003 attests. When confronted with alleged inaccuracies in his free-form translation by the interviewer, Biermann responded emphatically: “Es ist vollkommen egal, ob man die Sprache, aus der man übersetzt, versteht oder nicht. Ob ich übersetzen kann, hängt ausschließlich davon ab, ob ich in meiner eigenen Sprache ein Gedicht schreiben kann” (Hage / Höbel 2003). For him, poetic sensibilities transcend the need for semantic-level linguistic knowledge of the source text. The *Spiegel* interviewer continued to indict Biermann’s free-form translation:

Spiegel: Trotzdem noch mal: Wie kommen Sie dazu, dem Dichter Dylan viele Zeilen hinzuzufügen und ihm Worte unterzuschreiben wie “Apokalypse,” “Panik,” “Menschheit,” “Weltgeschichte,” die allesamt im Original nicht vorkommen?  
Biermann: Das habe ich ihm reingeschoben. (Hage / Höbel 2003, 182)

To the defense of Biermann, the exchange above indicates a fundamental misreading of Dylan’s poetry and song by some current-day German critics. Dylan’s original epitaphs are ambiguous and, as such, they prescribe no fixity of meanings or interpretation. They exude a “fertile lack of precision” (Roe 2002, 84) and – therefore – resist ‘precise’ translation. Realizing this essential aspect of Dylan’s poetry, Biermann has labored instead to reproduce the colloquial register of Dylan’s original by employing words such as “Kiez” from Berlin dialect and abbreviating words such as “hätt” and “Erin’rung.” In lines such as:

So ‘n Abhau-Typ bin ich und brauch es so  
bin seßhaft auf Achse,  
bleib der, der nicht bleibt  
und sein will ich nicht. Ich will werden (Biermann / Dylan 2003, 16)

we can see that Biermann regarded the aim of preserving the preeminence of Dylan’s destination topos, the overarching leitmotif of Dylan’s epitaph poems, as being of greater importance than maintaining word-for-word accuracy vis-à-vis Dylan’s original. It becomes clear in these lines that Biermann fundamentally understood the underlying exegetic problem in mediating Dylan’s poetry to a German audience: The vagabond-artist is always in a state of becoming (*werden*) and, consequently, no Dylan poem or song can be faithfully reproduced or, in this case, translated as the critics presume. Arguably, Biermann’s method of translation demonstrates an affinity to Walter Benjamin’s aesthetics of translation, according to which a free translation, by its very nature, is a re-creation whose primary objective is “to release in [its] own language that pure language which is under the spell of another” (Benjamin 1968, 80). In such statements, it is clear that Benjamin recognizes the perils of translating poetry, and, as such, allows for liberties to be taken in pursuit of the ethereal language of the poet.

These linguistic issues aside, the passages in Biermann’s free-form translation that most clearly bear the imprint of Dylan’s reception in Germany as protest singer are those that appear to comment on political themes. Where Dylan wrote “where is our party? / where all members’re held equal,” Biermann extrapolates:

Zeig mir die Party, die eine, die meine  
so ‘ne Partei wo alle echt gleich sind  
wo die Bestimmer nicht  
immer reicher sind  
wo nicht die Schweine  
immer noch gleicher sind (Biermann / Dylan 2003, 25)

Based on Dylan’s passing reference to the lack of integrity in party politics, Biermann makes a further socio-economic critique of the influence of money in democratic political systems. In “Grabspruch IV,” his poem continues to critique the ideology of democracy:

Auch Democracy kann niemals  
alle Menschentiere  
glücklich machen (Biermann / Dylan 2003, 26)

Further, he decries the tangible historical results of German nationalism, “Schweineereien” and “Staatsverbrechen” (Biermann / Dylan 2003, 26). In these passages, Anderson’s claim as to the resonance of Dylan’s early political message with German audiences rings true. Brief allusions of a political nature in the original receive extensive exposition in Biermann’s mediation. In some ways, the image of Dylan as protest singer may be fossilized in the German context, or at least as Biermann’s translation attests. As is already widely known, the *No Direction Home: Bob Dylan* documentary evidences that Dylan opposed the responsibility of having political significance for the 60s generation, an attitude most often tied to his refusal to play at Woodstock.

In conclusion, the epitaph poems in *Elf Entwürfe für meinen Grabspruch* comprise a textual encounter between two songwriters of great acclaim. Wolf Biermann’s *Grabsprüche* served two main ends: They mediated Dylan’s lesser-known

poetry to a broader German audience and paid homage at a critical time. Dylan's novelistic autobiography *Chronicles Volume 1* was, at the time of publication, considered for the Nobel Prize for Literature. As translations, Biermann's poems bear the mark of Dylan's politicized reception in Germany, and reenact the ambiguous tropes of the original by mediating an essential leitmotif of Dylan's music and poetry: the transience of ultimate destination and existence. Finally, it appears to be Biermann's hope, in publishing a free-form translation in German, that Fiedler's high/low culture gap can someday be bridged, at which point songwriter-poets such as Bob Dylan will attain their due prominence. While his endorsement of Dylan's poetry did not result in his selection by the Nobel Prize Committee, it nevertheless increased awareness of his contribution to world literature.

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## Buchbesprechungen

*Peter Erlebach, Bernhard Reitz, Thomas Michael Stein. Geschichte der englischen Literatur.* Reclams Universal-Bibliothek. Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam jun., 2004. 734 pp. € 24.90. ISBN 3-15-010556-0.

To write a history of English Literature poses fundamental theoretical problems nowadays: Postcolonial and comparative studies subvert any claims to a 'national literature,' gender studies and postmodern theory expose the vested interests implied in any literary canon, and 'history' is stigmatised as a key concept of a hegemonic occidental epistemology. In their preface the three authors signal awareness of these complexities, yet hope to excite the curiosity of the reader in spite of them by presenting English Literature as a history of genres.

The book starts with the exception to this rule, as Peter Erlebach und Bernhard Reitz portray Old and Middle English Literature independent of genre boundaries. They explicate the historical background and continental influences and gesture at a history of mentalities by tracing the development from pre-Christian through Christian to secular values. From the Renaissance onward English – or better British – Literature is presented as the history of poetry (78-245), of drama (246-502) and of prose (503-708). I shall review each part individually, as the methodological approaches differ considerably in these sections.

The history of poetry, written by Peter Erlebach, offers chapters on the late Middle Ages, Renaissance and early Baroque, Classicism, the Sublime and pre-Romantic poetry, Romanticism, Victorianism, the 20th century up to 1950, after WW II up to 1970, and a few pages on new tendencies, Commonwealth poetry and (again) notes on the poetry after WW II. The account draws analogies between particular poets (Spenser, Milton, Joyce and T.S. Eliot as creators of entire world views [96, 220]), and at certain points relates aesthetic concepts to philosophical premises (i.e. the Romantic concept of creativity to philosophical theses of Berkeley, Hartley and Hume [133f.]). Granted the subjectivity of any selective principle in a book like this, it comes as a surprise, however, to see Charlotte Brontë and her Gondal Poems presented at length, while Thomas Hardy is accorded half a page and D.H. Lawrence's name is mentioned once in passing. There is no reference to any woman poet like Anna Laetitia Barbauld, Charlotte Smith or Mary Robinson in the Romantic period, and neither Elaine Feinstein nor Jenny Joseph nor Eavan Boland makes an appearance in the 20th century. The approach seems to be untouched by recent developments in literary theory and falls back undauntedly on the creative genius of the poet (117) and the intention of the author (129) in the interpretation of specific poems.

Bernhard Reitz presents the history of drama in chapters on the theatre from Reformation to Restoration, from the Restoration to the 18th century, the comedy in the 18th century, Romanticism and Victorianism, and the 20th century up to the present. The brilliant pages on Renaissance drama elucidate the social and economic conditions of the period's theatre, media landscape and author function; they expose surprising and entertaining continuities from Robert Medwalls in the 15th century to Marga-

ret Thatcher and mirror the state of the art when it comes to the interpretation of specific dramas. This history of drama illustrates in an exemplary fashion the fascination of a literary history inspired by literary theory and cultural studies, including gender studies (cf. the pages on Aphra Behn [307, 324f.], women in Restoration comedy [320], gender roles and genre in the 18th century [338f.]).

Thomas Michael Stein divides the history of prose into the epochs from Reformation to Restoration, from Restoration to the end of the 18th century, Romanticism and Victorianism, from the turn of the century to the end of WW II, and from the end of WW II to the present. Dissatisfied with the limited range of standard categories like essay, novel or short story in the face of an amorphous mass of prose texts, Stein creates new groupings according to topics. Thus from Reformation to Restoration we find specific chapters about religious prose, humanist prose, literary criticism, popular prose, the essay, politico-philosophical and religious tracts, and diaries; Romanticism and Victorianism include, apart from various subgenres of the novel, the 'Romantic' essay, essays of Romantic literary criticism, expository prose, and Lewis Carroll's surreal prose. Nevertheless, the endeavour at minute systematisation founders with the arrival of the 20th century and culminates in the statement that any attempt at structuring prose after WW II must appear as an act of haphazard rigour (641, 651). Despite these problems, an unobtrusive focus on the contribution of prose texts to the process of subject-formation under specific socio-economic conditions welds the specific chapters together. In general, the prose section is held together by an approach which draws maps of intriguing landscapes of historically specific frames of mind. The chapter on expository prose of the 19th century for example relates Jeremy Bentham's philosophy to the emancipatory writings of John Stuart Mill, Mary Wollstonecraft, and Sarah Stickney Ellis (586); it places Darwin's significance for Victorianism in a context with the work of Lyell and Spencer, and finally groups all of them together with Carlyle, Rabington, Macaulay, Newman, Arnold, and Pater.

What about the book as a whole? A few words in the preface about the function of period and genre divisions, the authors' working definition of 'literature' or some implications of the term 'deconstruct' (430, 500) could have homogenised the methodological approaches, enlightened the uninformed reader and given orientation to the academic. As it is, the book offers a wealth of information to the student and the general reader, and ample food for thought to the academic teacher. In short: There are very good reasons for reading it.

Anna-M. Horatschek (Kiel)

**Andrew Gurr. *The Shakespeare Company, 1594-1642*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. 339 pp. Hb. £ 45.00. ISBN 0-521-80730-1.**

Andrew Gurr's latest monograph is a comprehensive account of the theatre company of which Shakespeare was both sharer and player as well as playwright, and which remained a coherent and continuous company, despite name changes, for nearly fifty years – an achievement unique during this period. The book provides a much-needed replacement for Thomas Baldwin's *Organization and Personnel of the Shakespearean Company*, first published in 1927: no-one since has attempted to draw together into a single volume all that is known about the workings of the company and those involved in it. It builds on Gurr's own earlier work, especially *The Shakespearean Playing Com-*

*panies*, which offered a detailed overview of the various theatre companies of the time, exploring their working conditions, characteristics and inter-relationships. He now focuses in depth on the Shakespearean company alone, charting its history from the establishment of the Lord Chamberlain's Men as part of a duopoly in 1594 through to the closure of the playhouses in 1642.

Gurr opens with a discussion of what he considers the key to the company's success and status, the continuing determination from 1594 onwards to operate both an indoor and an outdoor theatre, and a care to appeal to all sectors of the market. He emphasises, too, the company's strong bonds of family and fellowship, and its democratic operating principles, the way in which the system of 'housekeepers' was established in addition to the standard 'sharers.' He looks in detail at the company's working practices and how these changed over the period (considering accents and costuming, the extent and nature of the company's touring, the use of music and jigs) and at their finances, extrapolating from the limited information to produce an illuminating and plausible, though admittedly speculative, picture. Later chapters examine the developing repertoire and the different styles and concerns of the successive resident dramatists, going on to explore issues of censorship and the implications of the company's royal patronage and elite Blackfriars audience. Gurr argues for a conservative dramaturgy and a clear identification of interest between players and patron, with the actors supporting rather than challenging the court.

The book concludes with a brief outline of the company's afterlife during the Interregnum and Restoration. Although Gurr's choice of title implies the company folded in 1642, he also shows how the players tried to reform after the King's defeat: forcing Parliament to authorise back-payment for pre-1642 performances in 1646; bringing out the Beaumont and Fletcher Folio in 1647; performing at a range of venues in 1648 and beyond. Their Blackfriars home remained empty but performance-ready until vandalised by soldiers in 1649. Indeed, the company can perhaps only be said to have been truly dissolved with the sale of their costumes and playbooks in the mid-1650s.

This detailed social, political and economic evaluation is followed by six encyclopaedic appendices setting out the facts behind Gurr's arguments. These make up a third of the book and offer perhaps its most valuable resource. The first appendix gives individual biographical entries on each of the players connected with the company, from the Burbages down to hired man and musician. The next two focus on historical documents illuminating the company's working conditions, offering extracts from a selection of key primary sources, plus the full 'Sharers' Papers' testimonies from the 1635 dispute. The final three appendices are concerned with the plays themselves: listing the developing repertoire with a breakdown of when each play was acquired; setting out title-page details for all the surviving printed play texts; and providing a chronological account of court performances given by both 'the Shakespeare Company' and its rivals.

In *The Shakespeare Company*, Andrew Gurr provides both a clear narrative and a comprehensive reference book. It will prove essential reading for any student of Renaissance drama.

Clare Smout (Oxford)

Allan Conrad Christensen. *Nineteenth-Century Narratives of Contagion: "Our feverish Contact."* Routledge Studies in Nineteenth-Century Literature, 1. London: Routledge, 2005. x, 350 pp. Hb. £ 75.00. ISBN 0-415-36048-X.

Bereits der Untertitel "Our feverish contact" verspricht ein heißes und gleichzeitig ungewisses Thema, zumal im allgemeinen medizinischen Sprachgebrauch "Fieber," d.h. eine erhöhte Körpertemperatur als Folge einer gestörten Wärmeregulation, ausschließlich eine nicht näher bestimmbare, aus sehr unterschiedlichen Gründen hervorgerufene Krankheit beschreibt. Es scheint deshalb zunächst klug, dass sich der Verfasser nur einer der Folgen und deren Krankheiten, nämlich den Infektionen widmen möchte. Dabei ist freilich auch der Begriff "Infektion" überaus vielschichtig, bezeichnet er doch ebenfalls recht allgemein die Übertragung, das Eindringen und das Haftensbleiben von pathogenen Mikroorganismen in einen Makroorganismus, die dann eine bestimmte Infektionskrankheit und deren Übertragbarkeit bestimmen.

Die Komplexität dieser medizinischen Begriffe scheint Christensen allerdings nicht zu stören, ja er konzentriert sich sogar in seiner ausgesprochen breit angelegten Studie gleich auf mehrere Infektionskrankheiten (u.a. Cholera, Pest, Typhus) und erweitert darüber hinaus den vielschichtigen medizinischen Begriff der "contagion" durch zahlreiche nichtmedizinische Zusätze, wodurch zwar die teils fließenden Übergänge zwischen Medizin und Literatur, Kultur, Philosophie u.v.m. deutlich werden, aber auch zu einer gewissen Beliebigkeit in der Terminologie einladen, die wiederum einer differenzierten Behandlung im Wege steht und Allgemeinplätzen Tür und Tor zu öffnen scheint. So bezeichnet Christensen zum Beispiel in Anlehnung an Girard "metaphysical desire" als "eminently contagious" (13); der Teufel sei "involved in the contagion of waste" (107), gleichzeitig ist aber auch die Liebe eine "contagious disease" (156), und Lady Dedlock in *Bleak House* als "leader of 'fashion'" partizipiere "in a particular system of contagion" (107). Eine Frage wäre hier freilich gewesen, ob und in welchem Ausmaß die Begriffserweiterung von "contagion" tatsächlich charakteristisch für das 19. Jahrhundert ist. Schließlich wurden ähnliche Wendungen bereits im Mittelalter geprägt, so etwa von Chaucer in seiner "Second Nun's Tale," wo es heißt: "My soule [...] That troubled is by the contagioun of my body."

Indes lässt Christensens gleichermaßen exzessiver wie eklektischer Gebrauch vor allem poststrukturalistischer und anderer Theorien kaum Raum für eine differenzierte und v.a. systematische historische, soziale, geographische, demographische, medizinische, politische oder auch kulturelle Kontextualisierung der von ihm behandelten Infektionskrankheiten im 19. Jahrhundert. Vor allem die länder- und damit auch kulturspezifischen Charakteristika der durch Infektionskrankheiten heimgesuchten Gebiete in Großbritannien, Italien, Frankreich und Deutschland bleiben unklar. Hinzu kommt, dass der Verfasser sich nur auf recht wenige zeitgenössische, nichtliterarische Quellen bezieht, die Bedeutung führender Mediziner nur am Rande oder überhaupt nicht erwähnt (z.B. Robert Koch) und auch wichtige deutschsprachige Forschungsliteratur unbeachtet lässt, wie etwa die Studie Jürgen Grimms, *Die literarische Darstellung der Pest in der Antike und in der Romania* (1965) oder den vorzüglichen Ausstellungskatalog des Deutschen Hygiene-Museums Dresden, *Das große Sterben: Seuchen machen Geschichte*, ed. Hans Wilderotter et al. (1995).

Während die diversen Infektionskrankheiten den Verfasser offensichtlich dazu angesteckt haben, die damit verbundenen Themenbereiche in einen komplexen, zu Verallgemeinerungen neigenden und oftmals schwer lesbaren theoretischen Kontext mit ständigem Zitieren auf Foucault, Freud, Girard, Lacan u.a. zu stellen, ist seine

Auseinandersetzung mit den literarischen Beispielen und hier vor allem seine Interpretation eher unterkühlt und zeitlich auch recht begrenzt, denn im Gegensatz zum Titel der Studie konzentriert sich Christensen vornehmlich auf Werke, die zwischen 1852 und 1862 entstanden sind. Es werden lediglich folgende – für das Thema bereits öfter herangezogene – Romane behandelt: Charles Dickens, *Bleak House* (1852-53), Edward Bulwer-Lytton, *A Strange Story* (1862), Charles Kingsley, *Two Years Ago* (1857), Giovanni Ruffini, *Lavinina* (1860), Harrison Ainsworth, *Old Saint Paul's* (1841), Alessandro Manzoni, *I promessi sposi* (1827, rev. 1840) und Emile Zola, *Le Docteur Pascal* (1893). Diese Texte werden keinen separaten und etwas in die Tiefe gehenden Einzelinterpretationen unterzogen, vielmehr werden sie zuweilen wie Traktate behandelt. Dabei werden die fiktionalen, erzählerischen und emotionalen Qualitäten weithin vernachlässigt. Eher selten erfährt der Leser, welche narrativen Strategien die einzelnen Autoren bei der Beschreibung der Infektionskrankheiten verwenden, um die Krankheiten für ihre Texte nutzbar zu machen.

Dass die Schnittstelle zwischen Medizin und Literatur ein wichtiger Untersuchungsgegenstand ist, ist seit längerem bekannt. Die neuerliche intensive Beschäftigung damit ist sicherlich aufgrund der aktuellen Debatten über Gesundheit, Krankheit, den Unterscheidungen zwischen dem kranken und gesunden Körper sowie vor allem auch durch die Verschränkungen von Krankheit/Gesundheit und Geschlechterkonstruktion und schließlich durch die rasante Ausbreitung des HI-Virus und AIDS besonders gefördert worden. Dies gilt vermutlich auch für die vorliegende Studie. Insgesamt hätte die Forschung hier aber wohl mehr profitiert, wenn sich der Verfasser auf einen wesentlich engeren thematischen Untersuchungsgegenstand unter Verzicht auf allzu üppige, oftmals unnötige theoretische Untermauerung konzentriert hätte, so wie es die 2007 bei Cambridge University Press erschienene Arbeit *Smallpox and the Literary Imagination: 1660-1820* von David E. Shuttleton auf besonders vorbildliche Weise realisiert.

Christa Jansohn (Bamberg)

Kerry Powell, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Victorian and Edwardian Theatre*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. xv, 288 pp., 14 ill. Pb. € 27.76. ISBN 0-521-79536-2.

In her preface to this volume, Nina Auerbach calls the Victorian theatre "the scruffy orphan of high culture" (3). Editor Kerry Powell and his contributors' aim is to change this perception. Victorian and Edwardian theatre is presented as a lively and often contradictory phenomenon as well as an integral part of the public life of its time. While canonised authors like Wilde and Shaw are discussed, the focus of this book lies on what would today be called popular culture.

The book is divided into two parts. The first part entitled "Performance and Context" focuses on the more material aspects of theatre by discussing acting techniques (Joseph Donohue), stagecraft (Russell Jackson) and music (Michael Pisani) as well as placing the theatre in a wider social and economical context (Tracy C. Davis, Jim Davis and Victor Emeljanow). The second part, "Text and Context," includes articles on the most important Victorian and Edwardian genres: Michael R. Booth traces connections between comedy and farce and more serious forms, while David Mayer discusses melodrama. The latter article offers a valuable general introduction to the genre. Unfortunately, Mayer does not have room for more extensive readings of the many texts he lists.

Peter Raby's article ("Theatre of the 1890s: Breaking Down the Barriers") and Sos Eltis's contribution ("The Fallen Woman on Stage") deal with the presentation of changing social parameters on stage. Raby discusses mostly canonical texts (*The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*, *Lady Windermere's Fan*, *Mrs. Warren's Profession*) and deftly combines textual interpretation with performance analysis. Especially intriguing is his reading of the first production of Pinero's *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray* in which he demonstrates how the playwright's text is complemented and enriched by Mrs. Campbell's (the first actress to play the title role) interpretation of the part resulting in a complex portrayal of a troubled woman.

Troublesome women are the focus of Eltis's highly informative article. She shows how different manifestations of the fallen woman (mainly the seduced maiden, the wicked seductress and the repentant magdalen) have haunted the English stage and imagination in the 19th century and also discusses the relation of dramatic and public discourses on the issue of the New Woman and first-wave feminism. These issues are also at the heart of Susan Carlson and Kerry Powell's article of women playwrights. The authors convincingly point out that contrary to public opinion female playwrights did contribute considerably to the Victorian and Edwardian theatre scene. However, many of the plays written by women have never been published and have only survived as manuscripts. This is also the fate of most of the plays discussed by Heidi Holder in "The East-End Theatre." Holder contrasts East End theatres with the more respectable and established theatres of the West End and develops a fascinating picture of a colourful and sometimes subversive dramatic tradition that sported disreputable or even criminal heroes and gave voices to marginal groups such as blacks and Jews.

A similar argument is made by Jacky Bratton in her article on the Victorian music hall, a forum that also contained a variety of different, often dissident voices. Bratton attempts to read the music hall in the light of poststructural concepts such as bricolage, which at times appears a bit forced. The same can be said about Mary Jean Corbett's contribution, which discusses the performativity of the identities of actresses both on and off stage and in their autobiographies.

This *Cambridge Companion* is an extremely informative book. It succeeds in showing what an integral part the theatre played in Victorian and Edwardian society. Maybe most importantly, it takes on the worthy task of unearthing a rich body of largely forgotten texts. The tantalising glimpses one gets of Victorian and Edwardian popular culture will certainly provide the inspiration for further research in the area, although one feels sorry that many of the plays are not readily available.

Kerstin Fest (Cork)

Jan Marsh, ed. *Black Victorians: Black People in British Art 1800-1900*. Burlington: Lund Humphries, 2005. 208 pp. 116 ill. Hb. £ 35.00. ISBN 0-85331-930-8.

Paul Gilroy. *After Empire: Melancholia or Convivial Culture?* London: Routledge, 2004. 183 pp. Pb. £ 14.99. ISBN 0-415-34308-9.

The current revival of the cultural memory of the British Empire has no precedent. The books reviewed here are but two of many recent publications that have appeared in this context: The first is Paul Gilroy's fifth book, *After Empire*. In his earlier publications, *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack* (1987) and *Small Acts* (1994), Gilroy explores

the situation of black Britons with a particular emphasis on the classfactor. *The Black Atlantic* (1993), on the other hand, is devoted to the condition of descendants of the black diaspora around the world. *After Empire* unites both elements, the global and the local, in its assessment of race relations today. Globally, Gilroy approaches his subject in the context of human rights and a new imperialist cosmopolitanism which he sees fuelled by the 'war on terror.' Locally, he roots Britain's difficulties of coming to terms with its multicultural society in a postmodern nationalism that is fostered, above all, by a collective nostalgia about the nation's imperial past. His overall agenda is to set something against the "widespread reluctance to engage racism analytically, historically, or governmentally" (15) and to revive the "pursuit of a world free of racial hierarchies" (31) on an intellectual level.

Part One ("The Planet") is devoted to the global situation, whereas Part Two ("Albion") deals with the British peculiarities. Both parts are subdivided into two chapters whose titles are thought-provoking and provocative: "Race and the Right to Be Human" and "Cosmopolitanism Contested" challenge seemingly established notions of Human Rights and the idea of a humanist cosmopolitanism by testing them against the parameters of race and racially or culturally motivated hegemony. Gilroy argues that the new "armored cosmopolitanism" (70) draws from enlightenment anthropology, is based on racial difference and strengthens ethnocentrism and ethnic absolutism. The argument reads like an overall swipe against the underlying racist assumptions in the history of humanist discourses and presents a thoughtful critique of the instrumentalisation of the idea of cosmopolitanism in the context of a modern imperialism. Key ideas by political thinkers from W.E.B. DuBois to Hannah Arendt are called on stage. However, the close tying together of the new hegemonial relations and the factor race is not entirely convincing and could be viewed as too narrow; a wider concept of "difference" than the one offered here might have been more useful. An elaboration of the first part would have served a more comprehensive argument; alternatively, a shorter version of that part might have put greater emphasis on the second part, the greater achievement of *After Empire*.

"Albion" shows Gilroy, the cultural critic, at his best and immediately ties in with his agenda to analyse the state of the nation in the face of the "disturbing official diagnosis of its institutional racism" (vii) and to defend "the plight of beleaguered multiculturalism against the accusation of failure" (xi). The chapter "Has It Come to This?" offers an analysis of the prevailing ("postmodern") British nationalism that is fostered by a fear of new immigrants, of Islamic terrorism and of "black on black violence," but above all by what Gilroy comes to define as a state of melancholia (drawing from the Mitscherlich's concept) with respect to the nation's long-lost imperial greatness. With respect to the new nationalism, he diagnoses indifference on the part of the government and national institutions. Nevertheless, Gilroy does not leave his readers with bleak images. The closing chapter, "The Negative Dialectics of Conviviality," presents a sign of hope amidst the worrying developments outlined earlier as well as a new term: "Conviviality," based on the much-contested idea of multiculturalism, is a concept that describes the reality of a growing plurality in Europe's urban centres for which race has ceased to be a relevant factor.

A very different contribution to the discourse around the British Empire and race relations is the exhibition *Black Victorians* which was on display at the Manchester Art Gallery and the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery in 2005/2006. Curator Jan Marsh, an expert in Victorian art, devoted years of research to this project that is best

characterised as a *mélange* of social history and art history. Both shows were successful in terms of visitor numbers: the Manchester site drew 40,000 visitors, Birmingham attracted 20,000. As most thematic exhibitions are transitory by nature, the catalogue as a manifestation of a show's overall objective gains importance.

In his foreword to the *Black Victorians* catalogue, David Dabydeen traces the development of the study of black British history which has only recently entered the realm of museums and art galleries as well as departments of art history. This is a result of black activism and community initiatives, but also reflects the profound transformations in Britain's institutional landscape, in which the need to celebrate the nation's diversity has become a motto that resounds in the opening words of Jan Marsh's introduction: "In foregrounding this lost visual presence, we frankly acknowledge today's respect for diversity and inclusivity" (17).

The catalogue stands out among its genre as a very well researched piece. Approximately 100 images have been reprinted for the catalogue; they are extensively annotated and arranged in alphabetical order. The catalogue thus has an encyclopedic character and is, indeed, a source for discoveries and an incentive for further research. The range of genres is broad, from classical portraiture and historical or narrative painting to caricature and photography. The visual material is framed by a timeline, an introductory overview, five scholarly articles and a section of "brief biographies" of sitters. The latter draws the viewers' attention to the overall subject matter, the black subject as sitter or artistic figure. The wide scope of functions that these sitters or figures fulfilled is astonishing: the suffering slave in the context of abolitionist campaigns, the black missionary, the 'black Venus,' the exotic Nubian or Oriental subject, heroes and heroines (for instance Mary Seacole, the black nurse of the Crimea), objects of anthropological research, nannies, street figures, the devilish other, the aesthetic contrast in a composition with white figures, etc.

The scholarly articles contextualise these diverse functions: The introduction offers an informative overview of the exhibits, artists, backgrounds, developments, themes and tendencies. The discussion of over 100 images is structured thematically and largely leaves aside matters of artistic technique; artistic genres and means of representation are considered in the ensuing texts: Radicani Clytus's article on 'caricature,' "At Home in England: Black Imagery Across the Atlantic," is a brilliant discussion of "social typologies" on both sides of the Atlantic and maintains that the European Enlightenment discourse with its attempt to establish classifications of humanity influenced American and European caricature alike. Briony Llewellyn traces the development of the role of black figures throughout the 18th century in orientalist pictures by travelling artists in Egypt. The two subsequent contributions offer close readings and contextual analyses of single works: Charmaine Nelson looks at Charles Cordier's bronze sculpture *Vénus Africaine* (1851) and negotiates black femaleness in the Western imagination; Jan Marsh discusses *The Secret of England's Greatness* (1863) a narrative painting in which the Queen hands a Bible to a kneeling African delegate or prince that has become emblematic of Queen Victoria's 'empire of good intentions.' The final article by Caroline Bessey highlights how the new genre of photography was used to depict black people in late 19th-century Britain. A considerable corpus of images from orphanages, asylums and prisons have survived which document largely stereotypical figures of the poor and stand in sharp contrast to the artificial photographic poses of celebrities as the actor Ira Aldridge or Queen Victoria's god-daughter Sarah Bonetta.

As the bicentenary of the abolition of the slave trade is currently commemorated, the collection's strong focus on anti-slavery images appears somewhat programmatic. Nevertheless, Jan Marsh has excavated images that impressively demonstrate the black presence in 19th-century Britain and the quality of the white gaze on blacks. As it puts a neglected chapter of black British history and the history of race relations visibly on the agenda, *Black Victorians* is a vital contribution towards the aims formulated by Paul Gilroy.

Eva Ulrike Pirker (Freiburg)

Richard Brown, ed. *Joyce, "Penelope" and the Body*. Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2006. 204 pp. Hb. € 45.00. ISBN 90-420-1919-0.

This seventeenth of the Rodopi *European Joyce Studies*, edited by Fritz Senn and Christine van Boheemen-Saaf, resumes the succession of volumes dedicated to a single chapter of *Ulysses* (vol. 3 on "Circe," vol. 6 on "Ithaca," vol. 12 on "Wandering Rocks"). The particular approach to the final chapter of Joyce's novel springs from the fact that in recent years, as the late Wolfgang Iser suggests, "the body has embarked on a breathtaking career, providing a central orientation for assessing and judging human experience" ("The Resurgence of the Aesthetic," *Comparative Critical Studies* 1.1-2 [2004]: 12). In his brilliant "Introduction," Brown provides a concise history of the theoretical debates about the representation of the body since the 1980s, mapping their feminist, linguistic, epistemological, experiential and symbolic attachments, and their specific reflection in Joyce and "Penelope" studies.

In a letter to the Italian critic Carlo Linati of September 1920, Joyce explained that *Ulysses* "is the epic of two races (Israel-Ireland) and at the same time the cycle of the human body as well as a little story of a day (life)" (*Selected Letters*, 1975: 271). In two schemes for the novel sent to Linati and the French critic Valérie Larbaud, Joyce offered, in the 'Body' section, "fat" and "flesh" for the incessant flow of words of Molly Bloom's interior monologue in eight sentences, extending over 36 pages in the Penguin edition of 1956. For good reasons, Brown emphasizes the "revisionist" readings of "Penelope," informed by gender theory and deconstruction. As a result, chapter 18 has emerged as "the centre of our conception of *Ulysses* as Joyce's 'clou' or star-turn rather than as a kind of 'coda,' or even afterthought" (22).

The authors of the present volume proceed further in this direction, shedding new light on the narrative and conceptual use of the 'body' in Molly's 'speech.' The common denominator of practically all contributions is the question of the relationship between the (female) body and writing, of both gender and the body performed as textual representation. Paradigmatically, Brown traces the associative links between "sense" and "sentence" in his own essay ("Body Words"). With intellectual rigour, he directs his attention to the four "body words" ("because, bottom, woman, yes," which signify "female breasts, arse, womb and cunt," *Selected Letters*, 285) in order to reveal to what extent Joyce expresses female libido through both conventional linguistic form and an allusive, non-referential embodiment of sensitivity.

Christine van Boheemen-Saaf's magisterial paper, "Joyce's Answer to Philosophy: Writing the Dematerializing Object," is fittingly placed as the first essay in the collection. Van Boheemen points out that Joyce's pragmatic and uninhibited representation of the human body is a radical contradiction to the dematerialization of physical existence and the dualism of mind and body in Western philosophy since Plato. She con-

vincingly argues that the signifiers deployed in the text represent the power of sexuality and corporeality, "the supreme power of the tidal flow of generativity and fertility" (36), a representation that in turn transfers the object to textuality, 'Penelope' to 'Pen.' In a related fashion, Maud Ellmann, in "'Penelope' Without the Body," refuses to accept the cliché of identifying woman with the body, Molly with flesh. By way of contrast, she cogently argues that Molly's flesh is rewoven into words, "transuming both body and language into a 'posthuman' topography of intensities" (97), "a terra incognita blazed with kisses" (108).

The remaining essays are of a consistently high quality. At this point, however, the citation of the titles must suffice to illuminate what they discuss. Derek Attridge gives an account of "The Body Writing: Joyce's Pen," Valérie Bénéjam defines "Molly Inside and Outside 'Penelope,'" John Smurthwaite presents an ambitious reading of "Verbal or Visual? 'Penelope' and Contemporary Psychology," Finn Fordham goes "Spinning with 'Penelope,'" Vike Martina Plock discusses "Jack the Ripper and the Family Physician: Gynaecology and Domestic Medicine," Gareth Joseph Downes specializes on "Indifferent Weib': Giordano Bruno and the Heretical Mode of Vision," Andrew Norris pursues the line "From the Confessional Hole to the Techno-Erotic: 'Penelope' and *Finnegans Wake*," James Davies looks "Beyond Masochistic Ritual in Joyce and Deleuze: Reading Molly as Non-Corporeal Body," and Paul O'Hanrahan explores "The Geography of the Body in 'Penelope.'"

From his editorial perspective, Brown asserts that "a sophistication of argument and approach runs through these essays" (29). Though this might sound a bit self-congratulatory, it is nevertheless what this reviewer would wish to emphasize. This is a book full of new insights into the "Penelope" chapter of *Ulysses* and the particular ways in which the novel maps the physical, sexual, gendered, material, symbolic, astral, linguistic and conceptual 'sites' (and absences) of the body, and the 'senses' it makes through 'sentence' and representation.

Wolfgang Wicht (Krauthausen)

**Matthew Dennis. Red, White, and Blue Letter Days: An American Calendar.** Ithaca and London: Cornell UP, 2002. xiv, 340 pp., 55 ill. Pb. \$ 18.95. ISBN 978-0-8014-7268-8.

This very interesting book deals with both the historical contexts and the political meanings of the key annual public holidays in the United States. Ordered in a more or less chronological fashion, its individual chapters cover the relevant developments from the colonial period to the year 2000.

The first chapter, "Political Fireworks: American Independence Day, 1776-2000," explores the arguably most public of American political holidays. Taking a closer look at historically marginalized groups such as African Americans, Native Americans, and religious minorities, it analyzes how the Fourth of July has frequently been used to construct an American identity, to define who and what is, and – probably even more significant – who and what is not, legitimately American.

Chapter 2, "Haven in a Heartless Calendar: America's Thanksgiving, 1621-2000," charts the history of what Dennis succinctly calls "America's most loved holiday" (81). Having traced its origins to a feast of the Pilgrims and the Wampanoags, he discusses its role during the American Civil War, and closes with the observation that today, and

despite "its de-centered, ambiguous celebration of America, Thanksgiving nonetheless incorporates and unifies the nation's diverse inhabitants like no other American festival" (118).

The third chapter, "Reinventing America: Columbus Day and Centenary Celebrations of His Voyage of 'Discovery,' 1792-1992," studies not only the controversial figure but also the many functions of Christopher Columbus in United States history. Viewing him as "the emptiest – if among the most priceless – of American historical vessels" (119), the author here investigates how the Genoese explorer has turned into a symbol that has been filled with all sorts of sometimes even contradictory meanings and interpretations.

Chapter 4, "Washington, Lincoln, and the Unheroic Presidents' Day," examines the celebration and appropriation of the two most famous figures in American history. Perceiving them less "as historical persons than as personas" (164), this part of the study successfully shows how political groups as diverse as, e.g., the American Communist Party or the German-American Bund tried to tether the two presidents to their respective causes.

The fifth chapter, "St. Monday: Memorial Day, Labor Day, and the Celebration of Leisure," tells the stories of yet two other established public holidays in America's yearly cycle. After having scrutinized the history of these commemorative occasions, Dennis comes to the conclusion that Labor Day is "an appropriately ironic class holiday for America's supposedly classless society" (255), while Memorial Day might well be seen as "an appropriately ironic feast for a people not known for their historical consciousness or memory" (255).

The last chapter, "Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday: Inventing an American Tradition," addresses the holiday honoring the life of the most prominent African American civil rights activist. Focusing on what is to him "the most troubling dilemma in United States history" (258), i.e. the difference between the constitutional ideal of equality and the quotidian reality of racial discrimination, the author makes clear that this date has served well to create a public awareness of this conflict.

All in all, *Red, White, and Blue Letter Days* is a very informative, thoroughly researched, and well-written book. This makes it a valuable companion to anyone interested in how Americans have shaped, and – probably even more important – how they have been shaped by, their calendar.

Manfred Kopp (Paderborn)

**Heike Paul. Kulturkontakt und Racial Presences: Afro-Amerikaner und die deutsche Amerika-Literatur, 1815-1914.** American Studies, 126. Heidelberg: Winter, 2005. x, 365 pp. Hb. € 64.00. ISBN 3-8253-5044-4.

This study combines interdisciplinary concerns of American, African-American and German Studies with a solid grounding in cultural history, in the vein of the New Americanists (Kaplan/Pease, 1993), as the introduction eloquently proclaims. In trying to broaden thematic aspects, it focusses on "the analysis of symptomatic textual and rhetorical qualities of German literature on America" in a body of predominantly factual and pragmatic texts like travelogues, diaries, personal accounts and popular fiction which failed to become canonical and whose highly resonant contemporary reception has to be rescued from oblivion in our collective memory. The author chose the posi-

tioning and valuation of African-Americans under slavery and after emancipation as testing ground and measuring rod for the perception and propagation of specific features of American society in the eyes of German visitors and immigrants.

The tripartite structure of Paul's book reflects the changes in the self-positioning and cultural evaluation of Germans in America, from an initial empathy for the ruling class in Gottfried Duden's early account on the American South and West (1829), to a critical rejection of the marginalization of Blacks in Ludwig Gall's travel account (1822) – a contradictory and vacillating “formation of the discourse” on African-Americans in the period from 1815 to 1848. The second period, 1848-1870/71, Paul claims to have been marked by an “intensification of this discourse” shaped by the presuppositions of the politically motivated immigrants of the 1848 wave and by the influence, reception and refashioning of the images and ideologies of Beecher-Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in Germany. The consideration of this seminal and supremely dominant fictional text of the 19th century induces Paul to widen her text sampling by including other related American books available in Germany as translations (such as Frank Webb's *The Garies and Their Friends*, 1857/1859, and Frederick Douglass's *My Bondage and My Freedom*, 1855/1860). Contrasting readings of these and German fictional texts like Ferdinand Kürnberger's *Der Amerika-Müde* (1855) yield telling results in establishing a predominantly critical self-positioning of German voices towards America and its black minority.

From the foundation of the German Reich until 1914 Paul posits a “dislocation or shifting of the discourse”: Germans increasingly tended to “become white,” i.e. to place themselves on the same level with the dominant culture and to share its distance to the marginalized black Americans. Only Friedrich Gerstäcker (*In Amerika*, 1872) clings to views of the first two volumes of his immigration trilogy, while other German texts assimilate blacks to newly arisen colonial pretensions, thus conjoining colonialization and Americanization in their cultural self-positioning. To highlight the dramatic move away from an imaginative empathy with African-Americans, Paul concludes her study with a succinct contrasting account of social aspirations in African-American texts of the same period, and with an outlook on more recent reflections of German voices on the black presence in America.

The merit of Paul's study is two-fold: Following James Baldwin's radical perception of himself as the other in “Stranger in the Village,” she places African-Americans at the center of that nation's social structure and makes them the crucial detector for the German search for a real and an imaginary America, and by insisting on this unconventional probing device she presents a rich array of forgotten topical texts, eye-opening in their unsuspected socio-cultural dialogical potential. The bibliography alone deserves praise and a renewed hermeneutical interest. Her book opens up the confines of American and German Studies in a fascinating and highly rewarding way. A minor critical reservation is raised by the bilingual title: “Racial Presences” would have seemed quite as viable in a literal German equivalent.

Klaus Ensslen (München)

Prem Poddar and David Johnson, eds. *A Historical Companion to Post-colonial Literatures in English*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2005. 608 pp. Hb. £ 55.00. ISBN 0-7486-1855-4

History and historiography has long been a contested site in postcolonial studies. Much critical energy has been expended on exposing the use made of various versions of history to support and justify forms of social, political and economic oppression and exploitation in the colonized territories. Given the ambiguous, even suspect, status of historiography in postcolonial studies and the many efforts, particularly by poststructuralist inspired critics, to debunk what are considered to be the master-narratives of European History, the publication of the *Companion* is as surprising as it is welcome. Taking the entire territory under British colonial rule as its arena, the *Companion* sets out to provide explorations of the histories of the societies, people, ideas and states contained within it, while at the same time situating literary texts within this wider historical context. Considering the vastness of the project, the *Companion* does remarkably well.

It begins with a detailed chronology that moves from earliest recorded British voyages of exploration through the period of British imperial occupation to decolonization and the emergence of the new ex-colonial nation states, terminating with the invasion of Iraq in 2003. Contributions in the main body of the text have an equally wide range, widely, both geographically and historically. Arranged alphabetically, entries focus on topics as disparate as the anti-colonial movements in the Caribbean and the processes of economic globalization; individual historical events such as the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre; and the biographies of political leaders and critical thinkers from Lord Cromer to Aung San Suu Kyi. Despite this wide range and the limited space, entries succeed in remaining informative without becoming reductionistic, and provide not only extensive lists of literary texts connected to a theme, even when multi-national corporations are at issue, but also a bibliographical survey of related critical studies and articles.

Nevertheless, the *Companion* also shows inevitable limitations. Popular critical themes such as Women's histories are discussed in great detail for each of the broad geographical areas once occupied by the British Empire, but entries on less well-known topics, such as religion and its impact are limited to the perhaps most obvious examples, those of South Asia and Africa, leaving aside any mention of the important contribution of religious movements on independence struggles in the Caribbean, or the struggle to preserve indigenous religious practices in Australia and New Zealand. The collection of historical figures seems equally selective, biased mostly towards leaders of national liberation movements and Marxist critics. Thus, while figures such as Frantz Fanon and Amílcar Cabral merit individual entries, intellectuals like Edward Said and Gayatri Spivak receive only cursory mention, despite their important contributions towards the emergence of a postcolonial field of study in general, and postcolonial historiography in particular.

All in all, the *Companion* does provide a useful snapshot of the current pre-occupations and debates in the wider field of postcolonial studies, as much by what is left out as what is included. At the same time, its focus on historical events, figures and movements should prove a welcome antidote to the often detached and a-historical readings and arguments so prevalent in poststructuralist critical discourse. As such, the *Companion* will provide an invaluable resource to students entering the often bewilderingly diverse field of postcolonial studies by providing clear introductions to its main critical

trends and pre-occupations, while at the same time challenging practitioners in the field to expand and deepen their critical practice.

Erik Peeters (Leeds)

**Horst Trossbach. Von Kruger's Alp nach Darkest England: Christopher Hopes satirische Romane.** Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 2005. 313 pp. Pb. € 39.80. ISBN 3-8260-3035-4.

Christopher Hope's novelistic oeuvre has so far met with little critical acclaim and thus Trossbach's monograph fills a significant gap in the research on the new Anglophone literatures, even though Hope tends to occupy the honourable rank of a minor author. This, however, does not detract from the value either of his satires nor that of the present study on his work. Additionally, what is of minor, secondary or not strictly canonical status is capable of supplying highly relevant insights into the cultural processes at work.

Accordingly, Trossbach devotes the first part of his investigation to an analysis of the satirical mode which can be grafted onto any textual genre. Satire as some kind of *oratio obliqua* is thus understood to be a specific type of language act which makes use of certain figures, temporal and spatial concepts or actions that are fictitious, but only in order to exploit them as the expression of a critique intended to devalue or negate reality (19). In the process the reader is confronted with the task of making the referential connection with the way things are *via* the fictional world. This implies an extension of the concept of satirical reference, which is not confined to 'reality,' but more generally aims to analyse and expose the insidious ways in which our reality is constructed in the first place. This examination of the satirical mode, based on a lucid and comprehensive survey of secondary sources on satire itself, speech act theory and literary theory, provides the methodological starting point.

As Trossbach points out, the satirical negation of reality does not automatically posit a norm which functions as the didactic ideal by which the world is measured and then falls short of, and which to reconstruct falls to the task of the reader. Because in Hope's novels the satirical thrust is mainly directed against all sorts of ideological certainties and since therefore a total relativism in the way of complexity and ambivalence is propagated (155), any moral anchoring point would run counter to the metadiscursive questioning of all discursive limitations of reality the author aims to achieve. However, one is bound to ask whether this renders any kind of positivisation of negativity utterly and totally impossible. Of course, Trossbach is right when he argues that Hope's satire, like any other, is also driven by the sheer lust of and delight in aggression or invective, but even a Swifitean *saeva indignatio* at least asymptotically strives for something positive.

This becomes evident in Trossbach's biographical chapter on Hope, in which he elaborates how, as a White English speaking Catholic South African, Hope had, throughout his youth, found himself in a minoritarian position *vis-à-vis* the majority discourse of Afrikanerdom as well as of the Black population plus the religious dominance of Calvinism, all of which eventually led him into exile. From this results his empathy for hybrid and liminal figures who question the ethnic, national, cultural, etc. borders every society is only too prone to erect. Even if it has become decidedly unmodern to make use of the author's biography as an explanation of what and how he writes, such

an approach is highly useful in a kind of literature that is intent on social communication, which is undoubtedly the case with satire: Only when the readerly reception has been brought in line with authorial intent can the act of communication be regarded as successful. If, therefore, Hope has experienced the exclusionism of a racist society, it is not too farfetched to conclude that in a positive sense he would wish for a world where this is no longer the case. This kind of humanism is admittedly not very specific, but at least it counters the *dérailson* of exclusionism with the *raison* of inclusionism.

When Trossbach turns to the relationship between satire and the novel, he thematises the old question of how the satirical strategies of exaggeration and distortion are reconcilable with the novel's mimetic concerns. This would presuppose that the novel as an art form is still cast in the mould of the realist novel that has been broken long ago: The (post)modern novel is no longer fettered by the requirements of verisimilitude on the level of either *discours* or *histoire*, and the form of the comic novel, as David Lodge once remarked, frees the author from all mimetic constraints because of its contrivance of all kinds of strange and funny coincidents. Significantly, Trossbach never sufficiently dwells on the role of the comic within satire. But be that as it may, he saves satire for mimeticism by differentiating between the persons satirized, where caricature is permitted, and the persons who are the positive focalizers of what is being satirized and who are thereby exempt from satirical reduction.

This is precisely the point where one would have wished for a more detailed analysis of the satirical techniques and devices employed by Hope. The only strategy Trossbach mentions in this context is that of intertextuality as a play with discursive, linguistic or literary modes. However, even if he regards intertextuality, with Wolfgang Weiss, as 'the most typical procedure of satire' (27), and even if the direct rendition of certain types of speech may be the most effective way of discrediting the persons using them – as in the case of Defoe's *The Shortest Way With Dissenters* – satirical technique is definitely not confined to this type of irony. One almost gains the impression that Trossbach equates *dissimulatio* with satire without systematically considering other stylistic devices such as invective, mockery, hyperbole or understatement. Though one might argue that they represent subcategories of irony, at least one would have liked to have seen them discussed.

In his summary Trossbach turns to another satirical device frequently and successfully employed by Hope which one would have preferred to have been included in the theoretical chapter at the beginning of the book. 'Satirical metaphor' works by 'linking an elevated semantic register with a semantically lower one' (284). It thus functions through syntagmatically linking the sublime with colloquial or ridiculous diction, which causes both levels to be superimposed, in the process exposing the ridiculous within the sublime. However, such a disruption of the monosemic quality of discourses is actually nothing but a variety of intertextuality as analysed more extensively by Gérard Genette in his *Palimpsestes* (1982), namely the combination of a noble subject with a vulgar style *qua* the burlesque and *vice versa* a vulgar subject with a noble style *qua* parody. The satirical potential of such a procedure is, as is shown, quite considerable.

Another point of criticism would be that Trossbach is constantly pointing out Hope's opposition to exclusionist discourses without paying attention to the vast body of postcolonial theory on the construction of alterity under colonial conditions which would be highly pertinent when dealing with a postcolonial author. Only once does he make a fleeting reference to this in his analysis of *Darkest England*, and significantly the

only theoretical source invoked is Ashcroft, Griffith and Tiffin's study *The Empire Writes Back* (1984), which – although seminal at the time – is rather dated.

It is also somewhat surprising that Trossbach should uncritically replicate an argument from the lumber room of critical opinion, i.e. that satire – with the possible exception of Herman Charles Bosman and Roy Campbell – has played a very minor role in South African literature because of its preoccupation with more earnest and more important matters such as the iniquities of a racist society. What is disregarded in this argument is the tremendous potential for the ridiculous supplied by a repressive as well as a bigoted society which positively demands satirical treatment, such as evidenced at the beginning of the 20th century with Douglas Blackburn's novels *Prinsloo of Prinsloordorp* or *A Burger Quixote*, with William Plomer's *Portraits in the Nude* in the 1920s or Dan Jacobson's *The Price of Diamonds* in the 1950s. After the demise of apartheid, satire is flourishing in the 'new' South Africa where authors like Ben Trovato, Zakes Mda, Robert Kirby or Breyten Breytenbach are lambasting, as does Christopher Hope in his latest novel, the abuses of the new political class and the *enrichissez-vous* mentality of the Black elite.

Despite such shortcomings, Trossbach presents detailed and comprehensive discussions of the way in which the texts play with their literary or discursive pretenses in order to expose or undermine them. His study amounts to a comprehensive, well argued and theoretically well based and on all counts well informed treatise. The critical points mentioned in no way diminish the value of the present study which deserves to be read more widely than by the small number of German-speaking South Africanists and would therefore merit being translated into English.

Erhard Reckwitz (Duisburg-Essen)

**Randi Gunzenhäuser. Automaten – Roboter – Cyborgs: Körperkonzepte im Wandel.** Focal Point – Arbeiten zur anglistischen und amerikanistischen Medienwissenschaft, 2. Trier: WVT, 2006. 317 pp. Pb. € 32.50. ISBN 3-88476-745-3.

With the continuing interest in the relationship between man and machine and the creation of humanoid robots, as shown in the cinema blockbusters *I, Robot* (2004) or the *Matrix* trilogy (1999-2003), Gunzenhäuser's study is a timely book. Based on the assumption that bodies are the result of various culturally defined concepts, Gunzenhäuser aims at drawing on a wide range of theoretical approaches such as discourse and gender theory, literary and film studies, cyberspace theory and others to examine how the perception of artificial bodies is connected to aspects of gender, power and inclusion/exclusion. The title of her book reflects the development towards more complex and humanoid machines, and the author accordingly structures her chapters chronologically.

The introduction, which uses the influential film *Blade Runner* (1982) to convey first impressions of a possible relationship between humans and androids, stakes out the field and emphasizes the occurrence of man-machine constructions in Western intellectual history as a result of changing perceptions of the human body. In part I, "Von Menschen und Maschinen: Theoretische Körperkonzepte," the author discusses various relevant approaches such as Foucault's discourse analysis, psychoanalysis and Butler's concept of performativity which are applied to the interplay between man and

technology as in the hybrid cyborg. She also sketches the history of cyberspace and the cyborg within Western culture.

The second chapter, "Perfekte Körperbeherrschung: 'Europäische' Automaten," opens with a brief discussion of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) and then presents an analysis of Herman Melville's "The Bell-Tower" (1855) and Edgar Allan Poe's story "The Psyche Zenobia" (1838) as early examples of humanoid machines. Gunzenhäuser points out that Melville's literary creation of an automaton and Poe's bodily-fragmented version of the story's female narrator are primarily concerned with the question of body boundaries and serve to establish clear-cut masculine and feminine body concepts, but also include racial and social markers of difference.

The next chapter, "Visible Modernity: 'Amerikanische' Roboter," examines late 19th- and early 20th-century models of humanoid machines. Taking the World Exposition in Chicago (1893) as a point of departure, the author traces literary and filmic manifestations of robots, observing a fundamental shift of representation from the late 19th-century link between artificial humans and Europe to 'Americanized' versions of robots in the early 20th century which reflects the growing technological dominance of the United States. Incorporating studies on early cinema, the emergence of the 'New Woman,' Fordism and gender concepts, the author analyses early 20th-century serials such as the Soviet film *Aelita* (1924) and Lester Del Rey's short story "Helen O'Loy" (1938) which, according to Gunzenhäuser, reveal a strict dichotomy between male and female machines and thereby reproduce traditional, binary gender concepts to tackle the destabilizing onslaught of consumerism, mass production and modernist doubt.

"Zerstreute Aufmerksamkeit: Wandelbare Cyborgs," finally enters the digital age. After an interesting analysis of the textuality of cyberspace and the reception of interactive media, Gunzenhäuser dwells on a description of Peter Gabriel's computer game *EVE: The Music and Art Adventure* (1996), thereby largely neglecting a discussion of contemporary concepts of the digitalized body in favour of the game's audio-visual make-up. Her investigation of Lara Croft, heroine of the commercial computer game *Tomb Raider* (1996-2003) and surprisingly chosen as an example of the cyborg, highlights the figure's post-modern ambiguity as embodied in her combination of female attraction and martial arts.

The final chapter – "Globale Cyborgs?" – addresses aspects of cyborg existence in Kathryn Bigelow's film *Strange Days* (1995) and the computer game *Blade Runner* (1997). Particularly the latter presents a world where body boundaries are flexible and open, thereby deconstructing the organic unity of the human body. The very short conclusion states that the man-machine-boundary is always embedded in the prevalent gender concept of a period. Whereas 19th-century automatons in literature served to underline existing gender concepts, this binary gender model is increasingly questioned in contemporary computer games and movies, which employ a flexible system of body styling that is adaptable to various surroundings.

Gunzenhäuser's study presents an interesting selection of printed, filmic and interactive texts and also includes less well-known examples. It demonstrates the author's wide reading in the field and her analytic strength. The book accumulates an immense amount of references and quotations from a broad range of literary, cultural and media studies which are, however, sometimes not linked to the author's own research and therefore weaken the internal coherence of the chapters. An impressive bibliography of 40 pages as well as an appendix providing some illustrations is added. The book is well written and readable without an in-depth understanding of information technologies.

Despite its occasional incoherence, it is a fruitful contribution to literary and cultural studies' growing interest in interactive media and digitalized culture.

Oliver Lindner (Leipzig)

**Claus-Ulrich Viol. Jukebooks: Contemporary British Fiction, Popular Music, and Cultural Value.** Heidelberg: Winter, 2006. 262 pp. Hb. € 38.00. ISBN 3-8253-5039-8.

**Pascal Ohlmann. "How shall we find the concord of this discord?": Musik und Harmonie in Shakespeares Romanzen und in zeitgenössischen Texten.** Heidelberg: Winter, 2006. xvii, 280 pp. Pb. € 52.00. ISBN 3-8253-5169-6.

The research interest of studies specifically occupied with the relationship between word and music has recently shifted from a formalist to a text-based cultural studies approach. Claus-Ulrich Viol's and Pascal Ohlmann's doctoral dissertations are perfect examples for this shift, since both of them try to illuminate the functions of music in narrative and drama from a larger cultural perspective rather than exclusively focusing on formal and structural similarities between the two arts. While Ohlmann is interested in a critical re-reading of the musical sections in Shakespeare's romances with regard to the ambiguities and discontinuities in Shakespeare's use of music, Viol's study of the forms and functions of popular music in popular British fiction attempts no less than a revision of the academic field of word-and-music studies.

Maintaining that traditional accounts of the relationship between text and music have almost exclusively focused on the interrelations between classical music and high-brow literature, the aim of Viol's thesis is twofold. First, he seeks for new analytical models that are suitable for grasping the occurrence of pop music in recent British novels such as Nick Hornby's *High Fidelity*, Hanif Kureishi's *Buddha of Suburbia* and Salman Rushdie's *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*. Second, he asks how pop music is constructed and represented within the narrated worlds of these novels.

The first two chapters, in which Viol summarises the findings of word-and-music studies and sketches the main characteristics of popular music, provide the theoretical framework for the literary analysis in the following two chapters. Viol's main criticism of word-and-music scholars is that they have been preoccupied with structural and metaphorical imitations of music in literature, thereby not only showing a certain 'aesthetic elitism' but also neglecting sociocultural, communicative and interactive functions of music in the narrative. Hence, their analytic models are hardly applicable to the analysis of music in popular British fiction of the last two decades, which makes thematic rather than just structural references to music.

According to Viol, novels like *The Buddha of Suburbia* use music like a soundtrack in film. References to pop songs, albums, concerts, etc. form a communicative matrix between author and reader that provides information about characters, setting and mood and makes identification possible. Moreover, through direct lyrical quotes from pop songs the novels gain a certain transmediality, meaning that readers who know the quoted songs will perform them in their heads while reading and thereby extend the narrative toward the musical. Viol demonstrates this process of 'musicalisation' convincingly in his close reading of Barry Hines's novel *Elvis over England*. The following analysis of structural and formal analogies between music and fiction in punk and club

narratives shows that attempts to translate musical forms into literary structures can not only be found in highbrow literature but also in contemporary popular fiction.

One of the most valuable features of Viol's study is that he also considers extraliterary aspects of word-music interrelations in popular fiction. Providing a book with a soundtrack CD or advertising it in a 'litpop' nightclub event is certainly an even more significant change pop music has brought into contemporary literature than the thematic and formal impact it has had on the narrative – a fact that Viol acknowledges in his detailed exploration of the ways in which recent pop literature is marketed and consumed.

What makes Viol's study a generally convincing and pleasant reading experience is that, despite of working in the field of popular culture and certainly showing enthusiasm for it, he is far from exhibiting the kind of uncritical idealisation of pop-/sub-cultural phenomena that can be felt in many studies on this subject. Rather than interpreting any kind of pop-cultural expression one-dimensionally as a liberating, empowering or even subversive experience, Viol brings out its multifaceted nature in his theoretical reflection as well as in his analysis of the literary representations of pop music. Yet, it would have been enlightening to discuss gender-, ethnicity- or class-specific aspects of pop-cultural phenomena like fandom and stardom more thoroughly, since they certainly play a significant role in the novels of Kureishi, Rushdie, Hornby and the like.

Moreover, Viol's poignant reproach of 'aesthetic elitism' against the research area of word-and-music studies, though clearly aimed at the pioneering works within this field by Calvin S. Brown, Stephen Paul Scher and Werner Wolf, neglects more recent attempts (partly by the pioneers themselves) to extend the limited scope of a formalist approach, e.g. by viewing literature and music from the aspect of their cultural history (e.g. Lawrence Kramer) or by including genres such as blues and jazz (e.g. Saadi Simawe). However, while a consideration of these developments would have been rewarding, Viol's study nevertheless represents both a valuable contribution to text-based cultural studies and a solid introduction to word-music intersections in contemporary British fiction.

The aim of Pascal Ohlmann's study – reading the musical sections in Shakespeare's romances as mirrors of the ambivalent and polysemous nature of musical theory and practice in Renaissance England – is more modest but proves to be nonetheless successful. Ohlmann deliberately does without any initial theoretical construct but his project is clearly influenced by New Historicism and its chief practitioner Stephen Greenblatt.

At the centre of the first part of the study are the numerous musical discourses that were circulating in Renaissance England. As Ohlmann convincingly shows, musical treatises of the Renaissance were areas of political combat and deeply informed by patriarchal, puritanical, magic, humanistic and juridical discourses. On the basis of these historical observations Ohlmann argues in his second part that the musical sections in Shakespeare's romances are far from being mere markers of positive turns in the dramatic action. Although they still heavily draw upon Pythagorean and Neo-Platonic concepts of world harmony that were widely popular in Shakespeare's time, they nevertheless signal – by virtue of some strangely dissonant elements – that this harmony can neither be upheld in real life nor in drama. He shows that even the – superficially – harmonious endings of the romances represent the ambivalent, often contradictory features of Renaissance concepts of music.

Ohlmann is at his best when he considers the cultural conditions that 'made' Shakespeare's plays. Among many other points, he manages to show that Shakespeare partly exploited music in order to position himself favourably on the early modern cultural marketplace. Moreover, the scope of the historical research that Ohlmann conducts in order to unfold the extremely rich and heterogeneous nature of early modern musical forms is remarkable. An impressive range of writers, pamphlets and historical documents is drawn upon to bring out the presence of ancient Greek music philosophy, the intermingling of scientific concepts with theories of music, the association of music with magic, and the social distribution of music in Renaissance England.

Thus, both Ohlmann's and Viol's studies amount to a stimulating reading of literary history as cultural history that illuminates larger cultural developments by means of a detailed analysis of fiction and drama. In both cases, the cultural studies approach to word and music relations proves to be a valuable instrument for showing that the significance of speaking about and practising music exceeds the purely aesthetical sphere by far – be it in Shakespeare's time or today.

Sarah Fekadu (München)

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## Die Autoren dieses Heftes

- Dr. Bruno Arich-Gerz, Institut für Sprach- und Literaturwissenschaft, Technische Universität Darmstadt, Hochschulstr. 1, 64289 Darmstadt
- Dr. Gerd Bayer, Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg, Bismarckstr. 1, 91054 Erlangen
- Elliott Bergman, 117 Piper Drive, Pittsburgh, PA 15234, USA
- Dr. Klaus Ensslen, Georgenstr. 13, 82152 Planegg
- Sarah Fekadu, Promotionsstudiengang Literaturwissenschaft, Schellingstr. 7, 80799 München
- Dr. Kerstin Fest, Department of German, National University of Ireland – University College Cork, Cork, Ireland
- Prof. Dr. Anna M. Horatschek, Englisches Seminar, Universität Kiel, Leibnizstr. 10, 24118 Kiel
- Prof. Dr. Christa Jansohn, Lehrstuhl für Britische Kultur, Otto-Friedrich-Universität Bamberg, Kapuzinerstr. 25, 96045 Bamberg
- Dr. Jürgen Joachimsthaler, Seminar für Deutsch als Fremdsprachenphilologie, Universität Heidelberg, Plöck 55, 69117 Heidelberg
- Dr. Manfred Kopp, Dr.-Mertens-Weg 38, 33102 Paderborn
- Dr. Daniel Lea, Department of English, Oxford Brookes University, Headington Campus, Gipsy Lane, Oxford, OX3 0BP, United Kingdom
- Dr. Oliver Lindner, Institut für Anglistik, Geisteswissenschaftliches Zentrum (GWZ), Haus 4 & 5, Beethovenstr. 15, 04107 Leipzig
- Erik Peeters, School of English, University of Leeds, Woodhouse Lane, Leeds, LS2 9JT, United Kingdom
- Ulrike Pirker, Englisches Seminar, Universität Freiburg, Rempartstr. 15, 79085 Freiburg
- Prof. Dr. Erhard Reckwitz, FB 3 – Anglistik/Literaturwissenschaft, Universität GH Essen, Universitätsstr. 12, 45117 Essen
- Clare Smout, Magdalen College, Oxford, OX1 4AU, United Kingdom
- Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Wicht, An der Madel 32, 99819 Krauthausen