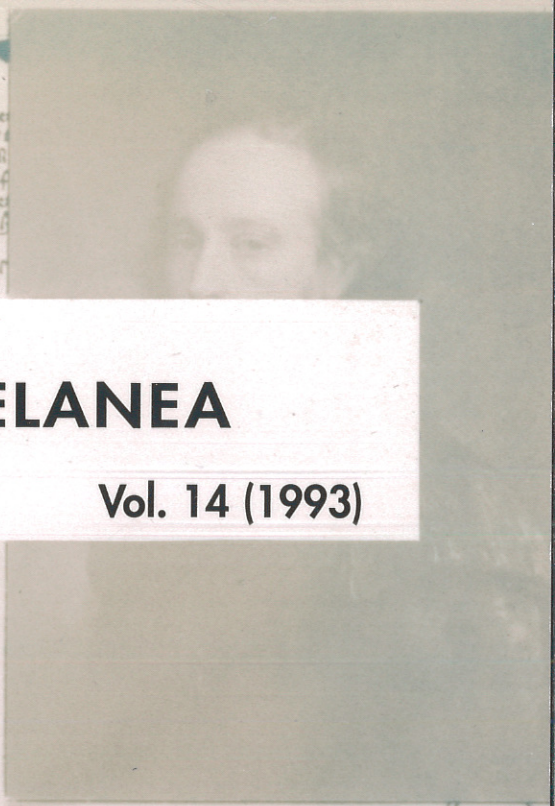

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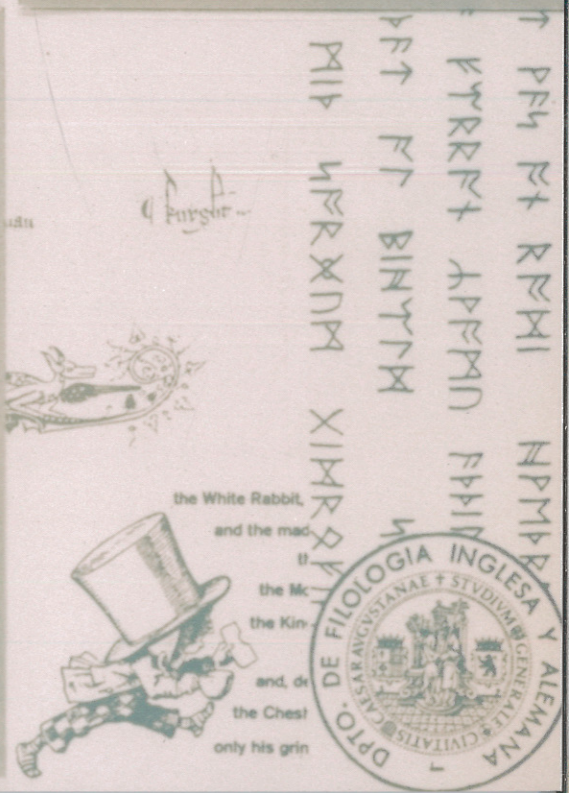

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LANDSCAPE DESIGN AND DRAWING IN *THE DRAUGHTSMAN'S CONTRACT:* PEEPHOLES TO AN AGE

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Peter Greenaway's *The Draughtsman's Contract* begins with various apparently unconnected scenes from which we gather that a young artist is to be commissioned to draw several pictures of a property during its owner's absence. The plot then shows the process of execution of these drawings while it also dwells on the relationship between the characters in the story. Although much information about contemporary issues is disclosed in the dialogues, one of the most striking features about the film is how much more our knowledge about the times is broadened if close attention is paid to the landscape and to remarks made by characters about gardens, garden elements or garden produce.

The purpose of this essay will therefore be to relate these motifs to main historical points by concentrating first, on the mise-en-scene, then on trees and fruits as part and produce of this mise-en-scene, and thirdly, on the actual drawings of the property and thus determine how much the insight into the times in *The Draughtsman's Contract* accords to the period.

Although the term landscape design includes such skills as site planning, land planning, urban design and environmental planning, it will be generally agreed that gardens, as vegetated green spaces on natural ground, are probably the most common example of landscape architecture.

Gardens, as architecturally-built ornamental grounds, are the result of the scientific planning and the harmonious blending of natural materials (earth, water and plants), and construction materials such as concrete, stone, wood, metal or glass. If this is correct, then it may safely be argued that garden and landscape design is concerned with direct relations between art, science and nature. Nature is invariably understood as meaning the whole world or simply scenery untouched by man, but art and science are the result of human

activity. Consequently, if garden and landscape design is the outcome of human activity upon Nature, it follows that it is also largely determined by one or other of the conflicting philosophies about how Man should relate to Nature.

Gardens and the produce of gardens represent an apparently discreet but all-pervading theme in *The Draughtsman's Contract.* Close attention to the opening section of the film will reveal that every time a character appears on screen he or she either refers directly to a garden, its fruits or trees (plums, plum-wood, a drive of orange-trees), or itemizes some component of garden architecture like water and stone, or even artificial elements of decoration such as water-cascades. If no direct allusion is made to gardens then the shot shows the actors speaking from behind a bowl of fruit as in the scene when Mrs Talmann convinces her mother to surprise the artist into a deal, or it shows the character eating fruit: while savouring a plum, Mr Neville describes his potential for controlling the jealousy of husbands by painting their wives dressed or undressed. Again, Mr Herbert's preferential order of things in life is clearly stated: "A house, a garden, a horse, a wife," while even time is calculated in terms of crop yielding: Mr Neville at first declines the offer made to him by Mrs Herbert by adducing that he will be occupied "this apple season until next year's apples have all been drunk as cider." Finally, the film closes with a pine-apple as a prominent allegorical element in the dramatic denouement.

The story of *The Draughtsman's Contract* is set at the end of the seventeenth century. During the introductory part of the film, a lady in the company recalls the amount of water in her father's garden and the stores of buckets kept, some thirty years beforehand, by her father in case of fire. Her witty account represents a muffled evocation of the Great Fire of London of 1666 — a deplorable event that caused up to thirteen-thousand houses and eighty-seven churches (Halliday, 1968: 166) to be destroyed but which indirectly, when the rebuilding began, produced men of the calibre of Sir Christopher Wren.[1] The date 1694 provides another, and this time precise, indication as to the temporal setting of the story.

Since the first contract binds the artist, Mr Neville, to produce twelve drawings of Mr Herbert's house and property within two weeks, logically, much of the action, or at least, many of the scenes in the film correspond to the spots selected by the draughtsman for the realization of his drawings. Consequently, the spectator is taken from one to another of the chosen sites within the garden and surrounding grounds. What, we may ask ourselves, does the view of the property reveal about the times?

First of all, it is important to stress the fact that gardens, as land-areas important to visual experience, with or without utilitarian functions, were still by the seventeeth-century a fairly recent phenomenon. During the middle ages, security and leisure had existed only in the monastic system. Consequently, for some time, the only type of garden was the cloister, with its well, herbs, pot plants, and shaded walk. Then, during the fourteenth century, secular gardens began to appear, but they were usually of limited extent, confined within the fortifications of a castle and often raised well above ground level. These Gothic gardens were rectangular, with the traditional division into four parts by paths. At the point of principal intersection there was usually a well, which, when elaborated, became the central feature of the garden.

The first major change came in the fifteenth century, when the increasing prosperity of Western Europe and man's increasing confidence in himself and his capacity to impose order on the external world was reflected in the gardens, first of Italy, where the old medieval enclosures began to open up, and then in the rest of Europe. As the century unfolded, dwellings were increasingly built for amenity rather than defence, and subsequently gardens became less enclosed and more susceptible first to visual, then to actual extension. However, even when the necessity for security was becoming less imperative, the feeling remained that any garth, or garden, needed a wall, or hedge, as a frame (Quennell 1933: 42). Hence, although larger in extension, gardens were still limited in size. Apart from that, the main ingredient of the Renaissance garden was its coordination with the building. In other words, gardens were seen as the "clothing" of houses. Since the houses had a certain square hardness about them, unity of concept between house and garden was rendered by an attempt to reproduce in nature the formality of the buildings. Garden layouts were therefore geometrical and the strong architectural component of the design was further emphasized by lavish employment of stone elements such as fountains, statues, urns and obelisks. However, the *social* implications of these innovations are also important. Harnessing plants into the strict confines of design demonstrates on the one hand the attempts made by man to master Nature and, on the other hand, it also demonstrates by implication that Nature, at the time, was still conceived as a dangerous place. Hence, gardens were the result of man's attempt to render natural space safe by means of architectural manipulation of plants and vegetation. In this way, man managed to extend the safety of the home beyond the walls of the building to the garden limits.

It is a well known fact that the sixteenth century was an age of great cultural interchange as well as a time when each European nation was beginning to develop its own peculiar characteristics. This general statement applies to politics, to religion, to the field of letters and can likewise be extended to landscape design. The French invasions of Italy at the end of the sixteenth century and the beginning of the seventeenth introduced to France the characteristics of the Italian garden. But what soon became a distinctive French element was the "parterre," or compartmentalized garden beds forming arabesques, sometimes of box hedging and flowers, or often of coloured stones and sand. Whereas the French laid out their grounds in the form of carpets that flanked a central axis of water, providing a sense of unlimited vista, the Dutch, to whom water was no luxury, tended to make less use of ornamental water canals or fountains. Moreover, because stone was scarce in Holland, walls were replaced by topiary: trees and shrubs cut and trimmed into sculptural, ornamental shapes (Heritage 1988: 11-18). During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, England was no exception to the general influences from the continent. Formality and regularity were applied, as in France, in small details of design as well as in the overall concept, while extensive use of topiaried yew and box point to Dutch influence (Quennell 1933: 42-43). However, over and above these borrowed elements, a distinctive national trait was added by the emphasis laid on what has since become the characteristic English grass lawns together with the neat gravel drives and walks.

This brief and over-simplified outline of developments in garden design through several centuries should help the spectator to apprehend how well the grounds at Compton Anstey in *The Draughtsman's Contract* conform to the times.

It seems that Mr Herbert's property mirrors the general subject matter of the story in so far as the various views of the dominions reveal a combination of English and Dutch traits more than any French influence. The clashing confrontation between Mr Herbert's Dutch son-in-law and the English artist in matters of religion, politics, art, taste and morals is "pinned down" in an evergreen English setting, peppered with details of Dutch influence — or interference. The sites chosen for "drawing number two" and "drawing number nine" — the lower lawns of the house and the closed-in yew-tree walk in the centre of the lower garden — show a man-made landscape with topiaried sculpture typical of the Dutch garden. The decorative columns and statue of Hermes, popular details all over Europe during the Renaissance, are to be set down on paper in drawings number two and six. Otherwise, the

views reveal a very English scene and scenery. "Picture number four" and "picture number seven," corresponding to the front part of the house show, on the one hand, the front lawn surrounded by the neat and imposing gravel drive and on the other, the straight lines, square hardness and strict formality of the main entrance; while the details that seem most prominent in the other vistas are both the sense of space and openness and the presence of sheep.

Apart from adding a bucolic touch to the scenes, the flock of fat healthy animals that appears in drawings number five and ten, indirectly indicates that the property is "enclosed," meaning that the field boundaries were marked out by hedges and fences. The process of "enclosing" had gathered pace during the seventeenth century and, more than ever before, sheep-rearing had become the basis of private economies as well as national prosperity. In the last two decades of the period the average prices for grain had fallen sharply. The major consequence of the low price of grain was the enclosure of lands where corn had been grown and their subsequent conversion into pasture. This activity ensured landowners and farmers substantial profits since, at the outset of the century, wool and woollen cloth were still England's major exports while the price of meat and dairy products remained steady. Writing on *The Mystery of Husbandry: or Arable, Pasture and Woodland Improved* in 1697, Leonard Meager remarked "where the grounds are enclosed, how happily people live" (Ashley 1982: 101). In other words, country gentlemen such as Mr Herbert, whose incomes derived mainly from sheep rearing, never had to worry unduly about getting into debt.

The fact that Mr Neville allows sheep but not people to disturb his range of vision provokes a very acid and revealing oral exchange between Mr and Mrs Talmann and the artist. On having his pictures criticized for their lack of human motives, the draughtsman retorts that a garden should reflect peace and quiet while noise and excitement should be reserved for such occasions as Carnival. The association of ideas between the garden and the festivities preceeding Ash Wednesday causes Mrs Talmann to think of the garden of Gethsemane. A rapid interchange of opinions concerning gardens and garden design ensues. The comments the characters dart at one another comprise what amounts to a very clever political, religious and patriotic double-entendre: About Gethsemane, Mr Talmann disdainfully replies:

— "A wild sort of garden, I shouldn't wonder."

The point is taken up by Mr Neville and the conversation goes on in the following way:

> Mr Neville: "Certainly, Mr Talmann, There would be no geometric paths or Dutch bulbs."

(This is obviously a disparaging reference to the sculptured trees in the background of his drawings.)

> Mrs Talmann: "Well, we have a Cedar of Lebanon and a Judas tree, perhaps we could cultivate a tree of heaven."
> Mr Talmann: "The gardens of England are becoming veritable jungles; such exotics are grossly unsuitable. If the Garden of Eden was planned for England God would have seen to it."
> Mr Neville: "The Garden of Eden, Mr Talmann, was originally intended for Ireland, for it was there, after all, that St. Patrick eradicated the snake."
> Mr Talmann: "The only use for eradication that ever happened in Ireland, Mr Neville, was performed four years ago by William of Orange, on my birthday."

A tendentious opinion that immediately provokes the following superbly contorted remark:

> Mr Neville: "And happy birthday to you, Mr Talmann, and if you are not too old to receive presents perhaps the gardener and I can find a snake for your orangerie!"

Much information about the times is disclosed in this short dialogue about gardens. First, the reference to exotic trees points to the new phase of experiments and novelties in agriculture dating from the middle of the seventeenth century.[2] This taste or fashion for unusual plants itself derived from the notable expansion overseas which had been taking place in all European nations since the late sixteenth century. By 1640, there were English footholds of empire in Asia and in the West Indies, while Virginia, Maryland and New England had long been settled and the conquest of New Netherland in 1664 had closed the gap in the row of English colonies along the North Atlantic coast. By 1691, Dudley North, in his *Discourse upon Trade,* could describe what he called "the exorbitant appetites of man" as the main spur to industry and exchange. "Did Men content themselves with bare

necessities," he went on, "we should have a poor world." This was the Restoration and post-Restoration view which led John Houghton to put forward the bold statement that "our high-living, so far from prejudicing the nation . . . enriches it" (Briggs 1985: 162). So when Dutch William ascended the throne, England already had the makings of a commercial and colonial empire. But the important point is that overseas enterprise was wholly backed by private investments of well-to-do families. As horizons were widened, attitudes at home were being transformed: England was growing richer and more money was in circulation. Freedom of enterprise, success, interest in the wider world and the new spirit of inquiry and experiment were all reflected in the vogue for innovative articles from foreign lands. The presence of foreign or exotic plants in English gardens is therefore a barometer of how all the ferments which had begun to break down orthodox views during the previous century were, by the end of the seventeenth century, showing widespread effects. Men no longer thought of European civilization as the pinnacle of human achievement and were now borrowing eagerly from other civilizations; new inventions, new instruments and mathematical aids invited men to examine, chart and experiment with nature instead of passively relying on scriptural revelation. All these elements together with the English triumph of having superseded Divine-right monarchy with a sovereign representative Parliament combined together to promote this new spirit of progressiveness and materialism.

The mention of the Judas tree — a popular name deriving from the belief that Judas hanged himself from one such tree — leads the conversation on to the Garden of Eden. The Garden of Eden is familiarly known as the dwelling place of Adam and Eve, but in a more figurative sense it also signifies a paradise as a delightful abode or resting place. The disparaging connection Mr Talmann makes between a jungle and the Garden of Eden neatly sums up his supercilious opinion of Englishmen and England as a wild and disorganized nation — a wasteland in matters of real art, mathematical aptitude and worthwhile knowledge. In other words, an uncivilized country in comparison to the greatness of Holland. This sentence sums up all the venom accumulated after a century of tension and wrestling between the two countries. In all England's early overseas enterprise the Protestant Dutch had been the country's main rivals. With its tiny population and their inability to feed even the mainland inhabitants from their own resources, the Dutch logically depended on overseas expansion and the holding of colonies for their living. Clashing trading interests between the two countries led to three wars against the Dutch (1652-4, 1665-7, 1672-4) all of which were attempts

by the Dutch to shake themselves free of the English Navigation Acts[3] that secured England's sea-trading monopoly. These acts required that goods be imported to England only in English ships or ships of the country of origin. In this way colonial trade was closed off to foreign shipping altogether. In other words, the supplies of tobacco, raw cotton, rice and sugar coming to Europe from the American and West Indian colonies were all transshipped through England. In the reverse direction, foreigners trading with the colonies had to ship their goods through England too, adding to their costs and putting them at a disadvantage with English manufacturers. It was a closed system, rigidly enforced and designed exclusively to supplant the Dutch in all fields of trade. These wars of attrition seriously wounded the Dutch nation and partly account for Mr Talmann's view of the English as a wild nation spurred on by its restless instinct for aggression. In his opinion, England was definitely no restful and peaceful Garden of Eden!

The intermingling of religious and botanical themes leads the conversation on to Ireland, an island which, as is well known, possesses certain unique features in plant and animal life due partly to climatic conditions, and partly to the fact that it became separated from Britain by the Irish Sea. Tradition ascribes the absence of snakes to banishment at the hand of St Patrick, the island's patron saint, although no miraculous explanation has ever been offered for the absence of other common English animals such as the weasel and the mole.

What had happened in Ireland at the hands of William of Orange in 1790 was still recent enough to be a raw wound or focus of contention among differing religious and political allegiances. However, in order to understand all the implications of the word eradication "spat" out by Mr Talmann, it is necessary to go back a few years in time. James II had inherited his brother's smoothly running despotism in 1685, but as a devout Catholic, he set out to make England Catholic again. He proceeded to dismiss Anglicans from all kinds of high office in Church, State and army to put Catholics in their places. The politically conscious elements in the nation began to draw together in angry opposition. They did not want another civil war; they might have put up with James and simply awaited the succession of his Protestant daughters Mary and Ann, if the Queen, after fifteen years of childless marriage, had not given birth to a son in 1688. The prospect of a Catholic dynasty was too much. Sinking their differences, the Tories joined the Whigs in sending a formal invitation to William of Orange, Stadholder of Holland and husband of James's daughter Mary, to come in, expel James, and take over the government. When William landed, James's flight was declared the

equivalent of abdication and both Whigs and Tories invited William to call a Convention Parliament. Parliament recognised William and his wife as joint sovereigns but in return, the monarchs had to accept the Bill of Rights which clearly established the supremacy of Parliament.

The event Mr Talmann alludes to took place in 1690, when James, with French aid, attempted to use Ireland and its people to regain his throne. William, in dire need of consolidating his position as king of England,[4] took charge and on the 1st July 1690 crossed the river Boyne to rout the rebels. Deserted by their king after the first blow had been struck, the Irish were left to the doubtful mercy of William, which meant that the country was reduced to starvation and surrender. The savagery of the army led by William and the massacres that took place during the Battle of the Boyne, have been remembered ever since, especially in Northern Ireland, as Orangeman's Day (Bryant 1981: 165).

The Dutchman's pompous pride is instantly crushed by the biting cynicism of Mr Neville's answer which neatly brings the subject round to gardens again while revealing his Catholic sympathies: "perhaps the gardener and I can find a snake for your orangery." Orangeries were gardening buildings for the wintering of orange trees or other exotic shrubs and fruits and were at the height of fashion in the second half of the seventeenth century. But it seems that the term "Orangery" is used by the artist less as a reference to this element of garden design than as a barely concealed indictment against William, the Dutch Prince of Orange.

The word orange brings us round to another notable component in a seventeenth century garden-plan: its orchard. As one of the most permanent features of nature or of any man-made scenery, trees usually form the structural foundation of a home garden. Likewise, in *The Draughtsman's Contract,* trees, and especially fruit trees, are a constant subject matter in conversations between characters. It is interesting to note that trees, fruit trees and their produce form not a visual, but a recurrent aural motif in the film. As the story proceeds, each new allusion to trees, however innocent it may seem in itself, gradually becomes more and more puzzling as it dawns on the spectator that such insistence on this common element of nature is no casual coincidence but some kind of message-conveying device. In trying to unravel the possible sequence of logic behind the reiterative allusions to trees and their fruits what soon becomes apparent is that the various species mentioned throughout the story are of no consequence in themselves while much information may be derived from their symbolic meaning.

In the introductory part of the film, the first character to appear on screen relates the story of a certain Mr Chandos who had a special predilection for growing plum trees. Why not? we may ask ourselves. However, suspicion that the story about plums and plum trees had more to it than a crude account of a man's peculiarities led me to the discovery that this common fruit had taken on a very pointed figurative meaning, precisely at the end of the seventeenth century. During the reign of King William, plum was a slang word used to refer to a specific amount of money: one hundred thousand pounds. In other words, fortunes were calculated in or as "plums": A gentleman could be reckoned a one plum man, a two plum man or half a plum man (*Oxford Dictionary*). If this more obscure meaning of the word plum is considered, then, the coarse anecdote about Mr Chandos's production of plums must be understood as referring less to the trees and fruits themselves than to a certain class, their resources, properties and their attitudes towards subordinates. Indeed, as has been suggested before, the period under study was a propitious time for the building up of fortunes. The increase of wealth of many families through commerce or investments in commerce implied a proportional increase of all those activities which were carried on by money-transactions and calculations of profit. It also meant a decrease of all the activities which had, up till then, been regulated by custom, tradition and authority. In all, it implied a movement from status to contract — an important theme in this film. Although, a century or two earlier, most people in Europe hardly handled any money at all, by the seventeenth century, a large proportion of the population, especially in England, Holland and France, was living by income economy. The heads of well-to-do family households planned their work and transactions with the primary aim of making as much profit as possible. However, it is important to remember that the growing wealth of this affluent class almost entirely derived from the work of employees or subordinates who never received any share of the benefits.

Bearing this in mind, two other definitions of the word plum gain special significance in the story about Mr Chandos. In the Webster Dictionary, it is stated that plum can also mean either; "something desirable or received as a recompense for service," or "an unexpected increment of property or money." Logically, the subordinates, bound by contract to work for the enrichment of their landlord, and without any other prospect than their fixed wages, could not expect any sudden increase in money. Hence, the cynicism in the anecdote stems from the playful oscillation between the literal or figurative meanings of the word plum: the only "recompense" received by the

people on Mr Chandos's property was the possibility of praying in the chapel on benches made out of plum wood while the landlord and his family physically suffered from the after-effects of so much plum-eating. In both cases, there was enough justification for Mr Chandos's tenants remembering their landlord "through their backsides." Consequently, it could be said that the last statement in the story shrewdly links the plum motif to a sardonic evaluation of class relationship.

Close attention to the following scenes will reveal that money and property are dominant themes in the preliminary setting of the film. The lady accompanying Mr Noyes explains to him that the members of the company have gathered simply "to express confidence in one another's money." To Mr Noyes's pointed remark about herself being a member of the company, she gaily answers that she was "strictly not of the company but a part of its property!" A property Mr Noyes would well like to possess if his own dominions, summed up as "two parterres and a grove of orange trees," could be somehow expanded to a more substantial fortune. The orange trees as indication of the character's economic position then take on a sexual connotation as Mr Noyes identifies the fruit with his companion's breasts. This scene anticipates a much more explicit comparison between a fruit tree and a woman's body. During their first encounter under contract, Mr Neville strips Mrs Herbert of her garments while asking a most shockingly unromantic question:

> — "When your husband had the pear trees grafted, do you know if he asked the advice of Mr Seymour's gardener?"

He then evaluates Mrs Herbert's body in the following terms:

> — "The trees have been poorly cared for, the angle between the branches and the main trunk is...too steep. But the original work is good. And what of the pears themselves Madam? Are they presentable?"

Although the equation between the fruit tree and the woman's body is quite patent, as with Mr Noyes's earlier comment the underlying message is that of physical delight in possessing the woman while the coldness of the mutually accepted relationship is emphasized: By contract, Mr Neville has a right of property on Mrs Herbert. As the first part of the contract is been duly carried out, Mr Neville can permit himself the luxury of mocking the

pompous talk about property and belongings of the company at Compton Anstey by referring to his meetings with Mrs Herbert in the following way:

> — "Mrs Herbert pays no price she cannot afford, and thanks to her generosity I am permitted to take my pleasure without hindrance on her property and to enjoy the maturing delights of her country garden."

If the produce of fruit trees are to be understood as symbolic allusions to women or women's bodies, then many otherwise mystifying scenes take on some extra significance within the story. For example, before tackling one of his drawings, Mr Neville is shown eating raspberries and lost in thought. He then suddenly titters with no apparent reason. This could be interpreted as him daydreaming about his encounters with Mrs Herbert. Another instance is when the draughtsman gaily tells Mr Talmann that he is becoming the gardener's taster for victuals and goes on to praise the raspberries of the day which he considered much sweeter than the tasteless damsons (another name for plum) of the previous day. This seemingly fatuous comment takes on another significance if it is understood as a veiled account of the encounters agreed on in the dual contract between the artist and Mrs Herbert on the one hand, and the artist and Mrs Talmann on the other.

However, there is a deeper connotation in the allegorical assimilation of women to garden produce of various types. As has been suggested before, gardens were the pride of a certain class of men in the seventeenth century as integral part of their property. Likewise, women enjoyed little status beyond that as their husbands' property. The basic assumption which governed relations between the sexes was that women were simply inferior beings. Throughout their lives they were to depend on men — as daughters, on their fathers, and, once wives, on the "masculine dominion" of their husbands. In common law, wives had no right over their children or to matrimonial property. At the time, marriage had nothing to do with a couple's happiness, but was a matter of family policy (Hibbert 1989: 381-88; Basch 1974: 4-5). Hence, women were only considered in so far as they could bring to a marriage either titles, dowries or descendants — or a combination of one or other. Once they had fulfilled the functions assigned to them, they were no more important to their husbands than any other of their belongings. The status of women in the affluent society of the period is therefore discreetly, but correctly, depicted in the story: Compton Anstey had once belonged to Mrs Herbert's father, but was now the property of her husband, not hers. In

her husband's preferential order of things, she is rated last, even after the horse. On the other hand, Mrs Talmann as the only fruit of the marriage is in dire need of a child in order to maintain the property within the family. By taking this fact into consideration another most obscure comment made by Mr Neville concerning limes can be deciphered:

> —"If you have any influence over your son-in-law, can I suggest that he travel over to Mr Seymour's to see what can be done with limes by doing as little as possible? Limes, Madam, can smell so sweet, especially when they are allowed to bloom without hindrance and it will shortly be time to bloom."

If Mrs Talmann is substituted for the fruit, the following meaning emerges: the draughtsman seems to be suggesting that in his incapacity to get his wife pregnant, the son-in-law should let another permit her "to bloom."

Apart from sexual implications, trees can also be used to transmit half stifled information about the political and religious allegiances of some of the characters. The story of Mr Lucas's eleven fruit trees, all named after his children, leads Mr Talmann to make yet another supercilious remark about the English, through his noticing that "they can raise colonies but not heirs to the throne." It is interesting to note that Mr Neville's defence of the fecundity in "some of England's oldest colonies" should immediately be interpreted by Mrs Talmann as an indication of the draughtsman's sympathy towards the Scots. By the Navigation Act of 1660, free trade within the British Isles, established by Cromwell, was done away with and Scotland and Ireland were given the status of foreign countries pertaining to the English Empire. Until 1707, Scotland had its own independent parliament which was a menace to English interests since there was no certainty that it would ever acknowledge the Hanoverian dynasty. Hence, from an English point of view, Mr Neville correctly refers to Scotland as "a colony." His remark about the colony's fertility in matter of heirs is a roundabout way of recalling that whereas William and Mary had no children, the Catholic king of England, James II (VII of Scotland), who had been destituted in their favour, was the father of three children.

Although constant, most of the allusions to fruit and fruit trees in the story are mere hints or dashes compared to the prominence given to the pomegranate as Mrs Herbert relates the mythological significance of the fruit. In the Greek legend, Persephone was seized by Hades and removed to the underworld. On learning of her abduction, her mother, in her misery, became

unconcerned with the harvest and the fruitfulness of the earth. Pluto therefore intervened, commanding Hades to release Persephone to her mother. However, as Persephone had eaten seeds from a pomegranate in the underworld, she could not be entirely freed but had to remain four months of the year with Hades,

By association, Mrs Herbert alludes to the efforts made by the gardeners to overcome adverse climatic conditions. Her tale then becomes a neat allegorical account of the drama befalling the main characters. On the one hand, man, capable of dominating nature by growing crops scientifically is himself defeated by nature since the fruits cultivated in hot-houses are themselves unfruitful. A picture that mirrors Mrs Talmann's position: She lives — or is kept — in a scientifically construed ambience but is incapable of engendering a child. On the other hand, the dark red colour of the pomegranate juice, which Mrs Herbert assimilates to blood — and murder — points both to her late husband's violent death and to the fate awaiting Mr Neville.

If the pomegranate was only an ill omen, the pine-apple proves to be fatal. The exotic fruit offered to the draughtsman by Mrs Herbert, serves as a closing symbol for the film. Yet again, it is less the fruit itself than its abstract meaning that brings sense to the final scene. By considering the fact that the written name of the fruit is made up of two parts linked by a hyphen, then, its full symbolic significance emerges: to pine is defined as "punishment; suffering inflicted as punishment; torment; torture" (*Oxford Dictionary*), while one of the immediate connotations the word apple brings to mind is that of the fruit of the forbidden tree in the Garden of Eden. Consequently, the pine-apple may be said to have religious overtones, but above all, it seems to comprise the major themes in the film: the garden as an artificially built Garden of Eden, the apple — or forbidden fruit — as component of the garden emblemizing women's bodies, and finally, the fate of Mr Neville, an opportunist who had dared to query the tastes, habits and political beliefs of his social superiors, and worse still, who had ventured to meddle with part of this closed circle's property: their women.

Hence, just as the various views of grounds at Compton Anstey form an overall frame or baseline for the film, Mr Neville (or the draughtsman) is the central figure around which the whole story evolves. As a young English artist wedging a place for himself in the world of arts, he accepts Mrs Herbert's commission for various views of the house and property to be set on paper, yet, as has already been made clear, only under certain conditions.

As the first day of work elapses, what soon becomes apparent from the outline of the drawings is that they are going to be severe renderings of the chosen sites; a style that calls to mind the preliminary drawings and designing an architect would undertake before tackling the actual contruction of a building. As such, Mr Neville's drawings display little real artistic virtuosity. It is not surprising, therefore, that during the evening meal, Mr Talmann should put the following malevolent question to the guest artist:

> —"If the best Englishmen are foreigners, Mr Neville, and that seems to me to be a statement of fact, then, the best English painters are foreigners too. There is no English painter worthy of the name. Would you agree, Mr Neville, that to be an English painter is a contradictory term?"

Since Mr Neville avoids answering the spiteful question put to him, we shall attempt to do so in his stead.

First of all, it seems necessary to elucidate the meaning behind "the statement of fact" about the best Englishmen being foreigners. From this provoking comment, it may be deduced that Mr Talmann was not born and bred on English soil. He was most probably one of the fifteen-thousand who landed at Torbay with William of Orange on the 5th of November 1688. This army, which marched on London with the King-to-be, was made up of Dutch followers and exiled Englishmen. It only fattened on the way to the capital as English supporters flocked to join in. It is interesting to note that in the film, Mr Talmann is made to assume many of the traits of character of William III. After the Revolution of 1688, England was once again ruled by a monarch who was a foreigner — a Dutch Calvinist who regarded the English as an inferior race. Just as it had been for England's medieval kings (The Angevins), English was only a second language for William (his first was French) (Billings 1991: 124). Everything he wrote had to be translated into English, which he spoke imperfectly. He was a very dry character, sullen with people and boorish in his manners. The nickname London society gave to the new King, the "low Dutch bear" (Billings 1991: 124), could perfectly well apply to Mr Talmann!

The turn of the character's question is most interesting for the plain sophism of the initial statement of fact leads on to, not only a logical probability, but a correct one: "the best English painters are foreigners too. There is no English painter worthy of the name."

Indeed, if England was omnipotent in matters of overseas trade and well ahead of other countries in political thinking[5] English art during the seventeenth century was dominated by a series of foreign-born painters, Rubens and Van Dyck before the civil War, and Peter Lely after it, all of whom were Flemish in origin. This indicates why Mr Talmann uses the term foreigner, the artists of renown in England being neither Dutch nor English. Meanwhile, apart from artists of relative notoriety such as the portrait painters William Dobson and Robert Walker, it is a fact that the vast majority of the painting executed by native Englishmen did not rise above the general level of mediocrity if compared to the remarkable flowering of vigorous styles on the Continent.

The seventeenth century was the period when giants like Bernini, Claude Lorrain and Poussin, Rembrandt and Velazquez produced their masterpieces. This period, known as Baroque,[6] was a time when each master developed his own style and when the peculiar qualities of individual styles were further enhanced by the different trends emanating from each country: between, for example, the characteristics of the art in Rome during the first half of the century and the later art of France and Holland. French, Dutch, Flemish and Spanish artists were in perpetual contact with Rome and Roman art, and all of them shared the same lively interest in Renaissance art and the art of ancient Rome. This meant that there also existed among them important common roots. If the wellspring of Baroque art was Rome it is because it started at the service of the Catholic Church and, through its influence, spread to other countries (Mainstone 1985: 9-11). Fraught with internal problems and loyal to its Reformation, England had remained mostly outside the orbit of influence of Rome, which probably accounts for its "provincialism" in matter of art during the seventeenth century.

In *The Draughtsman's Contract,* Mr Neville is an artist who has made a certain name for himself as a portrait artist, but, as has already been pointed out, he is commissioned to draw twelve pictures of Compton Anstey, not of the members of Mr Herbert's family. This, as we shall see, can also be considered as a telling detail about the times.

The Reformation of the sixteenth century had caused a division of Europe into two camps, Catholic and Prostestant. This religious separation affected the art in the different countries and especially in a small country like the Netherlands, which was itself divided into Protestant Holland, which resisted Spanish Catholic domination, and Catholic Flanders. It was as painters of the Catholic camp that artists like Rubens or Van Dyck rose to their eminent position. The art of Rubens, for instance, suitably enhanced and

glorified the dominant powers of kings and Church and, for that reason, he received commissions from rulers from all over Europe. However, things were very different in the Protestant countries of Germany, Holland and England where artists were confronted with a crisis still unknown to their Catholic colleagues of France, Spain or Flanders. This crisis was brought about by the Reformation. Many Protestants objected to pictures or statues of saints in churches and regarded them as signs of Popish idolatry. Thus, for religious reasons, the painters of Protestant regions had lost their best source of income. All that remained to them as a regular source of income was portrait painting — rather a narrow field of action for so many artists to rely exclusively on commissions. Hence, a new phase came about as ambitious minor masters tried to make a reputation for themselves by specializing in other, novel branches or "genres" of painting to which there would be no objection on religious grounds. This trend towards specialization which had begun in the sixteenth century was firmly established in the seventeenth when landscapes and seascapes and skyscapes began to be considered as subject matters in their own right. In this particular genre, the Protestant Dutch excelled. Artists like Jan Van Goyen or Simon Vlieger were among the first to discover that the representation of a piece of nature could make just as satisfying picture as any illustration of a heroic tale or religious theme. Hence, Mr Talmann could rightly be portrayed as rather patronizing and condescending towards the young English artist.

As a passing comment, it may be added that Mrs Herbert's commission for pictures of the property (rather than of herself and her daughter) is also a telling detail of another kind. The fact of having the property reproduced on paper points to the growing materialistic outlook of a sector of society in the seventeenth century. Rank, status and possession were no longer entirely taken for granted towards the end of the century. Rather, for the wealthy middle class, they served as indications of social and economic success. Hence, the novel taste for drawings or paintings of one's property was an indirect way of immortalizing its owner's enterprise and achievements in the economic field, and a new mode of revelling in the family's social position acquired through prosperity. Landscape drawing therefore also shows how the course of the arts ran parallel to the economic development of a growing middle class.

With respect to the actual elaboration of the pictures, it is interesting to note how many shots display Mr Neville bent on representing reality with scientific accuracy. The camera insistently shows the artist working out exact proportions through a viewfinder and painstakingly reproducing them on his

squared sheet of paper. In other words, we see the draughtsman's attempt to copy as faifthfully as possible the light and solid forms before him. As he himself declares:

> —"I'm painstaking enough to notice quite small changes in the landscape. Once started, I make that a commitment whatsoever ensues, and I think you can surmise it is an attitude from which I obtain great satisfaction and some entertainment."

If the artist's scientific focus, clearly revealed in his preparatory sketches, is an acknowledgement of the way in which a seventeenth century human eye would "read" a scene in reality then, much information about the age may be ascertained from this work-technique.

Nowadays, most thinking people agree that science is based on observation, on experiment, using, so far as it can, all relevant data; that it is capable of being planned ahead, and that it results in power to control material objects and living beings, in a conquest of nature.[7]

This state of mind is so familiar that most people take it for granted; but it has not always been so. In the Middle Ages, the spirit of scientific inquiry was alive and active, but novelty in ideas was distrusted, and the general opinion was that the main outlines of truth laid down in theology and philosophy were permanently fixed, and provided adequate explanations of the nature of existing things. From this, the orientation of the human mind was altered. During the Renaissance, artists investigated optics and anatomy; the closer and deeper study of ancient Greek writers not only equipped Europe with better textbooks of mathematics, physics, medicine, and zoology, but it sharpened method in every kind of field. There was no turmoil or commotion yet, but the steady preparatory work was soon to lead on to the scientific revolution of the seventeenth century. Consequently, the decisive period was the period with which we are here concerned.

During the seventeenth century, there was an infinite number of motives which led men to clear or free the scientific point of view from encumbrances. There were the economic motives. The explorers wanted ever more precise instruments for navigation; trading companies employed experts who used new methods of drawing charts; growing heavy industry led to questions being asked about metallurgy and about machines for lifting and carrying heavy loads; engineers improved canals and harbours by applying the principles of hydrostatics (involving the pressure of water or other liquid as a source of power). Not far removed from the economic motives were

those of the physicians and surgeons, who revolutionized anatomy and physiology. Like the doctors, the soldiers called science to their aid in designing and aiming artillery. But there were also other motives, unconnected to the economic sphere. While musicians learnt the mathematics of harmony, painters and architects studied light and colour, substances and proportions, not only as crafstmen but as artists.

Hence, well before the end of the seventeenth century the scientific movement was colouring almost every kind of human activity. However, the most important fact about the movement is not that it led to improvements in technology, or even that it fomented advances in man's conquest of nature. It is a fact related to thought.

So great an accession to the data of the universe was bound to influence philosophy and in this field, the work of René Descartes (1596-1650), so congenial to the scientific temper of the age, gave a tremendous new turn to the course of thought.

With Descartes, we come back to this permanent feature of nature, the tree — not, of course, as a botanical element but as a logical one. As explained by A. W. Levi,

> In his *Principia Philosophiae*... Descartes expressed the relation of philosophy as theoretical inquiry to practical consequences in the famous metaphor of the tree of philosophy whose roots is metaphysics, whose trunk is physics, and whose branches are respectively, morals, medicine and mechanics. The metaphor is revealing, for it indicates that for Descartes the main concern was for the trunk and that he busied himself with the "roots" only in order to provide a firm foundation for the trunk" (1980: 14: 264).

As is well known, Descartes conceived his physics as a rational system grounded on philosophical principles. In his *Discours de la méthode,* he found the basis of certainty in his own existence: "I think, therefore I am." From this he concluded that the material world existed, and maintained that the spatial extension of bodies was the basis of all material reality. According to his theory, bodies are constituted only as particles of matter in motion; apart from extension, the properties we perceive in sensory experience are merely apparent (Huisman 1981: 23-26). In other words, he thought that the ultimately real was not an unchanging substance beneath all changes and differences, but the principle of change and difference which was itself a force.

Particular attention to the plot in *The Draughtsman's Contract* will reveal how it "patterns" this abstract principle. As has been determined beforehand, the draughtsman employs himself in reproducing on paper the reality that lies before him as faifthfully and scientifically as possible. In modern terms, his drawings are as close to reality as a photograph could be. Although he gives precise orders about not being disturbed during the time of execution, various seemingly unimportant details of clothing find their way into his carefully selected views: riding boots, a shirt, a jacket and a ladder, and later, a dog and a sun-shade. Since the artist's method of working is that of "never to distort or dissemble," he decides to incorporate these details into his drawings. However, as Mr Neville is giving the finishing touches to his sixth drawing he is startled by Mrs Talmann's deduction in viewing his pictures. He is then told that

> — "I have grown to believe that the really intelligent man makes an indifferent painter. Painting requires a certain blindness, a partial refusal to be aware of all the options. An intelligent man will know more about his drawing than he will see."

The artist's certainty of having reproduced the natural world is therefore shattered. It is *his perception* of reality that has been set on paper, not reality in itself. This fact is further, and dramatically enhanced towards the close of the film, when it appears that the supposedly photographic renderings of the sites are apprehended differently by each of the characters, thus leading to different conclusions: Mr Talmann is convinced that the drawings will immortalize his wife's "duplicity," while Mrs Talmann retaliates that the pictures could equally well be reflecting her husband's share in a conspiracy of inheritance. She then adds a third possible and plausible interpretation:

> — "[the drawings] contain evidence of another kind... evidence that Mr Neville may be accomplice to the death of my father."

Hence, Mr Neville's attempt to "freeze" reality or to make of it an unchanging substance proves a lost battle, for his drawings turn out to be a force in themselves. Whereas many seventeenth century mathematicians and physicists still felt that what could be weighed, measured and expressed mathematically must be wholly independent of the mind, and therefore must possess a reality-status of a unique kind, Descartes' starting-point was scepticism about the truth of sense-data: a man's perception of external

objects may be deceptive. As suggested beforehand, all that is true about Mr Neville's drawings is that they reflect how *he* perceived reality. The artist's error is to judge his reproductions as the exact "likeness" of the real thing. Likewise, each of the other characters perceives a different reality from the one and same drawings. Consequently, the surprising multiplicity of interpretations about the artists's realistic drawings points to Descartes' discovery of *two* kinds of certainties, one objective and external (in this case, the drawings) and the other subjective and internal (the mind). According to the philosopher, the blending of these two worlds within each human being will bring about not an absolute certainty about truth, but an individual "knowledge" or perception of reality. This is precisely what takes place in *The Draughtsman's Contract,* where the nature of people's knowledge of external objects is illustrated by an insistence in the plot on how unreliable and subjective "reality" really is.

Once he has completed his part of the contract, Mr Neville departs. He has apparently accepted another commission from the Duke of Rauderdale. However, only three days after the burial of Mr Herbert, the artist is shown returning on a visit to Compton Anstey (invited by Mr Seymour). He finds Mrs Talmann going over the property with a Dutchman, Mr Van Hoyten, who, it seems, will be undertaking a "remodelling" of the grounds.

> — "Mr Van Hoyten is to consider for us a new management for the grounds, an entirely new approach. He has come at our request to soften the geometry which my father found to his taste and to introduce a new ease and complexion."

The changes contemplated for Compton Anstey parallel an overall movement that was beginning to take place in the last years of the seventeenth century. As the times were slowly moulding themselves into a new era, people became increasingly aware of the natural world around them. Rather than imposing man-made geometric order on Nature, the new fashion tended towards a general relaxation of formality. The English garden, it was felt, should allow, as Stephen Switzer, the influencial author of *The Nobleman, Gentleman and Gardener's Recreation* (1715), later stated, "Beauties of Nature to remain uncorrupted by Art."

> All the adjacent Country [should] be laid open to view, and the eye should not be bounded with high walls, woods misplaced and several obstructions. It should assume the forms suggested by "the best of landskip painters" (Hibbert, 1989:326-7)

This idea is echoed by Mrs Talmann when she tells the draughtsman: "It is probably you, Mr Neville, that has opened his [Mr Talmann's] eyes to the possibilities of our landscape." This change towards architecturally planned "naturalness" was the practical result of important social factors. First of all, at least in England, it can be interpreted as a reaction against any trace of French formality in landscape gardening. During the reign of William and Mary, the overpowering Louis XIV, supporter of the Jacobite cause, was England's arch-enemy. The end of the century was also the time of splendour of Versailles and its geometrically planned gardens. Landscape carved into artificial shape was suddenly seen in England as a reflection of French authoritarianism in politics and inflexibility in art.

On the other hand, as has been suggested beforehand, gardens and garden design reflect people's philosophy of life. After the "Glorious Revolution," and with the accession of William and Mary, a new political stability had been established in England. The constitutional monarchy, the new English system of government whereby Parliament, as representative of the people, held the upper hand, assured the population that their rights and liberties were and would be protected against Royal despotism. With the security of long-lasting internal peace, people could afford to open their eyes to the natural world around them. In other words, by the end of the seventeenth century, homes were no longer seen as havens of security, shielding their inhabitants from outside conflict, violence and danger. On the contrary, homes were now to be an integral part of Nature, the result being a new aesthetic which imposed a loosening of boundaries between the habitat of man and the external world. Consequently, the original enclosed, geometrical gardens were slowly giving way to freer forms that concealed the division between private properties and contiguous land. In time, this movement would lead to the typical eighteenth century, scientifically planned, "natural" landscapes which consisted mainly of expanses of grass, irregularly shaped bodies of water, and trees, in their natural shape, placed singly and in clumps. Hence, we see here that landscape design or rather, planned alterations in landscape design also serves as a temporal device in the film for it is indicative of how the seventeenth century was slowly melting into another age.

As an overall conclusion, it may therefore be stated that landscape design and drawing, basic features in *The Draughtsman's Contract,* transmit important information about the times in which the story occurs and the life-styles of its protagonists. The ingeniously planned murder and its dramatic

consequences for a guest artist — in essence, the basic plot of the film — could have happened at any historical time. However, the views of the property where the whole drama transpires, serve as chronicles of the period. As the spectator follows Mr Neville from one part of the grounds to another, he is presented with a typical late seventeenth century English garden dotted with details of Dutch influence such as the topiared yew walks and the cropped trees, while the vision of sheep in the grounds points to the economic standing of the Herbert family. Likewise, although the dialogues amongst the characters reveal much about contemporary events, a great deal more information may be extracted if particular attention is paid to conversations about gardens or elements of garden design. Thus, the rather sour interchange of words between Mr and Mrs Talmann and the artist concerning the Garden of Eden proves to be a veiled account of the famous battle of the Boyne while trees and fruits serve as symbols for women and women's position in seventeenth century well-to-do society. The fact that Mr Neville is commissioned to draw pictures of the property rather than portraits of the family is also a telling detail about the times. Similarly, the draughtsman's actual working method together with the surprising variety of interpretations his reproductions of reality provoke, singularly recall Descartes's *Discours de la méthode.* Finally, the intended change of style of the grounds at Compton Anstey to more informal and natural is itself indicative of the passing of time and the changing mentality of a people secure of their economic position and forever freed from the yoke of royal despotism.

In all, landscape design and painting serve, not merely as a historically authentic frame or container for the story in *The Draughtsman's Contract,* but as an important wellspring of information about a past age — more especially for the viewer who is attentive to the given cues and willing to follow them up.

NOTES

1. Sir Christopher Wren (1632-1723), a famous mathematician and astronomer, earned lasting fame not as a scientist but as an architect. After the great fire, he submitted a comprehensive scheme for the rebuilding of the whole city. Wren put his distinctive stamp on over fifty churches, and produced his masterpiece in the new St Paul's Cathedral which took thirty-five years to build.

2. The Royal Society, founded in 1662, of which Charles II was the first patron, set up a committee on agriculture which carried out experiments, instituted inquiries and published the results. Among the refinements advocated were: the growing of fodder crops such as turnips to feed animals throughout the winter; the use of artificial grass; the growing of potatoes; the testing of different fertilizers and experiment with novel vegetation imported from the colonies.

3. The Cromwellian Navigation Act of 1651 shows how strong the Republic was at the time. It was designed to break the hold of the Dutch on the carrying trade between Europe and America. The Dutch protested at this blow to their trade and war broke out between the two countries (1652). Another Navigation Act was passed in the first year of Charles II's reign (1660). It re-enacted the provisions of the Commonwealth Navigation Act, i.e. that trade between England and her colonies was to be carried only in English ships. However, free trade which Cromwell had established throughout the British Isles, was done away with in this second Act for Ireland and Scotland were treated as foreign countries in matters of trade.

4. According to G.M. Trevelyan, "William's throne was tottering in the after-throes of the earthquake of the late Revolution, which had not yet subsided. The English Church and Army were disaffected; the civil, military, and naval services were in grave disorder; the Whigs and Tories of Parliament were renewing their old feuds; half the public men of both parties were in secret communication with the Jacobites, not because they desired but because they expected a Restoration. With good hope then, Louis (XIV) had sent James over with French money, troops, and generals, to complete first the conquest of Ireland, where three-fourths of the land already obeyed him. Until Ireland was secured for William, Britain could take no part in the continental war, and might soon herself be in the throes of a counter-revolution" (1967:360).

5. During the period previous to the actual Revolution, England's internal political thinking had been developing on lines very different from that in the rest of Europe where there was a reassertion of the absolute power of Kings. It was the time of Louis XIV in France and the great kings of Sweden. The ideas of Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) had, by the second half of the seventeenth century, produced their effect. In his famous work, *Leviathan* (1651), Thomas Hobbes had stripped the monarchy of its moral basis. In other words, he had replaced the concept of legitimacy as the justification of political authority by the ruler's obligation to afford protection to the subjects who lived under his power.

6. According to E.H. Gombrich, "Baroque" was a disparaging term coined by critics of a later period who fought against the tendencies of the seventeenth century. In his own words: "Baroque really means absurd or grotesque, and it was used by

men who insisted that the forms of classical buildings should never have been used or combined except in the ways adopted by the Greeks and Romans" (1988: 302).

7. In saying this, we are perfectly concious of the new wave in science and physics. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Einstein's theory of relativity revealed that the very design of experiments, in fact, alters reality. Hence, from then on, experimentation as such is no longer thought of as being absolute — only probable or presumable; in other words, relative. Consequently, nowadays, instead of successful experimentation leading to a guideline theory, as had been the traditional practice, it is more usual for the reverse procedure to take place: a hypothesis is forwarded and then experimentation is made on the given assumption.

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THE FOCALISER FOCALISED

IN KING VIDOR'S *THE CROWD* (1928)

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A recurrent characteristic of classical film narration seems to be the constant tension between objective and subjective representation. Film critics have remarked, from diverse standpoints, the effect of these films on the viewer as a mixture of separation and identification (see, for example, Heath 1974, Dayan 1974 and Mulvey 1975). As I have argued elsewhere (Deleyto 1991 and 1992), this tension or simultaneity can be accounted for, at a purely narrative level, through the use of the concept of focalisation, as coined by Genette (1972) and revised by several theorists, including Genette himself (1982) and, above all, Rimmon-Kenan (1983) and Mieke Bal (1985). The activity of focalisation, in Genette, Rimmon-Kenan and Bal, replaces although it does not coincide completely with, the concept of point of view (see Deleyto 1991), and is narratologically distinct from the activity of narration. For Bal, this concept provides the answer to the question "who sees?" as opposed to the question "who speaks?" (1985: 101). The emphasis on focalisation as vision or perception makes the concept immediately relevant for the theory of film narrative, but apart from Jost's (1983) distinction between *focalisation* (what a character knows) and *ocularisation* (the relation between what the camera shows and what a character sees) and Chatman's (1986) introduction of the concepts of *filter* and *slant* in order to differentiate between activities which, according to him, are carried out at different narrative levels, little has been done in order to explore the specific possibilities of the use of the term in analyses of film narratives (see also García Mainar 1991). I would like to argue, for example, that Bal's distinction between internal or character-bound and external focalisation provides an appropriate narrative framework for psychoanalytic, feminist and other ideological discussions of the effect produced by classical films on the viewer, and it is with this premise in mind that I would like to carry out a narratological analysis of some aspects of King Vidor's *The Crowd* (1928). But first some theoretical considerations.

The almost universal existence of a textual external focaliser in classical films (see Deleyto 1991: 167-68) accounts for one of its most powerful means of fabula manipulation. Such potentially subjectivising devices as the eyeline match or the semi-subjective shot are mainly used to reinforce the smoothness and transparency of narration. Verisimilitude is strengthened when the vantage point of the spectator is brought significantly close to that of one of the characters. The impression thus obtained is not one of restriction of field, which usually goes together with subjective narration, but, in effect, the opposite: omniscience, understood as a narrative strategy which places the spectator in the position from which the development of the fabula can be best witnessed. The eyeline match becomes only one device of the "continuity system of editing," which seeks to justify the continuous shift of the spectator's vantage point on the action without him noticing the artificiality of such a change.

On the other hand, the more or less codified resorting to internal focalisation in order to secure the illusion of objective representation allows the classical film to pass as objective what in reality is not, by intensifying the subjectivity of internal focalisation in coherent patterns throughout the film. Therefore, a film in which most eyeline matches have their origin in the gaze of one single character will be presenting as objective what is, in effect, the personal vision of that particular character.

In other words, one single textual strategy may function simultaneously towards two contrasting ends without the spectator once questioning its coherence. One reason for this is the reliance of film representation on the Renaissance system of monocular or linear perspective, which identifies the origin of the production of space in the pictorial arts with the vision of the human eye (see Heath 1976: 93 ff.). Because of the similarity of visual representations with our own perception of reality, we, as spectators, feel comfortably safe and superior — omniscient — in a fictional world which depends for its creation on an origin which we recognise as closely bound with real-life experience. However, this God-like origin of creation is, like the human eye, nothing but a subject of perception, which excludes an infinite number of other subjects. The space thus created is then apparently objective because its origin is not part of the represented object, but really subjective because, by its own nature, it is attached to a particular vision.

It is, therefore, a crucial stage in the analysis of a particular film to describe and interpret the way in which this tension between internal and external focalisation affects our interpretation of the text. Or, to be more

specific, we must ask ourselves the following two questions: Do the internal gazes that appear in the film work exclusively towards intensifying the illusion of objectivity (which we could also call, with Bazin, the illusion of reality) or do they, on the other hand, function, working against the objectivising tendency of film language, as the expression of the relevant vision of one or more internal agents of the fabula? What are the consequences as to the presentation and manipulation of the fabula in front of the spectator, of the choice made by the film?

The answer to these questions is not a simple one, as, within their closed system of representation, classical films have made use of this tension in many different ways. It is my purpose to prove the relevance of this approach to the analysis of film narration by looking at the way in which focalisation works together with other story aspects and textual elements towards our understanding of the text in *The Crowd*.

There are two other kinds of tensions that are basic to the understanding of this film. At a textual level, there is the tension between its conscious attempt at realism — its portrayal of the lives and problems of "ordinary" people as a reaction to the remote, exotic themes of most Hollywood films of its time; the frequent location shots of the streets of New York, also unusual in the studio system of shooting prevalent at the time, etc. — and the very careful — and artificial — system of patterns, parallelisms and contrasts through which the story manipulates the fabula. At the level of the fabula, a tension is, on the other hand, established between the individual (represented by the character of John Simms) and the crowd.

The main process of the fabula concerns the change that occurs in the relationship between John and the crowd from the beginning to the end of the film. Initially, and throughout most of the film, John's only wish is to stand out from the rest and be important (a very simple version of the American Dream). The impossibility of such task is gradually realised by the spectator, then Mary, his wife, and finally John himself. At the end of this learning process John decides to forget about his dream and to be one more happy member of that crowd, which has almost destroyed his life. The apparent happy ending is put into perspective by the strong irony of the final section of the fabula (also enhanced at textual level). Unlike classical comedy, this melodrama full of comic devices does not portray the self-renewal of society through a social change brought about by the young protagonist, but the self-perpetuation of society through the destruction of individuality in its members.

The very carefully contrived structure of the film contrasts with its professed aim to portray the life of an ordinary working-class American family. The time structure of the story is dominated, throughout most of the film, by the significant use of ellipses. Whereas the time of the fabula spans over the first twenty-two or twenty-three years in John's life, the spectator is only shown some relevant moments in it: his birth, the death of his father, his twenty-first birthday, his wedding, his first Christmas with his wife, their first quarrel, the death of their daughter, etc. The ruthless passing of time is set against John's wish to stand out from the crowd. Each ellipsis, signifying a lapse of time in which nothing important has happened, is one more step towards the final destruction of his dream. After his daughter's death, as John gradually comes to realise the inevitability of his failure, chronological time virtually disappears from the story and the chronological succession of events is replaced by the logic of John's social and personal degradation, as the main cause of the order structure of the film. This division of the story in two parts works metaphorically as a sign of the overruling outside force which crushes the ordinary man's attempts at being an individual. Once John's misguided ambition has been shown as a ridiculous enterprise by the inexorable repetition of ellipses, time virtually disappears. It is, in any case, the active part that the metaphor plays in our understanding of the film that makes the consciousness of the story layout more noticeable and more distant from our interpretation of common life events.

There are other aspects of the film which point at the relevance of story manipulation of the events of the fabula. All films, like all other narratives, because they are closed systems with superimposed structures, show patterns of repetition, which also become significant for the spectator. In *The Crowd*, certain motifs appear more than once, working in themselves as alternative channels of narrative development. The most outstanding ones are probably not objects but related to the space of the film: locations in which the relevant events take place once and again.

There are, for example, the three window scenes, related with John's family. The first two offer the same pattern, with Mary speaking from the window and John in the street. During their first Christmas together, as John goes out to get some drinks, Mary warns him not to slip in the ice. He has just slipped on the doorstep but his imminent slip, as he stays out for a long time and gets drunk with a friend, is much more telling of the future of their relationship. After their first important argument, a few months later, and as John is leaving for work, Mary rushes to the window and calls him back to break the news that she is pregnant. If we compare it with the former scene,

the function of the pattern created is twofold: on the one hand, it presents the deterioration that their love undergoes because of his ill-fated attempts at fame. On the other hand, it suggests the only way out for John, which is through complying with the rules established by society: marriage, parenthood, etc. The last window scene happens when John has just won a prize for a slogan and hopes to have found a new opening. This time both he and Mary come to the window and call their two children, who are waiting in a queue with other children for the school bus. The two run back home and, as a consequence, the little girl is knocked down by a lorry. As a part of the process started by the two former scenes, John's fleeting moment of triumph proves disastrous for his family, since, by a cruel turn of fate, his daughter will die as a result of it. In this way, individual ambition, the American Dream, is opposed to family and society. At this point we know that it must be either one or the other for John. Shortly after, while the girl agonises in her bed, John's useless efforts to quieten down the noisy crowds in the street are a metaphor for the hopelessness of his struggle to defeat society. The pattern created by the repetition of the window shots, and the evolution-degradation observed through them in his individuality and family life, work in a somehow independent way to convey meaning to the spectator.

The line of children in the street is in itself a repetition of a former line of which John, as a child, formed part, when his father died. The scenes of both deaths are paralleled at story level by the selection of this motif and the staircase shots that follow on both occasions. The similarity is here intensified by textual devices: a similar framing from the top of the stairs, setting John, as he climbs the stairs, against the silent crowd which looks threateningly from the bottom; also the expressionistic quality of the setting, with a geometrical design in the walls and contrastive lighting which suggest the disturbance provoked in John's mind by the events. The two scenes are further connected because it was John's father that put the dream of being different in his mind when he was a child and it is his daughter's death that finally crushes it.

Time manipulation and repetition are, therefore, two outstanding characteristics of *The Crowd.* They have been discussed at some length because they are basic for our approach to the text, not only as an introduction to the tension symmetry/disymmetry which is at the core of the film's structure, but because they play an important part in the overall impression that the viewer receives from the particular scenes that we propose to analyse.

Undoubtedly the most spectacular scene of the film is its final one, with John, Mary and their son laughing at the performance of the clowns in the show that they are attending as a mark of their reconciliation. At the end of the scene, the external focaliser visibly moves away from the three characters by means of a quick ascending movement of the camera and two almost unnoticed dissolves. The rapidly increasing distance at which the focaliser places itself discloses the vastness and uniformity of the crowd of which John finally forms part. Happiness and harmony have finally been achieved in a world in which everybody is content with their lot.[1] The external focaliser is underlined as such by the described textual devices which give it a God-like quality, shared by the focalisers in many "realist" texts (in film and novel), but, at the same time, betrays the presence of the narrative device and, therefore, the artificiality of the text.

The effect of the scene on the spectator is achieved through this very tension: it does not only consist of the opportunity that is granted us of overlooking the whole audience space at the theatre in which John and Mary are just two undistinguished members of the crowd. The swiftness and span of the camera movement, combined with the dissolves, cruelly sets into perspective the apparent happiness of the protagonists. The movement of the camera, which in a narrative sense betrays the powerful presence of the focaliser, is, therefore, necessary for our understanding of the scene.

A further consequence of the textual realisation of this final scene is the timelessness at which the events are placed by the great distance that separates the viewer from them. The whole movement of the film, of a time that progresses towards its own dissolution, as a metaphor of the motionlessness of a society which represses all efforts to go forward, culminates in this final camera movement. The devastating quality of the former ellipses is now replaced by an equally devastating stillness which ironically we must take as the happy ending of the film. On the other hand, this final scene forms part of the pattern of repetition referred to above, since it parallels an earlier scene which also finishes with a combination of camera movement and dissolves.

This scene is placed in the first section of the film, immediately after its second ellipsis. John has just turned twenty-one and is approaching New York on the boat from Coney Island. He is looking at the skyscrapers in Manhattan from the deck, with an optimistic expression on his face. When another passenger joins him in the contemplation, he states that all he needs to stand out in such a town is a chance. The scene includes two textual devices mentioned at the beginning of this paper. The opening shot is a semi-

subjective shot. The external focaliser is placed behind John, in the direction of Manhattan; both the internal focaliser and the object of his gaze are included in the frame. The emphasis in this case is not only on John's perception. As in many other shots of the film, he is set against the crowd that he is trying to fight, here in the form of the huge skyscrapers. From our position, that of the external focaliser, the buildings tower above the insignificant person that contemplates them. The relationship thus stated contrasts vividly with the next shot, a reverse shot which shows John looking confidently offscreen, in the same direction as in the previous one.

Elsewhere in the film John's relationship to the crowd is shown in similar terms: isolated from it but threatened by its proximity and its power, working against the fulfillment of his objectives. Offscreen space is used, for example, twice for this purpose, with an added comic effect: when John and Mary have first moved into their flat, John is framed sitting comfortably on a chair, playing his banjo and singing a song. The next shot shows a noisy train passing through the window, and the subsequent framings disclose the ridiculously small size of the flat. Later on, on the beach in Coney Island, John is again playing the banjo, and the implication of the framing is that he is alone with his wife and children on the beach, as there is nobody else to be seen for a while. But after a cut, we discover that they are really surrounded by lots of people, who are unfriendly and irritable. From the moment we get this new information, things start going wrong for the couple.

The semi-subjective shot in the boat is, therefore, a part of a new, larger pattern of repetition, which had already started with the scene referred to above, of John's father's death. When the viewer interprets this particular shot, s/he will be influenced by the *mise en scène* and framing of the previous ones and by many other instances to come. The impracticability of his words is already felt by the audience and only needs to be confirmed by subsequent events.

The second device used at the beginning of the scene is the eyeline match: an external focaliser presents John and the other passenger looking offscreen right. In this shot the emphasis is on the contrast between the two gazes: John's, optimistic, and that of the other one, sceptical. When, in the next series of shots we are shown what they are looking at, the quality of both gazes will influence our perception. The next shot, again of Manhattan but now without including any internal focalisers, is cued as subjective by the movement of the camera, which represents the movement of the boat on whose deck the two characters stand.

We must remember that, up to here, the scene is clearly narrative: a ship is approaching a port and two passengers are looking at the townscape from the deck. But this shot, apart from being shot B in the eyeline match, serves also a sort of establishing shot for a description of New York which will be the main topic of the next series of shots. After what could be understood as a general view of the city (from a particular perspective, but all general views are from a particular perspective), we get a number of shots of several aspects of the city: by means of straight cuts, dissolves and superimpositions, we are shown the crowded streets of Manhattan, railway stations, views of the port, more skyscrapers... At one point, the camera concentrates on a particular building, framed from an extreme low angle, which exaggerates its size. Then the camera starts to move. First it tracks up, going past rows of windows which are all the same, then a spectacular tilt places us at eye-level with one of the rows of windows. A track forward concentrates on one specific window and, after a dissolve, we are placed at the other side of it, inside a huge office room. From a high angle, the camera starts moving again, past dozens of desks, all identical, at which similar looking clerks seem to be all doing the same thing. Then a gradual track down isolates one of the desks at which John Simms, our protagonist, sits carrying out his office work like everybody else in the room. After a cut, a detail shot shows a sign on his desk with his name and number.

This spectacular sequence is remarkable for several reasons, but its main interest for my purposes lies in the presence of John at its beginning and end, bracketing a series of documentary shots, mainly directed at presenting the grandiosity and vitality of New York. The last movement of the camera, inside the office, is a clear antecedent of the final scene, already analysed. In a way, both movements, in opposite directions, contain the whole of the film within them. The first one, towards John, presents him as one more indistinguishable member of the crowd. The last one, away from him, leaves him exactly in the same position and in the same relationship with his surroundings.[2] The implication is that everything that has happened between them has been to no effect whatsoever. The omniscience (omnipresence) of the external focaliser is here as remarkable as it is at the end of the film. After moving at will from one part of the city to the other, it is capable of picking one particular building, one particular floor, one particular window and one particular desk, among many exactly equal. At this desk sits the person that the story is about. I will not go over the "visibility" of this focaliser again, but the feeling of superiority that it transmits to us is obvious (and comforting for the audience of a classical film). If we consider both

shots together, the omniscience of this focaliser appears outstanding. From a huge mass of people it selects one specific person, with no remarkable characteristics in him except a foolish dream, narrates his ordinary, frustrated existence, and leaves him where it found him, returning to its initial position up high, from which the city is shown as a homogeneous group of people, all of whom lead lives exactly the same as John's.

From a narrative point of view, there is, however, one little problem with the external focaliser of the initial scene. Although its presence has been constant and active from the semi-subjective shot of John looking at Manhattan, it is not clear at what exact point the internal focalisers (John and the other passenger) of the eyeline match disappear. One characteristic of the eyeline match is that the internal focaliser is only in the frame during the shot before the cut (shot A). In shot B, his presence is only implied, as a point offscreen (not necessarily that occupied by the camera) from which the contents of the frame can also be seen. In this case, as we have said, the subjectivity of the subsequent shot of Manhattan is clear as emphasised by the movement of the camera. The establishing shot for the description of New York is, therefore, subjective. What we see is what John is looking at. Our perception of the film space is thus clearly influenced, at this point, by John's gaze. However, it is obviously impossible that John can be present somewhere offscreen in the rest of the shots: the focaliser here has to be exclusively external. But it is equally true that, in receiving the information provided by these shots, the viewer is still influenced by the fact that it was originally John that was looking at the city.[3]

I have said that the simultaneity of external and internal focalisation is a feature of classical film narration. The external focaliser can, within the conventions of this cinema, interrupt internal focalisation in order to ensure a clearer perception for the viewer than that of the character. This happens even in all forms of subjectivity, except in the purely subjective shot (when the camera is placed exactly in the same position from which the internal focaliser is supposed to be looking). Semi-subjective shots and eyeline matches, for example, usually provide us with more, or better, information than the character has. But in all of these cases, the internal gaze is crucial and narration is articulated around it. The tension between external and internal focalisation cannot break the implicit laws of the code.

It could be argued that the correct interpretation of the textual strategies at work in this passage is that the film uses the eyeline match, not primarily as a subjective cue, but as the most efficient way of objectively presenting the scene. As I said above, the eyeline match is a basic component of the

classical continuity system. This interpretation, however, undercuts the narrative importance of John's gaze and consequently eliminates from the scene an element which is constantly at work elsewhere in the film. What is more, the shot of New York seems to come chronologically after John's gaze. In the Classical Hollywood code, a dissolve usually stands for a short ellipsis. One sense of the various dissolves and quick cuts of this scene is the smoothness of presentation, the impression that there are no abrupt changes, chronological or otherwise, from one shot to the next. From her/his experience with other classical films, the viewer who sees this film for the first time probably expects to rejoin John, a little nearer to the port, when the shots of New York have ended.[4] It is clear that, at the point in which we rejoin John in the office, some time has passed from the time of his gaze, but, because of the nature of the eyeline match and because of the very few definite temporal clues that we are given in the subsequent shots, we expect this time to be approximately similar to the textual time that has elapsed. It is uncertain whether at the beginning of the scene John has already got his job at the office. But even if he has, not enough time has passed for him to have left the boat and got to the office, since no markers of significant ellipses (that the spectator of a classical film could understand as such) have been provided by the text.

What I am trying to suggest is that when the camera is moving along the office inside the huge building, the viewer does not expect to see John sitting at one of the desks because we think he is still on the boat, probably talking to the other passenger. External focalisation can interrupt internal focalisation but it does not usually "unlawfully" suffocate it. The shot of the office is somehow still under the influence of the eyeline match. It is a part of the same syntagma as shot B. Therefore, we are faced with a situation in which the subject of the eyeline match in shot A is also the main object in shot B. The focaliser focalises himself, without any particular time indicators.[5]

There are two important laws manipulated here: the logic of time and the logic of the simultaneity of internal and external focalisation. From the point of view of the spectator, two things have happened which we, from our viewing competence, did not expect: a much longer fabula time has elapsed than we thought during the textual block of the description of New York and, when the office shot is taking place, John is not, as we thought, looking at Manhattan from a boat.

I may be giving the impression that the film is being criticised here for its inconsistency and imperfections. This is not my aim. There are two important

events that are being narrated in the scene: John's physical and metaphorical approach to Manhattan when we first see him as an adult, and his starting point in professional life as a clerk in an enormous office. These two fabula events can be manipulated in various ways at story level, and presented through a number of devices in the text. From all the alternatives, the film chooses a particular one: one in which the two events are joined together by using some strategies of the classical code of representation but not in the classical way. It is obvious that, as the scene stands, everything is perfectly understandable. The clarity of exposition which classical cinema seeks is only minimally undermined here. At the very most, our expectations are cheated, although we might not even be conscious of it. I am interested, therefore, in finding out how the mode of presentation chosen works on the viewer's understanding of the narrative. One obvious consequence of the irregularity is that, as in the case of the camera movement in the final shot, the mechanisms of narration and the arbitrariness of film signification move to the front, at least for a short while. By noticing the unexplained change in focalisation, the viewer draws his/her attention to the textual elements at work rather than to the contents of the fabula. Our interest in the narrative, in what is going to happen next, is arrested and replaced by an interest in how the narrative is being conveyed.

I have said that the whole of the film may be seen as included within the two movements of the camera inside the office and at the show. The scene that we have just considered could also be interpreted metaphorically as a summary of the film. Elsewhere the passage of unimportant time is conveyed through ellipses. Then the scenes between the ellipses emphasise the impression that, in spite of the passage of time, the protagonist is not progressing towards his goal. Here time — textual time — is playing a trick on us and, indirectly (metaphorically), also on John. When we still think that he is getting prepared to face the great city, time has hurried on unnoticed to show him already defeated, already crushed like the rest of his fellow citizens. We have not even been given the chance to savour the exhilaration of the immediacy of the fight. Before we realise it, the thing is done. Time, like in the ellipses, has once again defeated John. This is, at any rate, something that the character is not conscious of yet. The manipulation of the time structure is not dependent on an internal psychological attitude towards it on his part. It is artificially imposed on the fabula, metaphorically anticipating its outcome.

The irregularity of the focalising agents is perhaps more clearly metaphorical. The importance of focalisation lies in the fact that the

focaliser, internal or external, has the power to present the film space to the viewer from its own perspective. What we interpret as reality is only the focaliser's perception of it. In this case, John's internal focalisation in the eyeline match runs parallel to his conviction that he can stand out, above everybody else in New York, above the tall skyscrapers and the crowded streets. He looks at Manhattan and his vision of it is presented to us as if he seemed capable of emcompassing it with his view, of framing it within his perception. The trick is played again on John from above, from outside the fabula. From one side to the other of the cut in the eyeline match, the focaliser becomes focalised, threateningly focalised. All the power that had been conferred him by granting him focalisation is "unjustifiably" taken away from him. By the end of the scene it is not within his possibilities to frame anything, because he has been cruelly framed, picked out as the illustration for the viewer of the crowd to which he felt so superior. The narrative inversion of focalisation, which, at a superficial level, works just as a textual strategy to join two elements together, becomes an image of the process suffered by the hero throughout the film.

Subjectivity is not always the function of an eyeline match. Objective narration usually profits from it in classical films. This is not the case of this scene from *The Crowd*. The eyeline match is here subjective, but the subsequent dissolves and camera movements snatch this subjectivity away from the development of the narrative in such a way that the subject becomes object. It is not, as in *2001,* that he is looking at himself. What has really happened is that the narrative has disavowed his gaze. The classical code is meant to trick the spectator into believing that the fabula is narrating itself. Here the trick becomes perceptible and we are no longer its object, as we are made conscious that the subject has been made into an object, by an arbitrary choice of the narrating agents. In a similar way, within the world of the fabula, Time and Fate have played a trick on John and, as the camera sweeps away from him at the end of the film, the spectator might wonder what he is laughing at or, perhaps, who is laughing at whom.

NOTES

1. I am aware that I am giving a rather partial interpretation of the scene, which somehow ignores its most positive aspects: the healing powers of laughter and the indestructible quality of the comic spirit in the human being, which makes her/him

forget her/his unhappy lot in this world. A similar scene from a later film which makes this point much more plainly is the jail scene in *Sullivan's Travels* (1941), in which the black prisoners in a remote Southern jail in America find temporary relief from their unpleasant routine in an old film cartoon.

2. In a much more recent film, *Working Girl* (1988), the closing shot is an interesting mixture of these two, and curiously, with a similar, if updated, meaning. After the main character Tess McGill (another "victim," like Thomas Hardy's character, played by Melanie Griffith) has been promoted to a managerial post, she is framed in her new office from outside the window. Then the camera starts zooming back and we find that the office is one among many, in a huge block in the centre of Manhattan. The "happy ending" (Tess, unlike John, seems to have fulfilled her dream) is undermined here in a similar way to that of *The Crowd*. Another shot in this film, with Tess on board a boat approaching Manhattan, as she sets to "conquer" it, suggests further textual connections with King Vidor's film.

3. A comparable shot occurs in *King Kong* (1933), when the film crew arrive on the island and, from behind some bushes situated at a considerable distance, watch the native tribe performing the ritualistic dance that precedes the sacrifice. After an eyeline match, shot B of which also works as an establishing shot, we get an analytical breakdown which shows several details of the ceremony that the internal focalisers cannot possibly see from their position. After this sequence, we see the main characters still looking from the same point and discussing their plan of action. This shot respects the laws of classical film narration. It would have been more similar to our example if in one of the shots that describe the dance, the character played by Fay Wray had become the sacrificial victim.

4. The nature of film narrative is such that descriptions, like the one of New York here, are interpreted as occupying story time by the viewer. Breaches of this narrative law are not expected to occur by the spectator of a classical film. The length of fabula time that this story time represents depends, of course, on the temporal clues provided by the text.

5. An internal focaliser can focalise himself in the past in a flashback, but we can probably say that the focaliser and focalised are here two different agents. A more obvious example of a focaliser who focalises himself in the present is the final scene of *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968), in which a series of eyeline matches and shot/reverse shots show the astronaut looking at himself as an older man, then as a dying man. But this is not a classical film, and the text is playing here with the arbitrariness of film representation.

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METAFICTION AND SOCIAL COMMITMENT

IN PYNCHON'S *V.*

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The title of this paper may strike the reader as paradoxical since metafictional practices have been usually regarded as the fullest expression of narcissistic artistic creation. In the twentieth century, narrative modes have evolved towards artistic forms which very often try to use inner reflections about their own processes in order to present their themes. They show a predilection for the contents which are directly or metaphorically related to the creative process, usually with the purpose of proving how narratives create worlds independent from reality and therefore reveal themselves and reality as human constructs (Waugh 1984: 49). This conclusion often leads critics to consider the texts either the last shelter for order in a degrading, chaotic world, or the best proof that the outside world is no longer reliable, a threat which is extended to them in their foregrounding of their narrative mechanisms. The assumption that the world is decaying is in itself an implicit social commentary, but some narratives show a more explicit position towards the role of literature in the modern world, some of them even adopting a revolutionary stance.

In her *Narcissistic Narrative: The Metafictional Paradox* Linda Hutcheon argues that metafiction does have a social side as it explicitly establishes links with reality. For her, metafiction, apart from flaunting its creative methods, constantly forces the reader to perform activities very similar to those required of him/her in the perception and understanding of real life. It is a vital genre which can even lead into political action:

> Reading and writing belong to the processes of "life" as much as they do to those of "art." It is this realization that constitutes one side of the paradox of metafiction for the reader. On the one hand, he is forced to acknowledge the artifice, the "art," of what he is reading; on the other, explicit demands are made upon him, as a co-creator, for intellectual and affective responses comparable in scope and intensity

> to those of his life experience. In fact, these responses are shown to be part of his life experience. In this light metafiction is less a departure from the mimetic novelistic tradition than a reworking of it. It is simplistic to say, as reviewers did for years, that this kind of narrative is sterile, that it has nothing to do with "life." (1991: 5).

> If self-reflecting texts can actually lure the reader into participating in the creation of a novelistic universe, perhaps he can also be seduced into action--even direct political action. (1991: 155).

This idea implies a conception of the processes of the human mind and of literature as effective interpretive methods. It assumes that both can establish valid links between life and the subject and, what is relevant here, that literature is a reliable tool for the analysis of reality. In this paper I will try to show how *V.* provides an original view of social commitment in literature, and how this view is based on a different notion of literature as method of analysis which the novel introduces. In order to do this, I will study *V.* as a parody of reflexive literature and its mechanisms. *V.* therefore transcends reflexivity, proposing a return to social commitment and a rejection of reflexivity's self-indulgence.

At a fabulaic[1] level *V.* presents two distinguishable lines of plot which take place in the 1950s in North America and whose main characters are Stencil and Profane. Stencil is the son of a late member of the British Foreign Office who was a witness to important historical events at the turn of the century. His son is engaged in the search of a pattern of development which would connect several historical facts, and would therefore explain them as part of a general conspiracy. The only clue he seems to have is the presence of the letter *V* in all the cases he investigates. The letter seems at times to stand for a woman (Veronica), at times for a mysterious country (Vheissu), even for a comb; but he never succeeds in finding a link between the different examples of *V* he encounters. In the process of his investigation he contacts several people who offer him the hope of a meaning for *V* and therefore for the end of his search. The clues these different characters provide are presented in the form of narratives, stories usually dealing with past events. Stencil's quest will be a failure as he faces too many examples of a possible clue, but not a single one that can invest all the others with meaning. The last chapter is a narrative introduced by the narrator of the novel dealing with Stencil's father's stay in Malta at the beginning of the century. It seems to offer the possibility of a final conclusion and clarification of the son's quest,

but it ends when the father drowns in the Mediterranean, possibly suggesting a mythical answer (of regeneration = meaning through death by water) but never confirming it.

The second line of plot shows Profane, an unemployed young man (formerly a sailor), in his purposeless ramblings. He moves along the American East Coast doing odd jobs and sleeping in his friends' houses, without showing the least interest in staying anywhere. He constantly reminds us he is Jewish and claims to be a schlemiehl at odds with society. He fails to commit himself to anything or anybody because he always feels the urge to continue his journey, even though he does not know where he is going or what he wants to find. Several women try to make him stay but they never really manage to persuade him to do so. He spends the time in bars and parties, getting drunk in the company of The Whole Sick Crew, a group mixture of ex-sailors and trendy artists, who do not seem to have any aim in their lives apart from trying to get laid as often as possible. Profane and Stencil's lines of plot meet when Stencil comes to New York after a clue. In the end Profane will accompany Stencil to Malta, where the clues seem to be leading them; but, after checking the clue is no good, Stencil flies away leaving Profane on his own, in the same place where Profane's plot had started (he had previously been in Malta as a sailor). Profane is back at the starting point but without the least idea of what he is doing there. Both lines of plot emphasise the uselessness of the characters' search and development, and leave the reader with a massive collection of stories and references whose obscurity does not allow him/her to form a coherent story.

One of the main themes of the novel is its discussion of history as a valid tool of knowledge and analysis of reality. The conclusion several characters reach is that history cannot be an objective account because it is a human construct, which is always inaccurate because men try to impose a human design or development on events which lacked it. This idea is explicitly mentioned by Fausto Maijstral[2] in one of the framed narratives:

> The writing itself even constitutes another rejection, another "character" added to the past. So we do sell our souls: paying them away to history in little installments. It isn't so much to pay for eyes clear enough to see past the fiction of continuity, the fiction of cause and effect, the fiction of a humanized history endowed with "reason." (*V.* 306).[3]

History is therefore only the record of the human desire to find a valid structure in reality, one that can help man understand what is illogical or irrational by nature. In this sense, the novel also refers to literature as one more construction which does not manage to apprehend reality and bring it closer to us for inspection. *V.* is a self-parodying text as its reflexive hints in fact emphasise the novel's incapacity to completely shape its material and bestow a truthful meaning on it. The novel is presented as a self-contained game where the clues for its understanding are to be found in itself, but the huge amount of information which the novel offers in fact prevents the reader from apprehending those clues, in a clear parodic reference to literature's universally acknowledged claim to be a link between the reader and external reality. *V.* is an instance of imitative form, a work of art whose form imitates its contents, both pointing at the same conclusions.

In a similar fashion, the narrator is parodied in its alleged role of intermediary with the world of referents. The novel constantly presents elements which help to build up an extradiegetic narrator, which flaunts its being in control of all the different narratives inside the text. But, again those references, once put together, do not allow the reader to construct a clear thesis or development. The reader is not in the end offered an unambiguous account of events which s/he shares with the narrator. So, on several occasions we find references to various revelation scenes which take place at different times: first, Profane believes to be before a revelation while he works in New York when, in Father Fairing's sewer crypt, he sees a light flickering; only we, the readers, will know through the extradiegetic narrator that the light was in fact a torch Stencil carried in his ramblings along the sewers, also adding a great deal of irony to Profane's hope of a revelation. Later on, during one of their usual binges, Profane and his Puerto Rican friends attend an Italian party in the street, and the scene is rendered as a "tourist's confusion of tongues" (*V.* 140). Again a reference to Pentecost, which in this case is described as a denied revelation. There are no tongues of flame which bring understanding and knowledge, but a confusion of tongues which derives into incommunication. In the final chapter there is another reference: "Spring had descended with its own tongue of flame. Valletta seemed soul-kissed into drowsy complaisance as Stencil mounted the hill southeast of Strada Reale toward Fairing's church" (*V.* 485). Here, an event which happened in 1919 contains the same reference to revelation and Pentecost that we found in the chapters devoted to Profane and placed in the 1950s. In all the cases the revelation and the knowledge which it promises never take place and the characters continue to face an impenetrable reality.

A similar example is the appearance of the word *outlandish* , both in the main narrative and in one of the narratives-within-the narrative. It appears in the account of the events in Florence, a story which is supposedly narrated extradiegetically by Eigenvalue, in a reference to Vheissu: "Vheissu, of course. A summons he couldn't ignore, Vheissu. He understood. Hadn't it been their only nexus for longer than Evan could remember; had it not stood preeminent in his catalogue of *outlandish* regions where the Establishment held no sway?" (*V.* 157) (italics mine). And it also appears in the accounts of Profane and the Whole Sick Crew, which are narrated by the extradiegetic narrator: Winsome's record company is called *Outlandish* Records. In both cases the reference is to elements which are supposed to be different and independent from the general trends, either political or musical. The narrator appears as all-controlling and therefore points to its own artificial activity by putting together apparently disconnected themes. But in general it is not a guarantee for development in the narrative or a progressive configuration of meaning, as John W. Hunt says:

> Within the first few pages a special relationship between the reader and the narrator is established by the latter's mode of direct address; ... (certain passages) indicate that what we are being given here is something in the nature of a report, an attempt to put data before us from any and all points of view by a narrator who refuses commitment to any specific meaning or set of meanings the material might suggest. (1981: 34).

V. parodies language's supposedly direct relationship with reality. The use of intertextual references reveals the existence of a certain amount of polysemic material in the novel. The text presents many elements which link it with T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land,* but the presence of this text within *V.* does not transform any component of the novel into a clear reproduction of any element in the poem. There is always room for uncertainty and hints of parody. Profane's story explicitly parallels the development of the poem, especially with respect to its concern with the decay of love, replaced by sex. This development is presented in the form of a mythical progress towards regeneration, with the implied rebirth that myths (after all accounts of the passing of seasons and of man's communion with nature) inevitably offer. Profane's affairs with Paola and Rachel Owlglass are empty experiences where he is unable to respond to the women's demands or to commit himself to any. His fear of the inanimate has a correlate in the second section of the poem, in a reference to cosmetics as something which distracts from the

object, drawing attention to themselves. At the end of the poem the Fisher King is left alone, in a similar way Profane is alone in New York at the end of the first chapter of the novel. On the other hand, many references point to the absence of development in Profane throughout the narrative. At the end of chapter one he says that he has not learned a single thing, something he will repeat in chapter sixteen in his last appearance. How are we to interpret this character then? Is he a mythical figure and then all his "yo-yoing" has a sense because it is the expression of endless renewal, or is he just a drifter and his life lacks a purpose? Or is yo-yoing the perpetual state of the seeker, always hoping for a meaning in the outside? In any case, the novel sets loose this complex set of inferences but it refuses to present one of them as the most plausible and valid. It foregrounds language's complex relationship with reality by making the novel refer to another literary form, and by showing that even a linguistic reference to another product of language is problematic and uncertain.

The metaphorical and metonymical functions of language are also parodied. The relationship of language to reality is symbolic. Language offers a certain number of signs which stand for something they cannot offer: the thing itself. These signs can appear in many different instances, one of the assumptions on which language is built being that the meaning of a sign is kept even when it is displaced from the original context in which it was created. A sign is therefore created by opposition to the different signs which surround it but, after it abandons this initial context, it keeps the same original meaning in all the instances in which it appears. It has a particular birth but it can be applied in the general context of language. Derrida has proved that this basic assumption of Saussurean linguistics is not true because, if the sign depends on its context to acquire its meaning, then a change of context will inevitably lead to a change in the meaning of the sign. What is true in a particular instance cannot be automatically assumed to be true in all the possible instances, and the same sign cannot be assured to always refer to the same referent (Brunette and Wills 1989: 179). A sign cannot reproduce reality and it cannot keep the same metaphorical relationship with reality in different contexts, but both the metaphorical and the metonymical functions must nevertheless be maintained in order to create at least the illusion of a coherent system of communication, always conveying relationships and never truths. It is this state of affairs that *V.* attacks.

In *V.* mises-en-abyme are examples of textual reflexive mechanisms which offer the illusion of a link between a particular part of the text and the whole of it, or another part, but which in the end are revealed not to

contribute to the final definition of the novel. They are examples of the text's parodying the metonymical side of language. The clearest example of mise-en-abyme is the confessions of Fausto Maijstral, where we find most of the textual and thematic elements which constitute the frame narrative. Fausto refers to himself in the third person, he says that history can only be made by dissecting an event or a character into its components, and this must be obviously done from the outside. He plays at referring to himself as if he were a compendium of different personalities. He is the equivalent of the extradiegetic narrator we find in the frame narrative and makes explicit what the latter only says implicitly: the role of poets and poetry is to use metaphors in order to make the world believe that its products and organisations are ruled by the same rules as man. The task of poets is to lie, to pretend that their metaphors have value apart from this deceiving function:

> Living as he does in a world of metaphor, the poet is always acutely conscious that metaphor has no value apart from its function; that it is a device, an artifice. So that while others may look on the laws of physics as legislation and God as human form with beard measured in light-years and nebulae for sandals, Fausto's kind are alone with the task of living in a universe of things which simply are, and cloaking that innate mindlessness with comfortable and pious metaphor so that the "practical" half of humanity may continue in the Great Lie, confident that their machines, dwellings, streets and weather share the same human motives, personal traits and fits of contrariness as they. (*V.* 325-326)

Fausto quotes other texts and transforms them in the process because he inscribes them in a different context, the context of his confessions. Precisely, what the frame narrative is doing with these confessions is to transform them, as they are presented to Stencil who will distort them in his search for an all-informing meaning. Stencil will try to find in them a metaphoric or metonymic meaning which may help him understand the rest of the clues he has come across. This framed narrative also includes the theme of the fight between the animate and the inanimate in the introduction of the Bad Priest, a figure who represents the advance of the inanimate until the final disassembly, suggesting a reversal of Jesus Christ's death. She (the priest is revealed to be a woman, linking her with other appearances of V.) is killed by a group of children, as if she were the negative side of a mythic figure (is Christ not one?). It is therefore suggested that a regeneration and rebirth may be expected, but there is no certainty of it as, similarly, there will be no

certainty of the development of the characters in the frame narrative, or that their quest for meaning will be rewarded in the future. This is so because the characters are looking for a pattern of development in their realities whose existence nobody can assure, the pattern is only the expression of man's desire to find it, to find a human logic in life. The parody lies precisely in that what these confessions contain can be metonymically applied to the frame narrative, but that this move does not mean the meaning of the text is clarified at all.

The metaphoric side of language is object of parody through the workings of doppelgängers, another reflexive strategy (Stonehill 1988: 30-31). The text is peopled by characters which are a reduplication of others: Stencil is a reduplication of his father, Profane of Stencil (and viceversa) and both Profane and Stencil are surrogates for the reader. But none of the alleged originals can control its copies, none of the copies can be said to be exactly like the originals. Stencil's father's investigations about some examples of V. are of no help to his son; Profane is a Stencil whose consciousness is too broad to comprehend everything that happens to him, while Stencil has adopted the narrow scheme of the V. and tries to accommodate the whole of his reality to this pattern (Tanner 1982: 42). Both perform similar activities but neither of them can be said to be the original which controls the other. They are the readers in the text, they try to decode all the available information in a similar way to the reader, who strives to find out the hidden clue to the understanding of the whole novel and never manages to get it. Doppelgängers are in fact parodying the reader's useless search, because they reproduce the different attitudes the reader may adopt towards the massive information the text contains: the reader may look for a single clue which clarifies everything as Stencil does, or s/he may search for a development which provides a meaning in the way Profane faces his predicament. In the end we, like them, are left with only a collection of data and our subjective pattern imposed on them, which is nothing but the hope, the desire, the faith that those data have such a pattern. The discussion on history which the text performs throughout shows a certain concern with the relations between reality and the accounts written about it, between reality and fiction, which is parallel to the discussion the novel performs about itself (another reflexive element). The already mentioned concept of original and copy is at the bottom of this dispute, the incapacity of the original to rule its copies and of the copies to be identical with the original because they appear in different contexts. The conclusion of the text's reflections about history, and implicitly about itself, is that the records of an event are always distorted by the new

context in which they are reproduced. The parody resides in the fact that the text acknowledges this, its being a metaphor, but in the end seems to refuse even to provide us with a clear knowledge of what the imaginary pole of the metaphor is, of what the text is saying, independently of what it stands for. As Richard Patteson says:

> Metaphor itself is, as Fausto Maijstral realizes, a kind of disguise, and the plot centering on the murder of Porpentine may be nothing more than an elaborate system of impersonation and speculation whose purpose is to disguise the truth: that there is no pattern, no cause and effect sequence, no recoverable story, no history. (1981: 22).

The reflexive novel has been traditionally understood as a mirror of conciousness, as a narrative mode which, by pointing to its own artificial nature, presents a new insight on the relationship of man with reality. The human being is a creator of constructs, human consciousness is also an artificial creation because it is based on systems of reference, like language, which are nothing but illusions of presence, of knowledge. The Wittgensteinian idea of the I constitutes a strong defense of reflexive literature. The I, the self, cannot observe and examine itself unless it adopts a detached position from which to apprehend the system to which it belongs. The I requires a mirror in which to analyse its reflected image (Kawin 1982: 8-12). Reflexivity in literature is an attempt of the work to explore its own nature and possibilities. At the same time, this construction of a mirror in which the subject becomes simultaneously object is very close to the idea of myth. As Richard Wasson points out, myth in modern theory works as a mode of perception which provides the unstable subjective self with a world order that transcends individuality. Myths function to get the subject beyond himself/herself. They turn history into a drama which can be incorporated into the self, they expand consciousness allowing it to include the drama of the world:

> In this sense myth is a perceptual device for including the other within the self; but for the process to work the individual personality must discipline itself by playing roles, by becoming other than self. (1981: 14-15).

This hope of integrative meaning both the reflexive novel and the idea of myth as metaphor of life promise is nevertheless contradicted in the novel because, as we can see, the reflexive mechanisms are refused the capacity to

provide a definite knowledge about the meaning of the novel. Many references in the text to processes of observation (Profane is described as an observer on several occasions) which do not lead to knowledge are therefore unveiled now as mises-en-abyme of the more general process the novel undergoes. *V.* represents an attack on any idea of knowledge which involves distance from the object of analysis: language and empirical observation are doomed to failure because they are distanced from what they try to analyse. The novel is a reflection on rationality's inability to apprehend what is not directly present for its analysis. *V.* therefore inscribes itself in a tradition of irrationalism which has been promoted in the 20th century by several philosophers, Jacques Derrida being the most representative and best-known among them. The text shows how this alleged capacity of rationality and language to apprehend consciousness of the self and external reality has also been traditionally used by the dominant classes in order to oppress the rest of society. In our novel this capacity is denied and this fact is foregrounded by its resistance to clearly present its meanings, making explicit that all attempts at codification are in fact attempts at manipulating information.

Some characters exemplify this theme, mainly those belonging to Profane's section. The Whole Sick Crew and Profane live in the paradox of being actual resistance to the codifying activity of society, refusing therefore to create stories, and of requiring at the same time those stories in order to go on living. They are never creative, but they keep using second-hand views about people and art in their everyday conversations. Winsome, a member of The Whole Sick Crew, seems to be most aware of it as he despises his wife's Mafia's pretensions to be a writer:

> He'd had another fight with Mafia in the afternoon, over playing tapes of McClintic Sphere's group in the parlor while she was trying to create in the bedroom.
>
> "If you ever tried to create," she yelled, "instead of live off what other people create, you'd understand."
>
> "Who creates," Winsome said. "Your editor, publisher? Without them, girl, you would be nowhere." (*V.* 348).

The progress of the inanimate is one of the great themes of the novel: the advance of technology, the substitution of machines for human beings appears as related to the decay of this world. The inanimate is at times presented as the representative of codification, of pattern imposed by the system of society. Profane is threatened by the inanimate, empty love of Rachel Owlglass. On one of the many occassions on which they get close, Profane asks himself

whether she can be human at all in these terms: "Only a general desire to find somebody for once on the right or real side of the TV screen? What made her hold any promise of being any more human?" (*V.* 359). The inhuman or inanimate is on the side of the TV, real people are on the right, real side. The inanimate is all that contributes to the creation of history, which is built up by the powerful in order to oppress the poor. To this, the animated humans must oppose by making those constructions impossible to be effected, by changing all the time, by moving, escaping the threat of definition which the bourgeoisie will impose on them if they stop moving and accommodate in a static position. But at the same time stories (also patterns) give Profane the illusion that his yo-yoing will lead him to a destination, while knowing that to reach his destination is to submit to the inanimate, to allow being rewritten by history and the bourgeoisie. Profane's presence in the novel is constantly punctuated by what seem to be dim references to a mythic progression. His problems with women, his inability to respond to the demands of the different women in his life, link him with *The Waste Land,* where the same theme of the decay of love related to the absence of a religious faith appears (Eliot 1952: 47-72). His stay with the Puerto Ricans and his job killing alligators in the sewers of New York reminds of the death of the Fisher King in Eliot's poem, and might be read as a temporary death common to so many classical fertility myths. Myths where for instance the goddess stays under-ground for six months (corresponding to the autumn and winter) and comes back to the surface in spring, bringing regeneration. Profane returns to street level and resumes his rollicking in a scene which echoes a mythic call: he bumps into a negro who brings the mail to the office where he is waiting to be interviewed for a job, which would mean his definite submission to the establishment; outside the wind blows, he suddenly changes his mind about the job and walks out of the office and into the street. But what promises to be some kind of renewal, of rebirth once he resumes his previous life as a yo-yo does not in fact take place. Profane will keep rollicking for the whole of the novel, always suggesting some kind of development or hope that his predicament is the previous stage for a regeneration and a meaningful life, a hope which will remain unfulfilled. In a similar way the text seems to follow a mythical development in the alternation between Profane's sections and Stencil's. The Whole Sick Crew and Profane provide stages of apparent decay in all respects (morality, religion, culture, etc...), and the constant reappearance of Stencil seems to offer the hope that our "private eye" will reach a definite and meaningful answer to his quest, one which will invest the rest of the material with meaning. This hope will not be fulfilled, but the ending will present us

Stencil's father being engulfed by the waters of the Mediterranean sea, a clear mythical reference which again demands that the reader should use his/her faith if s/he is to confer a dimly unambiguous meaning to *V.* .

In the same chapter where Profane and Rachel get friendly Winsome, a member of the Whole Sick Crew, considers suicide as a way of putting an end to a world where stories enslave him by jumping from a storey, the story which "holds" him alive:

> Winsome came awake from a dream of defenestration, wondering why he hadn't thought of it before. From Rachel's bedroom window it was seven stories to a courtyard used for mean purposes only: drunks' evacuation, a dump for old beer cans and mop-dust, the pleasures of nighttime cats. How his cadaver could glorify that! (*V.* 359)

He defines the members of the Whole Sick Crew, ascribes them his story, his version of them, and then goes on to jump but... Pig Bodine grabs him just in time. In the end the whole neighbourhood open the window and become an audience for their performance (story), even Elvis Presley sounds in the background, rounding off a perfect spectacle. Winsome's attempt to stop being just a story is in the end frustrated because he is too noisy and accidentally awakes the neighbours' curiosity. By becoming an object of observation he and Pig Bodine become part of a story again. They are again under control, in the hands of the narrator.

McClintic Sphere seems to provide the answer to such a predicament. In his talk with Paola he reaches the conclusion that the only answer to the pair cool/crazy is to keep cool but care: "Love with your mouth shut, help without breaking your ass or publicizing it: keep cool but care. He might have known, if he'd used any common sense. It didn't come as a revelation, only something he'd as soon not've admitted" (*V.* 366). Being cool seems the right attitude to survive in an increasingly inhuman world, but this attitude contributes to inhumanity by the denial of love, concern. The opposite, being crazy, is too dangerous because it contains a tremendous destructive potential (Tanner 1982: 49,50). He proposes to love without letting anybody know one loves because then it is impossible to remain cool. He sees in incommunication the answer to his personal problems with Paola (his girlfriend), in what seems to be a hint at an answer for a larger issue. He proposes a way of life in which one is aware of the process of inanimation which is going on through the spreading of stories, and at the same time one attempts to fight it by not becoming stagnant, by moving all the time. This

constant movement may lead the individual to become incommunicated from the outside, but this must be avoided, the individual must do both things at the same time: to be aware and concerned. This attitude must not be publicised because it would mean being ruled by stories, the individual must not let anybody know that s/he cares because they will want to engulf him/her into a comfortable, dead life; the individual will become part of history, will be manipulated and falsified. McClintic's proposal is ultimately to maintain a social awareness but at the same time to avoid publicising attitudes because this means creating a discourse and discourses are always distorted by the system. This conclusion may help to explain why Pynchon has always refused to appear in public, why his novels are so obscure and perhaps why he stopped writing for a fairly long spell after the publication of *The Crying of Lot 49*.[4] *V.* proposes to escape and transcend the traditionally dual way of thinking by proving how it is in fact a false duality, because thought is based on language and one may add a further way out, namely to stop using language.

Thomas Pynchon's *V.* contains many and obvious metafictional devices but its implicit notion of social awareness or social commitment is somehow different from Hutcheon's. The text makes the reader's comprehension, the creation of a heterocosm in the mind of the reader, very difficult, far more than his/her everyday processes of understanding. It finds in this activity the subversive function of metafiction: the novel avoids being easily interpreted, patterned and therefore falsified. *V.* sees in pattern the opposite of truth because truth is never logical and patterns are formed according to logical premises. Truth never follows the human logic, logic is a human construct. It therefore attacks the activity of literature itself because literary forms have always striven to be communicative and clarity is implicitly demanded in all communication. It suggests that only literature which obstructs its comprehension will be socially committed: obscure literature, literature which does not publicise its aims directly. *V.* goes beyond Hutcheon's idea, it acknowledges literature's capacity to study reality but only within its own subjectivity and restricted one-sidedness; because literature cannot apprehend reality as it is, it can only offer an illusion of presence, never the thing itself (Derrida 1988: 5-6).

Actually, Linda Hutcheon mentions a similar kind of metafictional practice in her book. The writers gathered around the journal *Tel Quel* attempted an obscure narrative mode where words were generated according to an artificial logic which they did not usually explain to the reader. This challenge to representation ran the risk of becoming non-representational if

the reader failed to understand the internal logic of the text; in that case the text would stop being metafictional (Hutcheon 1991: 120-125). Its political effectiveness is therefore in direct proportion to its clarity, denying non-representational instances any subversive power. Committed writing usually presents the reader with a text which on the one hand embodies in its textual mechanisms a challenge to its own comprehension (assuming that dominant processes are devoted to the perpetuation of a burgeois society) and on the other reveals that its effectiveness, as in all fiction, resides in its capacity to offer a clear meaning. *V.* is not explicit because it suggests that explicitness is precisely the worst political strategy, as it enables the establishment to dominate and falsify subversive attempts; and I would say that this is the more truthful and applicable to a text like *V.* , whose only political intention is to unmask the theoretical workings of oppression, not the actual ones. *V.*'s textual and thematic metafictional components build up a novel which refuses to allow the reader to decode it completely, always leaving a certain amount of the text which escapes our comprehension. This attitude is explicitly attacking the activity of the critic too, because what criticism aims to do is to codify every text, to interpret it completely. *V.* argues that criticism also falsifies the text, as the critic distorts it according to his/her already acquired knowledge. The novel is therefore a criticism on rationality and ultimately on the text itself; this is the reason why it strives to be unusually obtrusive and obscure, in order to posit a new way in which the novel can be political and literary at the same time. Besides, *V.* is a constant commentary on itself by means of reflexive mechanisms which ultimately parody the workings of the text at organising and clarifying thematic stuff, at conveying truth (reality). The final answer is provided by the obscurity produced through the accumulation of much more information than the reader can process. *V.*, like any other text, cannot guarantee to provide reality as it is. It chooses to flaunt the reader's recourse to faith in the link between signifier and signified in order to point out that the text is the only thing the reader has (an illusion of presence), and in order to make it difficult for the establishment to distort the novel. The massive accumulation of information ultimately points to the novel's attempt to destroy the idea that the conventional systems of language or rationality are the only possible ones. This social commitment may be understood as a reaction to the specific situation of the USA among post-industrial societies. The United States' lack of a long historical past has created the idea that only the present can be known, while the past (e.g. the Vietnam War) is constantly rewritten and accommodated to the country's necessities. It may also be a reaction to the absence of a progressive political

force which might control the traditional conservatism of most USA governments. This absence has enabled those in power to impose social structures without acknowledging before the country that they were doing so. American people have therefore got the impression that only what is apparent and present exists. *V.* is precisely an attempt at showing that what is apparent does not usually make sense if we reflect about it.

V. proposes the abandonment of language because it only offers dual structures, either/or alternatives which are always presented as excluding ones; the novel proposes the absence of language as a further alternative. This proposal may seem a mere metaphysical stance without any traces of social commitment, therefore introducing the issue of the political capacity of literature. I find it very difficult to imagine a kind of literature which can be considered socially committed nowadays if we do not accept that metaphysical stances are signs of social commitment. Literature of the kind Pynchon writes is not precisely well-known among non-academic people, and it is therefore very difficult that it may change public opinion to the extent of influencing its decisions. The only chance for literature to approximate such commitment is by creating metaphysical attitudes which manage to throw light on the power relationships at work in society. Social commitment is therefore only implicit, never explicit, in texts like *V.*

NOTES

1. I am here adopting Mieke Bal's terminology and concepts (1985).

2. Fausto Maijstral is the narrator and main character in what perhaps is the most illuminating framed narrative in the novel. It deals with Fausto's account of his own life in a recent past in Malta. His interest for literature and the concern with the state of Malta (oscillating between the influence of Britain and Italy) work as excuses for long discussions and reflections on language and history.

3. The edition of the novel I will be referring to is: Thomas Pynchon, *V.* (1963); London: Picador, 1975.

4. The fact that Pynchon returned to literature after such a period of silence, he has since written *Gravity's Rainbow* and *Vineland* , might be an implicit recognition that he no longer shares the views he exposed in *V.*

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METAFICTIONAL GAMES IN *CHATTERTON*

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And then we´ll decode Chatterton
O lovely delusion
(*Chatterton,* 57)

Peter Ackroyd´s celebrated fourth novel, first published in 1987 and entitled *Chatterton,* continues the line already opened and established by his previous novels *The Great Fire of London* (1982), *The Last Testament of Oscar Wilde* (1983) and especially *Hawksmoor* (1985). They all pose questions for readers of fiction as well as for readers of history concerning the meaning and the scope of these two terms. They also deal with the issue of the recapture of the past from the present and the echoes of that past that pervade the present.

The aim of this paper is the study of Ackroyd´s *Chatterton* as a metafictional work, as a novel self-conscious of its own procedures and of the subject-matter it deals with. The most appropriate critical study of a novel whose main concern is with the issue of plagiarism and forgery might be one that would adapt, copy or interpret previous studies of it. Due to a lack of a substancial and specific critical corpus on Ackroyd´s novel, however, I will have to content myself with adapting, copying and interpreting the novel itself and with quoting from some critical references to it, and I am conscious of it.

Central to the metafictional concern of the novel and to its story is the figure of Thomas Chatterton. The official historical account of his life tells us that he was born in Bristol in 1752 and died in London in August 1770 after taking arsenic. His father, who died a few months before Chatterton's birth, had been a schoolmaster at Redcliffe, Bristol. Early in his age, Chatterton's intellect became engaged by "old material, music folios, a black-letter Bible, and muniments taken by his father from a chest in the Church of St Mary Redcliffe" (*Encyclopaedia Britannica,* 15th edition, vol. II, p.781). Thomas Tyrwhitt, in the preface to his edition of the Rowley-Chatterton

poems, wrote: "he discovered an early turn towards poetry and English antiquities, particularly heraldry" (in Chatterton 1969: viii).

Chatterton devoted his short life to the writing of poetry, most of which he wrote under the name of Thomas Rowley, a fifteenth-century monk from Bristol that he, himself, had created. In the poems of the "Rowley sequence," Chatterton managed "to create an authentic medieval style from a unique conflation of his reading and his own invention" (*Ch* 1). "In April 1770, he left Bristol and came to London, in hopes of advancing his fortune by his talents of writing, of which, by this time, he had conceived a very high opinion" (Tyrwhitt, in Chatterton 1969: viii). Being later discovered, his medieval poems were rejected, which forced him, in London, to write elegies and satires to avoid starvation. He was as convincing writing elegies about a personage as when writing satires against him, such was his capacity of impersonation and adaptation. "But all these exertions of his genius brought in so little profit, that he was soon reduced to real indigence" (Tyrwhitt, in Chatterton 1969: x). Despondent of the lack of success in what he considered to be his "truest poetry," he eventually committed suicide. Up to here, we have a summary (and inevitably an interpretation) of the historical account of Chatterton's life that the novel offers in its very first page, and in relation to which the subsequent deviations from it are to be seen.

The "spectre" of this great plagiarist, whose method we will study in more detail later on, appears to be of the greatest relevance in the recreation of the present London society we are offered in the novel. Every member of this society is related in one way or another to the production or trade of art. Charles Wychwood is a poet who has not published anything yet and who is married to Vivien, at present working at an art gallery where Cumberland and Maitland deal in paintings. Philip Slack, Charles's best friend, works at a library and is described as an "avid reader." Andrew Flint, an acquaintance of both, is a novelist who has just published his latest novel, *Mean Time,* and is at present writing the biography of George Meredith. Charles occasionally works for yet another novelist, Harriet Scrope, who has got a friend, Sarah Tilt, who is preparing a book on the images of death in English painting, *The Art of Death.*. Another artist is Steward Merk, a painter who has been producing forgeries of the paintings of Seymour, a recently dead famous artist. Everything in this microcosm moves around texts and their producers, and is integrated in the macrotext that the novel itself constitutes. Most of these artists turn their eyes to the past or to previous works in the production of their new creations. They borrow plots, adapt styles, produce fakes or commit forgeries.

This contemporary narrative line and the eighteenth-century narrative line plot concerning Chatterton are placed together with a third line, that of the actual historical fact of George Meredith's posing for the painting "Death of Chatterton," produced by Henry Wallis in 1856. This painting stands as a very important text which, though intending to "depict" the death of the unfortunate poet, cannot help but offer an interpretation of it, conditioned as it is by several factors such as the painters's own vision, the model for Chatterton or the Romantic mythologization of the poet. A painting that will suffer further reinterpretation in the future and that will acquire new meaning in Charles Wychwood's hallucinations and in his son's, Edward's, dream.

These three stories are knitted together by "a causality of occult coincidences," according to David Lodge (1988: 15); coincidences that by being so occult and intricate reveal themselves as overtly and consciously constructed by the narrative voice, an extradiegetic heterodiegetic narrative instance (in Genette's terms) whose omniscience enables it to put in contact the three narrative lines. On one occasion, however, we are offered an intradiegetic homodiegetic narrator. In chapter six, it is the "I" of Chatterton himself who tells us the story of his life in the manuscripts Charles Wychwood has been given in Bristol. (We will later learn that it is not Chatterton who is writing about himself but a jealous editor of his time who decided to "out-trick the trickster" (*Ch* 221) and fake Chatterton's life).

Nevertheless, the main voice in the text of *Chatterton* is that of an omniscient narrator, master of the three story lines. Through this heterodiegetic narrator clear narrative parallelisms are drawn between the different story lines. In this regard, the account of the death of the two poets, Charles Wychwood and Thomas Chatterton, deserves special attention. In dying, both poets repeat the same movements and gestures (*Ch* 169, 230). The settings and circumstances of their deaths are also similar. Yet, the most striking parallelism comes through the narrative account itself. Both deaths are narrated with an immediacy nowhere else achieved in the novel. The omniscient narrator allows itself an insight into the minds of the two characters, whose last thoughts are narrated in free direct discourse, direct discourse shorn of its ortographic cues. The narrator seems to stop reporting their thoughts and let the characters speak in their own voices. This creates the illusion of pure mimesis in the representation of speech, though stylization cannot be avoid.

> He could see her outline as she bent over him, and she was encircled by light . . . . At that instant of recognition he smiled: nothing was

> really lost and yet this was the last time he would ever see them, the last time, the last time, the last time, the last time. Vivien. Edward. I met them on a journey somewhere. We were travelling together. (*Ch* 169)

> Chatterton is suffocating now, something is sitting on my chest and exulting, its head thrown back, I am the horse he rides. His body is plucked up and then trown in derision . . . . But he is suddenly quiet. No pain now the Arctic frost protects me from the dazzling sky and look my limbs are covered with snow. (*Ch* 230).

This narrator does not overtly flaunt its own status as narrator and, therefore, as producer of an enunciation or teller of a story. On the contrary, the narrator apparently seems to try to reduce its role to that of the narrative function and reduce to the minimum all other functions (directing function, function of communication, testimonial and ideological function, as studied by Genette, 1980: 255-257), while at the same time undermining its own voice.

The narrator, however, does not hide himself. There is no pretense of presenting an unmarked narration. How else could the three story lines be knitted together? Sometimes the presence of a narrator telling and, therefore, constructing, is easily felt in the novel. In the last pages, Edward Wychwood has a dream in which he sees his father as Chatterton (or as George Meredith, or as both) in Wallis's painting. The painting comes alive.

> He [Edward] saw that two other people entered the room. They were standing beside the body and the woman had put a handkerchief over her mouth and nose. He could hear them talking. What mischief is this, Mr Cross? I smell the arsenic, Mrs Angel, he is utterly undone. (*Ch* 229)

Not even in his unconscious could Edward know about the druggist who sold Chatterton the arsenic or about Chatterton's landlady. These two, Mr Cross and Mrs Angel, are clearly characters in Chatterton's story retaken by the narrator in the twentieth-century plot line.

If the narrator does not appear to be visibly engaged in the act of composition, the presence of the author in control behind the three narrative lines is shown by the intricacy of the plot and by the internal structural organization of the text. David Lodge sees Ackroyd cutting "abruptly backward and forward betweeen the story of Chatterton, the story of Wallis

and the Merediths, and the story of the fictitious characters in modern London" (1988: 15). The presence of the author is also perceptible in Part One, where different epigraphs are used to introduce diverse episodes in the first five chapters and then they are assimilated in the narrative by the voice of a character or of the narrator itself.

Before the actual story/stories start, the author presents in pages 2 and 3, four scenes concerning what Denis Donoghue (1988: 9) has called "the four lives" the novel presents; those of Chatterton, Meredith, Harriet Scrope and Charles Wychwood. These scenes, except the first one (Chatterton's), will be repeated in the story at a later stage (Harriet Scrope's on page 35, Charles's on page 47 and Meredith's on page 138), with slight variation in the narrator's enunciation but keeping the characters' exact words. In other words, the text quoting or misquoting itself, choosing four scenes to introduce, to sum up and mainly to represent itself.

It is precisely the topic of "representation" that constitutes the main concern in *Chatterton* and it is one of the issues most frequently questioned by Postmodernist writers. *Chatterton* is a novel which self-consciously weaves an intricate web of texts in such a way that anywhere in the story the reader is bound to find a construction, be it visual or narrative.

The text that gives birth to the detective-like story of Charles Wychwood's investigations is that of a painting, a portrait of an adult man painted in 1802 by someone called George Stead, a work made up in the novel for its purpose of proposing the possibility of Chatterton faking his own death. To give force to this hypothesis, Charles also finds some manuscripts, initially thought to have been written by Chatterton himself and relating how he decided to fake his own death in order to continue forging the poetry of some of the greatest Romantic poets. Charles discovers in the manuscript some lines traditionally attributed to Blake and that leads him to conclude that "half the poetry of the eighteenth century is probably written by him [Chatterton]" (*Ch* 94). The man represented in the portrait is not Thomas Chatterton; he is not the author of the manuscript, either. Both texts are fakes, which according to their actual owner, an old homosexual descendant from a former publisher of Chatterton's works, Joynson, does not mean that they are not real (*Ch* 219).

Both texts are "representations" but representations that are questioned as such. As Linda Hutcheon states in *The Politics of Postmodernism,* "the very word representation unavoidably suggests a given which the act of representing duplicates in some way" (1988: 32). That is also the case here: there is a "given" that is represented in the portrait and a "given" (a story)

for the narrative representation of the manuscripts. The status of both "givens" is not questioned. It is the sort of mimetic assumptions about representation that are challenged, "its transparency and common-sense naturalness" (Hutcheon 1988:32).

Charles Wychwood finds two texts, the portrait and the manuscripts, and he, as reader, chooses to interpret both of them as mimetic representations. He willingly suspends his disbelief and enters the story he himself has constructed with the two texts. When we, readers, discover with Philip Slack that the portrait and the manuscript are part of a joke Old Joynson decided to play on Chatterton's memory by faking "the work of a faker and so confuse for ever the memory of Chatterton" (*Ch* 221), we are forced to wonder how many traces of the past are real or fabricated.

Characters in the three story lines show a concern with what is real and what is not real, or rather with man's inability to distinguish between the two. Sarah Tilt encourages Harriet Scrope to buy a Seymour since "he's one of those realists" (*Ch* 35) she seems to like. To which Harriet replies: "But . . . who is to say what is real and what is unreal?" (*Ch* 35). In the last part of the novel, when Chatterton interrogates Daniel Hanway, "compiler of miscellanies" (*Ch* 192), epodist and hack, about the real poets, he retorts: "Who am I to say who is real and who unreal?" (*Ch* 215). The deepest debate the novel offers on this topic is given in the nineteenth-century plot in the talks George Meredith and Henry Wallis hold during the painting of "Death of Chatterton" and that we will analize in greater depth later on.

All the comments, debates and questions about the status of reality and about man's capability to know the real from the unreal appear in the novel to be related to products or works of art. The almost suffocating textuality reflected in *Chatterton* seems to point to a frightening hypothesis: nothing can be known to man unless it is represented, and through representations given a meaning. Man cannot apprehend reality except through his own representations of it. These representations are shown to be, in *Chatterton,* not mimetic reflections or showings but interpretations. There is no way in which something can be represented as it "is" because man's knowing of it will already be perverted by many different factors such as context, language, ideology, and cultural assumptions. The representation will inevitably constitute a further barrier or frame to the thing itself; it will be self-defeating and conditioned by the chosen system of representation.

The question of representation is inherently related to the status and nature of literature itself. Far be it from me to give a definition of literature, unavoidably a problematic and questionable task. The debate has long been

established and it is still far from reaching a definite conclusion. Nevertheless, since the old Platonic-Aristotelian debate, literature has been thought of as a representation, or a game of representations. *Chatterton* plays on this belief, which results in it being more than a game of representations. Instead it is a labyrinth of representations that renders the represented, not as inexistent but certainly as rather irrelevant compared to the representing or the act of representation itself.

Chatterton continues, without resolving (how could it?), the old debate of the relation between art and life. In opposition to the Realistic tradition which finds it essential to present a reproduction of reality as objectively and accurately possible, Ackroyd's novel focuses on the difference between art and reality and instead of hiding it, exposes this disparity. This is done, in the first place, by presenting itself as a narrative representation of many other representations, either visual or verbal.

At the same time, *Chatterton,* through the use of parody, attacks the Realistic belief in the possibility of offering a totalized and truthful vision of reality by means of narrative representation. The transparency and naturalness of these realistic systems of representation are questioned in a novel in which everything turns out to be a representation, frequently an overtly fictional one, and in which representation is de-naturalized.

The focus of representation here is Thomas Chatterton, "the greatest plagiarist or the greatest poet." This representation does not limit itself to just one system or field but expands and turns to be a representation of him in history, biography and art. As they stand in the novel, all these systems of representation "self-consciously acknowledge [their] existence as representations, that is, as interpreting [indeed creating] its referent, not as offering direct and immediate access to it" (Hutcheon 1989: 34).

The first representation of Thomas Chatterton the novel offers in its very first page is his representation in history: a historical account of his life and death, an account that the novel itself sets out to question through other representations. Thomas Chatterton's representation in the portrait and in the manuscript that Charles Wychwood finds suggests a new theory: Chatterton did not die when he was eighteen but went on writing and faking the poetry of popular eighteenth-century poets. Manuscripts and portrait turn out to be forgeries but they manage to keep their power as representations and to cast a doubt on the truthfulness of the historical representation. In the last part of the novel, another representation of this figure is offered. This time it is a narrative representation of the last moments in Chatterton's life and once again more doubts are cast upon the historical account: Chatterton did not

commit suicide but killed himself by accident when trying to cure himself of V. D.

The result would be the same: he died at the age of eighteen in London in 1770, but the implications are important. The representation of Thomas Chatterton in history led to the English Romantic Movement's considering him as a symbol of the tragic fate of genius. As David Lodge points out, "If Chatterton died of a quack remedy for the clap, the Romantic cult of the marvellous boy who perished in his pride seems rather foolish" (1988: 16). Something that did actually happen, the Romantic admiration of the figure of Thomas Chatterton, is shown to be in this narrative representation of his death as unfounded as the other hypothesis that has Chatterton living on to adulthood.

One more representation, in art this time, of the death of Chatterton is provided in the nineteenth-century story line and gives one more deviation of the historical account of his death. Here, we are referring to the painting *Death of Chatterton* by Henry Wallis having as its model George Meredith, the nineteeth-century novelist who considered himself primarily a poet. The process of creation of this representation of Chatterton is recreated in detail in the novel and offers an interesting debate between the painter and the model about the real versus the ideal in representation, both in words and in paint. Wallis intends to make a representation of Chatterton's death on canvas as realistic as possible. And for that purpose he has Meredith dressed in clothes of Chatterton's period, he chooses as the setting the very same room in London where the young poet died and he carries out some other "poor attempts at realism" (137), like dropping bits of paper on the floor of the room because in Calcott's account of Chatterton's death we are told that pieces "of torn manuscript were found beside the body" (*Ch* 137); attempts that Meredith is eager to describe as attempts at "verisimilitude" and not at "realism".

Previously to this scene, the two men have been debating about the status of reality and its representation, of fiction and its truth. Wallis asserts to Meredith that he wants him as a model, himself, his face, and the debate continues:

> "My face, but not myself. I am to be Thomas Chatterton, not George Meredith."
>
> "But it will be you. After all, I can only paint what I see..."
>
> Meredith laughed and raised himself from the sofa on which he had been lounging. "And what do you see? The real? The ideal? How

> do you know the difference?... When Molière created Tartuffe, the French nation suddenly found him beside every domestic hearth. When Shakespeare invented Romeo and Juliet, the whole world discovered how to love. Where is the reality there? . . . . Of course there *is* a reality."
>
> "Ah! The tune has changed!"
>
> "But, I was going to add, it is not one that can be depicted. There are no words to stamp the indefinite thing. The horizon." (*Ch* 133)

The discussion is continued in more interesting terms later on:

> Wallis was at that moment trying to fix the colour of the smoke . . . .
>
> "But how can you experiment with what is real? Surely you have only to depict it."
>
> "As you do? But what about your phial of poison, which miraculously changed its position?"
>
> "But the phial was a real object. *That* did not change..."
>
> "And I am in the same boat. Do you know that phrase? I said that the words were real, Henry, I did not say that what they depicted was real. Our dear dead poet created the monk Rowley out of thin air, and yet he has more life in him than any medieval priest who actually existed. The invention is always more real . . . . But Chatterton did not create an individual simply. He invented an entire period and made its imagination his own: no one had properly understood the medieval world until Chatterton summoned it into existence. The poet does not merely recreate or describe the world. He actually creates it. And that is why he is feared." (*Ch* 157)

Just as the poet creates, the painter does, and despite, or maybe because of, Wallis's attempts at realism, his representation of the death of Chatterton is a creation, a limited and mediated interpretation of many other representations: Calcott's account, the Romantic mythological representation, etc. And the real Chatterton that Wallis is painting is in fact George Meredith, who calls himself "a model poet" since he is "pretending to be someone else" (*Ch* 2, 141).

Henry Wallis not only reinterprets previous representations of the death of the poet, he also creates, as he himself might unconsciously admit, "the true death of Chatterton" (*Ch* 157) which "will always be remembered" in posterity through his representation of it. Wallis has created a master and

totalized representation of the death of Chatterton whose power and limitation are questioned self-reflexively in the novel itself.

The twentieth-century poet, an unpublished one yet, Charles Wychwood, dies from a brain tumour. At the moment of his death, as Linda Hutcheon has noticed, "Charles identifies with his obsession, Chatterton, and feels he is living out — in dying — Wallis' representation of his death" (Hutcheon 1989: 97).

> His face was turned to the wall but, with difficulty, he moved it so that he might look at his last room on earth: and he coud see it all, the garret window open, the dying roseplant upon the sill, the purple coat thrown across a chair, the extinguished candle upon the small mahogany table. And he seized with terror as the others stood around him: "No!" he shouted. He was ready to plead with them. "This should not be happening. This is not real. I am not meant to be here. I have seen this before, and it is an illusion!" (*Ch* 169)

Charles Wychwood's death constitutes an iconic imitation, in a world of imitations, of the death of the eighteenth-century poet, yet, ironically, it is a limited one. Charles is living out "the true death of Chatterton" (*Ch* 157) or what is considered to be so nowadays but that, in fact, is nothing but its representation by a nineteenth-century painter with realistic ideals. How different is Wallis's representation of the death of Chatterton from the narrative representation of that moment that *Chatterton* offers in its last pages! Wallis depicted beautifully Chatterton's death and the result is a portrait (reproduced on the cover of the Abacus edition of the novel), in which the poet seems to have reached at the moment of his death the serene grandeur that fate had denied him during his life. The verbal representation of Chatterton's death is narrated in Part Three:

> a birth pain, my bowels ripped open to find the child, oh mother, mother. Chatterton is being tossed up and down the sodden bed, the agony rising from him like mist into the attic room. Hold on oh hold on until this fit is past but my hands are nailed to the bed, my flesh being torn from me as I curve and break. His face is swelling, his eyelids bursting in the heat. I am a giant in the pantomime oh god save me from melting, melting , melting. (*Ch* 228-229)

Played in contrast, the limitations of these two representations, and indeed of any representation, are clearly shown. *Chatterton* self-consciously

acknowledges both of them as mere interpretations, deconstructing the transparency and naturalness of the powerful (because it has conditioned all subsequent representations of the death of Chatterton) and master visual representation of the death of Chatterton constructed by Henry Wallis in 1856. The novel also self-consciously questions the validity of its own representation, in narrative, of the death of the poet offered in Part Three. In this context we could agree with Josipovici that the modern novel, in general, seems to draw attention to "the rules that govern its own creation in order to force the reader into recognising that *it is not the world* " (Josipovici 1971: 298, my italics). Thus *Chatterton* 's self-conscious study of different means of representation and its rendering them as partial works to posit itself as being *not the world,* not reality.

Wallis states that the portrait is just a depiction of what he sees and the result is a painting which reflects a scene in which everything has been carefully arranged and deliberately constructed: the plant, the candle, the coat, the position of the model, etc. The very particular and indeed partial vision of the death of the Bristol poet ironically becomes, as Wallis himself foresees, "the true death of Chatterton" (*Ch* 157). Why should this representation "be always remembered as the true death of Chatterton"? Why not Ackroyd's narrative representation or Joynson's faked manuscripts? All of them are partial, constructed and limited, but so is man's knowledge of the past.

Chatterton's self-consciousness and its own methods of construction of representations and its main concern with a historical figure, make it a good exponent of that particular novel genre that Linda Hutcheon named as "historiographic metafiction" in her book *A Poetics of Postmodernism* (1988). By this term she meant "those well-known and popular novels which are both intensely self-reflexive and yet paradoxically also lay claim to historical events and personages" and whose "theoretical self-awareness of history and fiction as human constructs . . . is made the grounds for its rethinking and reworking of the forms and contents of the past" (Hutcheon 1988: 5).

The various representations of the historical personage of Thomas Chatterton work to make the reader aware of man's incapacity to recapture the past in a conclusive and teleological way. We, as readers, cannot avoid posing such questions as: what can we know of the past now? and, how can we know it? Indeed, is it not through those traces of the past which have reached the present? Historiographic metafictional novels render the issue of

man's recapture of the past a very problematic one by showing the constructedness and partiality of its traces.

Historiographic metafiction, insists Linda Hutcheon, argues "that *history* does not exist except as text, it does not . . . deny that the *past* existed, but only that its accessibility to us now is entirely conditioned by textuality. We cannot know the past except through its texts: its documents, its evidence, even its eye-witness accounts are texts" (Hutcheon 1988: 16; emphasis in the original).

Chatterton acknowledges the existence of the past in general and of Thomas Chatterton the poet in particular. Its narrative focuses on this figure and on the various representations of him that allow us, in the present, to have a knowledge of him, but by presenting itself as one more representation in a maze of representations, it works to question the ontological status and the claim to mastery and totalization of some other texts that have, in the past, chosen this figure as their subject of representation.

The historical account offered in the first page, the portrait and the manuscripts discovered by Charles Wychwood, Wallis's painting of the death of Chatterton and the narrative of Part Three, are all texts in which different semiotic codes, mainly those of linguistic and visual representations, have already been granted a meaning. The past is there, its reality is not questioned but we cannot get to know it directly, only through the different discourses and representations which it has been incorporated into. All these representations will be, unavoidably, constructions, particular visions of past events. Constructions whose production and interpretation will be conditioned by many different factors, like those of context of production and reception of the text, those of the system of representation chosen, those of ideological and cultural assumptions, etc.

The existence, in the past, of the actual historical figure of Thomas Chatterton is not doubted or questioned in Ackroyd's novel but there is a clear problematization of the ways in which we have acquired and maintained our knowledge of him. We can only know Thomas Chatterton through the texts that, in the years subsequent to his death, have "represented" him. By highlighting the mimetic limits of representation and self-consciously presenting itself as just another text, *Chatterton* questions the possibility of man's unproblematic knowledge of Chatterton, in particular, and of the past, in general. History's claim to truth is, thus, problematized. History is not truth, but "truths" in plural. The traces of the historical past, the traces of Chatterton's life and death, are shown to be

inevitably textualized and therefore partially and mediately constructed. In no other way can man get to know the past.

Historical texts do not, normally, cast any doubt about their claim to truth. They present themselves as transparent, natural, trustworthy accounts of the past. *Chatterton,* concerned with fakers and forgery, works to present historical writing as a kind of fake, showing, as Michael Neve suggests "the inevitable presence of fake in historical recapture" (1988: 54). Documents, the portrait of Chatterton and his manuscripts, thought to be real, at least by Charles Wychwood and by the reader who has willingly suspended his/her disbelief, turn out to be fakes. Historical accounts and biographies of Chatterton are discovered by Charles to be offering different "truths," or no truths at all. He has been studying Chatterton's historical figure after he got hold of the supposedly real manuscripts. Chatterton becomes his obssession and he is eager to write one more text about "the marvelous boy." He starts writing the preface, but then

> Charles stopped, uncertain how to continue with the preface. He could not remember whether all this information came from the documents themselves, or from the biographies which Philip had lent him. In any case he noticed that each biography described a quite different poet: even the simplest observation by one was contradicted by another, so that nothing seemed certain. He felt that he knew the biographers well, but that he still understood very little about Chatterton. At first Charles had been annoyed by these discrepancies but then he was exhilarated by them: for it meant that anything became possible. *If there were no truths, everything was true.* (*Ch* 127, my emphasis).

For Charles, then the manuscripts, the historical texts, the biographies, his own preface, all have the same claim to truth. For the reader of *Chatterton,* the truth of all these texts, and also of all the others retextualized in the novel, becomes provisional, unnatural and opaque. Everything is to be believed and to be questioned. The partiality, provisionality and constructedness of texts is recognized but so is the dependence of man on them in his compulsion to provide meaning to his present experience and to the past he is a product of. *Chatterton* 's own narrative and its capability of representation is put into question from within but it also consciously acknowledges the existence of the historical and literary traces of the past.

The significance of Thomas Chatterton as the chosen subject of representation in Ackroyd's *Chatterton* is double. On the one hand, he is a

historical figure whose traces have reached our time. On the other hand, he is, above all, a literary figure and quite a peculiar one. The Thomas Chatterton as first-person narrator in the manuscripts found by Charles says of himself: "nothing enthralled me so much as Historical works" (*Ch* 83) and this leads him to take his great decision: "I will perform a Miracle... I will bring the Past to light again." He then invents a priest, Rowley, whom he will present as author of the medieval poems Chatterton himself writes, and these poems are creations, interpretations of the past that not only acknowledge but also use and incorporate previous literary works.

> My method was as follows: I had already around me, in Volumes taken from my Father's shelves or purchas'd from the Booksellers, Charters and Monuments and such like Stuff; to these I added my Readings from Ricat, Stow, Speed, Holished, Leland and many other purveyors of Antiquity. If I took a passage from each, be it better so short, I found that in Unison they became quite a new Account and, as it were, Chatterton's Account. Then I introduc'd my own speculations in physic, drama and philosophy, all of them cunningly changed by the ancient Hand and Spelling I had learn'd; but conceeved by me with such Intensity that they became more real than the Age in which I walked. I reproduc'd the Past and filled it with such Details that it was as if I were observing it in front of me: so the Language of ancient Dayes awoke the Reality itself for, tho' I knew that it was I who composed these Histories, I know also that they were true ones (*Ch* 85)

As Elisabeth Wesseling has written, this novel "suggests that Chatterton, the forger of medieval poetry, exemplifies the account of origination of literary works in the poststructuralist terms of intertextuality and not in the romantic terms of creation *ex nihilo* " (Wesseling 1991: 136).

Charles Wychwood writes in his preface on Chatterton: "Thomas Chatterton believed that he could explain the entire material and spiritual world in terms of imitation and forgery" (*Ch* 126). A few pages before Cumberland reads from the catalogue of his exhibition of Art Brut: "Gradma Joel, known only as Grandma, was a prolific and versatile artist despite her mental instability . . . . She wanted to explain the entire material and spiritual world in terms of imitation" (*Ch* 109-110). The popular novelist Harriet Scrope has "adopted" the plots of two of Harrison Bentley's novels as vessels "for her own style" (*Ch* 102). Steward Merk stands as another good imitator

whose idea of producing art seems to be that of producing perfect imitations, forgeries and fakes of other famous painters.

None of the artists the novel presents escapes the influence of predecesors. All of them are marked by what Harold Bloom named "the anxiety of influence". Chatterton, Steward Merk, Harriet Scrope, Charles Wychwood, they all strive to avoid idealization of those artists that produced their works before them. They even conceal and veil those influential works they have appropriated. Nevertheless, as Bloom wrote,

> nothing is got for nothing, and self-appropriation involves the immense anxieties of indebtedness, for what strong maker desires the realization that he has failed to create himself? (Bloom 1973: 5)

In *Chatterton* there is not only a poignant recognition of the existence of the literary past, but also a sense of inevitable indebtedness to it and impossible escape from it; "the present feeds off the past and, vice versa, the past is resuscitated by the present" (Wesseling 1991: 136). Both are powerfully felt in the three narrative lines and in the novel as a whole. Present representations are shown to come from past ones through a process of continuity and difference, through a process of installing and diferring, past literary works, styles, traditions and conventions. This recognition forms the basis of Ackroyd's aesthetics. The author feels indebted to past literary works whose influence he cannot escape and he does not veil. In his latest novel, *English Music,* published in 1992, Ackroyd appropriates the works of several English writers, among them Lewis Caroll, John Bunyan, Thomas Malory, Samuel Johnson and Daniel Defoe, and recreates them through the imagination and readings of a boy living in the late Victorian period. Joshua Reynolds's words that open *English Music* could be appropriated by Ackroyd to express his own aesthetics:

> Invention, strictly speaking, is little more than a new combination of those images which have been previously gathered and deposited in the memory: nothing can come of nothing. (Joshua Reynolds, *Discourse II,* in Ackroyd 1992)

As David Lodge has written,

> Mr Ackroyd's fiction has always been characterized by the writer's effort to think himself back into the past by a dazzling feat of stylistic

> imitation -which would be a charitable way of describing the forgeries perpetrated by the young Chatterton. "The truest Plagiarism is the truest Poetry", declares Ackroyd's Chatterton, and on one level the novel can be reread as an exploration of that paradox and an implicit defense of Ackroyd's own self-consciously intertextual methods. (1988: 15)

Thomas Chatterton's method of recapturing and recreating (or rather creating) the past is through assimilation of past works and the adding of new and personally acquired knowledge. Ackroyd's method of recreating the past in *Chatterton* is very much alike. He adopts past literary styles, quotes poems, rewrites history and opens the past to the present. *Chatterton* ' s metafictional element stands ultimately as a perfect recognition of the textuality of history and, at the same time, by adopting and questioning from within those representations of the past, *Chatterton* questions itself. It turns the mirror on itself and realizes that even mirrors distort reality.

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CLOZE TESTING AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE CONVENTIONAL EXAM IN E.B.E.

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INTRODUCTION

Since Wilson Taylor (1953, 1956) designed the cloze technique to measure the reading capability of native English speakers much has been written on cloze tests. Its use has spread not only among students of General English but also among students of English for Specific Purposes. In testing literature this technique is classified as an integrative test and considered as a reliable and valid tool to assess the readibility of texts, although Alderson (1980) has questioned the exactness of cloze as a diagnostic instrument and, especially, its purported predictive capacity. Others researchers like Hatch (1979), Valmont (1983) and Brown (1986) have also discussed its potential as a teaching reading device.

During these four decades many hypotheses to study the different variables that intervene in the cloze procedure have been examined. Most of them take the deletion and assessment criteria as points of reference: whether one has to be "strict" or "flexible" in either of them. In spite of that, every other day new studies appear and the deletion and assessment systems are still open to new approaches. And it is one of them we are concerned with in this article.

There also exists considerable literature, Bachman (1982), Brown (1983), Alderson (1983) and Porter (1983) on whether there is sensitivity in cloze items across sentences or not. As in this study sequential and not scrambled texts are considered, the points of view of Chavez-Oller (1985) and Jonz (1991) are taken into account. The former demonstrated that about 10% of the items in each of the two texts examined were highly sensitive to constraints ranging across sentence boundaries while the latter confirmed that textually cohesive cloze-items showed a significant sensitivity to sentence scrambling.

Empirical findings on the item analysis and selection processes are described in Brown (1988). He investigates the possibility that the reliability and validity of a cloze procedure be improved with a "taylored cloze," taking into account the facility and discrimination indices. Brown (1989) is also concerned with the cloze item difficulty. On this occasion, he studies the linguistic features of cloze tests items in every 12th deleted word of randomly selected passages. Brown explores the effects on the scores of content/function words according to their appearance in the text. In this study the ease/difficulty of each item is also considered but from a different point of view, so two cloze tests using the rational deletion procedure rather than the fixed-ratio one were administered, trying to find out in each case whether students of English for Business and Economics (EBE) not only had more or less dificulty with content or function words but also within the content words with nouns or verbs, and within the function words between determiners or connectors.

The last research to be mentioned is Butler's contribution (1991) to the use of authentic material with the concordance-generated tests. It seems to be very relevant although Taylor's original idea of working with a complete text as a whole fades away if only scrambled texts are tested. In spite of that, his contribution is seen as a new device on which further research must be done in the near future. For the time being, the investigation reported is considered to be very useful for the classroom teacher since it deals with four individual sentences or propositions and that means more information and consequently more probabilities to recover the suitable term. As this article deals with testing rather than with methodological tools and the access to an EBE Corpora is unavailable at the moment, Taylor's patterns are followed.

Summarising then, the research done by Bachman (1992), Valmont (1983), Brown (1983, 88, 89), Henk and Helfeldt (1985), Chavez-Oller et al. (1985), Chapelle et al. (1990) and Butler (1991) is taken into account. But whereas all of them take texts to work with from General English, in this investigation the texts are taken from English for Business and Economics.

The overall purpose of this study is to explore the possibility of developing alternative tests to the conventional exams, with the purpose of avoiding, on the one hand, biased interpretations, as happens when we work with comprehension questions, and on the other, to find a faster, more accurate and fairer way to correct the exams, especially if there are hundreds of students taking the same exam and several teachers marking them. To that end the following research questions are examined:

1. To what extent can a cloze be considered an alternative to the conventional exams in EBE?

2. To what degree are content words easier or more difficult than function words? The same question can be asked about nouns and verbs within the lexical items. And what happens when the student deals either with determiners or connectors within the grammatical items?

3. Does it make any difference to give the first letter of the word being sought in a classical fixed-ratio procedure on an EBE intermediate level cloze test performance?

METHOD

1. Subjects

The sample consisted of 69 non-native students (27 males and 42 females) in their first EBE course at the Faculty of Economics in Complutense University, Madrid. The group of students weren't volunteers nor randomly selected from the enrolled students in this course but naturally-occurring groups since they were the students who on the date that the cloze tests were administered, attended their class without any previous notice.

2. Materials

Much of the work is done in the classroom with English for Academic Purposes Series Books, readings from the *International Management,* and *The European'* s business pages since the objectives of this course are focused on technical and semi-technical lexical items, collocations and premodifications in EBE rather than on text organization. So the cloze tests were based on passages taken from *Economics* by Yates C.St.J. (1989), (Appendix). The headline and the first sentence/paragraph of each passage were left intact in each cloze before starting the chosen deletion pattern. In the first two, cloze A (CLA) and cloze B (CLB), as the aim was to study the effect on scoring of either content or function words, a rational deletion scheme was carried out with blank spaces within a range of 4 to 14 words. Whereas in the third and the fourth ones, cloze C (CLC) and cloze D (CLD), a fixed-ratio deletion pattern was followed and every eighth word was

removed. In the latter, the first letter was written down in each blank. So a set of four cloze tests was delivered.

A total of 25 items were replaced by standard length blanks in each test. If in the first one, (CLA), the students were supposed to recover either nouns, verbs or modifiers, in the second one, (CLB), the attention was centered on determiners, pronouns, connectors, auxiliary and modal verbs, that is, function words. In the other two, (CLC) and (CLD), the students had to deal with the deleted terms no matter what kind of word it was (Table 4).

3. Procedure

Two weeks were allowed between the administration of the cloze tests and the first term conventional exam (CEXAM) at the Faculty of Economics, which took place in February, and included a reading comprehension text (TEX), and exercises on synonyms / antonyms (SYN), partnership words (PART) and fill in the blanks (FILL). This design has to be taken into consideration since the first research question settled above is to study if there is a correlation between this sort of standardised exam and the cloze testing presented as an alternative.

Two models of presentation were designed changing the order of each type of cloze, and were distributed to every other student to avoid cheating. They were allowed 1 hour to take the four 25-item tests.

The scoring was done by taking into account a flexible interpretation of the terms with which the students had filled in the blanks. Any word which could be considered suitable to recover the text was accepted, as there was not much concern with stylistic EBE texts. Thus, several options to express the same concept were admitted, a decision that can be easily understood whenever one comes across any EBE topic. There are different ways, all of them aceptable, to express the same idea as it happens, for instance, talking of the Stock Exchange with the idea of "rise and fall".

Instructions: The students were told

1. That taking the cloze tests was voluntarily.
2. That their scoring would be counted only if it were better than the one of the conventional exam.

4. Analysis

In the descriptive statistics central tendency and variability measures are primarily considered.

The degree of relationship between each cloze test and each conventional subtest was calculated using the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. The same was done with the subtests of the four types of clozes presented.

The T-test was used to determine whether or not there were significant differences within cloze tests and between the cloze tests taken as a whole and the conventional exam as such. Significant differences in the following pairs: content versus function words, nouns versus verbs, and determiners versus connectors were also calculated with the t-test.

The significance level was set at $\alpha<0.05$.

The data were studied with the DBASE III PLUS and with the BMDP Statistical Software.

RESULTS

A description of the results, which shows the central tendency and dispersion in the cloze tests and in the subtests of the conventional exam, is required in the first approach to the issue.

TABLE 1. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

V. NAME	MEAN	MEDIAN	MODE	SD	SKEWNESS
CLA	5.4261	5.1999	4.8000	1.5530	-0.28
CLB	4.8986	5.1999	5.1999	1.9090	-0.35
CLC	5.5246	5.5999	5.1999	1.6063	-0.25
CLD	7.4899	7.5999	N.UNIQUE	1.4595	-0.64
TEX	6.1232	6.5000	6.5000	1.5235	-1.05
SYN	5.9565	6.0000	N.UNIQUE	2.3542	-0.42
PART	5.4348	5.0000	5.0000	1.9590	-0.06
FILL	5.7391	6.0000	6.0000	2.2206	-0.33
CLOZE	5.8478	6.0000	N.UNIQUE	1.3866	-0.47
CEXAM	5.9145	6.4000	6.8000	1.3482	-0.53

It is easy to appreciate in Table 1, that the analysed indicators of central tendency have almost the same score value and all but two are found near the center, slightly negatively skewed, in a normal distribution. Leaving aside the cloze where we gave the first letter (CLD), the means of the other cloze tests and the four subtests range from 4.8986 in the CLB to 6.1232 in the TEX. Similar ranges are found in the median and mode values. Taking the mean of all cloze tests "CLOZE" and the four subtests which form the conventional exam (CEXAM), there is only a difference of 0.0667.

The standard deviation in all but the TEX subtest is higher in the conventional exam than in each of the cloze tests. That means that the dispersion is greater in the conventional one.

As it has been mentioned above, the first issue to investigate in this study is whether there is some sort of relationship between the different subtests of the conventional exam and the different cloze tests. The results shown in the correlation matrix (Table 2) confirm that there is a strong significant relationship, on the one hand, among all types of cloze tests and subtests of the CEXAM and, on the other, among all cloze tests. This relationship is higher than that which can be read among the different subtests of the CEXAM, in which the "PARTnership word exercise" shows the lowest correlations. Nevertheless if the cloze tests are taken together and the same is done with the four subtests of the CEXAM then, the empirical finding, 0.7884, confirms a strong relationship between the conventional exam and the alternative presented.

TABLE 2. CORRELATION MATRIX

	CLA	CLB	CLC	CLD	TEX	SYN	PART	FILL
CLA	1.0000							
CLB	0.6884	1.0000						
CLC	0.7144	0.5772	1.0000					
CLD	0.6034	0.4946	0.6041	1.0000				
TEX	0.5214	0.3310	0.5219	0.4063	1.0000			
SYN	0.4935	0.3557	0.4720	0.6269	0.5120	1.0000		
PART	0.4390	0.2982	0.2069	0.2598	0.1198	0.0456	1.0000	
FILL	0.6656	0.5723	0.6112	0.5519	0.4965	0.4535	0.2868	1.0000

*Critical value 1-tailed Signif, $p<0.05= .2319$

The purpose of the second research question set at the beginning was to study if it was easier or more difficult for the student of EBE to fill in the

blanks in which they had to deal either with content (Nouns —NOU—, verbs —VER—, modifiers —MOD—) or with function (Determiners —DET—, connectors —CON—, auxiliary and modals —AMO—) words. So a comparison between the first two types of cloze is required (Table 3).

The statistical analysis indicates that the observed differences in means in the lexical cloze test versus the grammatical cloze text were due to factors other than chance with an $\alpha<0.05$.

TABLE 3. SIGNIFICANCE OF DIFFERENCES IN THE FIRST TWO CLOZE TESTS

CLA vs CLB

TEST STATISTICS		P-VALUE	DF
MATCHED T	3.12	0.0027	68
CORRELATION	0.6884	0.0000	68

We find for a p-value of 0.0027 a "t" test = 3.12. Thus the null hypothesis that the content and function words have the same level of difficulty is rejected.

Further analysis is shown in the following table. The number of items in each category, the means of errors, since it is thought to be more enlightening, and their percentages are presented.

TABLE 4. DISTRIBUTION OF ITEMS IN EACH CLOZE. MEAN OF ERRORS IN EACH CATEGORY

	CLA			CLB			CLC		CLD	
	NOU	VER	MOD	DET	CON	AMO	CON	FUN	CON	FUN
_										

N	14	6	5	11	10	4	18	7	13	11
$\bar{X}$	6	1	2	3	4	2	6	2	2	2
%	43	17	40	27	40	50	33	29	15	18

T-test carried out among the different pairs has proved that there are significant differences between the recovery of nouns and verbs (A-NOU vs A-VER), determiners and connectors (B-DET vs B-CON), content and function words (C-CON vs D-CON, and C-FUN vs D-FUN) according to the system of deletion as can be appreciated in table 5.

TABLE 5. SIGNIFICANCE OF DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE CATEGORIES STUDIED

	TEST STATISTICS	p-VALUE	DF
A-NOU vs A-VER	13.90	0.0000	68
B-DET vs B-CON	-7.60	0.0000	68
C-CON vs D-CON	11.38	0.0000	68

C-FUN vs D-FUN	4.86	0.0000	68

While the last two pairs, CCON vs DCON and CFUN vs DFUN, established in this table show that there were significant differences among them, results that back up the ones that can be read in Table 6, in which scores not errors are considered. No significant differences, perhaps because of the sample, are found between lexical and grammatical performance within each of the fixed-ratio cloze (Table 4). These results lead us to consider other factors than the difficulty of function or content words as the explanation of the significant difference between the CLC and the CLD tests.

TABLE 6. SIGNIFICANCE OF DIFFERENCES IN THE CLC AND CLD.

	CLC VS. CLD	
TEST STATISTICS	P-VALUE	DF
MATCHED T -11.91	0.0000	68
CORRELATION 0.6041	0.0000	68

The statistical analysis confirms in this case that the differences in means between the fixed-ratio deleted cloze tests with or without cue letters, were due to factors other than chance with an $\alpha<0.05$.

Finally, I want to point out that considerable significant differences are found if we compare CLD versus CLA or CLB. They are even stronger if we take CLC versus CLD, T-test = -11, which leads us to say that it makes a difference if we give the initial letter in a fixed-ratio deletion procedure whether errors or scores are considered, and that this sort of cloze, the cued one stands quite apart from the conventional clozes.

DISCUSSION

1. Correlation between the conventional comprehension reading test and the alternative presented.

The results reported above in the correlation matrix support the existence of a good relationship between the alternative presented, that is, the cloze battery and the conventional exam, among students of EBE. The figures read in Table 2 confirm that the correlation is stronger among the different sorts of clozes than that found among the subtests of the conventional exam. It is the PARTnership words test which offers the poorest correlations with the cloze tests and doesn't reach the level of significance with the other subtests. A possible explanation for these anomalous figures could be that this subtest was introduced for the first time in the CEXAM and the students didn't master the item-matching technique.

On the whole, this battery of EBE cloze tests with some modification could fulfil the same objectives, even in a better way, than the conventional exam. It mustn't be forgotten that the purpose of the latter is to measure the students' capability of reading something for which the cloze was originally designed.

2. Is the students' performance better in the lexical or in the grammatical items?

The means of CLA and CLB are compared and the differences between them are found to be significant. A synonymic rather than a verbatim scoring has been preferred in the assessment, not so much for methodological reasons, but for the characteristics of these sorts of texts. They are open to several synonyms, especially in the content words.

The students' performance in the CLA, in which lexical items had been eliminated, was better than in the CLB, in which we weren't as strict as Levenston et al. (1982) in their "discourse cloze," and all kinds of grammatical words were deleted. That supports Cohen's findings (1984) on this issue in his studies with economic and business students. These results should lead us to consider that EBE students have more problems with grammar than with content words.

The organisation of the discourse in which determiners, prepositions, conjuctions and to some extent auxiliary verbs are needed, was more difficult to cope with than trying to recover items such as: "business, goods, money, accounts, prefer or satisfy." As a possible explanation of this performance it

could be pointed out that the students have a good deal of information on the different topics that usually appear in the EBE texts. So it must be assumed that they use the knowledge they have of the subject matter to make inferences.

—Which items create more problems to EBE students? To what extent?

To answer these questions it is necessary to refer to Tables 4 and 5. In a first approach to Table 4 it seems that the distribution of items to the different categories is quite normal in all cases except the CLC, in which the fixed-ratio deletion system has given 18 content words and 7 function words. In order to know whether these distributions are normal or not, further research on EBE Corpora is needed. In the second issue the means of errors is quite different. Leaving aside the auxiliary and modals because the number of items in its distribution is quite low, the differences in the percentages among nouns and verbs, connectors and determiners point out that EBE students have fewer problems with verbs in the first cloze and with determiners in the second one.

Going through the different categories in each cloze, it is in CLA, perhaps because of its design, where more options for each blank have been found. There are more synonyms within the verbs and fewer mistakes. Only on one occasion when we read, "it might be more profitable to *sell* hamburgers...," no other options than the original term are registered. It does not happen the same in the other blanks to be filled with verbs, as in "... suppose you *buy* a hamburger," where *choose, have, take, like, want* and *get* are registered as acceptable options. Synonyms are not so numerous with nouns and modifiers. Only in the following case: "If rents were higher, it might be more profitable to sell hamburgers in a cheaper area or to switch to luxury *lunches* for rich executives on expense accounts," such items as *areas, restaurants, cafes, meals* have been taken into consideration.

On the whole it can be said that in the responses related to any part of the nominal phrases the range of options is far narrower, some of them are bound because of the lexical collocation, than if the item to be recovered is connected with the verbal phrase.

If CLB is taken into consideration the data also show that connectors, whether conjunctions or prepositions, offer more difficulty than determiners. It's worth noting in this cloze test that in the students' performance in the grammatical items almost no other options are found. There is only room for some considerations in the "determiners": the, this for "that," or among some disjuncive or additive connectors.

3. Does it make any difference to give the initial letter?

The study of the third research question CLC vs CLD has been done from two different points of view. On a first approach, taking the cloze tests as such the T-test = -11.91, shows a significant difference. Obviously the help the student has with the initial letter is quite remarkable. Even if the CLD is compared to CLA and CLB, in which a different deletion procedure has been followed, the differences are still significant. Besides if the distribution of scores is examined in the CLD, then a considerable negative skewness -0.64 is observed. The figure has to be interpreted as an indicator of a quite high facility index for a norm referenced test. So it is quite evident that this deletion system, not far from other proposals: Braley-Klein (1985a), Grotjahn (1987) and Kokkota (1988), makes a difference if it is compared to the rest of the cloze test battery.

The second approach to the third research question is done from the errors perspective. If the content words of CLC and CLD are examined, and the same is done with the function words, there also appear significant differences. Consequently, giving the initial letter also has an effect. In this comparison it is also observed there is no difference between lexical and grammatical items. Apparently, this finding isn't consistent with the one of the second research question, in which it was said that EBE students had more problems with function than with content words.

Nevertheless, the deletion procedure could be one explanation. A rational elimination pattern affects the reading comprehension, both from a lexical or a grammatical point of view, more than a fixed-ratio deletion does, since there is a tendency in the former system to eliminate most of the lexical items which are usually labelled as semi-technical or function words. Whereas if the student has to cope with a fixed-ratio deletion pattern therer are fewer problems with comprehension because not all deleted items are either lexical or grammatical, so the economic discourse is a little more balanced and consequently it is easier to follow. Furthermore, the difficulty of the grammatical items, above mentioned, almost disappears since the discourse is a little more organised and it is not as difficult as before to infer the missing function words.

CONCLUSIONS

However, although more research is needed to study other possible cloze test batteries for EBE students, there seems to be no reason, if the correlation coefficients are examined, why the first three cloze tests cannot be considered an alternative to the conventional exam. Another relevant insight in this investigation is that EBE students have more problems with grammatical than with lexical performance and within the former with connectors rather than with determiners, whereas in the lexical performance they fail more in their noun-related responses. And finally, the last finding to be pointed out is that a cued cloze test is far easier than the other three.

For these reasons, we can conclude that a battery of cloze tests formed by a combination of the two types of rational deletion and another with a random deletion procedure represent a promising alternative to the conventional comprehension reading test.

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APPENDIX

Two excerpts of the four passages.

1.- Cloze A, CLA. Rational deletion procedure.

MARKETS

Markets bring together buyers and sellers of goods and services.

Prices of goods and of (1) RESOURCES , such as labour, machinery and (2) LAND , adjust to ensure that (3) SCARCE resources are used to produce those (4) GOODS and services that society (5) DEMANDS . Much of economics is devoted to the (6) STUDY of how markets and prices enable (7) SOCIETY to solve the problems of what, (8) HOW , and for whom to produce. Suppose you

(9) BUY a hamburger for your lunch. What does this have to do with (10) MARKETS and prices?...

Cloze C, CLC. Fixed-ratio deletion.

SUPPLY AND DEMAND

In Chapter 1 we defined markets in a very general way as arrangements through which prices guide resource allocation. We now adopt a narrower definition.

A market is a set of arrangements by which buyers and sellers are in contact (1) TO exchange goods or services.

Some markets ((2) SHOPS and fruit stalls) physically bring together the (3) BUYER and the seller. Other markets (the London (4) STOCK Exchange) operate chiefly through intermediaries (stockbrokers) who (5) CONTRACT business on behalf of clients. In supermarkets, (6) SELLERS choose the price, stock the shelves, and (7) LEAVE customers to choose whether or not to (8) MAKE a purchase. Antique auctions force buyers to (9) BID against each other with the seller taking (10) A passive role.

VARIACIONES TRADUCTORAS SOBRE EL HUMOR DE *THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL*

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Decía Wittgenstein que uno podría enfrentarse al problema de cómo traducir un chiste a otro chiste en una lengua distinta, y señalaba: "and this problem can be solved; but there [is] no systematic method of solving it" (en Steiner 1976: 275). Partiendo de esta actitud optimista respecto a la traducibilidad del humor, y extendiéndola al humor de las comedias, se analizarán aquí las distintas soluciones que varios traductores han buscado para una obra en concreto, *The School for Scandal* de Sheridan, comedia del siglo XVIII inglés, en la que, como en toda obra dramática del género, la traducción se complica más que en el simple chiste, puesto que el humor surge tanto del diálogo como de la situación, y el gesto, el tono, el contexto y la estructura de la obra revisten a las palabras de los personajes de un nuevo sentido, intensificando la carga humorística que ya de por sí podrían tener. Las traducciones utilizadas para este estudio, que identificaré en el texto con el año de publicación en cursiva, son las siguientes: *La escuela de la murmuración,* por Rafael Galves Amandi (1861); *La escuela de la murmuración,* por Marcial Busquets (1868); *La escuela del escándalo* por José M. Coco Ferraris (1955); y *La escuela del escándalo* de L.F. de Igoa (1967).[1]

La traducción del lenguaje teatral difiere de cualquier otra en que es en este género en el que más han de tenerse en cuenta los elementos paralingüísticos y kinésicos del diálogo de los personajes (el tono, el ritmo, los gestos, etc).

> The dialogue will be characterized by rhythm, intonation patterns, pitch and loudness, all elements that may not be immediately apparent from a straightforward reading of the written text in isolation. Robert Corrigan, in a rare article on translating for actors, argues that at all times the translator must hear the voice that speaks and take into

> account the "gesture" of the language, the cadence rhythm and pauses that occur when the written text is spoken. (Bassnett, 1987: 122).

Tanto más en la traducción de *The School for Scandal* cuanto que es precisamente del estilo peculiar de cada personaje del que deriva gran parte de su comicidad.

Las escenas de los cotillas son un buen ejemplo de ello. El análisis de las distintas traducciones deja ver cómo el inglés es mucho más rico que el español en el uso de la entonación y la acentuación para la creación de segundos significados o indirectas, para lo cual nuestra lengua ha de recurrir a perífrasis o a poner el peso en las distintas construcciones léxicas o gramaticales. Así ocurre con las maliciosamente cómicas insinuaciones de la hipócrita Mrs. Candour: "but there is no stopping People's Tongues", "People will talk" (I.i 177-4, 178-9): *1861:* "¡quién va a atar la lengua de los murmuradores!"; *1868:* "No es posible refrenar la lengua de la gente". "¿Cómo queréis contener la lengua de la gente?"; *1955:* "Pero, ¿quién para la lengua de las gentes?" "La gente tiene que hablar..."; *1967:* "Pero no es posible refrenar las lenguas de la gente..." "Como a la gente le gusta tanto murmurar..."

Otro ejemplo lo proporcionan el cínico Crabtree — "Yes and they do say there were pressing Reasons for't" — y la maliciosa Lady Sneerwell — "Why I have heard something of this before" (I.i 261-2) — cuyas intervenciones el traductor de *1861* vierte de forma libre, pero intentando mantener el tono del cotilleo ("¡Soberbio desenlace!" "¡Magnífica pareja!"), mientras que *1868* y *1955* las traducen prácticamente de manera literal, pero con gran pérdida del humor que proporcionaba ese énfasis en *do* y en *have : 1868:* "Sí: y dícese que hay para ello razones de mucho peso". "Ya había oído susurrar algo".; *1955:* "Así es... y afirman que había razones urgentes para hacerlo". "Claro, algo me habían contado al respecto". El traductor de *1967* ha preferido hacer explícita alguna insinuación de los cotillas y, así, toda la picardía y ambigüedad maliciosa que surge de la frase inacabada de Crabtree — "Yes, yes, they certainly do say —" (V.ii 100) — desaparecen con la mención expresa de lo que más o menos quiere decir este personaje: "Estará inquieta por Carlos. Como ella es viuda y él soltero...".

El hecho de que el tono y la acentuación ya no estén presentes en las traducciones como creadores de humor — pues no siempre se han hallado otros recursos para substituirlos — conlleva una inevitable pérdida de comicidad. Sin embargo, todos los traductores han intentado mantener el estilo general y el ambiente de las escenas de cotilleo, incluso las

traducciones de *1861* y *1967,* que aplicaron grandes recortes y refundiciones a dichas escenas: a pesar de dichas transformaciones, en *1861* sigue habiendo gran profusión de nombres, interrupciones de unos a otros, acumulación de datos, exclamaciones, estructuras similares entre las distintas intervenciones, contradicciones y enfrentamientos entre los participantes por tener la razón sobre los rumores, etc. En la adaptación de *1967,* una vez que se ha oído hablar a los cotillas durante un corto espacio de tiempo, se convierte todo el cotilleo en cuchicheo, y se intenta mantener la gracia con risas agudas que se intercalan, y algún "todo Londres lo comenta". De esta manera se consigue crear el ambiente de murmuración, aunque, por otra parte, han desaparecido algunos de los mejores comentarios y tanto la caracterización como el humor han visto aminorada su intensidad. Esta posibilidad de traducir elementos lingüísticos a kinésicos y proxémicos — de la conversación murmuradora inglesa se pasa en esta versión a gestos maliciosos, risas, cuchicheos y codazos que producen el mismo efecto general que el texto original en escena — es una característica especial de la traducción teatral, la cual, si por un lado posee una complejidad inherente debido a que tiene que hacer frente tanto al texto escrito como a la posible representación, por otro, posee una maleabilidad especial que la distingue de otro tipo de textos. En concreto, en las comedias, el humor que se expresa en una lengua con elementos lingüísticos puede llegar al receptor de la lengua meta a través de elementos escénicos visuales, y viceversa, con lo que el traductor cuenta con más recursos con los que salvar los problemas traduccionales que se puedan presentar.

La traducción se hace particularmente difícil cuando el humor procede de algún rasgo tan específicamente lingüístico como es la aliteración: "Has your Ladyship heard the Epigram He wrote last night on Lady Frizzle's Feather catching Fire?" (I.i 234-5). El deseo de mantener cierta aliteración ha llevado a los dos traductores que han vertido al español esta frase a no traducir en esta ocasión el nombre de la víctima de los cotillas: *1868:* ". . . el fuego que prendió en las plumas de la señora Frizzle?; *1955:* ". . . cuando se prendió fuego la pluma de Lady Frizzle?" Sin embargo, al no poder conseguirse ni la triple aliteración del original ni la concisa estructura y, por otro lado, ante la imposibilidad de mantener ese ritmo machacón que recuerda a una canción infantil o a un trabalenguas — "Lady Frizzle's Feather catching Fire" —, esta frase, que producía sin duda amplias sonrisas en los espectadores originales, pasa para los receptores de la lengua meta prácticamente desapercibida.

El ritmo de las frases es muy importante en Sheridan, y lo emplea no sólo para producir la risa sino para caracterizar a sus personajes. Así, si quiere mantener la caracterización original, el traductor ha de intentar conservar el estilo rebuscado de Joseph —con sus sentencias intrincadas y complejas, de largos sujetos que parecen no acabar nunca ni conducir a predicado alguno —, pues las máximas, no en su contenido sino en su forma, así como en su asidua presencia en la boca de Joseph, quiso el autor que fueran la nota principal de su caracterización. Este no ha debido de ser, sin embargo, el deseo del traductor de *1967,* como se puede deducir de la concisa versión que dio a la siguiente máxima de Joseph: "to smile at the jest which plants a Thorn in another's Breast is to become a principal in the Mischief" (I.i 143): "reirse de la gente es una mala acción". El cambio en el idiolecto de este personaje produce un efecto global distinto en su caracterización

El traductor ha de ser consciente de las consecuencias de los cambios que introduce pues a veces incluso una alteración del orden de las palabras puede llevar a arruinar la gracia de un discurso: así, la genial salida a escena de Crabtree en Vii, cuando los cotillas se están cerciorando ante Sir Oliver de que los rumores acerca de lo ocurrido en la escena del biombo son verdad, pierde en *1967* toda la sorpresa que causa en el público, sencillamente por haberse cambiado el orden, haberse alargado la frase y relegado el término principal al final: SIR BENJ. "Then Madam — they began to fight with Swords —" [Enter Crabtree] CRAB. "With Pistols — Nephew — pistols. I have it from undoubted authority —" (V.ii 66-7): CRAB."¿Las espadas? ¡De ningún modo, sobrino! Las pistolas: le hirió de un pistoletazo".

Muriel Vasconcellos estudia los recursos sintácticos a que recurren los autores para la creación de humor, tales como la posición de un determinado sintagma en un lugar inusual o especialmente "marcado", los contrastes semánticos entre sintagmas yuxtapuestos, etc., y señala la importancia que tiene para el traductor el mantener, en la medida de lo posible, dichas estructuras, puesto que son significativas (Vasconcellos 1986: 136). Sin embargo, sólo el traductor de *1955* ha sabido captar y transmitir la importancia que el ritmo y la estructura sintáctica tienen en el momento cumbre de la obra, la caída del biombo tras el cual se había escondido Lady Teazle, caída que la deja al descubierto en presencia de su marido, de Joseph — a quien había ido a visitar para un inocente coqueteo — y de Charles: CHAR. "Lady Teazle! by all that's wonderfull!" SIR PETER. "Lady Teazle! by all that's Horrible!" (IV.iii 374-5): *1861:* "¡Mi mujer!" "¡Pura!"; *1868:* "¡Lady Teazle! ¡A fe mía, esto es maravilloso!" "¡Lady Teazle! ¡Qué

horror!"; *1955:* "¡Asombro y maravilla, Lady Teazle!" "¡Condenación y castigo, Lady Teazle!"; *1967:* "Lady Teazle, mis saludos". "¿Lady Teazle? ¡Qué horror!"

Lo mismo ocurre con la significativa repetición de Joseph ante el comentario de Sir Peter sobre la utilidad del biombo, comentario revestido de gran ironía situacional, pues el fin principal del biombo es precisamente el de esconder a la esposa de Sir Peter: SIR P. "I dare say you must [find great use in that Screen] — certainly — when you want to find anything in a Hurry —" JOS. "Aye or to hide any thing in a Hurry either — (aside)" (IV.iii 116-8): *1868:* "Sí, sí y debéis valeros de él en casos urgentes". "(aparte) Sí, y sobre todo cuando necesito un escondrijo"; *1955:* "Así es seguramente, como cuando quieres encontrar algo en un apuro" "(aparte) Sí, o bien esconderlo en un apuro"; *1967:* "Hasta vuestro biombo es una fuente de saber, todo adornado de mapas". "Sí; es un biombo muy útil". "Sí, con tanto mapa".

Las repeticiones son fundamentales en los dimes y diretes de los Teazle puesto que el humor surge del modo en que cada uno, especialmente Lady Teazle, "recoge" la última palabra del anterior y la utiliza como introducción a su desacuerdo con lo que acaba de apuntar el otro. Dicha repetición no debería suponer ningún problema al traductor, y sin embargo, el traductor de *1868* ha prescindido totalmente de este recurso — ¿quizá por estar utilizando una edición original distinta a la aceptada? —, con lo cual las riñas de este matrimonio han quedado despojadas de gran parte de su gracia.

La repetición del vocablo "expectations" realza en gran manera el humor situacional de la escena en la que Sir Oliver, el tío rico llegado de las Indias, visita a su sobrino Charles bajo un disfraz de prestamista, y la conversación inesperadamente acaba girando en torno a un tío de Charles, es decir Sir Oliver, cuya herencia el joven piensa emplear como garantía para el préstamo que reciba del usurero: CHAR. "Then you must know that I have a devilish rich Uncle in the East Indies — Sir Oliver Surface — from whom I have the greatest Expectations". SIR O. "That you have a Wealthy Uncle I have heard — but how your Expectations will turn out is more I believe than you can tell". (III.iii 143-7). Excepto en la traducción de *1955,* en la que se mantiene la repetición y toda la ambigüedad del vocablo, en las demás traducciones dicha repetición no ocurre y la idea ha quedado simplemente implícita (*1861*), o se ha hecho demasiado explícita, viéndose despojada de toda ambigüedad y de gran parte de su comicidad (*1868* y *1967*). Así, en la traducción de *1861,* refiriéndose a una carta que Carlos afirma haber recibido de su tío, con promesas de una gran herencia (carta que no aparece en el original), dicen ambos personajes: SIR O. "Ya puede usted calcular que ese

papel no tiene salida por ahora,... ¿Y quién sabe si la tendrá tampoco en la sucesivo?" CARLOS. "¡Oh! Lo que es tocante a ese punto no le debe a usted quedar la menor duda". En las demás traducciones leemos: *1868:* CARL. ". . . de quien espero un día grandísimos bienes. SIR.O. "En efecto, . . . pero ¿se realizarán vuestras esperanzas? Se me figura que es más de lo que podéis afirmar".; *1955:* CARL. ". . . sobre el que abrigo las mejores esperanzas". SIR O. ". . . pero lo que no puede Ud decir es en qué han de parar esas esperanzas".; *1967:* CARL. ". . . del que espero heredar". SIR. O. ". . . Pero eso de las herencias cualquiera sabe..".

Los traductores han seguido criterios distintos respecto a la traducción de los nombres propios, que como en numerosas obras clásicas son alusivos a alguna característica del personaje. Mientras la traducción más moderna (*1967*) no ha traducido ningún nombre, y también ha suprimido o mantenido en su versión original los nombres de las víctimas de los cotillas, que son los nombres más significativos, la traducción más antigua de las consultadas decidió no ya traducir sino adaptar completamente los nombres originales al español.[2] Así, Sir Peter Teazle es Don Venancio Moraleja, Joseph Surface es Modesto Sotomayor, Crabtree se convierte en Benigno Gabarro, Sir Benjamin Backbite en Serafín Machuca, Rowley en Carrascosa, Mrs. Candour en Cándida Pedrero, etc. Los nuevos nombres no mantienen, sin embargo, el peso significativo de los originales (ni siquiera en los nombres de aquéllos a quienes critican los cotillas, que también han sido nacionalizados o suprimidos), sino que obedecen a un deseo de españolizar la obra o el ambiente.

A veces, un mismo traductor adopta distintos criterios respecto a la traducción de los nombres de los diversos personajes: el traductor de *1955* ha decidido transferir en su versión original los nombres de Sir Peter Teazle (alusivo a su carácter picajoso), de los hermanos Surface (que designa la distinta personalidad que se esconde tras la apariencia de ambos), de Lady Sneerwell (que nos hace pensar en su sonrisa maliciosa) y de Snake (ilustrativo de sus artimañas secretas); sin embargo, ha preferido otorgar nombres emblemáticos (traducciones de los originales) a Sir Benjamin Backbite ("Sir Benjamín Mordaz"), Crabtree ("el tío Cangrejal"), Careless ("Descuido"), Mrs. Candour ("Sra. Cándida"), y ha conseguido traducciones muy ilustrativas para algunos nombres de las víctimas de los murmuradores: Lady Brittle ("Lady Frágil"), Captain Boastall ("Capitán Gigante"), Miss Gadabout ("Srta. Vaivén"), Mrs.Drowzy ("Sra. Lirón"), Miss Nicely ("Srta. Belinda"), Mrs. Evergreen ("Srta.Siempreviva"), Miss Vermillion ("Srta. Bermellón"), Miss Simper ("Srta. Mueca"), Miss Sallow ("Srta. Oliva"),

Lady Dundizzy ("Lady Pocasluces"); mientras ha dejado otros sin traducir, posiblemente por no haber hallado un buen equivalente en español, que a la vez fuese ilustrativo y pudiese "sonar" a nombre: Miss Tattle, Miss Prim, Mrs. Clackitt, Mr. Premium, Lord Spindle, Mr. Nickit, etc., todos ellos evocadores de las actividades o cualidades por las que les critica el grupo de Lady Sneerwell.

El traductor de *1868* ha adoptado una postura que podríamos llamar "intermedia": no ha traducido ningún nombre, pero en la lista de personajes ha insertado una nota a pie de página aclarando la significación de los nombres principales de esta comedia. Respecto a los nombres de las víctimas del cotilleo, sin embargo, no ha introducido ninguna nota aclaratoria. La traducción de *1861* nacionaliza no sólo los nombres de los personajes sino las alusiones a lugares, a personajes históricos y otros elementos contextuales: Lady Teazle procede ahora de Illescas y Sir Richard Raveline, antepasado de Charles (a quien este último anunciaba como "my Great Uncle Sir Richard Raveline — a Marvellous good General in his Day I assure you — He served in all the Duke of Malbourough's Wars; and got that cut over his eyes at the Battle of Malplaquet" [IV.i 28-31]) se ha convertido en *1861* en "D. Fadrique de Sotomayor, rico-home de Castilla, que acompañó a los Reyes Católicos en el cerco de Granada".

Esto nos lleva a la cuestión del contexto: hasta qué punto se han de adaptar las alusiones humorísticas a la realidad del momento y en qué medida la traducción cercana al texto original conlleva una pérdida de humor en estos casos. Refiriéndose a la traducción de los factores culturales en general (no sólo en obras de humor), Daniel Shaw opina que "the explication of implied information in the source context would insult the intelligence of the audience. Not to explicate this same information for the receptor audience, however, could result in miscommunication". Y concluye: "Translation should come out of a dynamic awareness of worldview differences and an appreciation for communicating those within the new context" (Shaw 1987: 26.y 28). Si por un lado las explicaciones arruinan el humor, por otro, para que una referencia local sea capaz de producir la risa en el espectador, ha de tener sentido, una especial significación, pues "since the translator works for a particular audience in a particular place and at a particular time, his commitment to the 'truth' of the original message is socially and culturally determined" (Van Den Broeck 1986: 108). La significación, sin embargo, como se verá más adelante, no es sólo un problema de traducción sino del cambio de época.

The School for Scandal comienza con una breve frase de Lady Sneerwell alusiva a sus artimañas de introducir calumnias sobre gente de la aristocracia londinense en los periódicos de la capital: "The Paragraphs you say, Mr. Snake, were all inserted?" (I.i 1-2). Las traducciones de *1868, 1955* y *1967* han vertido la frase de una manera más o menos literal, sin aclaración alguna sobre el significado de "the Paragraphs": *1868:* "Con que, ¿decís, señor Snake, que se han insertado todos los artículos?; *1955:* "¿Debo pues creerle, Sr. Snake, que todos los párrafos fueron insertados?"; *1967:* "Bien, míster Snake, ¿qué me decís de esas noticias?" El traductor de *1861,* sin embargo, no sólo ha nacionalizado sino que ha añadido una larga explicación a dicha referencia: "Terminemos cuanto antes, amigo Juan de Mata. ¿Ha estado usted en la redacción del *Escorpión*? ¿Ha entregado usted a su viperino director mis apuntes relativos a la crónica escandalosa de la corte?" Sin embargo, esta traducción ha suprimido (por refundición de los párrafos) otra referencia local que venía a continuación — "I have more than once traced her causing a Tête-a-tête in the Town and Country Magazine" (I.i 17-8) — para la cual los demás traductores ofrecen una traducción explicativa , con la aclaración inserta en el propio texto traducido (*1955:* "[...] 'entrevistas imaginarias' de la Revista Campo y Ciudad"), que a veces acompañan de una nota a pie de página: *1868:* ". . . entrevista de personas que nunca se habían visto [en el] Town y el Country Magazine". (nota: "Periódicos de aquel tiempo, en los que algunas veces aparecían inculpaciones contra los particulares".).

Hay que observar que en la edición inglesa aquí estudiada esta referencia, como muchas otras, va acompañada de notas a pie de página del editor, lo cual indica que dichas alusiones con sabor local presentan problemas ya no de traducción sino de interpretación con el paso del tiempo: un lector/espectador inglés del siglo actual necesitará tantas aclaraciones posiblemente como el nuevo lector de la traducción. Esto lleva a plantearse la pertinencia de explicaciones tan largas como las que ofrece la traducción de *1861* para la primera frase de la comedia, especialmente cuando — como en este caso — el sentido de dicha frase queda perfectamente aclarado en el contexto global de esa primera escena.

El momento particular de la representación de una obra, como opina J. Palmer, está inmerso en el mismo texto:

> how the social occasion is inscribed in the very grain of the text, and by the same token how the text — the set of discursive meanings that constitute it — is responsible for some features at least of the social occasion in question. (Palmer 1988: 124)

Todo sabor local pierde peso y gracia ya no con el cambio de contexto que supone una traducción, sino con el transcurso de los años. Otro ejemplo lo constituirían las numerosas alusiones que hace Sheridan (cuya verdadera vocación fue la política) a leyes polémicas del momento. La referencia a "the annuity Bill" ("wouldn't you have him run out a little against the annuity Bill" [III.i 108-9]) queda suprimida en las traducciones de *1861* y *1967*. Tanto el traductor de *1955* como el de *1868* la convierten en "la Ley de Intereses", pero el segundo, en cuyo texto abundan las notas a pie de página, explica en qué se basaba dicha ley con una nota aclaratoria. Una anécdota ilustrativa de la distinta significación que adquieren las obras en los diversos contextos la constituye el hecho de que la referencia a esta polémica ley del momento casi le vale la censura al propio Sheridan a última hora, pues la obra se iba a estrenar en tiempos de campaña electoral (aunque luego el Lord Chamberlain se rió del asunto y autorizó la puesta en escena). La traducción de *1861* acaba, curiosamente, con estas palabras: "FIN DE LA COMEDIA / Habiendo examinado esta comedia, no hallo inconveniente en que su representación sea autorizada. Madrid 25 de setiembre de 1860. El censor de teatros, Antonio Ferrer del Río".

Más específico de la traducción es el problema que surge con el rico juego que ha desplegado Sheridan a lo largo de toda la obra con los términos *sentiment* y *sentimental,* gracias a las distintas acepciones que dichos vocablos tienen en inglés y a su especial significación en la época. Un análisis de esto último necesitaría más espacio del que disponemos aquí. Diré simplemente que *sentiment* significa tanto "sentimiento" como "máxima", y en una época en que estaba en auge la literatura de la sensibilidad, calificativos como *a man of sentiment* adquirían connotaciones especiales pues no se referían sólo a la sensibilidad o sentimientos de una persona sino a las máximas o principios que profesaba. El juego y la ambigüedad se ciernen sobre Joseph, representante en su cara externa del sentimentalismo moralista por las máximas que siempre están dispuestas a salir de sus labios, pero símbolo de la hipocresía en lo que nos deja ver de su cara interna. Al tener que traducir *sentiment* por *máxima* cuando el vocablo se refiere claramente a una de esas largas sentencias llenas de moralina que Joseph predica a diestro y siniestro, se pierde la carga significativa del vocablo, que surge no sólo de su recurrencia en la obra sino de las connotaciones especiales mencionadas; el juego original se ve desprovisto ahora del humor que se deriva del contraste entre el verdadero carácter de Joseph, frío y calculador, y la otra acepción del vocablo, "sentimientos", que inevitablemente viene a la

mente del lector/espectador aun en aquellos casos en que la acepción predominante no es ésta sino la de "máxima".

Esto a menudo ha llevado a los traductores a verter *sentiment* al español como *sentimiento* cuando la acepción que prevalece es sin duda la de "máxima". No he encontrado esta acepción de "máxima" en el vocablo español *sentimiento* (ni en el *Diccionario de uso del español* de María Moliner ni en el *Diccionario de la lengua española* de la R.A.E.) y, en consecuencia se incurre en cierta contradicción, o al menos incongruencia, en la relación de unas frases con otras: SIR P. ". . . — he professes the noblest — Sentiments". SIR O. "Ah plague on his Sentiments — if He salutes me with a Scrap of morality in his mouth I shall be sick directly". (II.iii 60-2): *1861:* "Si no te ves precisado a aplaudir sus nobles sentimientos..." "¡Vaya al diablo con sus sentimientos! La moral la quiero yo en las obras, no en las palabras"; *1868:* ". . . es un hombre que profesa los más nobles sentimientos" "¡Oh! dejémonos de sentimientos, — si se me presenta con alguna moralidad en los labios, . . ."; *1955:* ". . . profesa los más nobles sentimientos". "¡Al diablo con sus sentimientos! Si me saluda con un discurso moral en la boca . . . ."

La descripción que recibe Joseph al principio de la escena — "a man of sentiment" — parece corresponder con la traducción que le dan los traductores de *1868,* "hombre de buenos sentimientos", y *1955,* "hombre de buenos principios". Pero ese significado de *sentiment* queda totalmente alterado con el consejo que da Lady Sneerwell a Joseph, cerrando la escena: "In the meantime, you shall study sentiments" (I.i 351-2). La colocación del verbo *study* con *sentiments* obliga a replantearse el sentido otorgado anteriormente a *sentiment* y a concederle entonces la otra acepción de "máxima moral". En la traducción de *1955* se ha perdido toda relación formal entre ambos usos del vocablo: "y vaya Ud. a meditar nuevas máximas". En *1868* se ha dado a dicho consejo una alteración un tanto libre con el fin de poder mantener la relación formal entre ambas frases y el contraste subyacente entre los dos usos del término: "vos preparaos a fingir sentimientos".

David Jordan (1988: 144-5) distingue entre tres tipos de humor: "culture-dependent", "language-free" y "language-dependent". Se han analizado ya ejemplos de estos tres tipos. Me centraré ahora en lo que quizá sea más difícil de traducir en el ámbito del humor, los *puns* o juegos de palabras. La dificultad estriba en que en un juego de palabras se mezclan como factores determinantes tanto el aspecto lingüístico ("language-dependent"), como el cultural ("culture-dependent") y, en aquellas ocasiones en que uno se topa

con un "beautiful pun", según la clasificación de Matthew Marino (que distingue entre "bad", "good", y "beautiful puns"), influye también de manera importante el texto completo, pues el juego de palabras en este caso es portador de significados que pueden ser "essential to the reading of intricate texts" (Marino 1988: 39).

Los traductores han empleado recursos diversos a la hora de traducir los juegos de palabras, recursos que se extienden desde el afortunado "hallazgo" de un juego de palabras similar y equivalente al original hasta la omisión total del vocablo original (Delabastita 1987: 148-150). A menudo se recurre al modo que Delabastita define como "Pun translated into non-pun", es decir el vocablo original es vertido a la lengua meta en sólo uno de sus significados, ya sea el superficial ya el subyacente, con lo que el juego desaparece. Así ocurre con la traducción que han dado los traductores de *1868, 1955* y *1967* al siguiente equívoco de Snake: "She has been the cause of six matches being broken off, and three sons being disinherited, of four forced Elopements, as many close confinements . . ." (I.i 14-6). *Confinement* expresa tanto la idea de "encierro forzoso" como de "parto" ("part of time before and during which a woman gives birth to a child", según el *Collins Cobuild English Language Dictionary)*. Los traductores sólo han mantenido el primer significado: *1868:* "reclusión"; *1955:* "prisiones"; y *1967:* "encarcelamientos". Por su parte, el traductor de *1861* ha preferido la "zero-translation" en la clasificación de Delabastita: "The pun and its immediate (or larger) context are entirely omitted" (1987: 148-149).

Para el siguiente juego de palabras que pone Sheridan en boca de Moses ha habido diversas opciones: "I never Meddle with books" (III.iii 204). *Meddle* presenta varias definiciones en el OED, entre ellas: "to concern or busy oneself with" y "to mix wares fraudulently", es decir, se mezclarían los conceptos de entrometerse o tocar algo, y de manipular (en este caso los libros de cuentas, al tratarse de un usurero). Las traducciones de *1861* y *1967* han optado por la "zero-translation" u omisión del vocablo y de la expresión por completo. La de *1955* ha deshecho el juego adoptando el método del ejemplo anterior, "pun translated into non-pun", vertiendo uno solo de los significados: "Yo no sé nada de libros". El traductor de *1868* adopta este mismo método pero manteniendo ambos sentidos no ya en una relación vertical sino horizontal, lo que Delabastita llama "a non-punning conjunction": "No; nunca me he metido en libros, a no ser en mis libros de cuentas".

Otro estudioso del *word-play* señala un enfoque para la traducción del juego de palabras consistente en no traducir palabra por palabra ni buscar un

significado estrechamente equivalente sino en "concentrating on the imitation of the word-play as process"; así, "a translator . . . will be assured of achieving the effect intended by the original" (T. Gordon 1986: 146). Este enfoque, en mi opinión muy acertado, no cabe sin embargo en todos los casos pues a menudo el significado, o mejor, los significados específicos del juego de palabras original, sí son pertinentes e importantes en el contexto.

Un último ejemplo de juegos de palabras para el que algunos de los traductores han conseguido el modo "pun translated into same pun", sería el que proporciona el verbo *to knock down,* que se repite con gracia varias veces en la subasta de los cuadros de Charles: CHAR. "Careless, knock down my Uncle Richard". El juego ha sido suprimido en *1861* y en *1967.* En *1868* leemos: "Careless, rematad a mi tío Ricardo". Este traductor inserta una nota a pie de página: "a) Aquí hay un juego de palabras chocante: — *To knock down* quiere decir adjudicar, y también machucar o aporrear. Así pues, Carlos dice a un tiempo: 'Adjudicad o aporread a mi tío.'" El verbo español *rematar* conseguiría por sí solo ambos efectos, y por ello la nota (que es un frecuente método de compensación cuando no se ha hallado otro juego de palabras en la lengua meta y que serviría sólo para las traducciones destinadas a la lectura pero no a la representación) resulta aquí innecesaria puesto que destruye uno de los factores principales de la creación de humor mediante juegos de palabras, a saber, ese sentimiento que surge en el lector/espectador de una cierta confabulación entre él y el autor cuando ve que ha "adivinado" un segundo sentido en un vocablo. Dicho sentimiento proporciona un gran placer al receptor y es uno de los principales forjadores de humor. La traducción de *1955* ha conseguido también un juego similar al original: "ahora podrás rematar a mis antepasados con su propio linaje . . . . Descuido, un martillazo para el tío Richard". El juego se repite en el original al final de la obra cuando los hermanos Surface intentan echar de su casa a su tío Sir Oliver, a quien aún no conocen como tal. Sir Oliver recurre de nuevo al verbo *knock down* ahora con mayor peso en el sentido de "golpear" pero recordando también inevitablemente al concepto que predominaba — aunque no exclusivamente — en la subasta, "adjudicar". Dice ahora Sir Oliver: "I stood a chance of faring worse than my Ancestors — and being knocked down without being bid for —" (V.iii 94-5). Suprimido en *1861* y *1967,* aparece en *1868* como ". . . y por poco me vende sin haber sido anunciado", con lo que el traductor ha decidido que aquí Sir Oliver se refiera sólo a la subasta y no también a ese instante anterior en que los dos hermanos estuvieron a punto de hacerle caer al suelo. En *1955* encontramos una versión más cercana al juego de palabras, pues hace tanto referencia a la violencia

física de los Surface como a la subasta: ". . . y de que cayera el martillazo sin que nadie hiciera ninguna oferta".

Cuando la ambigüedad y el humor no proceden de un juego de palabras estrictamente sino que son más bien fruto del ingenio, la traducción se vuelve generalmente más sencilla. Para la siguiente frase de Sir Benjamin, "as [she] was taking the Dust in Hyde Park" (II.ii 7), las traducciones de *1868* y *1967* juegan con la expresión "respirar aire puro", y dicen: *1868:* "Habiendo ido a respirar el polvo en Hyde Park".; *1967:* "Habíamos ido a respirar el polvo a Hyde Park". El traductor de *1955* se basa en la idea de "tomar el aire" o "tomar el fresco" y traduce de una manera un poco más libre pero con el mismo efecto que el original: "estaba tomando calor en Hyde Park". Hubiera sido preferible, de todas formas, la omisión del artículo en las primeras —"respirar polvo"— y la introducción del mismo en la segunda —"tomar el calor" — puesto que de esta manera las construcciones estarían más cerca de las expresiones usuales que intentan evocar y destruir a un mismo tiempo, y la sorpresa sería por ello mayor. El autor ha recurrido al desbaratamiento de lo que espera el lector/espectador, que puede ser de coherencia sintáctica, textual, fonológica, estilística o semántica, como en este caso: el receptor espera que "was taking the —" vaya seguido de "air". Al oir "dust" se trastoca su sentido de la coherencia semántica, lo cual le provoca la risa. Como explica Muriel Vasconcellos,

> any thwarting of these expectations . . . produces a surprise of some kind which is felt by the listener as irony, revelation, shock, disappointment, etc. When the surprise is gentle and playful, and when the reader feels secure as a party to the conspiracy, the effect is humor. (1986: 139)

En la traducción, cuanto más se fomenten estas expectativas (es decir, más recuerde a una estructura determinada la expresión elegida) mayor será la sorpresa cuando aquéllas no se cumplan y, como consecuencia, mayor será la comicidad y más cerca estaremos del original si éste ha sido el recurso empleado en el mismo.

La traducción literaria es un acto de interpretación individual (Foulkes 1989: 26-8) y, en el caso de las comedias, precisa de grandes dosis de imaginación, de un conocimiento profundo tanto del contexto original como del contexto y cultura del nuevo receptor, y sobre todo de rigor técnico: cualquier cambio gratuito que se aplique a la obra puede acarrear una alteración total de ésta. La supresión de personajes secundarios y la adición

de escenas inventadas por el traductor encontradas en las traducciones de *1861* y de *1967* son transformaciones que no alteran el conjunto global de la obra. Pero ciertos cambios de personaje para algunas intervenciones, la omisión de algunas de éstas, las explicaciones añadidas puestas en boca de personajes, las alteraciones en la colocación de ciertas escenas importantes, etc., que también han aplicado esas dos traducciones —y cuyo análisis requeriría un estudio más profundo— han producido profundos cambios de caracterización, incoherencias estructurales y, sobre todo, una pérdida de humor y tensión en el momento culminante de la obra, la escena del biombo, cuya importancia no sólo en esta comedia de Sheridan sino en el teatro inglés en general no han sabido apreciar estos dos traductores.

El nuevo receptor ha de estar continuamente presente en la mente del traductor de humor (pues para la apreciación del humor es esencial la cooperación del lector/espectador), pero a su vez el autor del texto meta ha de ser consciente de las consecuencias que las transformaciones introducidas por él tendrán en la comicidad y coherencia interna de la obra. El que algo no sea pertinente o significativo en la cultura meta puede ocurrir en la misma cultura original con el paso del tiempo debido a un proceso de evolución; pero, a su vez, es posible también que otros factores tengan ahora una nueva significación que no tenían en el momento inicial: las interpretaciones de un texto literario pueden ser múltiples no sólo según las épocas, sino según las culturas y, de hecho, según los receptores individuales. Teniendo esto presente, el traductor sin embargo puede querer acercarse al contenido humorístico conseguido por el autor en el texto de origen. El punto medio lo expresa muy bien Daniel Shaw cuando dice: "The message needs both to act and to talk right with respect to the receptors while communicating the meaning intended by the author" (1987: 29). Las traducciones de *1868* y especialmente de *1955,* con mayores y menores aciertos, son buenos ejemplos de ese punto medio que preconiza Shaw y muestran cómo el humor, ya sea "language-free", "language-dependent" o "culture-dependent", con distinta dificultad y unos recursos u otros, a menudo es capaz de traspasar con éxito las barreras lingüísticas y culturales.

NOTAS

1. La definición que cada traductor da a su versión ayudará a elucidar los criterios seguidos en la realización de su tarea: "Refundida y arreglada a la escena

española" (*1861*); "Traducida al español" (*1868*); "Vertida al castellano" (*1955*); "Traducida y adaptada para T.V.E" (*1967*).

2. No quiero indicar con esto una evolución en los criterios de traducción de nombres: las traducciones estudiadas no proporcionan una base para ello; antes, todo lo contrario, ya que con una pequeñísima diferencia de años *1861* y *1868* adoptan criterios muy distintos entre sí, como ocurre también entre las traducciones de *1955* y *1967*.

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HAL, A PROMPT

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The title of this paper is related to the fact that the computer of *2001 A Space Odyssey* (Clarke 1968) is an object, or creature, which clusters around itself a number of fascinating issues, all of them central for our Present Day civilization and way of life. *2001 A Space Odyssey* (henceforward *2001*), whether we think of it as a novel or as a film, is the joint creation of the British science-fiction (henceforward SF) writer Arthur C. Clarke and the film director Stanley Kubrick, who cooperated with each other in the making of both film and book. The development of their mutual collaboration has been the subject of several essays and articles, among them: *The Making of Kubrick's 2001* (Agel 1970) and *Filmguide to 2001 A Space Odyssey* (Gueduld 1973).

The ultimate source of *2001* is the short story "The Sentinel," first published in 1958, which has been reprinted many times since. In the prologue to the 1985 edition Clarke himself remarks: "I am continually annoyed by careless references to 'The Sentinel' as the story on which *2001* is based; it bears as much relation to the movie as an acorn to the resultant full grown oak" (1985: 137).

In fact, what attracted Kubrick in Clarke's short story was an object, a glittering pyramidal structure which symbolized the hidden though efficient influence of extraterrestrial creatures upon man's destiny. This object later became the mysterious black monolyth, located first on earth, then on the moon's surface and finally in outer space. But "The Sentinel" was not the only source for the film script; *Encounter at Dawn* (1950), *Out of the Sun* (1957) and *The Possessed* (1953) also provided the narrative motifs on which the story is based. The fragmentary nature of such raw materials is no doubt reflected in the various sections of the novel. Contrary to what is the usual sequence in the relationship between film and written story, in our example the novel was published once the film had been released and Clarke himself acknowledges that he occasionally watched film episodes as the input for his own writing. Moreover, in some editions of the novel, Kubrick appears as the co-author.

Clarke is indeed a prolific writer and it is not surprising that he yielded to the temptation of writing a sequel to *2001*. He did so two decades later, and the resulting publication, *2010 Odyssey Two* (henceforward *Odyssey Two*) (Clarke 1982) was received as a product of much lower artistic quality which did not even solve the thrilling enigmas of its predecessor. *Odyssey Two* was also turned into a film, which was met with cold indifference and has by no means reached the near-classical status of *2001*.

Although it is only marginal to the main topic of this paper, it should be pointed out that Clarke proved to be sensitive to the spirit of the times and in his second novel he introduced some so-called "progressive" elements such as collaboration between the USA and the USSR, and the presence of women among the crew, a concession, no doubt, to the increasing "visibility" of women in society.

Both *Odysseys* are basically, if not exclusively, space travels. The first is the search for the monolyth (the mysterious extraterrestrial source of power) and the second is a rescue expedition to find out whatever might have hapenned to the spaceship *Discovery* and its unfortunate crew. The whole saga takes place against the background of highly advanced technology. As Patrick Parrinder puts it

> to the extent that it [science fiction] expresses our sense of wonder at new technologies it tends to endow them with the air of conspiration and magic. Arthur C. Clarke expressed this idea in his much quoted statement that "Any sufficiently advanced form of technology is indistinguishable from magic." (Parrinder 1990: 70-71)

Space travel belongs to the central core of science fiction and thus contains an element of extrapolation which is fundamental to the identity of the genre. As Kroeber says,

> All commentators of Science Fiction . . . agree that the key to the genre is *extrapolation*. The writer of Science Fiction extends or projects or draws inferences from what is known and accepted. (Kroeber 1988: 9)

In order to stress the projective imagination of Clarke and Kubrick, let's remember that at the time they were preparing the filmscript, in 1964, man had not yet reached the moon. Critical opinion unanimously agree upon the narrative and symbolic value of Hal in the saga and its/his status as a real character in both the novel and movie.

Hal stands for **H**euristically programmed **Al**gorithm computer, its complete name being Hal 9000. It has a twin computer which remains on earth throughout the mission. A malicious joke circulates on the fact that if you replace each of the three letters by the one following it in the alphabet you get IBM. Clarke himself has explicitly denied that such a link was ever intended.

In the long history of literature there have always been artifacts with forceful meaning and symbolic import; let's just remember Noah's Ark, the Trojan Horse or the *Pequod.* However, they are locations or "stage props" never reaching the real identity of an actual character. Hal, on the contrary, — as stated earlier — has been *perceived* as a character. Robert Plank says: "Reviewers have found him more human than the human characters in *2001,* more interesting as a personality, more individualized" (1974: 134).

We should keep in mind, however, that one of the standard criticisms against SF is the lack of subtlety in the display of characterization, so the human-like behavior exhibited by Hal has to be compared with relatively flat human personalities. The computer confronts us with several issues that consistently strike our minds, such as the notion of intelligence, mental disorder and moral responsibility.

Hal has the shape and structure of an artifact; that is, it is not a robot-type creature imitating the human body, but neither does he show the architecture of the heavy cumbersome machines associated to the Industrial Revolution. Hal is in charge of the full control of the *Discovery* and he communicates with people by means of natural language. His perceptual organ is an eye-like lens and the rest of his physical body consists of screens and keyboards of the usual type. Hal's "brain" is, on the contrary, presented in a more imaginative way , to which we shall return later.

Consequently, Hal is and looks like an artifact, albeit endowed with intelligence, so, at this point we have to ask ourselves what intelligence is. Intelligence is described in the *Shorter Oxford Dictionary* (1972 ed.) as "The faculty of understanding," and, in a more recent work, *Collins Cobuild* (1991 ed.) as "The intelligence of a person or animal is their ability to understand, learn and think things out quickly, especially compared with other people or other animals of the same kind."

In present-day psychology, intelligence, rather than being talked about, is measured in terms of the I.Q. or intelligence quotient, but it is still considered as a requisite for moral behavior. We may not be aware of the effect that prevalent notions about intelligence influence public opinion and, in particular, educational policies. Quoting López and Luján,

> desde la teoría hereditarista de la inteligencia se critica ahora el actual modelo de enseñanza obligatoria orientado hacia la universidad a la que, pese a la igualdad de oportunidades solo unos pocos bien dotados podian acceder. Todo un derroche, en suma, de dinero e ilusiones. (1989: 181)

The presupposition of Hal's intelligence leads us to the topic of machine or *artificial intelligence.* That term or AI, for short, has been with us for decades, and its history can be traced back to a meeting of mathematicians and logicians which was held, in the summer of 1955, at Dartmouth College, Hanover (New Hampshire). The purpose of the meeting was to debate the possibility of creating computer programs which would be able to think or, eventually, behave intelligently. The test to discover or recognize intelligence in a machine is the so called Turing test (Gardner 1988). A programmed machine has passed the Turing test if its responses are indistinguishable from those of a human being.

It is obvious that Hal, as shown in both *Odysseys* never fails to pass the Turing test. His behavior is human in two important respects: he makes mistakes and he commmits crime. Moreover, his mistakes are later to be found intentional errors subservient to his main aim of murdering the human crew and remain the sole responsible creature in the mission of discovering the mythic monolith.

Our intuitive understanding of AI tells us that, although machines can think, emotions and will pertain to human beings only. In the earlier stages of AI, programs were described in term of inexhaustive computing capacity. Talking about the first AI scientists, Gardner says:

> Su propósito: debatir la posibilidad de producir programas de computadora capaces de "comportarse" o "pensar" inteligentemente. Según ellos mismos habian declarado en su solicitud de subsidio a la Fundación Rockefeller: "el estudio se basa en la conjetura de que en principio es posible describir tan precisamente cualquier aspecto del aprendizaje o todo otro rasgo de la inteligencia como para que lo pueda simular una máquina." (1988: 158)

Hal's behavior, however, is erratic and can be pictured as evil, so more human than can be expected from a machine. He manages to kill the hibernated crew members, a fourth astronaut is abandoned in outer space and the main character Dave Bowman (an obviously symbolic name) is locked

out of the spaceship to face an inevitable death, which only Bowman's skill in opening the door manually can prevent. Hal's motives are not known to the readers/audience until they are disclosed in *Odyssey Two.*

Hal, of course, deserves to be deprived of his ability to handle at least the higher functions of control upon the vehicle, that is, he has to be made powerless by "disconnection" or removal of his memory banks which rule his logical and intellective functions. The disconnection sequence is one of the most succesful scenes of the film and, if we compare it with the rather sober description by Clarke, we can see that the merit is almost exclusively Kubrick's. Here is the written presentation of the scene (David Bowman is in the sealed vault that houses the "brain" of the computer):

> Now he was in the little red-lit chamber, with its neatly ranged row of columns of solid state units looking rather like a bank's safe-deposit vault. He released the locking bar on the section labelled COGNITIVE FEEDBACK and pulled out the first memory block. The marvellously complex three dimensional network which could lie comfortably in a man's hand yet contained millions of elements, floated away accross the vault.
>
> "Stop, will you — stop Dave ..."
>
> He started on the AUTO INTELLECTION panel.
>
> "Stop, Dave, I'm afraid . . . ."
>
> "Dave, my mind is going, I can feel it. My mind is going. I can feel it... I can feel it"
>
> Then abruptly, the tempo of HAL's voice changed and it became remote, detached. The computer was no longer aware of him, it was begining to regress to his earlier days.
>
> "Good afternoon, gentlemen. I am a HAL 9000 computer. I became operational at the HAL plant in Urbana, Illinois, on the 27th January 1992. My instructor war Dr. Chandra, and he taught me to sing a song. If you'd like to hear it, I can sing it for you ... It's called *Daisy, Daisy*..." (Clarke 1982: 208)

Hal's criminal behavior is odd and and seems to contradict our intuitive belief that machines, no matter how autonomous and sophisticated they might be, should always obey and respect people, their makers. However,the possibility of erratic and potentially dangerous behavior has been repeatedly stated by S F writers. Asimov's Laws are aimed at protecting human beings against the whims of robots:

> 1) A robot may not injure a human being or, through inaction, allow a human being to come to harm.
>
> 2) A robot must obey orders given by human beings except when such orders would conflict with the First Law.
>
> 3) A robot must protect its own existence as long as such protection does not conflict with the First and Second Law. (Olander and Greenberg 1977: 187)

While Hal undergoes the process of disconnection he recedes back into what can be called his childhood, but his disturbances are only of phonological realization. We cannot find the agrammatisms or morphosyntactic errors that characterize most severe speech disorders (Caplan 1980). His disease can be described as *dysarthria* which is a collection of motor speech disorders in which impairment originates in the central or peripheral nervous system (Evached 1989). The term encompasses coexisting motor disorders of respiration, phonation, resonance and prosody.

The diagnosis of Hal's madness is only revealed in *Odyssey Two,* through the report by Heywood Floyd, commander of the rescue mission.

> The problem was apparently caused by a conflict between's Hal's basic instructions and the requirements of security. By direct Presidential order the existence of TMA (the Monolyth C.O.) was kept a complete secret. Only those with a need to know were permitted access to the information . . . . As Hal was capable of operating the ship without human assistance it was also decided that he should be programmed to carry out the mission autonomously in the event of the crew's being incapacitated or killed. He was therefore given full knowledge of its objectives, but was not permitted to reveal them to Bowman or Poole.
>
> This situation conflicted with the purpose for which Hal had been designed — the accurate processing of information without distortion or concealment. As a result, Hal developed what would be called, in human terms, a psychosis — specifically schizophrenia. Dr. D. informs me that, in technical terminology, Hal became trapped in a Hofstadter-Moebius loop, a situation apparently not uncommon in advanced computers with autonomous goal-seeking programs. (Clarke 1982: 141)

In terms of current research in schizophrenia Hal's behavior corresponds to the so-called *pragmatic paradox,* specifically related to contradictory commands or instructions.

With respect to the Hofstadter-Moebius loop, it is named after the German mathematician August Moebius (1790-1868) and the American physicist and Nobel Prize winner Robert Hofstadter (b.1915). The Moebius loop, strip or band plays a central role in Topology, a branch of Geometry.

Although technical explanations are well beyond my own limited mathematical background, it is easy to imagine the if one could glide along a Moebius band, one's own position would be either inside or outside the enclosed space, without a clear conscience of the transitional points, thus a situation leading to insecurity and anxiety.

The possibility of the raising of emotions, as a further step beyond computational (or artificial) intelligence, has been extensive explored in SF (Rose 1981; Scholes and Rabkin 1977). No conclusive proof has been produced so far, but such hypothesis has by no means been discarded by scientists.

Hal is "resurrected' in *Odyssey Two,* and the film sequence is, predictably, similar to that of *2001,* only the circuits are replaced instead of removed. The setting, however, lacks the glowing delicacy of the first movie.

The computer's first sign of recovery is speech; he comes back to life by greeting Dr. Chandra, his father-like builder. Later in the story when the crew faces the dilemma of sentencing Hal to extinction to ensure their safe return to earth, they are confronted with the decision of telling him the truth (that is his risk of death) or otherwise concealing the real danger and assuming blind obedience from the machine

> "Then what do you suggest?" Tania asked, in a voice that now held a distinct note of menace.
>
> "We must tell him the whole truth, as far as we know it— no more lies or half truths, which are just as bad. And let *him* decide for himself"
>
> "Hell, Chandra —he is only a machine."
>
> Chandra looked at Max with such a steady, confident gaze that the younger man quickly dropped his eyes.
>
> "So are we all, Mr. Brailowski. It is merely a matter of degree. Whether we are based on carbon or on silicon makes no fundamental difference; we should each be treated with appropriate respect." (Clarke 1982: 239)

Hal is actually told the truth — that he may very likely be destroyed — and this time he faces the predicament with a spirit of free choice which in turn implies moral responsibility. In so far as we can indulge in the

interpretation of Hal's motivations at all, and assuming that logical reason prevails over emotional reactions, we could guess that Hal's behavior is this time guided by the system called in standard Ethics *proportionalism,* (Rodríguez 1991: 312), that is to say, moral evaluation of a given course of action will depend on the relative proportion for the reason why that course of action should be taken. We cannot discard, however, deeper human-like attitudes such as solidarity or even love.

The computer is finally destroyed, he is blasted away with the spaceship Discovery, but his destiny is not extinction. Something like his soul joins Dave Bowman in his eternal journeying through the galaxies. Hal has also become a child of the stars.

So, after having being in the company of Hal for a while we realize that he has led our thoughts to topics such as intelligence, madness, moral responsibility and friendly devotion. Our aesthetic feelings have also been rewarded with the contemplation of his inquisitive eye and the elegant, luminous geometry of his brain.

I cannot help wondering whether human narrative characters always give us as much pleasure and instruction as our friend Hal does.

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THE PASSION: JEANETTE WINTERSON'S UNCANNY MIRROR OF INK [1]

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Rosemary Jackson (1981) has defined fantasy fiction as corresponding to the first stage in Freud's evolutionary model, the magical animistic stage during which primitive man and the child alike have no sense of difference between "self" and "other." That is, a literature that works to dissolve structures, moving towards an ideal of entropic *undifferentiation,* "of transgression of the limits separating self from other, man from woman, human from animal, organic from inorganic objects" (Jackson 1981: 73).

But fantasy literature not only works towards undifferentiation, it simultaneously works towards the contrary pole of constant metamorphosis, with its stress upon instability of natural forms, expressive of its rejection of the notion of the self as a coherent, indivisible and continuous whole held by traditional 'realist' fiction. According to Rosemary Jackson (1981 : 83), "it is precisely this subversion of unities of 'self' which constitutes the most radical transgressive function of the fantastic."

The oxymoronic quality of the fantastic, with its simultaneous opposed pulls, on the one hand, towards instability and metamorphosis and, on the other, towards entropic undifferentiation, explains the appeal this literary mode has for the contemporary writers of the fringe (Jameson 1984) for, as a movement away from patriarchal totalitatianism, the new alternative culture is by definition heterogeneous, multilayered, unstable and contradictory.

Describing the position of the fantastic with respect to other literary modes, Jackson, following Todorov, situates it between "the opposite modes of the marvellous and the mimetic," explaining that "[t]he ways in which it operates can then be understood by its combination of elements of these two different modes" (Jackson 1981: 32).

Starting from the Freudian notion that the fantastic always develops around some kind of epistemological doubt,[2] Todorov (1973), drawing on Vladimir Solovyov, formulated his definition of the fantastic as a mode constantly hesitating between the poles of the credible and the incredible, the

real and the unreal: "[i]n the genuine fantastic, there is always the external and formal possibility of a simple explanation of phenomena, but at the same time this explanation is completely stripped of all internal probability." (Solovyov, in Jackson 1981: 27).

Epistemological uncertainty and equivocal truths are, then, the indispensable ingredients of "classic" fantasy literature. Now, looking at the writing practice of late-twentieth century "experimental" novelists, we find that they often combine in their work the self-referentiality characteristic of metafiction and the pleasure in the equivocal truths and epistemological hesitation characteristic of the fantastic, with a third element, an apparently contradictory realism-enhancing interest in history and in the traditional story-telling aspect of fiction. The paradoxical combination of self-referentiality, epistemological uncertainty and history that suffuses the work of an important number of contemporary writers in Britain and in the Western hemisphere as a whole reflects, as Linda Hutcheon (1988: 3) has pointed out, the basic contradictory nature of postmodernist art, which she describes as "a contradictory phenomenon, one that uses and abuses, installs and then subverts, the very concepts it challenges."

Linda Hutcheon has coined the phrase "historiographic metafiction" to describe this world-wide trend which, in England, can be traced back to the work of John Fowles and Lawrence Durrell, spreading in the seventies and eighties with novelists like Julian Barnes, Peter Ackroyd, Jim Crace, Charles Palliser, Angela Carter, Maureen Duffy and Jeanette Winterson.

In keeping with the heterogeneous and fragmentary nature of the postmodernist ethos, the novels written by these writers are very different in tone, range, scope and sensibility, some are overtly fantastic, others apparently more realistic; some more audaciously self-referential and formally intricate, others more conventionally linear and easy to read. Often, those written by socially well-established males tend to be more covertly subversive, while those written by feminists usually are subversive in a more obvious form, for, as J. A. García Landa recalls,

> The different social interests and conflicts at play within the same sign community are not only the interests of class. There are many other significant relationships (*power* relationships) at work. Differences in gender, sexual preference, race, ethnic group, religion, age, authority, political creed, scientific or other beliefs shading into individual attitude — all these may be a source of the accent which implements the ideological sign. (1991: 39)

We should bear García Landa's contention in mind in order to understand the true quality of the "accent" that suffuses Jeanette Winterson's work. Indeed, of the above-mentioned contemporary British writers, Jeanette Winterson is perhaps the one who best exemplifies the characteristics of the "fringe." Born in Lancashire, in a labouring-class family, in 1959, and brought up in a strict Pentecostal Evangelist faith, Winterson has led a quite unconventional life that qualifies her social, ideological, religious and sexual positions as in opposition to the mainstream of social patriarchy. As Nicci Gerrard (1989: 13) has explained, "at 12 she became a preacher . . . ; at 16 was found in bed with another woman and thrown out of her home and the Pentecostal Church," after which she tried several jobs "in an undertaker's parlour, selling ice-cream, and working in a mental hospital" before she went to Oxford to read English. She then tried a new job in advertising, eventually turning to writing after she "established that I'm unemployable" (in Gerrard 1989: 13).

Of the five novels so far written by Jeannette Winterson — *Oranges are not the Only Fruit* (1985), *Boating for Beginners* (1985), *The Passion* (1987), *Sexing the Cherry* (1988) and *Written on the Body* (1992) — her third and fourth novels may be described as fantastic "historiographic metafictions" in Linda Hutcheon's terms (1988), for they combine fantasy with a self-conscious relish in the story-telling aspect of fiction and with an apparently paradoxical interest in re-writing history: the Puritan revolution that brought about the death of Charles I and Cromwell's Commonwealth rule, in *Sexing the Cherry,* and Napoleon's imperialist wars, in the *Passion*.

Critics unanimously agree that *The Passion* is a landmark in the literary evolution of Jeanette Winterson. It culminates a tendency away from the autobiographical, realistically set comedy of her first novel and towards a much more overtly fantastic and lyrical kind of fiction. David Lodge (1988: 26) has aptly synthesised this evolution by saying that, where fantasy only "showed itself in the interpolated fairy tales of *Oranges* and the Monty Pythonesque surrealism of *Boating* [it] manifests itself as full-bloom magic realism [in *The Passion*]."

David Lodge further characterises the kind of "magic realism" he has in mind when he says that the increase of the fantasy element in *The Passion* is the result of the adoption by Jeanette Winterson of the Romantic tradition of storytelling as developed by Poe, Mary Shelley and Emily Brontë, a tradition which he contrasts with classical realism:

> whereas the realist tradition reflects back to us a familiar world subtly defamiliarised, and thus made more luminous or comprehen-sible or meaningful than it was before, the Romantic tradition deals with the unfamiliar, transgresses known limits, and transports the reader into new imaginative territory (Lodge 1988: 26)

According to David Lodge, the stylistic price the Romantic writer has to pay is the loss of "the ironical self-consciousness that saves a writer from bathos and pretentiousness" (1988: 26). Therefore, while considering *The Passion* "a remarkable advance in boldness and invention, compared to the previous novels" (1988: 26), he deplores its "high seriousness" and also the "intuitive, hit-or-miss . . . impatience to search for *le mot juste* or testing of every sentence, like Flaubert, or Joyce" (1988: 26). Analysing the style, Lodge finds, for example, that "[f]ragments of modern poetry, like the last line of T.S. Eliot's "The Love Song of Alfred Prufrock, "are anachronistically put into the mouths of the characters with no discernible reason except to contribute a spurious touch of class to the discourse." (1988: 26).

We may agree with David Lodge when he says that the incorporation of fragments of poetry to the speech of concrete characters, or to the narrators' reports may have important stylistic consequences, and much more so, perhaps, in a novel whose stylistic richness has been compared to that of Virginia Woolf (Monmany 1989: 20), whose tone has been described as "rhythmic and seductive" (Gilbert 1988: 79), and whose "feel" has been likened to that of "a villanelle, an elaborate — and originally French — verse form in which words are repeated in a mesmerizing pattern." (Gilbert 1988: 79-80). A novel, in short, that stylistically aspires to that category of poetic prose T. S. Eliot attributed to St. John Perse's *Anabase*. Still, we may ask ourselves whether Jeanette Winterson's apparently haphazard appropriation of lines from various poems by T.S. Eliot is really only meant, as Lodge thinks, to give her novel a stylistic "touch of class," that is, whether there really is "no discernible reason" for Jeanette Winterson's "anachronistic" pastiche-ridden prose beyond a sheer Mannerism or whether, on the other hand, they form part of a well thought-out scheme with more than stylistic implications.

In order to answer this question we would have to attempt a thorough analysis of the novel, not only, as David Lodge proposes, horizontally, at a stylistic level, but also vertically, in depth, at the levels of fabula, story and text (Bal 1985) and even transtextually, that is, analysing *The Passion* not as

an isolated, singular text, but rather considering, in Genette's words, "everything that draws it into secret or overt relation to other texts."[3]

The Passion combines the stories of two narrator-characters: one is that of Henri, Napoleon's personal waiter and chicken cook, who simultaneously plays the roles not only of character and internal narrator but also of author and reader, for he is writing his memoirs/diary primarily for himself: "I re-read my notebook today . . . . I go on writing so that I will always have something to read" (*TP* 159). The other story is the retrospective account of a character-bound narrator, Villanelle, a Venetian boatsman's daughter with webbed feet and bi-sexual tendencies, who narrates the story of her life sometimes at first level, that is, addressing the reader directly, and sometimes as second-level narrator, addressing Henri and his friends.

Henri begins to narrate his life story in the first chapter, "The Emperor." This chapter goes from the moment when he volunteers as a recruit to join "the army of England at Boulogne" (*TP* 8), in 1797 (*TP* 86) and ends on New Year's Day, 1805, when he is twenty years old, but the chapter also includes a series of analepses recalling episodes of Henri's childhood and youth as well as episodes of his parents' lives, especially his mother's. The beginning of Villanelle's story, narrated in the second chapter, "The Queen of Spades," goes back to the moment when Bonaparte invaded Venice, also in 1797 (*TP* 52) but also includes a series of flashbacks recalling episodes of her parents' life and of her own birth and early years. Like "The Emperor," "The Queen of Spades" ends on "New Year's Day, 1805" (*TP* 76).

Chapter three, "The Zero Winter" alternates Henri's and Villanelle's narrations with Henri acting as first-level narrator, and Villanelle as second-level narrator, that is, at a certain moment, Henri hands over the narrative role to Villanelle, who starts narrating her life story to Henri and his two friends, Patrick and Domino. Henri's narration begins after he lost an eye at the battle of Austerlitz (*TP* 79), that is, after 2nd December 1805, and covers the Russian campaign and the desertion of Patrick, Henri and Villanelle, who return on foot from Russia to Venice. It ends in Venice after Henri murders Villanelle's husband on an unrecorded date, just before he is sent for life to "the madhouse on the island" (*TP* 140) of St Servelo, where we find him writing his diary.

The fourth chapter, "The Rock," again alternates Henri's and Villanelle's narrations, but now Villanelle's status as narrator is not subordinated to Henri's: as in "The Queen of Spades," she directly addresses the reader, and so enjoys perfect autonomy with respect to Henri's narration. Since they met in Russia their stories have merged, so in the fourth chapter their narrations

refer to the same events. In this sense we can say that the fourth chapter provides two parallel versions of their situation: one focalised from the perspective of Villanelle, the other from that of Henri.

At the beginning of the fourth chapter Henri has been in the St Servelo madhouse "I forget how many years" (*TP* 135), and is trying to break the spell cast by the ghosts of the past that daily visit him with their frightening voices, hollow eyes and even murderous hands (*TP* 142) by reading and adding to the war journal (*TP* 36) he keeps in a notebook (*TP* 159): the same journal he has been writing during the Napoleonic wars, and the same one we have been reading so far. When the chapter begins it is again near "Christmas and New Year" (*TP* 158) "more than twenty years since we went to church at Boulogne" (*TP* 160), that is, more than twenty years after 1789 and, we could add, after 1821, the date of Napoleon's death, for Henri refers to his death "in the mild damp" (*TP* 133) in retrospect. Although Villanelle's narration in this chapter is, like her previous ones, reported in the past, Henri now speaks in the present tense. So, in his narration story time and narrative time overlap in a present that projects itself into the future as the novel ends: "I will have red roses next year. A forest of red roses" (*TP* 160). In this sense, although Villanelle's narration in this chapter refers to the same events Henri describes and theoretically enjoys the same status as Henri's, it is psychologically contained within Henri's ending, for her account remains past with respect to Henri's and the reader's presents. This impression is further enhanced by the obvious fact that Henri's ending literally puts an end to the novel, as it is printed after hers.

Chronologically, Henri's and Villanelle's life stories follow parallel lines, as their lives were equally crucially conditioned by the same external event: the effects on them of the French Revolution and of Napoleon's imperialist policy. Henri "was only five when the Revolution turned Paris into a free man's city and France into the scourge of Europe" (*TP* 16). And Villanelle grew up in a Venice transformed by Bonaparte into "an enchanted island for the mad, the rich, the bored, the perverted" (*TP* 52). But they were also conditioned by fate for, long before their lives crisscrossed and became united in Russia, they already formed part of the same fatal pattern: the same day Napoleon promoted Henri to his personal service (*TP* 19), he earned the eternal hatred of the former chef, the disgusting male chauvinist and drunkard cook who was dismissed when he was found by Napoleon in a drunken stupor, only to become the supplier of meat and horses for the French army in Venice (*TP* 63) and so, eventually, Villanelle's sadistic husband. So, behind the apparently casual encounter of Henri and Villanelle in Russia, we

can trace an intricate pattern intertwining Henri's and Villanelle's lives together, which will be completed when Henri murders the cook with the help of Villanelle; and we should not forget that it is the cook who sells Villanelle to the French army in Russia as a *vivandière,* an army prostitute, thus making possible Henri's and Villanelle's encounter.

The convoluted pattern intertwining the lives of Henri and Villanelle at the story level, therefore, echoes the pattern of alternate and embedded narrations we have described at the textual level. Furthermore, both Villanelle's and Henri's stories may be seen as mirrored literary variations of the same basic fabula, synthesised in the novel's epigraph: "You have navigated with raging soul far from the paternal home, passing beyond the seas' double rocks and now you inhabit a foreign land." The words, taken from Euripides' *Medea,* [4] are spoken by the Chorus to Medea after she had found out Jason's infidelity and refer to all Medea had done and renounced for Jason's sake.[5] The epigraph, then, encapsulates within itself the core of the novel's fabula: the journey or quest, motivated by the unconquerable passion to possess something unique, in Jason's case, the Golden Fleece; in Medea's case, Jason's heart; in the case of Henri, first Napoleon's heart, then, that of Villanelle; in Villanelle's case that of "The Queen of Spades" a beautiful and mysterious Venetian lady, and in the case of this lady's husband, the most unique object of all: the Holy Grail itself, capable of restoring fertility to the waste land.

In the novel, both Villanelle's and Henri's passionate quests are simultaneously developed at three related symbolic levels: in archetypal terms, as a hero's (or heroine's) quest for maturation; in psychological terms, as an ego's quest for individuation; or in card symbolism, as the Fool's journey along the interlocking circles formed by the twenty two major arcana of the Tarot, as suggested by the titles of the first two chapters, Villanelle's job as a croupier, and the structure of the novel in two symmetrical loops overlapping in the middle (Fig. 1):

(Douglas 1972; frontispiece by David Sheridan)

Indeed, the most obvious form of symbolism in the novel is derived from the Tarot. The title of the first chapter,"The Emperor," corresponds to the fourth card of the greater arcana; the second chapter, "The Queen of Spades," to one of the four court cards in the lesser arcana. As Alfred Douglas explains, The Emperor

> indicates reason, will power, and the world of mankind on earth.... He too represents creation, but the creation of the will, not of feelings. He symbolizes power rather than love. Mythologically he is a descendant of father figures such as the Greek god Uranus.... He is the symbol of the warlike patriarchal societies which superseded the primitive agricultural cultures of the Great Mother....
>
> The Emperor as father-figure does have a positive side . . . a strong will, courage and fearlessness. On the one hand he can be an unbending tyrant, on the other a powerful ally. But he must be relied on for his strength, and not for his judgement. (1972: 56-68)

The Queen of Spades, on the other hand,

> is highly intelligent, has a complex personality and is concerned with attention to detail and accuracy in all things. She is alert to the attitudes and opinions of those around her, and skilled at balancing opposing factions whilst she furthers her own schemes. She is self-reliant, swift-acting, versatile and inventive (Douglas 1972: 142)

The difference in temperament and symbolism between The Emperor and the Queen of Spades in the Tarot cards perfectly fits the difference between Bonaparte's patriarchal world, ruled by logic, and the much more intuitive and uncanny feminine world of Venice, as Henri openly acknowledges:

> Where Bonaparte goes, straight roads follow, buildings are rationalised, street signs may change to celebrate a battle but they are always clearly marked. Here, if they bother with street signs at all, they are happy to use the same ones over again. Not even Bonaparte could rationalise Venice. (*TP* 112)

Opposed to the totalitarian patriarchal world of Napoleon's territories, Venice appears, then, as a much more complex, seductive and disquieting world, isolated from the rest by its surrounding water, and described by Villanelle as "the city of mazes" (*TP* 49). It is a weirdly fantastic world with a labyrinthine structure which, like the intestines of a living creature, is constantly changing shape, so that strangers like Henri can never find their way:

> [Henri"] "I need a map."
> [Villanelle:] "It won't help. This is a living city. Things change." (*TP* 113)

As Alfred Douglas explain, the Tarot cards consist of two packs combined: "a fifty-six card pack called the *lesser arcana* or *small cards*, and a twenty-two card pack called the *greater arcana* or Tarot trumps" (1982: 13). While the title of the first chapter ("The Emperor") is taken from the major arcana of the Tarot, the symbolism of the second chapter ("The Queen of Spades") is related to the pack of fifty-six cards called the lesser arcana, which are the source of present-day playing cards. The major arcana of the Tarot are derived from hermetic occultism: they were originally devised to represent grades or stages in a system of initiation, aimed at bringing about spiritual enlightenment. One of the twenty-two cards, The Fool, is not numbered, for he is the subject who undertakes the quest. Each of the other twenty one cards represents a crucial stage in The Fool's journey through life. As Alfred Douglas (1972: 34-35) explains, these stages follow the dual pattern of Jung's psychological process of individuation. According to Jung, the individuation process encompasses the whole life, but falls naturally into two halves. The first half is concerned with the individual's relationship to the world outside himself; it is directed towards the development of the conscious mind and the stabilization of the ego. The second half reverses this process and confronts the ego with the depths of its own psyche, seeking to establish links with the inner self, the true centre of consciousness. The two phases, which respectively recall Ulysses' external and Theseus' internal versions of the mythical hero's quest, oppose one another, yet are complementary. The major arcana of the Tarot, likewise, contain and express this dual nature of the individuation process for, as Douglas has pointed out,

> If we examine the twenty-two Tarot trumps with this in mind, we find that they fall naturally into two groups, with The Wheel of Fortune significantly at the mid-point.
>
> The turning-point between one half of life and the other is of critical importance; at the high point of physical existence one is suddenly confronted with the inevitability of death. As Jung himself has said: 'At the stroke of noon the descent begins. And the descent means the reversal of all the ideals and values that were cherished in the morning.' (1972: 35)

Arranged in sequential order, from number one to twenty one with the numberless card, the Fool, situated between the first and the last and forming two symmetric loops merging at the centre by the superposition of cards ten and twenty-one, the major arcana of the Tarot visually represent the Fool's quest for individuation in two opposed and complementary phases: one from card one to ten, is outward-looking and confronts the 'I' with the 'not I', the "Innenwelt" with the "Umwelt," the self with the world; the other, from eleven to twenty one, is inward-looking and confronts the ego with its true centre of consciousness, the inner self.

A third version of the quest incorporated into the novel is that of the mythological hero. In classical mythology there are two basic versions of the hero's quest: Ulysses' journey on water and land takes place in the open air; Theseus' quest, in the enclosed and subterranean darkness of the Minotaur's labyrinth. In *The Passion* , Henri's quest eastwards, following the course of Napoleon's military campaigns, echoes Ulysses' journey, while Villanelle's wanderings along the mysterious dark lanes and apparently dead-end canals of Venice, recall the much darker and claustrophobic wanderings of Theseus along the Cretan labyrinth. The watery Venetian maze is, like the intestines it recalls, a monstrously large and complex gutter constantly pouring out the human detritus of the city: "the exiles, the people the French drove out. These people are dead but they do not disappear" (*TP* 114). Among these living dead, which strongly echo T.S. Eliot's "hollow men," there is a weird old lady, who wears a crown "made out of rats tied in a circle by their tails" (*TP* 74), that is, a witch's quincunx or mandalic circle, evoking the hermetic occultism of the Tarot. This haggish creature is always asking the passers by, in words that recall the opening section of "Burnt Norton," "what time it might be" (*TP* 49, 54, 74 and 114). Villanelle explains to Henri, in words that are close to T.S. Eliot's description of Madame Sosostris, "the wisest woman in Europe, / With a wicked pack of cards" (1974: 64) that this repulsive soothsayer was "one of the wealthiest women in Venice" (*TP* 115)

before Napoleon seized her fortune. Therefore, this hag with the black magic crown echoes and varies the symbolism of Madame Sosostris in *The Waste Land*, who used the ancient and powerful magic of the Tarot in a devalued and meaningless way in order to earn her living by casting horoscopes. Thus, through Villanelle's haggish friend, the symbolism of the quest acquires further accreations derived from Eliot's version of it in *The Waste Land* , hinting at a fourth overall symbolic level, that knits the mythological, psychological and Tarot symbolisms together: that of literature itself.

In Jorge Luis Borges' "El jardín de senderos que se bifurcan" we find the story of Ts'ui Pên, the man who gave up everything in order to concentrate on the composition of a book and of a labyrinth. When, after thirteen years of total dedication to this double task Ts'ui Pên was murdered, the only thing that was found in his rooms was a bulky manuscript containing "un acervo indeciso de borradores contradictorios" (Borges 1989: 476), a vague heap of contradictory drafts, that simultaneously offered the reader not one alternative line of development among many, but rather, all kinds of alternatives, every possible combination and conclusion. As the narrator reflects, nobody could find the labyrinth because "[t]odos imaginaron dos obras; nadie pensó que libro y laberinto eran un solo objeto" (Borges 1989: 477). That is, the narrator finds the labyrinth nobody had been able to spot when he realises that book and labyrinth were not two different objects, but one, that the book was "un laberinto de laberintos" (1989: 475) a labyrinth of labyrinths. The reader of Ts'ui Pen's infinitely circular book, in which all conceivable *dénouements* are possible, is given the possibility of endlessly reading, and so living, the same events in infinitely various ways. In Borges' tale, then, the book as labyrinth becomes the path for the hero's quest, and so, his world.

By sitting down to re-read and re-write his and Villanelle's life stories, arranging and linking the events that make up their lives in a chain of cause and effect, Henri is, like Borges' hero, situating Villanelle and himself within the limits of the cardboard covers of his own book and undertaking a further quest along the paths of a world of paper and ink.

In this sense, it is significant to point out that Borges constantly identifies books with the world and also books with mirrors. In "El espejo de tinta" (1989: 341-343), for example, a magician brings about the tyrant's death by forcing him to "write" and "read" the ceremony of his own future death in the mirror-like pool of ink poured in the hollow of his hand. In "La biblioteca de Babel" (1989: 465-471) the universe is a limitless library, made up of hexagonal galleries and bottomless wells arranged around a spiralling

stair without beginning or end, reduplicated by a mirror. It is a "total" library, whose shelves "registran todas las posibles combinaciones de los veintitantos símbolos ortográficos . . . o sea todo lo que es dable pensar" (1989: 467). Borges' Library of Babel, registering all possible combinations of the twenty-odd orthographic symbols and containing everything that is thinkable recalls the ancient gnostic and hermetic as well as the Judeo-Christian and cabalistic cosmogonies, according to which the Universe is a total book written by God and foretells the deconstructivist contention that the text pre-exists the writer, that writer and reader are part of the text.

Within the context of Borges' *Ficciones,* Henri's writing and reading of his own war journal/diary becomes a further metaphor of his hero's quest for individuation, with the notebook acting as Henri's Borgean "espejo de tinta" or mirror of ink where he can see himself and his world for the first time as what they truly are. Significantly, it is re-reading his notebook in the madhouse that Henri eventually understands the difference between his infatuation for Napoleon and his true love for Villanelle and this knowledge casts new light on his own apprehension of himself:

> I re-read my notebook today and I found:
>
> I say I'm in love with her, what does that mean?
>
> It means I review my future and my past in the light of this feeling. It is as though I wrote in a foreign language that I am suddenly able to read. Wordlessly she explains me to myself; like genius she is ignorant of what she does.
>
> I go on writing so that I will always have something to read. (*TP* 159)

Henri expresses the difference between his infatuation with Napoleon and the true love he feels for Villanelle by drawing on the Freudian (1988) and Lacanian (1966) distinction between narcissistic "love for the 'ideal I'" and adult "love for the other":

> Her. A person who is not me. I invented Bonaparte as much as he invented himself.
>
> My passion for her, even though she could never return it, showed me the difference between inventing a lover and falling in love.
>
> The one is about you, the other about someone else. (*TP* 156)

As the above quotation makes clear, Henri is now able to reject his mirror stage love for Napoleon, "the mirror-bearer" (*TP* 154) as an illusion, and accept the mature love he feels for Villanelle as a feeling capable of dissolving his childlike self-centredness and of setting him free:

> I think now that being free is not being powerful or rich or well regarded or without obligations but being able to love. To love someone else enough to forget about yourself even for one moment is to be free. (*TP* 154)

Henri' s rejection of Napoleon and his revelation of what true love is signifies the end of his quest. Like Perceval "the gentle knight, who came to a ruined chapel and found what the others had overlooked, simply by sitting still" (*TP* 154), Henri has found the most absolute treasure of all by giving up action and sitting down to write and read.

Sitting still in the volontary isolation of his brain-like cell, Henri, like the heroes of many other experimental writers, such as Kafka, Proust, Borges, Robbe-Grillet, Beckett, Golding, Durrell and Fowles, weaves the labyrinthine pattern of his own life into a journal, only to discover that, in Gabriel Josipovici's words: "the writing *was* the travelling (1971: 306). This discovery amounts to the exhilarating experience of the existentialist, seized by the *joie de vivre,* the *delirium vivens,* that comes together with the acceptance of his position in the universe, the submission to the "reality principle," for as he renounces immortality and accepts his limitations he is given climactic insight into the true, limitless, nature of man:

> The book becomes an object among many in the room. Open and read, it draws the reader into tracing the contours of his own labyrinth and allows him to experience himself not as an object in the world but as *the limits of his world. And, mysteriously, to recognise this is to be freed of these limits* and to experience a joy as great as that which floods through us when, looking at long distance, with Dante, into the eyes of God, we sense the entire universe bound up into one volume *and understand what it is to be a man.* (Josipovici 1971: 309; my emphasis)

In his review of *The Passion,* David Lodge accused Jeanette Winterson of appropriating lines from T.S. Eliot for no clear reason at all. As we have seen, these appropriations are only the most obvious of many others in a

novel that is literally clogged with literary allusions, ranging from Homer and Euripides to Joyce,[6] Pushkin[7] and Borges for, besides labyrinths and mirrors, Jeanette Winterson owes to Borges even the wonderfully uncanny idea of the beating heart separated from its body (cf. "Las ruinas circulares," 1989: 153).[8]

Still, more important than the list of borrowings is the discovery of Jeanette Winterson's aim in borrowing. Coming as s/he does at the end of a centuries-long literary tradition, the contemporary writer is anxiously aware that, in Josipovici's words (1971: 293), "literature moves inevitably towards a mode of total possibility — a *langue* without *paroles* — ." The exhilarating awareness of total possibility is constantly undermined, however, by the anxious realisation of "the necessity of choice." So, according to Josipovici,

> Where Frye is perfectly happy to reiterate Shelley's remark that all literature is 'that one great poem, which all poets, like the co-operating thoughts of one great mind, have built up since the beginning of the world', a writer like Kafka or Eliot feels himself forced to ask: "But how do *I* relate to this great poem?" . . . . Two possibilities seem to be open to the writer: either he can go on adding yet more items to the body of literature and ignore the problem altogether; or he can give up writing altogether. *The modern writer does neither. Instead, he makes his art out of the exploration of the relation between his unique life and the body of literature, his book and the world.* (1971: 291; my emphasis)

In this light, Jeanette Winterson's fragmented and repetitive version of Napoleon's historical campaigns, focused from the decentralised or "fringe" perspectives of a French cook and an Italian bi-sexual woman, is, like T. S. Eliot's "heap of broken images" (1974: 63) the only kind of "historical" account she can aspire to offer: a self-consciously parodic and overtly literary text, indulgently relishing its own stylistic virtuosity and simultaneously evincing the "anxiety of influence," the pressure exerted on her writing by the bulk of the Western tradition of literature which, as John Barth (1967 and 1980) and Harold Bloom (1975) among others have explained, it must acknowledge, absorb and recast.

That we should be willing to grant that this heap of broken images accurately expresses the world-view of this young feminist writer, Jeanette Winterson, depends on the readiness of the reader to recognise, beneath the wealth of fragmented mythical, archetypal, psychological and literary echoes, the labyrinth of labyrinths, the unifying metaphor that gives the novel and her

world-view cohesion: the contemporary writer's quest for individuation along the only knowable world: the uncanny mirror of ink.

NOTES

1. The research carried out for the writing of this paper has been financed by the Spanish Ministry of Education (DGICYT: Programa Sectorial de Promoción General del Conocimiento, 1991)

2. In his essay on "The Uncanny" (1988: 2483-2506), Freud analysed at length the etymology of the German word "unheimlich" and its corresponding terms in Latin, Greek, English, French and Spanish, with a view to explaining the specifically ambivalent effect produced in certain epileptic crises and cases of madness as well as by traditional fairy tales and fantastic literature in general. As Freud explains (1988: 2484), the word "un-heimlich" is the antonym of "heimlich," homely, familiar, comfortable, intimate, secret and domestic, thus conveying the notion of what is uncomfortable, uneasy, gloomy, dismal ghastly and uncanny in the otherwise familiar and intimate. Following E. Jentsch, Freud offers as a prototypical example of this "uncanny" effect the shocking and anguishing epistemological doubt produced by the sight of something inanimate that appears to be somehow also animate (1988: 2488).

3. "tout ce qui le met en relation manifeste ou secrète, avec d'autres textes'. (Genette 1982: 7)

4. çu; d j ejk me;n oijj;kwn patrivwn ej;pleuçaç mainomevnai kradivai, diduvmouç oJrivçaça povntou pevtraç: ejpi; de; xevnai (Euripides, *Medea,* 432-435).

5. After Hera, aided by Aphrodite, had caused her to fall in love with Jason, Medea helped Jason and the Argonauts to run away with the Golden Fleece, incidentally murdering her own brother, Absyrtus, in the course of their flight. Impelled by her passion for Jason, Medea, therefore, betrayed her father, killed her brother and exiled herself from her homeland for ever. She later used her magic power to renew the youth of Jason's father, Aeson. But in spite of all these proofs of love, Jason soon fell in love with another woman, Glauce of Corinth, and Jason's father, enraged with Medea's terrible threats after she discovered Jason's infidelity, condemned her to a further exile, which is the point at which the chorus speak to her.

6. Apart from the overall topos of the hero's quest shared by *The Passion* and Joyce's major novels, we can also see an intertextual echo of Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* in Villanelle's name that recalls Stephen Dedalus' love poem about Emma, a villanelle (1969: 202).

7. Pushkin's uncanny short-story, "The Queen of Spades" (1967) is the most obvious intertext of the "Queen of Spades" chapter in *The Passion*. Another is the Queen of Spades in *Alice in Wonderland.*

8. Indebtness to Borges can be taken to surprising extremes, when one thinks, for example, that Borges was punished to work for several months as "chicken inspector" during Peron's regime. The passion for chicken also recalls that of another patriarchal figure, the archbishop in Gabriel García Márquez's *Crónica de una muerte anunciada,* who has a devastating passion for chicken-comb soup.

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ABSTRACTS

LANDSCAPE DESIGN AND DRAWING IN *THE DRAUGHTSMAN'S CONTRACT:* PEEPHOLES TO AN AGE

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The basic plot in Peter Greenaway's *The Draughtsman's Contract* is no more and no less than an ingeniously planned murder and its dramatic consequences for a guest artist. However, the views of Mr. Herbert's house and property, which the draughtsman is commissioned to reproduce on paper, do not serve merely as a background setting for the story. Close attention to the mise-en-scene, to remarks made by characters about gardens, garden elements or garden produce and to the artist's work-technique reveal how much the insight into the times in *The Draughtsman's Contract* accords to the period, while it also provides interesting clues that help the viewer elucidate several, otherwise, obscure or baffling scenes.

THE FOCALISER FOCALISED IN KING VIDOR'S *THE CROWD* (1928)

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The concepts of internal and external focalisation, as described by Bal (1985), Rimmon-Kenan (1983) and others, provide, with certain variations, a powerful way to approach, from a rigorous narratological standpoint, some of the most hotly debated issues in film theory in the past twenty years: spectator manipulation and subject positioning in classical and non-classical films through the activation of mechanisms related to the gaze. This analysis of *The Crowd* (King Vidor 1928) attempts an interpretation of the film through the exploration of patterns of external and internal focalisation in two key scenes of the film. This is related to the use of narrative time by the text

and the complex network of tensions, parallelisms and contrasts established at several narrative levels. As a conclusion, it is suggested that the narratively unmotivated disavowal of internal focalisation in one of these scenes works as a metaphor for the process of deterioration undergone by the protatonist in the course of the film.

METAFICTION AND SOCIAL COMMITMENT IN PYNCHON'S *V.*

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The aim of this paper is to analyse Thomas Pynchon's *V.* within the tradition of metafictional literature, and to show that it proposes a new view of social commitment for the novel. The paper studies *V.* as a parody of reflexive literature in order to reveal that its reflexive nature emphasises the novel's incapacity to shape its material and bestow a truthful meaning on it. History, the act of narration, language's relationship with reality, the metaphorical and metonymical functions of language and mises-en-abyme are some of the strategies the novel parodies. Such reflexive mechanisms are refused the possibility of providing an integrating meaning. They are inscribed in a linguistic system whose processes of codification entail a trasformation and manipulation of reality. As a conclusion, the text proposes the absence of language as an alternative to a state of affairs which has been traditionally used by the dominant classes in order to oppress the rest of society.

METAFICTIONAL GAMES IN *CHATTERTON*

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"Metafictional Games in *Chatterton"* is a study of Ackroyd's *Chatterton* as a self-reflexive novel. This paper seeks to analyse the self-conscious narrative methods in *Chatterton* , focusing on Ackroyd's choice of subject matter and on his rewriting of history. From a narratological approach, we see how the novel questions its own methods of representation, and the issue of representation in works of art, mainly in literature and painting. After a study of the figure of the poet Chatterton, we examine the relevance of his ideas on plagiarism in the present literary society depicted in the novel; plagiarism is a general condition in this poststructuralist society. The last part of the paper is devoted to a study of *Chatterton* as a historiographic metafictional novel, and is based on Hutcheon's analysis of this narrative form.

CLOZE TESTING AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE CONVENTIONAL EXAM IN E.B.E.

Honesto HERRERA SOLER
Universidad Complutense

Much research has been done on cloze tests. Whereas most of the literature is based on General English in this study English for Business and Economics (EBE) is going to be the point of reference. Two 25-item rational deletion and another two 25 fixed-ratio cloze tests were administered to 69 non-native university students at the Faculty of Economics. The aim of this article is to analyse to what extent a battery of cloze tests can be an alternative to a conventional comprehension reading test, to find out whether content words are easier or more difficult than function words and to study if giving the first letter makes any difference. The data analysis reveals that there is a good correlation between the cloze tests and the conventional reading comprehension tests, that there are significant differences as far as the

difficulty is concerned, and finally that a cued cloze test is different from the other deletion procedure adopted.

VARIACIONES TRADUCTORAS SOBRE EL HUMOR DE *THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL*

Marta MATEO MARTINEZ-BARTOLOME
Universidad de Oviedo

Focussing on comedic humour, the paper analyses the different strategies that four translators have used to render Sheridan's *The School for Scandal* into Spanish. Comedic humour does not simply spring from characters' words but also from the situation, the gesture, the tone, the context and the plot, all of which add to the humourous load that the dialogue may have of its own. The translation of humour in comedies also differs from that of other literary genres in the fact that it has to pay attention both to the written text and to a potential performance; furthermore, linguistic signs may be translated into kinesic signs with a similar effect. This special malleability is shown in the paper through the study of the different translations of the elements used by Sheridan to create the humour in his play: the characters' idiolect, intonation, rhythm, tone, alliteration, repetition, reversal of syntactic and situational expectations, proper names, wordplay and contextual references.

HAL, A PROMPT

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Hal is the governing computer in the spaceship *Discovery* which appears in Clarke -Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey*. Hal has the shape and structure of an artifact although it/he exhibits signs of human-like behavior. The computer confronts us with several issues that consistently strike our minds such as the notion of intelligence, mental disorder and moral responsibility. The paper explores Hal's conduct from a psychological and moral perspective stressing his status as an actual character in the story.

THE PASSION: JEANETTE WINTERSON'S UNCANNY MIRROR OF INK

Susana ONEGA JAEN
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In keeping with the contradictory nature of the postmodernist ethos, *The Passion* combines three apparently opposed elements: a realism-enhancing interest in history and story-telling, a heavily parodic and ironic relish in self-referentiality, and the zest for the uncanny epistemological uncertainty characteristic of fantasy literature. The combination of these three elements, the historical, the metafictional and the fantastic, produces an overall effect of fragmentation which is, however counterbalanced by the possibility of a unitarian reading of the novel that goes through the perception of its unifying myth: the journey or quest, already hinted at in the novel's epigraph and developed in the text at three major levels: the archetypal, the psychological and that of Tarot symbolism.

FE DE ERRATAS

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