TEXT : READER : WORLD

Representation in the Novels of Peter Ackroyd

HDeG Laurie

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REPRESENTATION IN THE NOVELS OF PETER ACKROYD

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OPSOMMING

Te midde van die teenreferensiële neiging wat gesien word as kenmerkend van postmodernistiese fiksie toon die romans van Peter Ackroyd 'n terugwending na referensialiteit. In hierdie verhandeling word getoon dat sodanige terugwending na referensialiteit "virtuele werklikhede" skep, in 'n poging om lesers tromp-op te konfronteer met onbekende vorms van syn. Sodanige konfrontasie vind plaas op sowel die vlak van die narratief en die van die leeservaring. Die leser is derhalwe nie meer bloot 'n waarnemer nie, maar word 'n aktiewe deelnemer in wat die rolspel(etjie) van die roman genoem kan word. In so 'n posisie geplaas, moet die leser meganismes aanleer om met die romans te kan omgaan. Verder is die wêrelde van die romans en die meegaande vorms van syn nie ver verwyderd van die wêreldsbeskrywings van poststrukturalistiese teorie nie. In 'n sekere sin kan daar dus gesê word dat die romans die leser bystaan om meer effektief te kan aanpas in die "tekstueel gekonstrueerde wêreld" van die postmodernisme.

Die hoofargument van die verhandeling wentel om 'n dubbele analise/ontdekkingstog wat fokus op drie van Ackroyd se romans, naamlik Hawksmoor, Chatterton, en Dan Leno and the Limehouse Golem. Die eerste analise, **"Text: Representation"** ondersoek representasie in die romans na aanleding van Thomas Pavel se Fictional Worlds en Postmodern Characters van Aleid Fokkema. Die representatiewe lyn van Ackroyd se fiksie word gesien as 'n tegniek om die romans buitengewoon toeganklik te maak, terwyl die strukturele en onderwerpsmateriaal van die romans gapings los wat deur die leser gevul moet word.

Die tweede analise, **"Representation: Reader"**, bou op die eerste en lees die romans onder leiding van die hermeneutiese teorieë en tegnieke van Paul Ricoeur. Hierdie seksie ondersoek die leeservaring in terme van beide die leser se ondersoek na die vorme van syn van karakters en van die leser se ervaring van die roman as op sigself 'n alternatiewe vorm van syn. Die *topos* van die speurroman wat dwarsdeur Ackroyd se oeuvre strek is van kritieke belang vir die leser se betrokkenheid by die leeservaring. Die leser moet self 'n speurder word wat deelneem aan die rolspel(etjies) wat afspeel binne die virtuele werklikhede daargestel deur die romans.

Kortliks word daar in **"Text, Reader, World: Outside the Novel?"** aangetoon hoe dieselfde teoretiese gereedskap, naamlik die speurroman *topos*, rolspel(etjies), en virtuele werklikhede, kan bydra tot lesings van ander romans van Peter Ackroyd. Laastens word die vaardighede wat deur die lees van die romans aangeleer word, geplaas binne die konteks van die wêreldbeskrywings van poststrukturalistiese teorie en postmodernistiese kultuurteorie.

Sleutelterme: Peter Ackroyd, postmodernistiese fiksie, representasie, lesersbetrokkenheid, (fiksionele) wêrelde, leeservaring, vorme van syn, rolspel, virtuele werklikhede.

SUMMARY

In the face of the supposed anti-referentiality of postmodernist fiction, the novels of Peter Ackroyd show a return to referentiality. This dissertation contends that this return to referentiality is in fact an attempt to establish "virtual realities" in which readers can be engaged at close quarters, as it were, in order to expose them to unfamiliar "modes of being". Such exposure occurs both on the narrative level and on the level of the reader's experience of the novel, so that readers are no longer passive observers, but become active participants in what may be termed the role-playing game set up by the novels. As such, readers need to acquire mechanisms that allow them to cope with the novels. The worlds and concomitant modes of being show resemblence to the descriptions of the world offered by poststructuralist theories. In some sense, then, the novels can be seen as leading the reader to adjust more effectively to the postmodern (?) "textually constructed world".

The dissertation is guided by a double analysis/exploration which focuses on three of Ackroyd's novels: Hawksmoor, Chatterton, and Dan Leno and the Limehouse Golem. The first analysis, **Text: Representation**, explores representation of these three novels in terms of Thomas Pavel's Fictional Worlds and Aleid Fokkema's Postmodern Characters. The representational facet of Ackroyd's fiction is a device which makes the novels particularly accessible, even while the subject matter and structure of the novels leave gaps which the reader needs to fill.

Building on the first, the second analysis -- **Representation: Reader** -- is a reading of the novels guided by the hermeneutics of Paul Ricoeur. In this section the reading experience is explored, both with reference to the reader's investigation of the modes of being of characters in the novels and to the reader's experience of an alternate mode of being occasioned by the world of the novel. Crucial to the reader's involvement is the *topos* of detective fiction, found throughout Ackroyd's oeuvre in one form or another. The reader becomes a detective who has to partake in roleplaying games set in the virtual realities set up by the novels.

Text, Reader, World: Outside the Novel? briefly indicates how the same theoretical tools -- the influence of the detective fiction *topos*, role-playing games, and virtual realities -- may be applied to other novels by Peter Ackroyd, and relates the skills taught by the novels to the actual world, especially as it is described by poststructuralist and postmodern cultural theory.

Key Terms: Peter Ackroyd, postmodern fiction, representation, reader involvement, (fictional) worlds, reading experience, modes of being, role-playing, virtual realities.

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Notes on the Text

1 Stylesheet

The stylesheet used reflects the requirements set out in Handleiding vir Nagraadse Studie (PU for CHE. 1997. Potchefstroom) and Handleiding vir Bibliografiese Styl (PU for CHE. 1997. Potchefstroom). There are, however, some exceptions; these are listed below.

2 Bibliographical Detail

2.1 References: Primary Texts

References, bibliographical and otherwise, to primary texts in the body of the dissertation are abbreviated as follows:

The Great Fire of London	GFL
The Last Testament of Oscar Wilde	LT
Hawksmoor	HM
Chatterton	CTN
First Light	FL
English Music	EM
The House of Doctor Dee	HDD
Dan Leno and the Limehouse Golem	DL
Milton in America	MA

Throughout the introductory and concluding chapters (**Text : Reader : World** and **Text, Reader, World: Outside the Text?**) primary texts are referred to by their full titles, both to smooth the flow of these chapters and to indicate the entry into and exit from the "world" of this dissertation. Dates (when given) indicate publication date.

2.2 Graphic Narratives

In acknowledgement of the literary context of this study, references to comix in the body of the text refer to the name of the author of the text only:

(Gaiman, 1992:15)

3 Terminology

3.1 In the face of poststructuralist analyses, all language and especially theoretical terms are necessarily questionable -- a position recognized in this dissertation. All terms, and all meaning, in this dissertation should be read as qualified rather than "absolute", even if not specifically qualified.

3.2 "The reader" is referred to as feminine throughout this dissertation. Adopted to acknowledge sensitivity to gender issues, this convention is not intended to give offence, either through excluding the male position or constructing a female position. Read he/his/him where desired or preferred.

3.3 The collective term "comix" (singular: comic) is adopted from current debates on graphic narratives to distinguish "serious" graphic narratives from those that are primarily intended to be humourous.

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1 TEXT : READER : WORLD

> But what if it were possible, after all, for Charles Dickens to enter one of his own novels? To bow his head and cross the threshold, into the world which he had created?
>
> Ackroyd, Dickens: 100

The fledgling protagonist of Peter Ackroyd's English Music (1992), Timothy Harcombe, is both a healer and a visionary. The first ability answers to the needs of those who visit his father's theosophical meetings, while the second questions Tim, posing a mystery that he needs to solve. In his visionary states, he enters fictional worlds: that of Byrd's music, Conan Doyle's detective stories, the gothic landscape of Wuthering Heights. In the fictions which construct English culture, he finds questions, answers, and inherits the past. He learns to understand himself and a reason for his life; but he does so only through recognition of the fictions.

This dissertation represents a circumlocution of and an entry into the fictional worlds of Peter Ackroyd. It explores the relationship between the fictional worlds represented in Ackroyd's novels and the reader of those worlds, and between the reader of the fiction and the actual world to which she eventually returns. Novel, reader, world, influence each other in a simultaneous motion; each is mediated by all the others. As an agent (if not exactly as coherent subject) the individual reader is, in the last instance, the node which collects interpretations of the world and of texts -- even if such a collection is finally for her own perusal only. This dissertation will focus on the reader's experience of Ackroyd's novels, especially with regard to characters and fictional worlds, and the possible influence of those novels on the reader.

Although postmodernism eschews the idea of a canon, studies of Ackroyd's fiction implicitly place it within a postmodernist context (Fokkema, 1991 *and* 1994; De Lange, 1994; Luc, 1990). Fokkema includes a discussion of Hawksmoor (1985) in her book Postmodern Characters (1991), and (re)places First Light (1989) within postmodernism in a later article (Fokkema, 1994). Although these studies do not make explicit their reasons for considering Ackroyd's fiction postmodern in the first place, the novels accord well with various constructions of postmodernist fiction. Lyotard's

"degree zero" of postmodernism, eclecticism (1992:120), is more than satisfied in the stylistic potpourri of First Light, English Music, and Hawksmoor. His oft-quoted "incredulity towards metanarratives" (1984:xxiv) is amply reflected in Ackroyd's repeated dissolution of boundaries between **actual** [1] and fictional worlds, histories, and myths, as well as in his deconstruction of stable identities (as we shall see, this extends to the position of the reader as well). The dissolution of actual/fictional[2] boundaries is central to McHale's construction of postmodernism as a shift towards an "ontological dominant" (1991:6). For Eagleton, postmodernist fiction "inherits [from modernism] the fragmentary or schizoid self, but eradicates all critical distance from it", and opposes itself to "high culture" (1992:159). Such postmodern fragmentation of the self is central to -- or rather, dispersed throughout -- all of Ackroyd's novels, but especially The Last Testament of Oscar Wilde (1987), The Great Fire of London (1982), and Dan Leno and the Limehouse Golem (1994). First Light blends pulp fiction, popular culture (*à la* People magazine and The National Enquirer), and Dickens with postmodern concerns, even if the commercial success of Hawksmoor had not evidenced a blurring of the boundaries between high and popular art.

Although less extreme than the "paradigmatic" postmodern texts investigated by McHale (1991) and Lodge (1977), Ackroyd's texts also answer to (re)constructions of the technical characteristics of postmodernism. Lodge identifies six characteristics, all of which can be found in Ackroyd's work. [3] The triple explanation of the disappearance of the title character of Chatterton (1987;1993) is an example of contradiction; the constant shifts in characterization in Dan Leno and the Limehouse Golem can be seen as permutation; discontinuity is violently present in the alternation of 18th and 20th century narratives of Hawksmoor. The permutating identities of the characters of Chatterton show randomness; the worlds of Hawksmoor gain their apparent significance through excess. The stability of many of Ackroyd's worlds is short-circuited by repositioning them as *myse-en-abyme* narratives. Similarly, most of the more than twenty textual characteristics/strategies identified by McHale can be found throughout Ackroyd's work, notably apocryphal history, dual ontologies, and chinese-box worlds. The last is

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1 Critical terms that do not necessarily belong to general literary discourse are **boldfaced** when introduced and/or defined.

2 "Actual" and "actuality" are used in this study to refer to the world to which our experiences refer, both because it is less cumbersome than "really real" (Pavel, 1986:59), and to express *différance* towards/with/against the radically qualified concept of "reality". Conversely "real" and "reality" (with or without quotation marks) are used metaphorically and/or ironically.

3 These observations will be explored at greater length in chapters 3 and 4, although not necessarily in Lodge's terms.

apparent especially in English Music and Chatterton (in the latter, "Chatterton's" world is embedded within Charles' private interpretation of his own world).

Peter Ackroyd has, to date, published nine novels and four biographies (Ezra Pound (1987), T.S Eliot: A Life (1985), Dickens (1990), and Blake, (1995)). All of his biographies and most of his novels have been highly acclaimed; for him, though, the main difference between the two is that "in fiction you have to tell the truth" (Onega, 1996:213). Accordingly, Dickens includes entirely fictional chapters, where Ackroyd has the Victorian enter his own fictions (1990:100-105; 306-308), or converse with the spirits of Eliot, Chatterton and Wilde (1990:427-432). He even sets up an interview between himself and Dickens (1990:753). Much of Ackroyd's fiction enters into dialogue with earlier literature: the abovementioned English Music, as well as The Great Fire of London and The Last Testament of Oscar Wilde. The last, like Hawksmoor, Chatterton and The House of Doctor Dee (1993) (among others), drafts an actual-world historical figure into discourse with the present. His fiction shows certain recurring themes: the role/intrusion of fiction and of history in(to) the present, the instability of time and identity, the character of London, the investigation of some mystery.

The Great Fire of London concerns a group of characters whose lives are invaded by the spirit of Dickens' Little Dorrit. The characters are dwarfed by a London simultaneously "realistic" and Dickensian, and by the history it represents. They progressively find themselves and their stable visions of themselves undermined as these come into conflict with Victorian temptations, frustrations and desires occasioned, on the one hand, by the film of Little Dorrit directed by Spenser Spender, and on the other by Audrey Skelton's possession at a seance by the spirit of Little Dorrit. At the same time, Rowan Phillips, a Cambridge lecturer in English, is preparing a biography on Dickens.

The Last Testament of Oscar Wilde is a stylistic *tour de force* which appropriates Wilde's discourse to represent an "autobiographical" diary of Wilde's last days. In reminiscence, Wilde reconstructs his life and his art. While his body is failing, he "puts his art into his life", producing a diary at once witty, astute and candid. Ironically, although Wilde comes to life in Ackroyd's novel as he does not in any of his own work as he offers up his deepest secrets and feelings, his reconstructed identity is as fragmentary, heterogeneous, eclectic, as the actual-world reports of his personality. Apart from the verisimilitude of the narrator/protagonist, the novel is set firmly in late 19th century Paris, even while Wilde remains true to London. As an author, Ackroyd's Oscar Wilde muses on the relationships between fiction, narrative and personal history/identity.

Ackroyd first captured critical and public attention with Hawksmoor. The novel not only won the Whitbread and Guardian awards for fiction, but was also a bestseller. Hawksmoor opposes/juxtaposes two narratives. The first is an autonarrative of one Nicholas Dyer, an 18th century architect with strong resemblances to the historical Nicholas Hawksmoor, while the other deals with a 20th century detective bearing Hawksmoor's name. Dyer, who calls himself a servant of dark powers, is constructing a series of churches across London, each of which he secretly consecrates with a human sacrifice. In the 20th century, Nicholas Hawksmoor follows a trail of bodies left at the churches by a serial killer. As the tally mounts, he finds himself losing control of both the case and his own identity. Apart from the murders (and the names of the victims) there are various indications that the two sections of history are intimately linked.

Ackroyd's 1987 novel, Chatterton concerns a quest for the truth behind the life and death of Thomas Chatterton, the "wondrous boy" of 18th century poetry. Chatterton has become famous for the "Rowley" sequence of poems, written (and sold) as the work of a medieval monk. The novel "[introduces] a blazing cast of Dickensian eccentrics and rogues, from the outrageous, gin-sipping Harriet Scrope to the tragic Charles Wychwood, seeker of Chatterton's secret" (to quote the blurb on the back of the 1993 Penguin edition). The novel's protagonist, Charles Wychwood, finds first a portrait and later (what is apparently) an autobiographical note which convince him that Chatterton actually faked his own death. The motif of fakes and imitation is reflected at various levels in the novel. Charles acts as secretary to one Harriet Scrope, an author who lifts her plots from Victorian novels. His wife works at an art gallery, where a battle rages as to the veracity of the latest paintings from the stable of a popular artist. A second narrative -- linked to the first -- concerns George Meredith, who poses for a painting of the dead Chatterton in 1856.

In First Light the technique of stylistic appropriation of the earlier novels becomes schizophrenic. Echoes of Hardy, Dickens and forties' pulp science fiction[4] resound in a novel dealing with alien visitations, long-buried supernatural beings, or a strange religious cult kept alive through centuries by the inbred, reticent but "mostly harmless" Mint family, centered around a sarcophagus buried underneath a hill (choose one, all, or none of the above). Set in and near John Fowles' adopted Lyme Regis, (which is itself situated in Hardy's Wessex -- references to both authors abound), First

4 The most obvious reference to the pulps is in the personal names. Characters in both bear names and surnames of only one or two syllables each that may be easily remembered and recognized and which are occasionally interchangeable. In both, many names incorporate object nouns. Compare Vandal Savage to Damien Fall, Bruce Wayne (Batman) to Mark Clare, Harry Flowers to Martha Temple. Simultaneously, some of the names refer to characters of Hardy's.

Light deals with unlikely heroes, New Age and other icons of popular culture. Two men -- astronomer Damien Fall (!) and archaeologist Mark Clare -- each investigate the mysteries of the universe through their vocations. Clare finds the same pattern inscribed on a tomb that Damien finds in the stars; a pattern which leads him underneath the earth past the ghostly guardians of an ancient tomb. Although the novel does not destabilize its world in the same way as Hawksmoor or Chatterton, it similarly turns around the highly subjective nature of search, interpretation and history.

English Music (1992) was followed by The House of Doctor Dee -- "a good old-fashioned spine-chiller of a ghost story", as one of the blurbs on the back of the 1994 Penguin edition (Catherine Moore's, from The Times) would have it. As in Hawksmoor, two apparently interconnected times are involved. Matthew Palmer, a 20th century Londoner, inherits the erstwhile home of John Dee, court magician to Elizabeth I, from his father. He comes to believe that the house is haunted by his father's acts, the residual energies of Dee's experiments, and a homunculus. His investigations of Dee's and his father's lives parallels Dee's quest, in the 16th century, for a mysterious, eternal London, buried beneath the streets of his own. The approaches to this hidden London bear certain resemblances to those that lead to mythical Abaddon, home of the spirits of England -- a prolonged, apparently fruitless quest, a loss of self, a movement *between* the fabric that appears to be reality. Once again, the real issues at stake are less what the characters ostensibly search for than the true nature of reality, of identity -- not the eternally self-replicating homunculus, but the nature of eternity as a continuous self-(re)creation.

Dan Leno and the Limehouse Golem is a reconstruction not simply of the Ripper killings, but also of the society which spawned them. It is a novel concerned with identity, with the inaccessibility of truth, with entertainment and with sexual repression. Narrated from a myriad of different perspectives, it is perhaps Ackroyd's most clearly "experimental" and self-conscious novel. The serial killings in the novel touch the lives of George Gissing and Karl Marx, who in return -- together with Charles Babbage's ideas and "analytical engine" -- help provide the social environment of the novel.

Apart from numerous reviews of Ackroyd's novels in (mostly) British newspapers, the body of critical writing on his work is fairly sparse. The most comprehensive study is Hendia Baker's Master's Degree dissertation, which deals with all the novels up to First Light; other published studies and articles almost invariably focus on Hawksmoor exclusively, albeit on different aspects of the text. In the case of Aleid Fokkema's Postmodern Characters (1991), Hawksmoor is one of several novels used to elucidate her investigation of characters in postmodern novels.

The *locus criticus* as far as Ackroyd is concerned, if one may speak of an initiator of discourse, is Herman Luc's 1990 article "The Relevance of History: Der Zauberbaum (1985) by Peter Sloterdijk and Hawksmoor (1985) by Peter Ackroyd". Luc probes the dividing line between fiction and history in both novels, at least as far as encyclopaedic knowledge is concerned. His article, although useful reference, stops short of the *forms* of knowing practiced by character and reader. He pays no attention, for instance, to the historicity of the rhymes and riddles in the novel; nor does he investigate the impact of the ontological *uncertainty* generated by the elusiveness of the fiction/history border. In this dissertation, Thomas Pavel's (partially) reader-oriented model of world-construction and Ricoeur's hermeneutics are included in part to investigate the effect of this blurring of boundaries.

De Lange's "The complex architectonics of postmodern fiction" (1994) focuses on the interplay of theme, the architecture *Leitmotif*, structure and "the sense of an ending" (with reference to Kermode) in Hawksmoor. De Lange traces the patterns of repetition and discontinuity through the novel, utilizing both Lodge's formalist description of postmodernist fiction and Iser's reader reception theory.

Hendia Baker's dissertation (1993) manifests the extensive web of intratextual cross-references that tie together the different time-frames in Ackroyd's novels. Her analysis of "the motifs of time and history" in several of the novels connects them to 20th century physics, specifically Einstein's special law of relativity and Heissenberg's uncertainty principle. She argues that the coexistence of time in Ackroyd's fiction engenders "mobilities of presence", characters and entities that appear to exist at multiple points in space-time simultaneously. One instance of these "mobilities of presence" is that present in sets of characters -- Dyer/Hawksmoor, Chatterton/Meredith/Charles/(Edward) -- who closely parallel each other's lives. She sees these characters as striving towards "rejuvenation", adaptation to different expressions of space-time.

Fokkema, in the course of her investigation of the modes of existence of postmodern characters, points to the role the characters in Hawksmoor play in the constitution of the text's world as well as the themes of the novel. Many of the actions, reactions and motivations of the characters are determined as much by the metaphysics underlying the world of the novel as by facets of their represented psychological make-up. Reciprocally, descriptions of their projects, actions, and perceptions also come to signify aspects of the world of the novel. Fokkema concludes that the characters are *conditionally representative* -- that is, representative but compromised by the instability of the world they help to construct. Although Fokkema's study of character in the novel

is comprehensive, her model is not particularly concerned with the worlds which compromise the characters; nor with the possibility of these worlds' being themselves representative, at least if compared to poststructuralist representations of the actual world.

Fokkema's follow-up article (1994) places First Light in the context of an alleged return to representative techniques common to much British postmodern fiction -- a return also discussed in the same issue of Postmodern Studies by Amy Elias, although the latter does not mention Ackroyd specifically. Her conclusion, again, points towards the double vision (re)present(ed) in the phrase "conditionally representative": apparently representative in many respects, but destabilized by the relationship between world, character, and metafictional intertextuality.

The representational tendencies Fokkema recognizes in Ackroyd's work are, in fact, already tacitly acknowledged in some of the early reviews of his novels. Several reviewers applaud Ackroyd's talent for *pastiche*, for reconstructing historical discourses and characters. King (1985:29) and Hollinghurst (1985:1049) both point to how "convincing" Dyer's 18th century English is. The Last Testament of Oscar Wilde has been both praised (Hollinghurst, 1985:1049) and criticized (Davenport, 1985) for its reconstruction of Wilde's style. Davenport (1985:328) quotes a reviewer as saying that it may have "been written by Oscar himself"; writing in the Sewanee Review, he notes in an as(n)ide that "Ackroyd's Wilde is *authentic* but not really *surprising*" (1985:328; emphasis added). Setting aside possible comments on the demand for surprise inherent in US consumerism, the authenticity of the unauthentic may very well be seen as an end in itself -- especially since this is the credo by which Wilde lived.

Fokkema, King, Hollinghurst and others recognize a mimetic vein running alongside the experimental in Ackroyd's fiction. His characters are complex and "conditionally representational", if not exactly flesh and blood. The worlds in which they live are equally problematic. How can the London that Hawksmoor lives in match actuality so closely and be "anti-representational"? In many of the novels, the dividing line between fiction and fact is so thin that it is almost impossible to pin down. His historical details are accurate to points so fine that they can be corroborated only with a great deal of effort.

Much of the discourses of Dee and Dyer are taken verbatim from the writings of their actual-world historical counterparts (which is Nicholas Hawksmoor, in the latter case). They, and Wilde, Gissing, and Marx (the last two in DL) become "transworld identities" (McHale, 1991:35). McHale shows that postmodern transworld identities usually bare their own devices, drawing attention to their fictional status. His

paradigmatic case is that of Nixon in Robert Coover's The Public Burning (McHale, 1991:91), who is publicly sodomized by Uncle Sam. This is not the case with Ackroyd's transworld identities, who retain not only their positions in history and (usually) their names, but also their historical discourses and identities. Rather, Ackroyd constructs his interpretations of these characters in historical "dark areas". They become supplements to official history, whose behaviour and personalities fit the pattern of their actual-world historical "originals". As characters (mostly) faithfully "borrowed" from actual-world history (as opposed to characters from other fictions, or clearly fictionalized historical figures), they enhance rather than destabilize the ontological status of their worlds.

Another aspect in which Ackroyd's fiction does not fit its postmodern paradigms is its construction of space. Despite the indeterminacy built into Ackroyd's fictional spaces (such as the darkness enveloping Dyer, in HM) place in the novels is carefully defined -- or at least carefully labelled. His use of street names (for instance, the street-by-street tracing of Hawksmoor's final route), prominent buildings and pubs, evokes a map of the actual London. Against such careful echoes of historical and contemporary "(f)actual" representations of London and of historical characters in Ackroyd's fiction, arguments proposing the anti-referentiality or even exclusive self-referentiality of Ackroyd's fiction become reductive. Although the mingling of fiction and fact is generally considered a typical postmodernist trait, in Ackroyd's fiction the precision of the incorporated historical and spatial details is actually aimed at making the novels *more*, not less, referential.

Under the "paradigmatic" constructions of postmodernist fiction, Ackroyd's representational bent may appear to rest uneasily under his "canonization" as postmodern author.[5] Under the aegis of "the death of the novel", much postmodernist criticism places representation on the far end of a binary opposition with self-reflexivity. Self-reflexivity, in turn, is seen to be a central feature of postmodernism in general, and of postmodernist fiction in particular. In fact, several other characteristics of postmodernism are seen as extensions of the program of self-reflexivity: historiography, parody (including stylistic parody), thematic *myse-en-abyme* constructions. Richard Brautigan (Trout Fishing in America) and others not only construct postmodernist fiction as self-reflexive, but also equate self-reflexivity with anti-representation. This equation

5 While one should be skeptical of all biographical comments and authorial interviews, it is interesting to note that Ackroyd, too, himself seems uncomfortable with being labelled "postmodern" in an interview with Anke Schütze: "[It does] not [mean] very much [to me]. In fact nothing. I mean I understand what it is meant to mean. I don't see how that necessarily fits me or suits me as a description" (1995:6).

implicitly also denies postmodernist fiction access to/influence on actuality. This poses two distinct problems for this dissertation: first, how should the representational aspects of Ackroyd (or Alasdair Gray, or Angela Carter) be reconciled with their parodic, self-reflexive, or carnevalesque aspects? Secondly, if self-reflexivity denies a text access to actuality, is it possible for postmodern texts like Ackroyd's to influence their readers?

This same problematic is attacked by Raymond Tallis in Not Saussure (1995) and In Defense of Realism (1988). His primary thrust is aimed at poststructuralist criticism and theory which deny not only literature, but also subjects, access to actuality. Tallis performs what he clearly believes to be a comprehensive (re)*coup*, criticizing poststructuralism and postmodernist criticism alike on the grounds of "common sense", logic, and internal coherence. His arguments -- mostly directed at theorists -- are a reaction to the detrimental influence (as he sees it) of poststructuralist theory on contemporary fiction. If Tallis represents a somewhat reactionary stance, his interrogation is in step with current postmodernist autocritique against trends towards the hegemonization of poststructuralist and postmodern theories.

A more graceful alternative perspective is offered by Andrezj Gasiorek in his study British Post-War Fiction (1995). Gasiorek, as his title suggests, is wary of the term "postmodernist fiction", arguing that it reinforces an artificial division between representationalism and experimentalism (1-17). He shows that the origin of this dichotomy is political, as post-war theorists equated realism with reactionism and experimentalism with political liberalism. This dichotomy has been naturalized, leading to the so-called "crisis in representation", which allows texts to be *either* realist and reactionary *or* experimental and "progressive".

The self-reflexivity of postmodern texts is an expression of what Gasiorek calls "experimentalism". The equation between self-reflexivity and "anti-referentiality", however, may be seen as an equally politically motivated project. Although it centers postmodernism as progressive in an "aesthetic" debate, it marginalizes postmodern fiction *vis-a-vis* any socially or psychologically oriented discourse. In other words, the same critical project/movement which focuses on the formal (including self-reflexive) aspects of postmodernist fiction also denies it any social, political or sociological relevance.

Amy Elias also "[calls] into question the binary thinking [...] that separates Realism from postmodernism [and] experiment from tradition" (1994:10) in her "Meta-*mimesis*? The Problem of British Postmodern Realism". Rather than emphasize political implications, Elias shows how postmodernist criticism sets up Victorian Realism as a monolithic style, in order to define "a British postmodernism [by claiming] difference [in

anti-Realism]" (1994:18). For Elias, "at each stage in its evolution, Realist fiction has interrogated prevailing assumptions about what was 'realistic'" (1994:18). In this sense, British postmodernist fiction is a continuation of realism. The differences lie in the different nature of the reality it tries to articulate and in the aspects of that reality which influence the mimetic process. She identifies several themes common to British postmodernist fiction: textuality of the world (1994:12) ("actuality" in the terms of this dissertation), the rejection of Newtonian order (1994:13), cultural "de-differentiation". [6]

Such (re)definitions of British postmodern fiction, proposed by Elias, Fokkema, and others deconstruct the opposition between self-reflexivity and mimesis[7] recognizing their co-existence within postmodernism. Ackroyd's fiction may comfortably be placed within this context. (Elias herself does not do so, possibly reserving Ackroyd's fiction for the category "detective fiction with an ontological dominant").

Elias expands her thesis towards a definition of British Postmodern Fiction as *meta-mimesis* with an ontological dominant: the representation of mimesis focused on ontology. As mentioned above, she argues that the world itself has become textualized. Although this provides a useful perspective, it does not really constitute a revision of McHale's thesis. For McHale, representation is already a part of the ontology represented by postmodern fiction. The distinction between Elias' representation-representation-ontology and McHale's representation-ontology-representation remains, largely, one of perspective.

Elias' "meta-mimesis" does however help to move *myse-en-abyme* from the realm of representation (i.e. as implicating self-reflexivity) to that of ontology, of the represented world. Under her light, the reflection of Ackroyd's thematic concerns in the form, style and structure of his novels may be seen as mimetic. The impersonation of Wilde in The Last Testament of Oscar Wilde can be seen as being in itself a representation of Wilde, in a novel which pretends to be written by a man who "put [his] art into his life". Hawksmoor, a metaphysical detective story, has the reader trace its paths through the minds and world-views of a detective and a serial killer. This can be seen as simultaneously a representation of the characters and of the process of interpretation inherent to life. In similar vein English Music, a novel concerned with the influence of English culture on the mind of an Englishman, adopts styles and worlds

6 A term borrowed (by Elias) from Scott Lash, Sociology of Postmodernism (1990).

7 Susana Onega in "British Historiographic Metafiction in the 1980's" and Catherine Bernard in "Dismembering/ Remembering Mimesis: Martin Amis, Graham Swift" both come to mind; but the movement is already apparent in McHale, for instance in his reading of reading of Raymond Federman's fiction (1991:186-7).

from English literary history. First Light, a novel thematically related to popular culture, itself represents popular culture through stylistic features appropriated from the same.

Elias and Fokkema both focus on the (re)construction of "postmodernist fiction", and are therefore primarily concerned with *whether* British postmodern fiction resembles actuality. Their discussion of selected novels is mostly by way of example, and their "position" should be seen as a starting point rather than an end.

From the understanding that fiction can be mimetic, at least in the sense of representing/(re)producing representations of actuality, this dissertation proceeds to investigate the mimetic aspects of Ackroyd's fiction. The primary approach lies -- as with any study of fiction -- through the novels themselves, the **"Text"** of the title. Chapter 3, **Text : Representation** (per)forms a preliminary analysis of selected novels by Peter Ackroyd. It can be seen as a study of the *means*, the *how* and *to what extent* of the representation of Ackroyd's fiction. Underlying this preliminary analysis is an assumption that Ackroyd's novels represent worlds and characters. Poststructuralist claims -- that fiction represents fiction and language represents language -- are noted. The assumption guiding the initial analysis is not that the novels represent actuality, but that they represent "characters", "events", "worlds" of *some* order of ontology, which is *related to* actuality. "Character" and "world" are the primary facets investigated in this section, with an eye toward the way in which they are represented in the novels.

Two main theoretical models appropriate to these foci preside over this interrogation of the novels. Thomas Pavel's Fictional Worlds (1986) draws on literary theory as well as possible-worlds theory, philosophy, and anthropology. The theory deals with worlds not as discrete entities but as *related* to other worlds, which facilitates the simultaneous (or parallel) exploration of several worlds. As such, it provides an ideal tool for the analysis of Ackroyd's fiction which stresses (in all senses of the word) the relationships between the different worlds presented by the novels. If adapted slightly, it could also cope with different worlds on the same ontological level, worlds in which the primary/secondary ontology hierarchy is inverted or placed in oscillation, as is the case with most of Ackroyd's fiction. Pavel's focus on the relationship between different worlds, while not specifically concerned with mimesis, allows comparison between fictional worlds and the "actual" -- although the full implications of such comparison will only be investigated in the final section of this dissertation.

Pavel's theory largely relegates character to a subsidiary position *vis-a-vis* the construction of fictional worlds. His focus excludes from his theory the role of character in the construction/definition of a world. Especially for a reader-oriented reading,

characters help to define the world(s) within which they move and "think". In Ackroyd's fiction, as Fokkema observes (1991:146), the construction of character and world is intertwined (and interdependent) at the most basic level. In the context of this dissertation it would be reductionist to analyze the two as radically discontinuous entities. Fokkema's study of the representation of character in postmodernist fiction is therefore used as basis for the analyses of Ackroyd's characters. Her model focuses on the representational (or not) status of characters. Like Pavel's model, Fokkema's implicitly makes it possible to compare the subjective "actual" perception/representation of actual people and of fictional characters.

The second analysis, **Reader**, builds on(to) the first by considering the implications of the role of the "actual" reader for an analysis of Ackroyd's fiction. The guiding theory here will be Paul Ricoeur's poststructuralist hermeneutics. Ricoeurian hermeneutics lend themselves to an analysis of the novels in terms of the reading *process*. The reader is recognized as agent in the reconstruction of the novels' worlds and characters, a position implicit in both Pavel and Fokkema. "The reader" for Ricoeur is not the implied reader of narratology, nor the actual person reading the text, but rather the actual subject assuming the "position" in which the text "seeks to place" the actual reader. For Ricoeur, the reader does not/should not remain a passive agent, but both reconstructs and interacts with the text. Ackroyd's novels attempts to influence the reader's involvement through their use of the detective and horror/supernatural *topoi*. The hermeneutic reading therefore needs to investigate these *topoi* in the novels as well. The hermeneutic analysis of Ackroyd's novels point towards the *interaction* between reader and text, both the influence of the reading process on the (re)construction of the novels, and the influence of the reading process on the reader.

Reader examines the (possible) influences of the novels on the actual reader. The final chapter, **World**, compares Ackroyd's fiction to reality in terms of that influence: how does the *sens*[8] in which the text "seeks to place" the reader hold up to actuality? If the reader is influenced or changed or "learns from" the novels, will such changes/lessons/skills be of any use in the actual world(s)? It is also here that the full implications of Pavel's theory will be considered: whether it is viable to conceive of actuality as a continuum of disjunctive worlds, linked by particular relations.

Text : Reader : World attempts a deep entry into Ackroyd's fiction. Within the scope of the dissertation, though, the intricacy of the analyses/reading does not allow a

8 Ricoeur's neologism, which combines "sense", "meaning", and "direction".

comprehensive study of all Ackroyd's novels. The dissertation will therefore focus on three novels: Hawksmoor, Chatterton, and Dan Leno and the Limehouse Golem. The selection of these specific novels is admittedly strategic. Representing a cross-section of Ackroyd's fiction, these three novels are also, for several reasons, exemplary for the purposes of this dissertation. Firstly, although it is present to a greater or lesser extent in all of Ackroyd's fiction, these novels (together with The House of Doctor Dee) represent the most explicit use of the detective *topos*. Secondly, they show a strong similarity in their construction of world(s). Each juxtaposes several clearly individuated worlds, usually set in different time-frames. This aspect is shared by The House of Doctor Dee. Hawksmoor and The House of Doctor Dee deal with very similar subject matter, but of the two Hawksmoor is the more securely "canonical" text, allowing dialogue between **Text : Reader : World** and established Ackroyd criticism. Thirdly, as a set these novels clearly show a rising intensity in their invitations to the reader -- a claim which will receive more attention Chapter 4, **Representation : Reader**. This, proleptically, also serves to validate the inclusion of DL in the set. Fourthly, the three novels are *equally* concerned with the instability of world and that of identity. Both represent themes that run throughout Ackroyd's *oeuvre*, but they are less clearly articulated in The Great Fire of London or English Music. In The Last Testament of Oscar Wilde, the instability of the world is subordinate to that of character.

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Text : Reader : World is itself a search. Several guiding questions may be formulated as main foci, to lead to "waystations" and hopefully some destination. Firstly, how are worlds and selves presented in the novels of Peter Ackroyd? What are the relationships between different worlds within a single text, and what are the relationships between the characters and the worlds? Secondly, what is the role of the reader in the reconstruction of Ackroyd's worlds and characters? What is the *sens* in which the novels seek to place the reader? What is the relationship between character and reader, textual world and actual? Thirdly, could the novels have an impact on the reader's skills for dealing with fictional worlds? Finally, to how large an extent do the worlds of the novels correspond to a postmodern, poststructurally constructed world? If the novels do "teach" the reader to cope more effectively with the fictional worlds, may the acquired skills be applicable to the reader's actual life?

2 THEORY : WORLDS AND CHARACTERS

Il n'y a pas de hors-texte - Jacques Derrida
(quoted here in Culler, 1991)

From the point of view of the reader, there is always already something outside the (current) text. Fictional worlds can only be experienced/ (re)constructed in relation to the reader's experience of actuality. There is always ***différance***; the fictional world is interpreted in terms of the reader's understanding of actuality while simultaneously being different from that understanding. From a perspective **internal** to the reading situation the reader is an actual agent, indeed a present agent, actually (re)constructing the fictional text and its world. Viewed along the referentiality/ anti-referentiality axis from an internal perspective, the fictional world can only be less or more radically *not*-the-reader's-actuality. "There is nothing outside the text" only if one steps *outside* the reading situation.

From an **external** perspective, it might be possible to see that the actual reader herself is in some sense text, that the text does not project a world, that no actual experience of the world exists, only interpretations, and that such interpretations are themselves texts, that all these texts are inextricably intertwined. Viewing the reading situation from an external perspective represents an attempt to describe what "really" happens. Why stop there, though? If the whole of the world is text, is it not then impossible to see the reading situation "from the outside"?

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In this poststructuralist sense, any account of fiction is simultaneously internal to the extra-fictional reading situation and external to the intra-fictional reading situation. If the reading situation were to be bracketed, however, or seen in freer terms, it would be possible to distinguish between **external** and **internal** approaches to fiction. A study

which attempts to account for the reader's experience of fiction and its worlds needs to take an internal approach to fictional worlds. For the purposes of this dissertation, it is necessary to be able to account for the relationships between the world of the text and that of the reader. What, and how large, are the differences between the two? How believable is the fictional world? What effect does the reading situation have on the world, and the world and its text have on the reader?

Thomas Pavel's Fictional Worlds (1986) constructs a comprehensive internal theory of the re/construction of worlds. The theory establishes a model of fiction which describes worlds simultaneously in terms of the actual reader's perception of both fictional and actual worlds, and in terms of poststructuralist constructions of fiction and actuality. This allows the theory enough flexibility to investigate the relations between different fictional worlds as well as between fictional worlds and (the) actual world(s), to provide a structured account of a deconstructed world and the function of fiction therein without establishing its own metanarrative.[1] The hybrid nature of the theory, its foci, and its flexibility make it ideally suited to describe the novels of Peter Ackroyd, which represent an intersection of postmodernist "experiment" and referentiality.

If fictional worlds provide the decor for the experience of fiction, fictional characters are both the guests of honour and the hosts. They show the reader around and make her feel welcome -- or not. The conduct of characters provides clues to the physical and metaphysical rules of the fictional world. Their movements and observations guide those of the reader; their experiences and beliefs point to the limits of possibility, desire, and knowledge available in their world. Readers searching for illumination look towards the fictional characters, supplicate them, consider their examples. If the concerns of the characters correspond with those of the reader, it is easier to associate with them. Characters that are familiar or at least believable lessen the distance to the fictional world -- to use a concept of Pavel's preemptively. And if the reader is to learn anything from fiction, which is one of the functions Pavel attributes to fiction, she will do so by association with the characters at least as much as by exploring the world.

In addition to Pavel's theory, this dissertation needs to appropriate a model to examine the characters of Peter Ackroyd. In her book Postmodern Characters (1991) Aleid Fokkema designs a model specifically for the examination of postmodern

1 Metanarratives, for Lyotard, are the totalizing ordering systems which are used to "explain" actuality -- organized religion, science, politics. He sees metanarratives as being superseded by a web of small narratives, localized explanatory systems. Although Lyotard's definition of postmodernism as a state of "incredulity towards metanarratives" (1984:xxiv) has been criticized as setting itself up as a new metanarrative, it provides a useful point of departure.

characters. One of the main criteria of her model concerns the extent to which characters are representational -- to which they *represent possible actual-world individuals* -- and the extent to which their relation to actuality is mediated.

Fokkema's model parallels Pavel's in other important aspects. Based on semiotic ideas, her theory too enters into the poststructuralist debate while providing useful tools to examine the relationship between fiction and actuality.

PAVEL : (WORLDS)

Fictional Worlds constructs not only a model but also an extensive theory of both fictional and social ontologies. It draws on widely diverse sources, combining philosophy, literary theory, possible-worlds philosophy and the social sciences, as well as reception theory. Since the theory supporting the model is at least as important to Pavel's study as the model itself -- the text is, in fact, an extended argument leading up to an examination of the experience of reality as a series of interconnected worlds -- it is necessarily extremely broad. Pavel does not provide a neatly packaged model with step-by-step directions, but rather a set of philosophical and terminological tools together with established relations between them. For the purposes of this study, then, it is necessary to reorganize much of Pavel's theory into the form of a model or set of models. In this context it is not advisable to retrace all of Pavel's sources and arguments; even if the scope of this study allowed for such an exercise, Pavel's tapestry of ideas, arguments, asides and examples is so closely interwoven that rewriting it in different terms becomes virtually impossible. This study, then, draws models and relevant theoretical concepts from Pavel's text without necessarily ret(h)reading his argument.

According to Pavel, all questions pertaining to fictional worlds fall into one of three broad categories. **Metaphysical questions** concern the metaphysical status of fiction, its "reality" relative the actual and religious worlds. How "real" is fiction, compared to the actual world? Can worlds and characters be said to transcend their texts, or do they remain trapped in ink on paper? Hollinghurst witnesses the complication of the inscrutability of a postmodern historiographical fiction to the answers to metaphysical questions:

> The Last Testament of Oscar Wilde was consummate ventriloquism, so Wildean that it was easy to forget it was make-believe and the result of research, hard work and a brilliant ear
>
> (Hollinghurst, 1985:1049).

To the user of fiction, such as Hollinghurst, postmodernist fiction often supplants, or threatens to supplant, aspects of the "actual" world by becoming *more real* than its actual-world counterpart.

Demarcational questions concern the boundaries of fiction; such questions are implicit in virtually any argument about the reliability of the mass media. Demarcational questions differ from metaphysical ones in that they concern the borders of fiction as related to both actuality and fiction, including questions pertaining to intertextuality on the one hand and the supposed erosion of the boundaries between fiction and fact. The discussion between J.G. Ballard's narrator/protagonist and the documentary film director Sanger, from The Day of Creation (1987), concerns demarcational questions:

> [...] The West's *image of Africa* was now drawn from the *harshest newsreels* of the civil wars in the Congo and Uganda, of *famine* in Ethiopia, and *from graphically explicit films* of lions copulating in close-up on the Serengeti or dismembering a still breathing wildebeest. But Sanger disagreed, claiming that *these were merely another stylized fiction*, a more sensational but just as artfully neutered violence [...] an authentic first-hand experience of anything had long ceased to exist
>
> (Ballard, 1987:156; emphasis added).

Sanger's point is that one does not know where fiction ends and where actuality begins; that there is finally no border between the two. The last, **institutional questions**, concern the role and functions of fiction in society. Should one view fiction as a way of learning about the actual world? Or should the reading of fiction rather be an act of escapism? Institutional questions are implicit in the emphasis Marxist and especially post-colonial theorists place on the social functions of fiction, but also to some extent in the hermeneutics of Paul Ricoeur.

Approaches to fiction fall between two poles. The **segregationist** approach is informed by the belief that fiction and actuality should be kept as far apart as possible. It tends to conflate all three types of questions, reifying fiction and actuality each within their own boundaries, which seem sharp and easily recognizable since they are seen to exist on two different metaphysical levels. **Integrationist** approaches treat metaphysical and demarcational questions simultaneously, deliberately blurring the distinction between boundaries and metaphysical status. At the extremes, this leads to the relegation of

actuality to the textual level, either occasioning Derrida's "there is nothing outside the text" or reinstating fiction as a new metanarrative, a new religion. Either extreme is counter-productive to the study of fiction as it projects reductive external standards onto fiction and actuality. A model that intends to explain the experience of the user of fiction needs to approach ontology internally, as *perceived* by users of fiction rather than as projected from a theoretical, "objective" viewpoint.

(Worlds) : The Inference Machine

But how is the "possibility" of a world established? One way to describe a world is in terms of a set containing all statements about the world. Each statement, each **atomic proposition**, is assigned a truth value which ranges from false through possible to true. It is true about the actual world, for instance, that an architect called Nicholas Hawksmoor built the church of St Mary Woolnoth in Spitalfields, London; while any statements concerning a church of Little St Hugh in London that fail to mention its fictionality are necessarily false in the actual world. (Statements placing such a church anywhere else in the actual world would also be false, of course, since Little St Hugh is a fictional saint). The respective truth values of the above statements are (relatively) easy to establish. In everyday life, as in fiction, we are constantly confronted with statements the truth value of which we are not familiar with. A statement like "the CIA killed John F Kennedy" is highly controversial; even though it has never yet been proven legally, recent surveys have shown that more than fifty percent of Americans believe it to be true. Many people, especially outside of the United States, believe it to be false, a case of media paranoia. Yet others are undecided on its truth value.

Any unfamiliar proposition needs to be adjudicated regarding its truth value in the user's world. The process involved is no different for fictional statements than for real ones. The statement is compared to similar or relevant propositions of which the truth value is known. If it seems convincing, whether for logical or intuitive reasons, it is integrated into a set of statements true in the actual world, here designated *Pg*. If it is impossible to establish the truth value of a statement, it still becomes integrated into the set *Pc* of statements possible in the world. When engaged in fiction, "[the] reader does not have only to signal the propositions accepted into *pG* and therefore assumed to be

true in the actual world [...], but also to indicate the propositions integrated into *pC*, that is, the propositions possible in *G*" (Pavel, 1986:48).

Fiction is filled with unknown atomic propositions. In the case of Peter Ackroyd, it is not uncommon to find that the apparent truth value of propositions changes during the course of a text -- or of a reader's investigations into a text. This is true of one of the more harrowing passages from HM:

> And thus will I compleet the Figure: Spittle-Fields, Wapping and Limehouse have made the Triangle; Bloomsbury and St Mary Woolnoth have next created the major Pentacle-starre; and, with Greenwich all these will form the sextuple abode of Baal-Berith or the Lord of the Covenant. Then, with the church of Little St Hugh, the Septilateral Figure will rise about Black Step Lane and, in this Pattern, every Straight line is enrich'd with a point at Infinity and every Plane with a line at Infinity. Let him that has Understanding count the Number: the seven Churches are built in conjunction with the seven Planets in the lower Orbs of Heaven, the seven Circles of the Heavens, the seven Starres in Ursa Minor and the seven Starres in the Pleiades. Little St Hugh was flung in the Pitte with the seven Marks upon his Hands, Feet, Sides and Breast which thus exhibit the seven Demons [...]
>
> (Ackroyd, 1985:186).

This statement as it stands is necessarily false, since it relies heavily on the significance of the number seven while only six churches actually exist. Even so, the implications of the passage cannot be simply discarded. The gist of the passage, shorn of its obviously fictional elements and with the explicit articulation of its implied actual-world historical context, could be summarized:

> In the very centre of London Nicholas Hawksmoor constructed, on enormous scale, a temple to dark gods to serve, as it were, as foundation for the rebuilding of the city undertaken mostly by Hawksmoor, Sir Christopher Wren, and Vanbrugghe.

This proposal could be broken down into several atomic propositions:

1. After the Fire London was reconstructed virtually *in toto* by three men: Wren, Vanbrugghe and Hawksmoor.
2. Hawksmoor designed and built five churches and rebuilt a sixth.

3 Hawksmoor's churches are built and spaced according to a certain geometric and numerological symbolism.
4 The design and spacing of his churches are informed by his religion.
5 Hawksmoor served a religion which stands in opposition to christianity and which is dark in nature. [2]

From this the argument can be extracted that London is constructed around a pattern of churches dedicated, if not to evil, to a religion far darker than christianity.

But how is this information processed? Obviously, the reader who does not care to locate the relevant churches on a map of London or to research Hawksmoor's life will simply reject the notion. A reader prepared to do such research -- an ideal reader, from the perspective of the novel and of this dissertation -- will have no trouble integrating statements 1 and 2 into her set of propositions describing actuality. Statement 4 fits snugly into traditional psychoanalytic approaches to art, and may easily be accepted -- although its implications have far less force without the investigation of the speaker's religious views. The corroboration of statement 3 requires knowledge of the symbolic tradition in architecture, dating back to ancient times, according to which buildings are designed as metaphors or according to symbolic systems. Churches in general, and specifically Gothic cathedrals, usually function as symbolic systems. Additionally, many critics have remarked on the disturbing nature of Hawksmoor's architecture, and its essential *darkness*. Some have linked him to the tradition of the Dionysiac Architects (Moore, 1991:36). [3] Yet more specific information shows that Hawksmoor's five original churches *really are* located on the points of a regular though flattened pentacle. Once these facts are known, proposition 3 could easily be assigned the truth value "probable" if not "true" by most readers. The statements, however, are like a house of cards: the truth value assigned to each influences that assigned to the next. If, in addition to the knowledge influencing the adjudication of statements 2 and 3, the reader knows that Hawksmoor had a tremendously intense, brooding and retiring personality, to such an

2 This set of atomic propositions is selected in fulfillment of subjective narrative, logical and ideological requirements. It is neither comprehensive nor conclusive.

3 In the notes to From Hell (1991), a text concerned with Jack the Ripper, London and Victorian society, Alan Moore gives research references almost on a line-by-line basis. Moore makes a connection between two critical works: Hawksmoor by Kerry Downes (Thames and Hudson) and The Secret Teachings of All Ages by Manly P Hall (1928: Philosophical Research Society). The first work (amongst others, apparently) extensively documents Hawksmoor's obsession with the work of Vitruvius, whom the second in turn names as a member of the Dionysiac Architects. Unfortunately, neither of these texts could be located in time to be used in this dissertation.

extent that virtually nothing is known of his personal views, it is difficult not to accept statement 5 as at least possible. The effect, at the least, is that Hawksmoor's churches become even more forboding.

The status of a world as actual, possible or alternative is adjudicated by a continuous series of similar operations of the inference machine. Since a world can be described by the set of statements about it, together with the truth values assigned to them, a possible world is one in which there are no statements that are patently false. The set of propositions describing a possible world are all either true or possible in the real world.

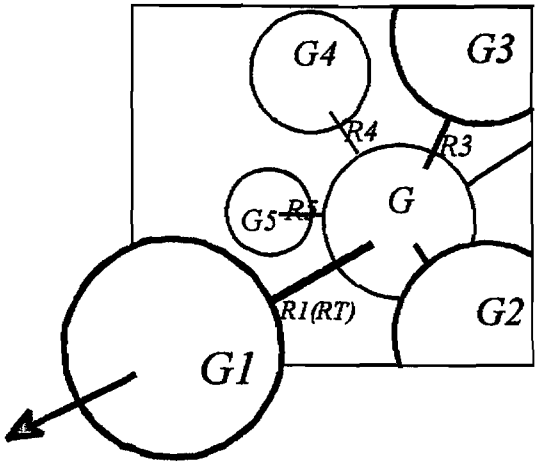
(Worlds) : Worlds possible and alternate

Worlds do not exist in isolation, but are surrounded by their possible and alternate worlds. Any wish, prediction or hope, implies a projection of an imaginary state of affairs. The easiest way to look at such a state of affairs is to see it as belonging to a different world, a possible world that might become actual if certain requirements are met. A non-actualised set of propositions is projected into an alternate (imaginary) world, usually based on actuality, where the given set of propositions obtains. Worlds projected in the ordinary course of events may include elaborate fantasies, as happens in Alaisdair Gray's 1982 Janine,[4] but are usually called into being for such mundane uses as planning a day. Especially when used for practical purposes, the user's inference machine is used to adjudicate imaginary events with regard to possibility, probability, and truth. Reality emerges not as a single world, but as a *set* of worlds clustered around a base.

Such a set may, for argument's sake, be labelled *K*. A set may be defined around any world, which serves as base for the cluster. The situation may be represented graphically:

4 Gray's 1982 Janine (London: Penguin, 1985) is narrated entirely from the consciousness of an aging *civil engineer*. Although the *topos* belongs to modernist fiction, the novel's only direct reference to the "world outside" is within flashbacks. Both the "ontology" representing the narrating consciousness and his past are increasingly swallowed by the elaborate fetishistic mystery fantasy projected by the narrator, a fantasy centred around a "conditionally representative" (to use Fokkema's term) woman called Janine.

Fig 1: Alternate worlds



In figure 1, world *G* serves as base for the set *K* (the complete set represented by the illustration). *G* is set on a timeline *GT* Clustered around *G* are its alternate worlds -- *G1, G2,* etc. -- which are related to it by a **relation of alternativeness**. This relation (designated *R1, R2, R3.... RT*) may be defined as including or negating any criterion or set of criteria. In figure 1, as in subsequent illustrations, depth perspective is used to represent the temporal relations between worlds.

*R*1 may, for instance, be construed in such a way that all natural laws are preserved. This is likely if *G1* is to be used for planning a day. If the purpose of projecting *G1* is to wish the past away, though, *R1* would need to negate the passage of time, to "turn back the years" and project a radically different set of affairs. It is in this mode that the pop song A Different Corner operates:

> Take me back in time, maybe I could forget
> Turn a different corner and we never would have met
>
> (George Michael, 1987)

Another possible criterion for the definition of *R* is that of **domains**. Domains are specific collections of related details: *R* may specify that the domain of buildings in

the base world *G* be preserved in a given or all possible worlds, or the domain of individuals -- although this last is plainly too restrictive a demand to make of an account of fiction. Even daydreams implicitly allow for the usual few million births and deaths per second internationally.

In planning a day, *R1* might retain the domain of individuals in the work-place, while neglecting (or even negating) that of family members, since their "presence" might detract from the day's work. In "A Different Corner", *R1* is constructed explicitly to negate the "presence" of the addressee in the domain of individuals.

Possible worlds represent a specific instance of alternate worlds where, by definition, the relation of alternativeness calls for the preservation of all natural laws of the base ontology, including those of time and of probability. If natural laws include the linearity of time, as appears to be the case with actuality, they become a definitive component of *R*. In figure 1, this specific relation of alternativeness is congruent with time-line *RT,* which is unidirectional. Beyond the base *G*, though, time diverges, since the future is not set (or cannot be proven to be set). Thus, in set *K*, *G1*, *G2*, and *G3* are possible worlds of *G*. *G0* is not only a possible world, but one which has already been actualized, since it lies in the past. *G5* is not a possible world, since it constitutes an alternate past (this might be the world of "A Different Corner"). *G4* occupies the same position in time as *G*, and might or might not be a possible world of *G*. It represents a world alternate to *G* because vital epistemological uncertainty (If, for instance, the KGB and not the CIA had shot JFK).

In view of the restrictions on the relation of alternativeness *R*, possible worlds tend to differ from the actual in very specific respects: "what if I were to win the jackpot?".

The notion of **accessibility** is related to that of possible worlds. A world is accessible from another if it can be reached via the relation of alternativeness without violating the natural laws of the base. Hence, in figure 1, all of the possible worlds are accessible from *G*, except *G0* which is in the past. *G5* is also accessible, since its relation of alternativeness is not ontological. Note, however, that worlds are not necessarily mutually accessible; from the point of view of *G2*, *G* lies in the past and is therefore inaccessible. *G1* is also inaccessible from *G2*, because it is a *different* actualised (or not) possible world.

Most fiction, especially realist fiction but even that which is only marginally referential, constructs worlds that have the same general history and occupy a *similar point in time* as their contemporary actual world or at a given moment in actual history. From an external point of view the simultaneous existence of fiction and actuality places

fiction on an inferior metaphysical level, since metaphysically it ought to be impossible for them to co-exist.[5] But what about multiple fictional worlds? Viewed internally, metaphysical questions have no predetermined answers. The study of Ackroyd's fiction requires the development of model which allows for the co-existence of worlds.

(Worlds) : Games of make-believe and Salient Structures

The most basic model for a world would be a **simple** or **flat structure**, a model of a world without any possible or alternate worlds -- "a model representing the attitude of a population entirely deprived of the faculty of imagination" (Pavel, 1986:55). Such a model would not only be purely theoretical but also virtually useless for the investigation of fictions. Any reading of fiction, after all involves at least two worlds, the fictional and the actual. While engaged in fiction, readers are convinced if only momentarily and partially that the characters are real and the assertions about them are true in the world they inhabit. Pavel argues that this experience of *being caught up in a story* occurs "because works of fiction are not mere sequences of sentences but props in a game of *make-believe*" (Pavel, 1986:55). Rather than watch fictional events from some privileged viewpoint outside of the fiction, readers "are located *within* the fictional world that, for the duration of the game, is taken as real". In effect, readers themselves play a role in a game of make-believe, if only that of spectator. Since participants in a game of make-believe act simultaneously in the actual world and in the world which is real within the game, an internal model of fiction, of reading, needs to "distinguish between the two distinct levels on which the game takes place and show the links between them" (Pavel, 1986:56).

5 Ironically, of all fictional genres it is only traditional science fiction that deals with possible worlds as such. The plots of authors like Bob Shaw and the early Heinlein and Asimov turn upon a single significant scientific discovery not impossible within the laws of physics. The worlds of traditional science fiction are set in the near future; *R* sustains all physical laws as well as the linearity of time. Shaw (c1972. Other Days, Other Eyes. London: Pan) for instance, projects a future world in which a type of glass has been invented which slows down light passing through it. Building on this single basic requirement relation of alternativeness (which is conceivable within the limits of science, though unlikely) he evolves actuality into a future world which differs from actuality in many respects. Since the basic premise is grounded science, the relations of alternativeness between actuality and Shaw's future world retain all physical laws and (potentially) all domains of characters (since his characters could be *descended* from current actual people), events, and objects (which might be retained or destroyed naturally.

The structure displayed by games of make-believe can be explained in terms of the relations between alternative worlds. Actuality serves as a base to which another world is closely linked by specified rules. In a game of make-believe, the relation of correspondence takes the form of basic principles which stipulate a set of make-believe truths. The basic principles indicate the initial departure from the actual world. In Pavel's example, that of a children's mudpie game, the basic principles are:

(1) Globs of mud fashioned into pie-shape will be taken as pies.
(2) Small black pebbles will be taken as raisins.
(3) A metal object will be taken as a hot oven

(Pavel, 1986:55).

A recursive principle allows for the construction of new make-believe truths from the basic principles ("The pies will have to bake for a while still"). An incorporation principle allows for the addition of other truths concurrent with the basic principles -- for instance truths concerning the actions, beliefs and relationships of the characters. In the mudpie game, such a truth could express the preference of a character for raisin pies. In terms of reading, where the reader participates as observer only, such truths might be the reader's impressions of characters or the disclosure of which areas of the fictional world are accessible to the reader.

The levels of a make-believe game express what Pavel calls a **complex structure**. Complex structures arise when two or more universes are linked in a single structure so that there is a detailed correspondence between elements; the mudpie game is an example of a **dual structure**, a complex structure involving only two universes.

Dual structures usually comprise a **primary universe**, the base, which has a clear *ontological priority over the* ***secondary universe*** *to which it is linked by a relation of* correspondence. When the relation of correspondence yields an isomorphism, assigning one and only one element from the secondary universe to its correspondent in the primary, the situation is **existentially conservative**. Fiction, though, tends to be **existentially creative**: the secondary universe often projects entities and states of affairs that lack correspondents in the actual world. Pavel names **salient structures** "those structures in which the primary universe does not enter into an isomorphism with the secondary universe, because the latter includes entities and states of affairs that lack a correspondent in the real world" (1986:57).

Although the notion of salient structures provides a useful guideline for the anatomization of fiction, the study of fiction is by no means its only application. Pavel argues that religious ontology is fundamentally representable as a salient structure:

> [The] religious mind divides the universe into two regions qualitatively different: space is partitioned into sacred regions, endowed with reality in the strongest sense, and nonsacred places that lack consistency; sacred cyclical time diverges from profane time and its irreversible duration
>
> (Pavel, 1986:57).

In Catholicism this structure is clearly visible in the reverence of saints and the identification of holy places. Viewing the religious mind as a salient structure, though, also reveals its universality. The Dreamtime of the Aborigines of Australia displays as radical a saliency: sleep and religious experience are entry points into a world more real than that of everyday reality, a world straddled and travelled by gods. Religious consciousness presents "[an] ontological model containing two frames of reference that are as distinct as possible [...] though closely related" (Pavel, 1986:58).

At the same time, the work of art too reveals a salient structure in its most basic functioning. On earth-prime, the work of art is a collection of paint marks on a surface. In the secondary universe invoked by the work of art, it is an artwork, a vehicle for meaning. In this respect there is no difference between an abstract and a representational work of art; the distinction between the work of art and its material support is ontological "since the ontology of the work cannot be reduced to that of its material" (57). Paintings by Jackson Pollock or Franz Kline[6] -- or of any artist, for that matter -- articulate content that cannot be expressed verbally or without reference to the secondary universe invoked by the painting. If they could, the paintings would either be redundant or not exist at all. This perhaps explains why the work of Marcel Duchamp creates difficulties for staunch realists: a snow shovel with a clever name[7] is a work of art exactly because it draws unexpected attention to the distinction between the work of art and its material components. It is a work of art that *explicitly thematizes dual ontologies.*

Likewise, some literary works of art also thematize the saliency of their relationship to the real world. In this respect "The Library of Babel" by Jorge Luis Borges is exemplary. Borges' short fiction "sketches a detailed secondary ontology

6 Both are American Abstract Expressionist painters, whose work are fairly inaccessible to the untrained eye. Pollock's work -- for example One (1950. Museum of Modern Art, NY) -- is built up out of layers of paint splashes; Kline's paintings, such as Mahoning (1956. Whitney Museum of Modern Art, NY) look like blow-ups of calligraphical detail.

7 The work in question here is entitled In advance of a broken arm. (1915. Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven).

containing objects, properties, relations" (Pavel, 1986:58) -- secondary because it is expressed in terms belonging to earth-prime and is activated by a given relation. The relation is the modelling of the secondary ontology as a library. Clearly this library does not belong to the real world, and it also contains traits incongruent with real libraries. The reader grasps the significance of the fiction only because she "[knows] what kind of object the libraries-in-the-actual-world are, and [she feels] free to relate the library-in-the-story-by-Borges to these. In the same way, we are prepared to relate each object in the story to some object in our world, by virtue of the relations of correspondence, whose role is to ensure the correct grasping of the structure of the secondary ontology as both different from and based upon the primary ontology" (Pavel, 1986:58-9).

In actual fact, *any* fictional statement obtains its meaning only by reference to the primary ontology, which in turn can only signify any meaning if it can be related to the "really real" world.

> '[In Little Red Riding Hood [...] "red" means red and yet ... the rules correlating "red" with red are not in force' [...]. What happens in fact is that the rules correlating "red"-in-the-second-ontology are more complex than the rules relating "red" with red in the first ontology [...]
> (Pavel, 1986:59).

Fictional terms can only *mean* indirectly. The meaning of "red"-in-the-second-ontology is dependent entirely on whether the correspondence relations between the first and the second ontology allows it to *correspond* to its counterpart in the first ontology; "'red'-in-fiction is matched with red-in-the-really-real-world only indirectly, via the correspondence relations" (Pavel, 1986:59). There is nothing to stop a writer to create a secondary ontology where red is in fact green -- or red is in fact trout fishing in america.[8] This, however, is only a step away from allegory, where the secondary ontology contains "agents shaped as human beings [which] correspond to abstract qualities in the primary ontology" (Pavel, 1986:59). Allegory proper is merely an extreme instance, however, since "even [realist fiction's] links to the primary world are highly mediated" (Pavel, 1986:59). Realist fiction can only "make sense" through the links between the secondary world and the primary. The intellectual operation involved in understanding realist and allegorical fiction is of the same nature.

Fictional worlds therefore display as salient an organization as sacred worlds. The essential mutability that resides in alterations of the correspondence relations,

8 This is a reference to Richard Brautigan's novel of the same name, in which "trout fishing in america" may be anything from an expletive to a postal address (cf. McHale, 1987:137).

though, has prompted theology to advance the theory of the analogy of being, "according to which the verb *to be* is only analogically asserted of God and his creatures" (Pavel, 1986:61). By the same token, "being" in fiction is only analogically similar to the same notion in actuality. This, however, leaves fiction and religion on dangerously equal footing. Pavel argues that sacred worlds are perceived to be overflowing with energy, *more real* than the actual world, while the loss of energy of fictional activities prevents them from invading the actual world. Occasionally, though, it happens: [9] readers believe themselves to be influenced by fiction, or they believe fictions to offer the metaphysical truths previously the exclusive domain of religion. Given, fiction cannot but remain on a problematic ontological level with regards to actuality; but then, from a certain perspective, fiction's position need be no weaker than that of religion. The difference, after all, is one of the energy invested in -- or granted to -- the secondary world.

(Worlds) : The Threefold Nature of Fictionality: Text & Textuality

Fictional worlds obtain their meaning only by the grace of the relations of alternativeness which connect them to the actual world. In other words, a fictional *term* can only be understood if the correspondence relations either supply its meaning or allow it to denote the meaning of the same *term* in the actual world. And yet, terms in "the actual world" are themselves problematical to a lesser or greater extent, being linguistically mediated. This is evidenced by the famous example of the sense of snow: that Lapps have twenty-seven words for snow while English has only a handful. Viewed externally, this may not prove that there is an ontological difference for users of either language; it does, however, suggest that the internal experience of the relation between the world and either language differs.

It has been argued above that a world may be described by the complete set of possible sentences about it, together with their assigned truth values. Such a set with its truth values Pavel labels a *Magnum Opus*. It is clear, though, that no single language can adequately describe the world. For English to properly describe its various colonies, it needed to take words from different *Magna Opera*: "pampas", "veld", "tundra", "tepee".

9 This last is not Pavel's argument but my own inference. The decision of assigning the status of "more real than actuality" to either religion or fiction belongs to each individual reader.

These are "untranslatable" words, words denoting things that are difficult or impossible to adequately describe without a convenient example close at hand.

Different disciplines each have their own language (or *discourse*, in Foucault's terms). It makes little sense to view scientific language(s) as meeting-places where other languages may overlap only; even though it may be argued that "Klein bottle" is a concept in English, the word cannot be understood or even used properly without reference to a "world" of experience belonging to a rather select community exclusively. Each scientific language tries to describe the world, but due to their various limitations none by itself can give a complete description of it. The language of astrophysics can hardly be used to describe the human anatomy, or that of sociology to describe Chaos Theory. (Chaos theory is used to describe social phenomena, but it can only do so through an act of signification, by establishing correspondence relations between concepts in Chaos theory and concepts in sociology -- a translation, of sorts). In a certain sense, from the point of view of the user each language does not only occasion a world-version, but a *world*; the user of a language seldom stops to consider things inexpressible in her language, or the differences between languages. The inferiority of English as regarding the description of snow indicates a radically different experience of the world between users of different languages.

As a result of the incompleteness of language(s), no text can be totally self-sufficient. In its construction, any text -- be it a novel or a history textbook -- necessarily takes sentences from numerous *Magna Opera*. Without reference to and knowledge of these *Magna Opera* it is virtually impossible to make sense of the text. In addition, the selection of sentences from numerous *Magna Opera* necessitates a **refraction index** of sorts, a system of reference whereby the origins of a statement can be traced and which indicates the angle and bias at which it is cut from its *Magnum Opus*. The poststructuralist debate provides ample examples: words like "discourse", "identity", or "signification" can hardly be mentioned without qualifying their usage and identifying the science to which they are aligned, whether linguistic, psychoanalytic, hermeneutic or sociological. Of course, many books such as encyclopedias attempt to provide an overview, an amalgam of various *Magna Opera*. This only complicates matters, since such a book remains merely a compendium, a selection of statements from widely diverse origins which has its own refraction index. Any book, therefore, draws statements from many different *Magna Opera* and compendia. The result is

> a geological view of texts: like bedrock, texts amalgamate strata of diverse geological origins. Pressed together by the cohesive forces of petrifaction, the colour and texture of these strata refer back to their

> birthplace: it is the task of enlightened analysts to reflect not only on various structural constraints and on textual coherence, but also on the deeply ingrained semantic heteronomy of texts, on the principle of dispersion embedded in them
>
> (Pavel, 1986:71).

As dual structures emerge as being at the heart of the functioning of fiction the deeply fragmented nature of texts becomes apparent. Each fiction takes propositions from not only one text about the actual world but from many different *Magna Opera*, many different world-versions. Fiction cannot be interpreted without reference to the actual world, but since this happens only indirectly by reference to *texts about the actual world* which in turn take statements from many different world-versions it is no longer possible to conceive of a text as being *a book about a world.* It becomes impossible to trace back all sentences to one and the same world, since heteronomy and dislocation intervene at each step.

Constructed from an indefinitely large number of universes, some texts take sentences from impossible worlds and thus become readier than others for a fictional reading:

> The dual ontology of fiction reflects, in a simplified way, the deep heterogeneity of texts. But since mixture and not homogeneity governs textual matters, fiction does not constitute the exception one is tempted to believe. Its semantic duality merely intensifies a more general feature of texts, thus revealing under a particularly clear light the more general heteronomy of texts
>
> (Pavel, 1986:71).

To complicate matters, it is not necessarily by virtue of its semantic composition that a text is fictitious. Clearly this is the case with a text containing impossible objects, but it may also happen that factual books on worlds -- miscellanea and compendia, to use Pavel's metaphor -- become fictive many years after their constitution, if there is a change of attitude toward their validity. This has been the case for myths and medieval bestiaries. Furthermore, the non-fictionality of texts is often the result of "cultural tradition [ossifying] certain kinds of structural constraints for fiction" (Pavel, 1987:68). As a result texts that are nonfictional on semantic or pragmatic grounds can be read fictionally for purely textual reasons.

When fiction is approached internally, it is of little consequence whether a text was originally intended to be fictional or not. An internal theory of fiction is concerned with the *pragmatics* of fiction; with its *semantic* aspects, which include not only metaphysical questions, but also demarcational ones with regards to the borders of

fiction, the distance between fictional and nonfictional universes, and the size and the structure of the former; and with the influence on the fictional experience of *stylistic and textual constraints* relevant to fictional genres and conventions.

Pavel : Fictional Worlds

Considering the highly fragmentary nature of the origins of texts, and the extent to which their origins are obscured as by a mist, texts can no longer be seen as belonging to specific worlds. The representation of worlds is disrupted at every turn by various levels of heterogeneity, rendering the relationship between texts and worlds highly unstable.

Despite this, readers seldom experience fiction as an inchoate collection of fragmented representations. Pavel suggests that the only reason "the worlds we speak about, actual or fictional, neatly hide their fractures, and our language, our texts, appear for a while to be transparent media unproblematically leading to worlds" (Pavel, 1986:73), is because readers choose to see them that way. Readers, rather than dwelling on the origins and birthplaces of worlds and the network connecting them to the world of a text, use compendia and texts merely as paths of access to worlds. The pleasure of the text, the detailed map of the path to the world gleaned from close reading: these are the interests of critics, not of readers. The very fact that some critics deem it necessary to point these things out, like tour-guides, emphasizes the hurry of readers to get to the world itself and forget the journey there. When readers do remember passages from the text, these tend to be aphoristic or gnomic and, notably, applicable to the actual world as well; apparently driven by "an irrepressible referential instinct" (Pavel, 1986:74), readers attempt to transcend the medium of the text.

Still, only through their manifestations, whether textual or non-textual, can worlds be known. Texts *are* more than referential paths leading to worlds: "to read a text or to look at a painting means already to inhabit their world" (Pavel, 1986:74). Despite the propensity of readers to focus on facts and events, to read ontology into the text, the medium cannot be discarded once the world is reached. Besides, texts may be read for various purposes; reading a text for purely textual enjoyment is a different exercise from doing so specifically to learn how to orient oneself in the world depicted by it.

Fictional Worlds : Borders

Segregationist approaches deny fiction relevance in the actual world on metaphysical grounds. In the first place, it is argued that fiction is located at an inferior metaphysical level since its existence is negated by the actual world; in the second, fictional worlds are intrinsically incomplete and inconsistent while real worlds are not. To some extent fictional worlds *are* both inconsistent (a question may be unanswerable, a statement true on the level of the fictional ontology and plainly false on that of the real or of a metafictional ontology) and incomplete. After all, many questions about fictions cannot be answered by reference to their world, while -- theoretically at least -- similar questions about the real world *can* be answered. From the segregationist position, the "clear" metaphysical differences between fact and fiction ought to imply that the boundaries between the two should be clear and impermeable as well.

On closer analysis, though, the clarity of definition of the borders of fiction is as much a matter of faith as of anything else. The truth about Kennedy's assassination is by no means the only question about the actual world that anyone may answer in theory, but not in practice. And from an internal point of view, such indeterminacy has as destabilizing an influence on the user's perception of the actual world as uncertainty over Hawksmoor's final fate. Not only does the actual world contain cracks as wide as those in the sparsest fictional world, but viewing it as clearly individuated from its fictional worlds does not necessarily reflect cultural practices at an institutional level. "Most contemporary readers are indeed institutionally aware of the difference between fact and fiction, but this is by no means the universal pattern" (Pavel, 1986:76).

The institution of rigid boundaries is to a large extent culturally determined. The emergence of such boundaries, in both fictional and geographical terms, could be seen as forming part of a general movement towards the imposition of rationality (and predictability) on every facet of the world. As such, the development is a fairly recent one; international political boundaries are largely the result of European colonization, which in turn can be linked to an attempt to define more clearly the spheres of power and of possession in (especially) Western culture. Like international political regions, "[fictional] domains have undergone a long process of structuring, ossification, and delimitation" (Pavel, 1986:76). The boundaries of fiction are passed on from generation to generation; as such, it is not unlikely that such boundaries may weaken where reading -- whether of fiction *or* non-fiction -- becomes a practice verging on the edge of

extinction. Certainly this appears to be the case in certain sub-cultures, where the heroes are, quite literally, those with the biggest and the fastest guns.

Apart from Western readers who by choice or as a result of deficient fictional experience ignore fictional boundaries, it is not uncommon for cultures to lack such boundaries. In many primitive cultures there is no distinction between fiction and myth; often the boundaries between history and fiction are non-existent as well. Archaic epic and dramatic artifacts were not fictive in content or setting for their primary users, but either mythical or historical. "The characters of these were heroes or gods, beings endowed with as much reality as myth can provide [...] Gods and heroes inhabit the sacred space, but this space is not felt fictional; if anything, it is endowed with *more* weight and stability than the mortals' spaces" (Pavel, 1986:76). The sacred spaces and their inhabitants are understood to be ontologically self-sufficient, occupying a privileged space and a cyclical time. What has since come to be seen as archaic fiction was endowed with either as much reality as the actual world when taken as history, or *more* when the religious dimension of these myths is taken into account.

If myths may cross the border and become fiction, though, fiction may become mythical. Myths are used to provide exemplars in the light of which the events of life make sense. Ordinary events may cross over into legend, then into myth to serve as exemplars. The initial mundane event may come to be seen as the lie while the new myth becomes a truth -- which is one of the primary functions of myth. Pavel cites an example where a woman's fiancee had died in a mountaineering accident. In the neighbouring villages the story had taken on mythical dimensions: the man had been solicited by a mountain fairy, but remained true to his earthly love. In a fit of jealousy the fairy threw him from the mountain. Even when confronted with the fiancee's version of history, this remained the truth to the villagers. In a sense, it may be: "wasn't the myth more truthful than the story, since it gave the story a deeper, richer sound: since it revealed a tragic destiny?" (Pavel, 1986:77).

Pavel calls such transferral across the border of legend **mythification**. It is a process which may take years or happen in a moment of what may be called enlightenment; but it occurs at the one border of fiction, that shared with myth. But fiction's other border, where it touches actuality, is also mutually permeable.

Fictional Worlds : Difference and Distance

To speak of borders, worlds, territories, domains; these metaphors evoke travelling, and travellers, to cross the borders and visit the worlds. Fictional heroes, in many ways, visit the actual world, and they may exert as much influence as real heroes. Ackroyd notes that Dickens' public recognized his characters everywhere, and even behaved in a "Dickensian" manner in the presence of the writer (Ackroyd, 1990:253). Pavel cites the example of Goethe's Werther, which "[triggered] an epidemic of suicides" (1986:85). Don Quixote, whose story is that of a life invaded by fiction, ironically became an archetype and travelled the world extensively (Pavel, 1986:85). In Brian Aldiss' Frankenstein Unbound (1991) Aldiss' protagonist intermingles with both imported fictional characters (Frankenstein, his monster, his fiancee, their servant and the monster's bride -- who remains uncreated in Mary Shelley's novel) and imported "actual" characters (Mary Shelley, Polidori, Percy Bysshe Shelley, and Lord Byron). Aldiss' Joe Bodenstein is from the future; in a sense, then, he is also an alien in the landscape which is an inextricable mishmash of Mary Shelley's world, the early 19th century, and a post-apocalyptic science-fiction landscape. Actual historical figures who become fictionalized and wander fictional territories are common, especially in the work of Ackroyd. John Dee, Dan Leno, Oscar Wilde, Christopher Wren, and, under a different name, Nicholas Hawksmoor, all appear in worlds to which they are strangers -- even if these worlds sometimes appear to be an exteriorization of their consciousnesses. Even in his biography of Dickens, Ackroyd presses the Victorian to wander a world much like that he himself created.

Readers, too, are tourists to fictional lands which they inhabit for a short while, rubbing shoulders with the heroes and gawking at the scenery. Yet the reader never physically leaves the actual world; rather, Pavel suggests that the reader projects "a fictional ego who attends the imaginary events as a kind of nonvoting member" (Pavel, 1986:85). The reader experiences fictional events and is moved by them by proxy only. Fictional egos infiltrate fictional worlds "as scouts [...], with orders to report back" (Pavel, 1986:85) and are moved. This explains readers' lack of commitment to fictional experiences: "we only lend our bodies and emotions for a while to these fictional egos; just as in participatory rites the faithful lend their bodies to the possessing spirits" (1986:85).

In a sense the worlds visited by the fictional ego do not exist before the reading of the text, but are reconstructed by the reader during the reading process. The

reconstruction is governed by the **principle of minimal departure**: the reader reconstructs fictional and counterfeit worlds as being as close as possible to the world she knows, projecting everything she knows about the actual world upon the fictional world and making only those adjustments which cannot be avoided (Pavel, 1986:88). The difference between a fictional world and the actual may be measured by the adjustments the fictional ego needs to make to its knowledge of actuality in order to inhabit the fictional world. To extend the metaphor of tourism, the difference may be measured by the difficulty of mastering the language and customs of the foreign country, and by how much of it is necessary to function there effectively.

As readers impersonate fictional egos, so the author pretends to be the narrator of the text who exists in the fictional world. Fiction becomes a masque of sorts, with the fictional narrator "[introducing] the fictional beings and states of affairs to the fictional ego of the reader" (Pavel, 1986:88). Reader and author simultaneously act in the actual world and in the fictional world, highlighting the salient structure of fiction:

> the fictional exchange takes place within the secure precincts of the imaginary worlds, but it is not abruptly severed from the primary (actual) world, since fictional readers and writers emerge through impersonation by actual members of the cultural community and, as actors in the fictional system, retain most of the traits, cultural or biological, displayed by their actual bearers
>
> (Pavel, 1986:88-89).

Through impersonation, the actual traits and skills of the reader and author from the real world act as fictional traits and skills for the fictional ego in the fictional world.

The reader can only make sense of the fictional world by travelling to it; the fictional ego can only act in the fictional world through an act of impersonation. But impersonation cannot negate the displacement to the fictional world. The function of impersonation is to veil the *awareness* of the displacement:

> In order to make fiction function smoothly, the reader and the author must *pretend* that *there was no suspension of disbelief*, that travel to the fictional land did not occur, and that the fictional egos have in a sense always been there, [even though] phenomenologically they came to life together with the imaginary realm
>
> (Pavel, 1986:89, emphasis added).

The principle of minimal departure represents an attempt to make the displacement as unobtrusive as possible, simplifying the suspension of disbelief. At the same time the principle of minimal departure is also a way of bypassing the consequences of the

journey to the fictional world. Since the fictional world differs relatively little from the actual and impersonation dulls the edges of the distance between them, the fictional ego need not differ radically from the actual reader but may borrow her mental processes and knowledge. As a result, "travel to fictional lands does not necessarily entail a weakening of the usual methods of inference, common-sense knowledge, and habitual emotions" (Pavel, 1986:89). The fact that differences with respect to acquired knowledge have to be processed in the same way as non-fictional fresh information, however, contributes strongly to the subversive possibilities of fiction. For, while fiction can clearly not alter established facts, any *interpretations* of actual facts and causal chains -- as well as challenges to conjectures conventionally taken as fact, as in the case of CTN -- has to be processed in terms of actual-world logic and cogency. The fictional interpretation, if strong enough, offers true competition for the conventional one.

If impersonation is central to the reading process, and the reader has a natural propensity to reconstruct fictional worlds along the lines of her own, it would appear that fictional distance may be measured as difference from the actual world. The processes involved in the exploration of fictional territories are those of the reader; therefore "[the] impersonated fictional ego examines the territories and events around him with the same curiosity and eagerness to check the interplay between sameness and difference, as does any traveler in foreign lands" (Pavel, 1986:89). In order for the fictional ego to function effectively, it seems that its displacement from the reader needs to be as little as possible. In order for fictional distance to be manageable, it seems desirable that the fictional world differs from the actual as little as possible.

Fictional Worlds : Difference; Fictional Modes and Cultural Economies

The distance to a fictional world and the displacement of the fictional ego cannot necessarily be equated with the quantitative differences between the point of departure and the target world. Simply measured as quantitative differences, worlds should recede in distance the further they are located in time; thus, Dickens' Victorian London, lacking subways, motorcars, gramophones (although replete with theatre) differs more from the actual world than does Tim Harcombe's world in EM. Earth-Hawksmoor, the world experienced by detective superintendent Nicholas Hawksmoor, is quantitatively relatively similar to the actual, containing all the creature comforts of the late 20th century.

Despite this scale of difference, however, the distance to these fictional worlds is experienced inversely; it is far easier for the reader to adjust to Dickens than to Tim's dreamscapes, while the London experienced by Hawksmoor -- filled with mystic significance and inexplicable events -- requires an extreme effort of reorientation. This inversion of experienced distance can be ascribed to the general quality of the fictional worlds involved. Dickens presents what appears to be a true version of history (but then he would, since our perception of the Victorian age is strongly influenced by his fiction) while Ackroyd's novels cast an alien light on reality, presenting it as something radically uncontrollable. The feeling of unease left by HM can in part be explained as a violation of the principle of minimal departure. As with quantative difference, the reader attempts to reconstruct the fictional world as qualitatively similar to the actual; and with regards to general quality and atmosphere, the fictional ego needs to make radical modifications to enter the world of Hawksmoor. This does not necessarily mean that the novel is experienced as unrelated to the actual world, though, since it aids -- even forces -- impersonation in other ways.

The principle of minimal departure seems to govern not only the remove of the fictional world in time and background, but almost more importantly the difference in the general quality of the fictional world. Yet the principle of minimal departure is not the only consideration in the reconstruction of fictional worlds. The transition may also be radically simplified by the influence of what Pavel calls **fictional modes**, after Northrop Frye.

The theory identifies five different modes: myth, which tells stories about beings superior in kind to other men as well as the environment; romance (which category includes legends and some folktales), in which the heroes are superior in degree to other men and the environment; the high mimetic mode, where the heroes are superior in degree to other men but not to the environment; the low mimetic mode, where the characters are equal to others but not to the environment; and the ironic mode, which deals with characters inferior in power or intelligence to the spectator.

Broadly seen, the history of fiction oscillates between periods dominated by each mode. Even so, each period or culture produces fiction in all five modes; "healthy narrative cultures need a good diversity of fictional modes and situate their fictional worlds at various distances.." (Pavel, 1986:91). In the current epoch, which is supposedly governed by irony (Pavel, 1986:91), romance is to be found not only in fantastic fiction, and religious fiction such as Murder in the Cathedral, but also (abundantly) in superhero comix. High mimetic texts, in which men rise above their environment through art or dedication are common. Mixed modes also appear. Michael

Moorcock's international cult following is the result of widespread support for his Elric character, a being superior in degree and possibly even in kind who is yet unequal to the destiny of his environment. Ackroyd's HM also amalgamates different modes: in a sense Dyer rises above his environment and other men, while Hawksmoor is overwhelmed by his environment even though both might be seen as being superior in degree to other men. In fact, Ackroyd displays a perverse attraction for an inverted mythical mode where the world gets the better of the hero despite his qualities. Fictional modes modify the principle of minimal departure by indicating the **optimal distance** at which a world should be reconstructed. Use of the mythical mode alerts the reader to the fact that the reconstructed world should be sufficiently different to accommodate heroes of mythical proportions. The high and low mimetic modes and the ironic mode call for reconstruction in strict accordance to the principle of minimal departure.

The distance of fictional worlds is further affected by the extent to which they, and in fact the extent to which the societies producing them, are **import-dependent** as opposed to **self-contained**. All societies appear to need fictional production in all fictional modes; societies self-contained with regards to fiction are able to fulfill their own fictional needs. Imports are kept to a minimum, and when fiction is imported from other cultures, it is carefully adapted to local needs. Some societies, though, become import-dependent whether as a result of fictional needs becoming extremely diversified or because local production is insufficient. An import-dependent or nostalgic culture massively imports fiction from different times and cultures to meet its own needs.

The distance of the fictional world cannot be reduced to simply distance and difference. "If the test of distance is impersonation, its measure must be the impersonating *effort*, the tension needed for the ego to project its fictional surrogate" (Pavel, 1986:92; emphasis original). While the "objective" distance obviously influences the effort, the style of presentation may add to or diminish the *perceived* distance to the fictional world. Depending on focus, too, the same story may be presented as belonging to various modes; a myth may focus on the human weaknesses of gods, for instance, or a low mimetic story may become mythical as a result of its frame. In HM the 20th century narrative, which belongs to the low mimetic mode, comes to suggest a world of "myth and mystery and ritual better suited for supernatural characters" (Pavel, 1986:93) than for Nicholas Hawksmoor. The minimal departure principle is not applied consistently; the text precipitates a maximal departure so that the reader actually looks for its signs: "Mimetic principles are supplemented with antimimetic expectations" (Pavel, 1986:93). In the text-reader *rapport* an *optimal departure* is agreed upon that allows the reader to make sense of unusual states of affairs.

The friendliness of the text also influences the fictional ego's perceptions. Some works almost provide a guide to their relations of alternativeness, a map that tells the fictional ego how to interpret the world. In others, "distance indicators are willfully jammed, leaving indeterminate the choice between familiarity and infinite remoteness" (Pavel, 1986:93) -- like the 20th century narrative from HM which leaves the fictional ego groping for some foothold in the fictional world.

Fictional Worlds : Size

How large are fictional worlds? What events do they include? Are all fictional worlds part of the same world, or do they come in different shapes and sizes? Size seems to be one of the most contended aspects of fictional worlds, both because internal and external approaches come up with different answers, and because fictional worlds themselves complicate the issue. Even if the concept of size could be restricted to spatial dimensions, which it cannot, how should it be gauged? Few texts come with maps of the area involved, and even when they do their world is seldom restricted to that which appears on the map. Charles Palliser's The Quincunx, a novel about inheritance which is set in the early Victorian age and which is replete with Victorian fictional obsessions -- legal and family entanglement, financial melodrama, high detail and street names -- provides several period maps of sections of London. Yet many events, some of them important, occur off the borders of the maps. The Western Lands Tolkien's elves migrate to are not mapped; just as significantly, the complete map of the continent found in some editions of The Lord of the Rings makes it clear that the world extends far beyond the lands travelled by Frodo. Even restricting the concept of size to the spatial axis, there is extreme disparity between the space occupied by a novel and the space it describes.

From an external perspective, it is tempting to see fictional worlds as being always maximal constructs. Anything, after all, is possible in fiction; and there is nothing to stop a reader from speculating on events "outside" of the novel. Viewed internally, though, few readers of fiction stray far from the track beaten by a text. But a theory limiting fictional worlds to what is "of concern" to "the reader" is clearly too restrictive a model to cope with fiction. The limitation on the size of fictional worlds is rather "some form of gradual opacity to inference, some increasing resistance to maximal

structures [which keeps] most fictional worlds [...] from expanding indefinitely along irrelevant lines" (Pavel, 1986:95).

Fictional worlds may approach but never quite reach maximality, since texts appear to restrict the inferences that might reasonably be drawn. The size of fictional worlds cannot simply be restricted to the affairs described in or easily inferred from the text. Such a view (which Pavel calls "the global approach" would imply that the size of fictional worlds is largely dependent on the size of their texts. And yet this is not truly the case. Lengthy novels tend to be closed; most of the information relevant to their understanding is included in the text. By contrast the short story, like a haiku, is open to inference. It provides a fragmentary image *in order to* give an observation or an event the maximum possible impact. It almost becomes exemplary, mythical, just as the haiku is supposed to ultimately express enlightenment -- an event of which one cannot speak adequately.

The problem of inference is the most prominent shortcoming of the global approach, but it is by no means the only one. Borges provides ample examples of texts apparently too small for their worlds; both "The Aleph" and "The approach to Al-Mutasim" express worlds far larger than one would expect from such short stories. Textual size is only an adequate indication of world size if the observer's point of view does not change -- a state of affairs almost unheard-of in fiction. In texts with multiple entry points into their fictional worlds, the fictional world may easily approach a maximal state while the novel retains a comfortably manageable length. Rather than reflect the size of the fictional world, the size of a text reflects its perceptual and generic constraints and **referential density**.

The concept of a **superzone**, an always maximal fictional universe from which various texts tailor their referential domains to size, allows for worlds that vary in size as well as the permanent (potential) maximality of fiction. A **superzone** "can either be taken to be similar to the actual world in accordance with the principle of minimal departure, or it can be situated at an *optimal distance*, calculated according to specific clues offered by the text" (Pavel, 1986:98). The superzone may be construed in various ways depending on how inference and its projected power is seen. It may be seen as a general domain set aside for the consumption of fiction, or it may be subdivided according to cultural or periodic boundaries; or each fictional text might be allowed to create its own fictional world. The fact that inference does not spread indiscriminately, that characters do not mix with each other, would indicate that fictive worlds do *not* "constitute a transcultural homogeneous space" (Pavel, 1986:99); it would be necessary to postulate unified fictional fields divided by historical and cultural periods.

Postulating superzones allows for the fact that "[s]ocieties tend to develop characteristic imaginary spaces that inform both social life and cultural production" (99). The culture's general laws of the imaginary serve as guidelines by which members can judge fictional texts. Recently, the lines between imagination and fact have become increasingly blurred as fact is increasingly presented as melodrama, and fiction contains more and more solid facts side-by-side with surrogate and native objects and states of affairs. Many nations, the Zulu among others, believe that the soul and the imagination are inextricably interdependent; the loss of distinction between fact and fiction in contemporary society may be at least partially responsible for the existential crisis held by many philosophers to be paradigmatic of the late 20th century. As a cultural imaginary helps to delimit fiction, though, fictions help to shape the imaginary. Soap operas today perform a significant part in the creation of the rules according to which fiction is judged; they serve as an excellent backdrop of mediocrity against which one can recognize the so-called "high art" with its "true displays of emotion".

The assumption of a "culturally unified world of the imagination" (Pavel, 1986:99) is, however, insufficient to cope with all fictional worlds. Science fiction, postmodernism and cyberpunk often present worlds that cannot possibly all be extracted from a single culturally constructed "all-encompassing" fictional base. In some cases the only answer is "to assume that each text or family of texts posits an idiosyncratic fictional world *and* sheds light on a fragment of it" (Pavel, 1986:100, emphasis original). Aldiss' Helliconia trilogy (1985) deals with a world totally different from that of Jeff Noon's Vurt (c1995), as does The Lord of the Rings. [10] In none of these cases the text deals even approximately with the whole of the fictional universe, indicating an imaginary superzone outside the text but bounded by its laws. The map of the whole of Middle Earth found in some editions of The Lord of the Rings hints that the novel concerns only a fragment of the fictional world. The Lord of the Rings, in fact, constitutes its own superzone from which *other* authors have again drawn their own texts. Vurt posits a imaginary universe which is simultaneously self-generating and self-destructive. The outside frame "A young boy puts a feather into his mouth [deleted: 300

10 The Helliconia trilogy postulates an alternate world which differs from actuality in virtually all respects, except for human nature. The planet Helliconia circles a set of two suns, so that it has both ordinary day/night divisions and eons-long planetary seasons. Aldiss has developed an intricate ecosystem and several diffcrent cultures which populate the world. In the same fictional universe (literally) as this complex alternate fictional world, exists a possible future world of actuality, the inhabitants of which follow events on Helliconia as though it were a soap opera.
(ALDISS, B. 1985. Helliconia Winter. London: Triad.
_____. 1985. *Helliconia Spring*. London: Triad.
_____. 1985. Helliconia Summer. London: Triad.
NOON, J. c1995. Vurt. New York: Crown.)

pages] A young boy takes a feather out of his mouth" describes the use of a fictional drug. This may relegate the novel to the ontology of a drug trip, but the information needed to formulate such an explanation is given only *inside of* the frame. The novel refuses to be subsumed into any culturally determined superzone. The popularity of science fiction, fantasy and cyberpunk evidence the rise of a new collective imaginary. Clearly a model of fiction needs to distinguish between collective imagination as a frame of reference and fictional worlds proper.

The model Pavel proposes distinguishes between the questions of fictional size and culturally determined fictional spaces, and also accommodates both the notions of the variable size of worlds and that of maximality as a limit (in the mathematical sense -- fictional worlds approach but can never quite attain maximal size). In such a model "fictional worlds, without reaching maximality, possess stable dimensions, variously suggested by the literary texts that describe them" (1986:100). This theory is concerned with more than just fictional size, though; it occasions further questions dealing with *how* fictional worlds are focused upon, how texts suggest world size, and especially whether referential angles of view could be identified that differ from the points of view identified by narratology and the rhetoric of fiction. This last calls for a sharp distinction between epistemic and rhetorical strategies as opposed to techniques of world presentation. Rather than examining the *presentation* of the world, narratology focuses on ways of introducing the reader to the narrated world. These "represent encoding techniques, whose purpose is to make narration attractive, surprising, impossible to abandon" (Pavel, 1986:100). Such encoding techniques are immediate; properties of fictional worlds can be grasped only after the completion of the reception process.

If fictional worlds are not maximal, their extratextual limits need not be stabilized by completeness or consistency. The size of fictional texts has little influence on the size of their worlds; and yet projected worlds do have limits, excise boundaries where one stops importing extratextual information and making inferences. The nature of these limits vary between texts according to the *scope* and *openness to extratextual information* of the texts.

The scope of fictional universes ranges along a "scalar typology" (Pavel, 1986:101) from maximal fictional universes (The Lord of the Rings, Divine Comedy) to minimal universes (Malone Dies). The Divine Comedy was a project on a vast scale to rebuild the world in terms of metaphysical structure. Attempts to work on a similar scale have been rendered all but obsolete by the proliferation of non-fictional discourses about the world, though, and this century saw a movement towards minimal universes along with a decrease in distance. These tendencies are probably related: filtering the whole of

a text through a single psyche obviously limits the world to that part observed by the focalizer.

Permeability to extratextual information also varies between extremes. The Divine Comedy or the dramas of Tom Stoppard seem constructed to welcome comparison with contemporary philosophy and sciences. Philosophical and satiric texts tend to be highly permeable -- Stoppard's work is exemplary of both -- as do encyclopedic texts and contemporary realist novels. In contrast, romance, tragedy and the modernist stream of consciousness often deliberately dissociate themselves from the empirical world, becoming nearly impermeable to extratextual information. Universes large in scope are not necessarily highly permeable, though; importing relevant knowledge into Dune is almost impossible. Vurt, on the other hand, responds well to importation of at least basic knowledge of computers and cyberpunk or related philosophy while simultaneously helping to construct such knowledge.

While "the relationship between world dimensions and text dimensions" (Pavel, 1986:101) determines the *referential density* of a text, the impression that a text efficiently represents its set of worlds can be ascribed to its **relative density**. Relative density depends on referential density as well as on other variables, "such as the external information needed to understand the text, its narrative crowding, the ration between action and description" (Pavel, 1986:102) and its epistemic paths.

Some highly permeable texts are perfectly enjoyable without importing extratextual knowledge. Some, though, are so conspicuously open to external information that they cannot be properly understood without it. Appreciation of Douglas Adams' Dirk Gently's Holistic Detective Agency, for instance, *hinges* on the actual-world fact that Coleridge never completed "Kublah Khan", having been interrupted by "a person from Porlock".[11] Apart from the tastes of writers, recurrent families of texts that are import-dependant are occasioned by public taste; the current Hollywood fashion for integrating as many marginal groups as possible into one film is a case in point. The 19th century "saw the development of exotic novels, thriving on descriptions of faraway places, frontier culture, marginal social groups" (Pavel, 1986:102). On the upswing of the pendulum relatively *im*permeable texts are fashionable, as witness Modernism or the *nouveau roman*, styles which tend to leave an impression of density.

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11 The novel (ADAMS, D. 1987. Dirk Gently's Holistic Detective Agency. London: Heinemann) opens to an honorary reading of the *complete* "Kubla Khan". As it transpires, this complete version exists because of a time loop: a visitor from a different dimension is trapped in 20th century actuality because Coleridge has access to the drugs which enables the alien to travel through time. As the alien breaks out of the time loop, he interrupts Coleridge who is composing the poem under the influence of the drug. Hence, according to the novel, the actual unfinished state of "Kubla Khan".

The relative density of texts is further influenced by several aspects of the narrative itself: narrative tempo, narrative orchestration, the distribution of showing and telling. Texts often combine a number of plots, each involving a varying number of characters; "plots may be analyzed into moves which are independent actions each having an impact on the development of the plot. The **narrative tempo** is determined by the ration between the number of moves and the length of the text. **Narrative orchestration** describes the relationship between the number of characters corresponding to **narrative** or **dramatic domains** -- "Groups of characters sharing the same moves" (Pavel, 1986:103). Even though the domains of contemporary texts appear to be almost completely fluid, texts which handle numerous narrative domains containing large groups of characters appear to be deeper and denser than a simpler one. Similarly, the predominance of **telling** over **showing** "fosters a sense of detachment and mastery over large developments of human destiny", increasing the density of texts by compacting events into narrative segments. Every bit of information is of importance, so that a reader may feel that she gets an optimal return for her attention. Controlling decoding in this way, while adding to the density and compactness of the text, limits the freedom and active participation of the reader.

Lastly, relative density is also influenced by the epistemic paths leading into the text. Using moral systems to categorize action as Dante does in the Divine Comedy saves on details of action and dialogue, heightening density. Alternatively, the reader may be led to abstract moral conclusions from events if the text emphasizes significant details, even while presenting them as perceived in naivete. Emphasis on details for their own sake has less to do with the evocation of the world than with an attempt at defamiliarization. By focusing on detail that is insignificant to the action, defamiliarization expands texts, rendering them less dense. Short stories, by contrast, gain density by focusing on a piece of the world and maximizing the effect of fragmentation.

Fictional Worlds : Incompleteness

Allowing fictional worlds to be of different sizes also implies that they may be either more or less **comprehensive**. Like ease of inference, comprehensiveness bears on the amount of actual-world information transferred to a fictional world. Where ease of

inference deals with the relevance and applicability of actual-world situations and intertextuality, often extending the size and depth of the fictional world, comprehensiveness has little influence on the size of the fictional world. Rather, it indicates the extent to which actual-world *regularities* hold in a given fictional world. Such regularities make up a vast bulk of the information transferred to fictional worlds via the correspondence relations: laws of nature, the general nature and appearance of everyday objects, general history, specific history applicable to a specific fictional world. In accordance with the principle of minimal (or optimal) departure, actual-world regularities are applicable in a fictional world unless negated by the text. Laws of nature are taken to function normally; all characters in fiction may be assumed to have had human forebears unless the text specifies otherwise; in HM, since the text does not contradict the supposition, Dyer's first six churches should be understood to correspond to the actual-world historical Hawksmoor's churches. In fiction, though, texts often contain minor exceptions to the normal laws and facts of nature, which may take a variety of shapes. Matthew Palmer's hearing voices from another time in HDD constitutes such an exception, as does Dorian Gray's transferral of his age to his portrait; or, to use Pavel's example, a child's having been engendered by a divine father definitely constitutes an exception to natural laws. If logic is to be supported, such exceptions when indicated may be explained (as some possible-world philosophers do) as "small miracles" (Pavel, 1986:105).

Such a "small local change, somewhat miraculous" (Pavel, 1986:105) modifies a single, relatively insignificant detail while leaving the laws of nature and normal causal chains unaltered. Pavel gives an example of a world which differs from the real only in that the roof of the Notre Dame de Paris is covered in blue paint. But then, any realist novel or world makes *ample* use of small miracles. The addition of fictional characters by Balzac (Pavel's example) or Dickens does not alter the laws of nature in any way. Technically this may be nothing more than a small miracle, but taking into account the sheer scale of this miracle (a difference of thousands of characters between the real and the fictional world)[12] one wonders that the only changes are local.

If one believes that 19th century England (or France, in the Balzac example) was a given and Dickens did nothing except slot a multitude of fictional characters into it, the sheer scale of the project warrants admiration. Even more impressive is the opposite possibility -- that 19th century England was *not* a given; for it would mean that

12 I am reminded of an article from the Journal of Irreproducible Results which argues that the sheer weight of all the back issues of Reader's Digest and National Geographic stored in garages and basements should have been enough to sink the North American continent by now.

contemporary perception of the period is shaped largely by Dickens (or Balzac). Certainly Dickens's version is far more widely known than that of historians; but it may have seemed so convincing, so "true as a well-structured whole" (Pavel, 1986:105) that other accounts seem fictional by comparison. It is possible, therefore, that "small miracles" may actually shape understanding and perception of the actual world as much as of fictional world. Small miracles tend to slip from fictional (or mythical) worlds *past* the actual, flaunting the fact that they, in turn, contain entities, objects or states of affairs not "allowed" by actuality.

One might allow the addition to fictional worlds of facts and laws not alluded to in the text, or limit them to that which *is* described, unambiguously implied, or alluded to in the text. Prohibiting the addition of laws, however, shows up the essential incompleteness of fictional worlds. In a complete world, either a proposition (Chatterton committed suicide) or its negation (Chatterton did not commit suicide) obtains truth value. In a fictional world, unless specified, one cannot decide whether a statement is true or not. The real world has indeterminacies, but these might be solved in principle; even when they cannot, the indeterminacy seems to obey certain laws. (Even in this respect the actual world may be less stable than it appears. When a world-user says that an actual indeterminacy may be solved in principle, she resorts to a possible world-version where it *is* solved. There is no reason at all why a fictional indeterminacy may not be solved by projecting from the fictional world a possible world where the answer is known. By means of example, by saying that one can in principle establish how many affairs John F Kennedy was involved in during his lifetime, a world-user projects a possible world where the facts are known to someone -- the CIA, for instance. The same happens when Chatterton projects a possible world where the facts about the poet's death are known. The distinction boils down to the ontological difference between fact and fiction).

Indeterminacy in fiction is sometimes due to practical causes. Some texts have been irrecoverably damaged. But many contemporary fictions evolve around an epistemological gap, an area of indeterminacy. CTN makes it obvious that some historical "knowledge" is accepted merely on the grounds of its cogency by positing two equally convincing alternatives to history; in some texts, a central aspect of the fictional world is radically unknowable. Such enacted incompleteness constitutes a reflection on both the nature of fiction and the nature of the world. "High literature" attempts to capture the world, and the disquieting incompleteness of these texts "[follows] from equally disquieting (albeit possibly different) qualities of our universe" (Pavel, 1986:108).

While it is possible that incompleteness and indeterminacy are so central to modernity and postmodernity that they form an irrevocable part of fiction to come, it is equally possible that cultural equilibrium will turn the wheel back again, "marginalizing these highly revealing abnormalities". If incompleteness is an unavoidable facet of fictional worlds, the choice to maximize or minimize it is up to authors or cultures.

Cultures and periods permeated by a stable world view attempt to minimize incompleteness by strategies that are either **intensive** or **extensive**. When the universe is perceived as unbound, knowable (in principle) in all its details, texts tend to be *extended* as far as possible, "as if the difference between incomplete fictional worlds and the actual universe were one of quantity" (Pavel, 1986:108). Intensive strategies assume that the universe is complete and that a divine Book exists that describes it in full. Since the "Book is of finite dimensions, and the wisdom of its author infinite, all conceivable truths [...] have been inscribed therein since before the beginning of time". Attempts to glean these truths have subjected not only the Torah but also the Divine Comedy and Don Quixote to numerous occult, pythagoreic, and mystic interpretations.

Periods of transition and conflict, on the other hand, tend to maximize the incompleteness of fictional worlds. The Gothic, arising amidst the French and Industrial Revolutions, often deals with the occult and distant, unknowable locales. The texts themselves are structured in such a way that, objectively seen, the information cannot be verified. An aspect central to Gothic and other horror fiction is the attraction to the unknown, an attraction which found expression in the 20th century in espionage and detective fiction; Modernism allows indeterminacy to erode the foundation of the fictional world. Other periods have found other solutions: while medieval drama could afford to be fragmentary, with the Biblical backdrop completing the world, Renaissance drama needs to sustain itself by momentum. "[The] rapid montage, the quick shifts of perspective, the transient secondary lines of action, all induce a nontectonic tension between fragments, which support themselves, as it were, by their own dynamism, not unlike a baroque painting, without resting on a basic, more complete, validating groundtext" (Pavel, 1986:109).

Marlowe's Tamburlaine exemplifies yet another approach to the maximization of fictional universes. Like all heroes, Tamburlaine rises into a world in conflict, but where other heroes solve the problems and establish new social contracts along the lines of the old, Tamburlaine is empowered to succeed in everything he undertakes. Tamburlaine sets out to quite literally change the world; his knowledge of certain success leads him to radically reject the ontology of the world into which he was born and reshape it along the lines of the "world project" he carries within him. His world falls apart into a worse state

than the initial disequilibrium because it cannot stand the stress of his molding. Such heroes Pavel calls **ontological founders**: characters who attempt to implement their frame of reference on the world around them. "[Prone] to endless victory, like Tamburlaine, or endless defeat, like his failing counterpart Don Quixote, the principle of their operation consists in the monotonous conflict between the old order and the new" (Pavel, 1986:110).

The incompleteness of these worlds, stemming from the impetus of the protagonists' world projects, is somehow more troubling than the normal fictional incompleteness. The powers that sustain the protagonists -- Quixote's chivalric novels, Tamburlaine's will to power -- are fictional in nature, originating outside their respective worlds. These texts thematize the *incompleteness of utopia*, feeding on worlds more actual than utopia. "Tamburlaine's world must encompass the entire universe"; as stubbornly, Don Quixote interprets his world according to a private paradigm. And in a sense they both succeed: the world around Quixote fails to obtain over his personally constructed universe, whether for the indeterminacy of reference or of translation. "Utopia devours actuality in various ways: Tamburlaine annihilates his adversaries by military might, Quixote confounds his with his gentle semantic obstinacy".

Tamburlaine's influence on other characters is attributable to his power acting as a **condensed symbol**. Condensed symbols are

> economical and well-articulated systems of signs to be found in magically oriented societies, so that, according to Mary Douglas, "it is enough to strike one chord to recognize that the orchestration is on a cosmic scale". For Christian examples of condensed symbols, consider the sacraments, particularly the Eucharist and the Chrisms. They condense an immensely wide range of reference summarized in a series of statements loosely articulated to one another
>
> (Pavel, 1986:111).

In Tamburlaine, the cosmic framework is articulated through his flowery rhetoric, calling the heavens and the whole world into support through reference to the Fates and geographical allusions. The victims of his power correspond "to the anthropological description of ritualism, as signifying 'heightened appreciation of **symbolic action**,'" manifested in two ways: "'belief in the efficacy of instituted signs, sensitivity to condensed symbols'". Ritual, represented by Tamburlaine's speech, plays an important part in the activation of condensed symbols. "The incompleteness of utopia is compensated for by the overwhelming richness of symbolic action"; utopia, as an

implementation of new worlds, replaces the sacrament that traditionally activates condensed symbols by ritualizing the destruction of the old order.

Rather than give in to the nihilism of letting indeterminacy take over their worlds, contemporary writers have the option of risking the creation of completeness-determinacy myths, using condensed symbols and new rituals based on emotion to give meaning in incomplete worlds through **ritual emotions**.

Worlds : Reprise : Alternate Worlds in Salient Structures

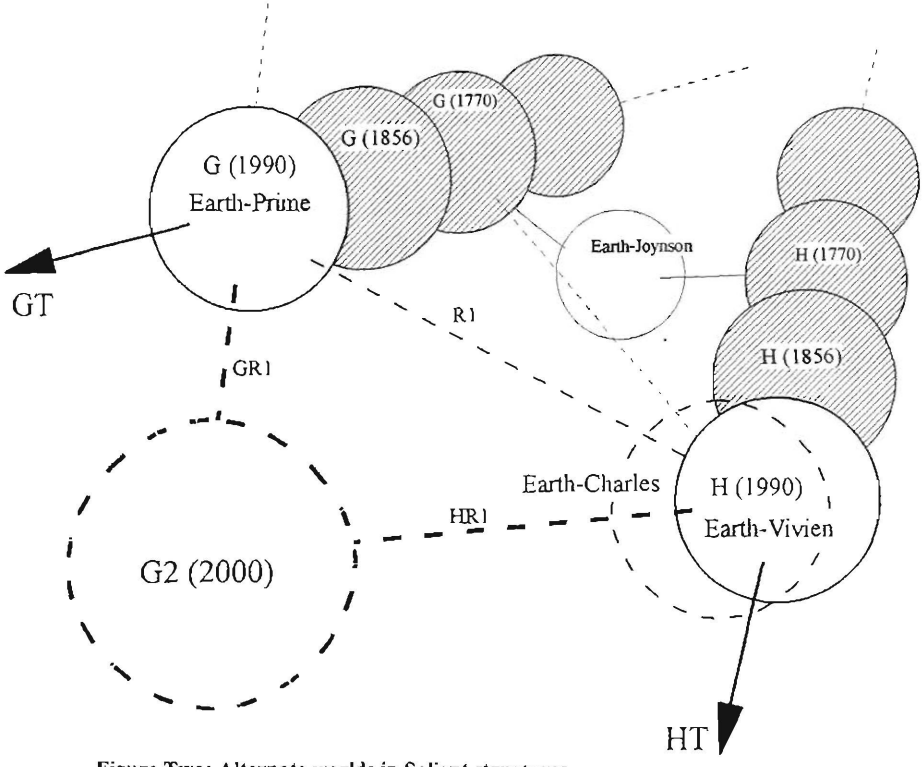

Figure Two: Alternate worlds in Salient structures

Figure 2 illustrates the relations of two alternate worlds, *G* and *H*. Each is set on a time-line (*GT* and *HT*), with some past worlds. For each, several relations of alternativeness are illustrated[13]: the relations between worlds and their possible worlds, *GR* and *HR* respectively, leading to different possible worlds; and *R1*, the relation of alternativeness between the two worlds.

This system may be used to represent the reading situation, or the relationship between different fictional worlds (with the actual world represented on yet another timeline). In representation of the reading situation, for example, of Ackroyd's CTN (1987) the base set *G* is assigned as the actual world (Earth-Prime[14]). Earth-Prime (1997) -- the 'present', 'actual' world -- is assigned to the position *G*(1997), and set *H* is seen as a 'leisure ontology' -- representing, in this case, the timeline of the novel's world.

Each timeline contains several **timepockets**. (The term timepocket is coined here to indicate an area of a specified temporal line centered on a specific individual, or specific events; it indicates that there may be more than one relevant moment on the same time-line). Viewed internally, time-line *GT* (as supporting actuality) is directional. As a result, Earth-Chatterton, parallel to the actual-world historical timepocket Earth-Prime (1770), is inaccessible from Earth-Prime (1997). As a past timepocket of the secondary universe, Earth-Chatterton (in this case designated as Earth-Vivien/Earth-Charles (1770) is equally inaccessible from Earth-Vivien/Earth-Charles. Both of these, however, are accessible to the reader situated on Earth-Prime from 1987 (the novel's publication date) onwards, as is Earth-Meredith.

Charles, a reader situated at Earth-Charles (1987), does have access to *a* timepocket set in 1770 -- that represented by Earth-Joynson, ostensibly written by Chatterton's publisher. This access is, however, only *as fiction*, that is, the ontological relationship between Charles and Earth-Joynson parallels that between the reader and

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13 Pavel does not need to specifically draw this distinction, since he does not deal with possible worlds and alternate worlds simultaneously. Rather, he treats alternate worlds as cases of possible worlds where *R* does not uphold the notion of linear time. The model is extended here to facilitate use for the analysis of Ackroyd's fiction.

14 In order to streamline designation, and to "humanise" a particularly "scientific" (read impersonal) theory, the designatory system is borrowed from that used by DC Comics. DC called actuality Earth-prime, a designation I retain. The world supporting DC's main continuity is called Earth-1. As worlds, which are conceived of as existing in different dimensions, diverge further from Earth-Prime they are called Earth-2, Earth-Z, Bizarro Earth (which is cubical), etc. Since I will need to refer to different sets of worlds, I will adapt this system, designating each world by the name of its prominent inhabitant (or proponent): hence **Earth-Chatterton, Earth-Charles, Earth-Hawksmoor**.

In cases where it is necessary to identify worlds as timepockets, i.e. where the relationship between different worlds is pertinent, dates are appended to the name of the world in brackets. Thus the inaccessibility of Chatterton's life from current actuality may be indicated by referring to the worlds as **Earth-Prime (1770)** and **Earth-Prime (1985)** respectively.

Charles. Strictly speaking, Earth-Joynson should be represented on the diagram as a world alternative to both Earth-Chatterton and Earth-Prime (1770).

By analogy to the actual reader who can acccess Earth-Chatterton, Earth-Charles and Earth-Meredith but not Earth-Prime (1770), internally it *appears as though* Charles should have access to any timepocket on any timeline except his own, even if this is precluded by metaphysical boundaries. If the 'past' timepockets of Earth-Prime are inaccessible from the present on the linear timeline *GT*, they are (theoretically) accessible from the point of view of someone situated on *H*.

The proposition that Earth-Joynson may be a possible past of both Earth-Prime and Earth-Charles is adjudicated by reference to yet another projected world, placed in the diagram at *G2*. The correspondence /relations/ of alternativeness needed to construct this world require

a) full retention of natural laws
b) current indeterminacy regarding actual-world history in respect of Chatterton's disappearance transformed to
c) projected future determinacy in respect of Chatterton's disappearance.

If these requirements can be met, *G2* is a possible future world of Earth-Prime, and Earth-Joynson a possible past timepocket. It is also, theoretically, possible that CTN itself may come to be seen as historical, through the addition of a single requirement to the relations of alternativeness:

d) absence of proof of the fictionality of characters in the novel.

The world produced in this way is a possible future coinciding with both Earth-Charles and Earth-Prime, situated at *GH* in the diagram.

Admittedly this last seems unlikely; but a similar argument could be made for LT. The minimum adjustments for the fictional account, an alternate world, to be assigned to the actual past are, a) the disappearance of the convention of specifically distinguishing between an author of fiction and an editor of autobiographies, and b) the lapse into obscurity of secondary material proving the novel's fictionality. At the rate at which literary criticism and theory is entering the hyperreal, the last seems not at all unlikely.

CHARACTER : FOKKEMA & PAVEL

For the purposes of Pavel's study, character is sufficiently subordinate to the construction of the world for him to be able to disregard character. When the focus shifts to the experience of a text, and of the world of a text, character becomes important to several questions about the text. Character is an important aspect in the determination of the distance and borders of a text; in the case of Ackroyd specifically, there is a holistic relationship between character and world. As Aleid Fokkema notes, in examining the codes constructing the characters in HM, "much is signified by codes on a plane of signification which has little to do with individual characters" (Postmodern Characters, 1991:146). The codes describing the characters have an essential bearing on the world; those constructing the world bear directly on the characters.

Character is instrumental in establishing the distance of a world. Distance, as Pavel shows, is indicated by difference but may be measured by the effort of displacement required by the reader. When the characterization is noticeably sketchy, the text requires more effort on the part of the reader who has to accept that characters are faceless and unmotivated. Similarly, if the thought processes of a character are totally alien or non-representative the effort required by the reader is radically increased -- even when the author takes great pains to explain them. In Brian Aldiss' Helliconia Winter, the Sibornalese nation uses a language "larded with slippery tense, past continuous, future compulsive, avoidance-subjective [amongst others]" (1985:49). Some examples make it clear that, rather than bridging the distance to the presented world, such representation and concordant explanation of the language (and by implication the minds of the speakers) only increases it:

> ... I doubt if you can/will/could support ...
>
> This causes/has/will further misery ...
>
> I would not/admonitorily have it spoken ...
> (Aldiss, 1985:49, 214, 214).

Character influences fictional borders mostly on the technical grounds of focalization; if it is not possible for a character to board a ship to India, the reader cannot do so either within the fiction. If no means -- technological, parapsychic, magical -- exist for a character to discover certain information, the reader cannot project relevant world which as it were offers a solution based on such information.

The nature and extent of (re)presented character has direct bearing on the representation of the world. Fokkema's model is geared toward establishing the mode of existence of characters, the extent to which they can be said to be representational.

Character : Fokkema

Like Pavel's model, Aleid Fokkema's Postmodern Characters draws on a variety of disciplines. Unlike the other, though, Fokkema tries to construct a literary model rather than a theory. While eclectic, her model is perfectly suited to the examination of postmodern characters.

Postmodern characters are often subject to the same subversions and short-circuits which inform many postmodern texts. As a result, some critics have claimed that character no longer exists in postmodernism. This is patently a self-contradicting stance; in the very act of declaring postmodern characters dead one grants them existence. Some critics have eschewed the word "character" altogether. Greimas speaks of "functions"; while some of these occasionally refer to abstract entities, the greater percentage of them can be identified with a name -- a name to which a series of attributes and actions can be traced. Even if characters are denied "life", then, they can still be identified as individuated characters.

Although postmodern texts (and everyone else) fail to subvert character as a narrative given, what *can* be accomplished, and what is often done in both modernist and postmodernist fiction, is the subversion of the referential potential of character. Character is often presented in such a way that the reader's identification with characters is blocked, short-circuiting the constitution of meaning. Established conventions are negated, and many texts attempt to present character as incomplete and incoherent. Leaving aside for the moment any arguments for actual-world *identity* itself being fragmented and incoherent, and the perception of it as incomplete, there are always degrees of incoherence and incompleteness. Fokkema's model is designed to gauge the degree to which characters are representational. [15]

15 Fokkema draws on numerous sources, but the tangent of her argument is largely semiotic. As such, she uses many concepts from structuralism and especially poststructuralism. Some of these are necessary for my own argument; some are used mainly to explain her concepts in poststructuralist terms.

Character, to Fokkema, is a cumulative *sign* rather than a signifier of an actant, as Greimas views it, or a signifier of an imagined person, which is the traditional position. Her **character-sign** is constructed from both signifiers (aspects of character referring via the correspondence relations to actuality, such as a character's occupation or race) and signifiers that have taken on the aspects of signifieds themselves (character traits, the name of a character, the characters' family structure, none of which necessarily has a correspondent in actuality). Every reference to a character in a text contributes to this sign. This places the character-sign on a curious ontological footing: it is both a sign drawing together signifiers for different possible human characteristics *and* it is the signified to which various textual references all refer. In other words, the character-sign is both a signifier for an imaginary person and it is itself an imaginary person.

The correspondence relations of character Fokkema calls *codes*. These codes - the *logical*, the *biological*, the *psychological*, the *social*, the *code of description*, and the *code of metaphor and metonymy* -- can be *general* or *literary*, or a combination of the two. General codes are applicable to understanding of actual-world people as well as fictional characters; literary codes operate according to literary conventions. Thus, the **code of description** and the **code of metaphor and metonymy** are purely literary codes. Strongly influenced by genre and period conventions, the occurrence of these codes varies. Under 19th century realist conventions the first called for a full physical description as part of characterization; 20th century conventions are more lenient, so that "a Nordic type" or "dark-haired" are often adequate physical descriptions for representational characters. The code of metaphor and metonymy is equally susceptible to conventions. It is this code which governs the characterization of a character's personality through appearance or nature; the landscape of Wuthering Heights is strongly evocative of the passions and the strength of the protagonists. By contrast, the **logical code** is a general code; it is the logical code which prompts people to attempt to make sense of other people and of characters. The logical code demands logical explanations for changes in hair colour and behaviour, among other things. The **social code**, the **psychological code**, the **biological code** are general, with specific literary applications. The social code assigns a place in society to people and to characters on the basis of aspects such as status or occupation. In literature the social code is often subsumed or supplemented by that of metaphor; certain occupations often imply corresponding characteristics. The psychological code assumes that people and by extension characters have an inner life. Typical applications include assumptions about character as a result of personal catastrophe, or projections of catastrophe as responsible for characteristics. The biological code is likewise transferred from actual-world people to literary

This code is represented by family relations, bodily functions, and biological construction. Characters that behave in a manner like to actual-world people are assumed to have two arms and two legs (or at least to have had them at some stage).

The number of codes used to construct a character gives an indication of how "complete" a character seems. Additionally, though, codes can be used either denotatively or connotatively. Denotative activation of codes is direct and saves space ("he had dinner"); connotative activation adds depth to a character ("He cut the meat carefully into small cubes; then, assigning each bit its load of greens, he slowly carved away at his meal"). Characters constructed mostly or wholly from denotative codes tend to appear flat even if all codes are used.

The character codes and the text in general are guided by a **principle of coherence**, similar to Pavel's "principle of minimal departure", which is a convention based on psychology, according to which

> [the] reader - or human beings in general - will try to reconcile the differences between signs where possible . . . The principle of coherence guides the assimilation of various signs and their merging into a larger sign without too many inconsistencies
>
> (Fokkema, 1991:76).

Following Cohn, Fokkema (1991:76) identifies three modes of representation, which she calls the signifiers of character: psycho-narration, authorial description of thought; narrated monologue, thoughts embedded in a free indirect style; and quoted monologue, or thoughts directly reported. Although Cohn sees these three modes of representation as ordered hierarchically according to their potential for rendering a character's consciousness, Fokkema often finds that the hierarchy is invalid in postmodern texts. As postmodern characters are often constituted in text alone, identifying and analyzing their signifiers gives an impression of their mode of existence.

The signifieds of character - character being constituted as a sign, which draws both signifiers and signifieds to itself - that Fokkema examines are based on Philipe Hamon's thinking (Fokkema, 1991:40). She calls these signifieds `modal roles': those of knowing, being able to, and wanting.

Lastly, Fokkema postulates five hypothetical interpretants of the character sign. 1) An iconic sign, built up with a substantial number of codes, which is by analogy and convention taken to represent (a) human being. 'This interpretant constitutes a character that appears to be autonomous and to have an accessible, knowable self' (Fokkema, 1991:77). 2) A sign of which the interpretant is still iconic, but where the focus is on

"provisional presentation" rather than representation. 3) An interpretant that is experienced to be not only subject in, but also subject to discourse. Such a character would be non-representational. 4) An interpretant that is 'tangled', where the sign emphasizes the linguistic nature of knowledge of and discourse about the world. Such an interpretant is suspended between representation, presentation and non-representation, since its existence hinges on a linguistic paradox. 5) Signs that present (virtual) iconic representation despite not being conventionally constituted and appearing not to possess a self.

3 TEXT : Representation

For Paul Ricoeur, the hermeneutical reading of a novel requires a tripartite process consisting of prefiguration, configuration and transfiguration. **Prefiguration** requires of a basic apprehension of the social and literary codes surrounding the novel as well as the preliminary reading. **Configuration** consists of a dialectical process between the preliminary reading and an analysis of the novel, leading to the reader placing herself within the *sens* of the novel. **Transfiguration** is an extra-novelistic process, where the reader takes from her experience of the novel in order to enrich her apprehension of the world in which she dwells.

This dissertation attempts to trace the reading process of Ackroyd's fictions in order to examine their potential for transfiguration of the reader. Although **Text : Representation** takes the first step through the analysis of Ackroyd's fictional worlds and characters, it is also in itself an exploration of the novels guided by Fokkema's and Pavel's models of fiction. The main theme is that of the representational qualities of the worlds, as indicative of the urgency of the invitation the novels extend toward the reader. In this regard, a preliminary comparison will also be made between different worlds within the same novel.

This chapter focuses on the construction of the worlds themselves, and of the characters as hosts to the fictional worlds. Since the relationships between fictional worlds directly influences the reader's experience of Ackroyd's novels these will, to be explored in greater detail in **Reader : Representation**. Similarly, the relationship between fiction and actuality as constitutive of fictional worlds will here be dealt with only cursorily. This -- and the converse, the relation as constitutive of actuality -- form the focus of **Text, Reader, World: Outside the Text?**

Pavel suggests that the reading experience creates of necessity a complex structure comprising several different worlds situated at different ontological levels. Within this complex structure actuality itself is the primary world, forming a base in relation to which a fictional world is (re)created as alternate or possible world. The fictional ego is projected into the fictional world, which in turn functions as a base from which the characters as well as the fictional ego project further possible and even alternate worlds in the forms of wishes, hopes, guesses, projections. Ackroyd's novels further complicate the reading situation by representing two or more distinct fictional worlds that may function as bases, often situated in different timepockets.

Two narrative domains set in distinctly different timepockets already constitute two different worlds. These may be analysed separately since the adaptations the fictional ego needs to make is different in each case. The salient structures of Ackroyd's

fiction are rarely this simple. The represented worlds of CTN, HM and DL are not connected by any linear logic. In different ways, each novel presents worlds that are either apparently unrelated to each other or contradictory. In HM, worlds separated by centuries appear to exist side by side as characters, objects and especially events that occur in the 18th century cross over into the 20th century. In CTN, three different worlds apparently on the same timeline lead to three different visions of history, none of them stable or original. The manifold worlds of DL, while appearing to refer to the same characters and events, contradict and qualify each other, even as they depend on each other for even a semblance of coherence. Each novel presents not only a base, possible worlds and an actualized possible world, but *alternate worlds* existing side-by-side in an uncomfortable relation.

It should be kept in mind that *even while* each novel represents several different worlds, these worlds are still closely related. HM and CTN both refer only to different timepockets and versions of the *same* world in the sense that they are concerned with history as well as with worlds in collision. In these novels as well as in DL the different versions of the worlds and of the pasts subvert each other exactly because they simultaneously refer to the same world and cannot refer to the same world.

Although each present more than one base, the differentiation between worlds is not equally clearly differentiated in the three novels. In HM, the division between the two base worlds of the novel -- Dyer's and that of Hawksmoor -- is fairly clear until the end of the novel. The worlds are clearly set in different times, and their individuation is reinforced by the novel's formal structure. CTN presents at least three different base worlds, but the worlds are still clearly separated by time. In DL, though, a myriad of similar world-versions present themselves as often conflicting base worlds. These are to some extent formally differentiated in that no chapter deals from/with/in more than one world-version; but their occurrence lacks the formal pattern that aids differentiation in HM.

Where the two worlds of HM may be fairly easily differentiated, CTN presents a group of worlds that occasionally overlap, making it difficult to pick them apart. DL shows a proliferation of worlds and world-versions that cannot be clearly differentiated since they refer to the same characters and events, but do so from different perspectives. Naming and individuation therefore becomes an increasingly difficult -- and important -- task.

TEXT : REPRESENTATION : INDIVIDUATION AND NAMING

> Names have power.
> (Neil Gaiman, The Books of Magic, 1992)
>
> By giving something a name you're admitting its existence.

Naming : Hawksmoor

Throughout HM events, characters and causal chains move across and span the boundaries between the novel's two timepockets, often belonging to or appearing to belong to both, and distinctions between these two worlds seem to break down entirely in the closing paragraph. Despite this, HM presents the most clearly defined worlds of the three novels. It presents two distinct worlds: one set in the 18th century and one in the 20th. These worlds may be *named* Earth-Dyer and Earth-Hawksmoor respectively. Several factors conspire to keep the two worlds apart: formal structure, temporal setting, narrative domains, narrative instance.

The formal structure of a novel operates metatextually. In Ackroyd's fiction, chapter or section divisions impose an external division between worlds. Each chapter in HM deals with one world exclusively (with the exception of the closing paragraphs). The worlds are also presented in alternate chapters, so that the uneven chapters deal with Earth-Dyer and the even chapters with Earth-Hawksmoor. The temporal remove between the two worlds also helps to differentiate them. The difference in temporal setting, though, is more than a matter of dates. The mention of objects like televisions, computers, omnibuses and structures like the police force in the 20th century chapters, and obviously their absence from the 18th century ones, helps to enforce the difference. Conversely, Dyer's transport is restricted to pedestrian means or (for his journey to Stonehenge, (HM:59)) to the stagecoach. These represent narrative domains of objects that belong exclusively to one world of the novel; but the narrative domains of characters also differ.

Hawksmoor and his father belong exclusively to the 20th century narrative, as do most other characters even though the parallelisms of some of their names and occupations suggest the permeability of the boundaries between the novel's worlds. Thus, the 20th century features Walter Payne as Hawksmoor's assistant and Mrs West as his landlady, as well as his father, a coroner, and others; while the 18th century boasts Walter *Pyne*, Mrs *Best*, and others like Wren, Vanbrugghe, and Dyer's servant Nat Eliot. It is interesting to note that the characters who apparently belong to both worlds -- for example, T(h)omas Hill and the vagrant Ned -- have little interest in or sense of time, as if their disinterest stems from a different (superior?) experience of time.. They "experience all time as eternal, timeless, and essentially the same" (Baker, 1992:154). [1]

Hawksmoor and Dyer, characters from different worlds, eventually meet each other in a space that does not appear to belong to either world (or belongs to both). Hawksmoor, especially, also experiences an extreme sense of dislocation prior to the collision of their worlds, emphasizing the usual division between the two worlds.

The worlds are also kept apart by the difference in their narrative instances. Each world is described from a point of view and in a language appropriate to the period. The 18th century is narrated by Dyer, and necessarily focalized around him, while the 20th "narrates itself" (Brooke-Rose, 1991:70). [2] The point of view is omniscient, but focalizes mostly on Hawksmoor (Chs 6, 8, 10, 12) after abandoning the initial focalization on first Tommy Hill (Ch 2) and then on Ned the vagrant (Ch 4). Technically, Earth-Hawksmoor as experienced by Tommy Hill and Ned also represent distinct worlds -- Earth-Tommy and Earth-Dyer respectively -- while remaining, from the reader's perspective, part of Earth-Hawksmoor.

The temporal separation between the two worlds is reinforced by the presence of the churches, which affirms the separation between the two worlds by emphasising the passage of time. In Earth-Hawksmoor St. Alfege's and Christchurch are both in a state of decay, Hawksmoor notices (or doesn't notice) plaques that place the origin of the churches firmly in the past.

The clear individuation of the two worlds is formed along the same relations that bind the worlds together, though. Characters appear to move from Earth-Dyer to Earth-

1 For Baker, these characters are exemplary of "mobilities of presence": "The characters who are about to travel through time or undergo a transformation are often seen by others as insane or out of step with what is generally regarded as normal" (Baker, 1993:154).

2 This idea is taken from Christine Brooke-Rose, who argues that as long as the reader remains unaware of the narrator, the text can be said to "narrate itself" (Benveniste, quoted in Brooke-Rose 1991:70). Unless specifically implied, the narrator is a narratological construct which stems from "a communication model of adresser-addressee" (Brooke-Rose, 1991:70). The distinction is adopted here because it supports an internal model of fiction.

Hawksmoor; 20th century victims bear the same names and often personalities as 18th century sacrifices; objects that are lost in Earth-Dyer turn up in Earth-Hawksmoor. These syn(dia)chronicities collapse the time separating the two worlds, sandwiching the two worlds together. Metatextually, too, the worlds are drawn together through the parallels between the endings and beginnings of following chapters. The naming, the individuation, forms a background against which the collapse of difference between the two worlds comes to destabilize both the worlds themselves and the separation between them.

The duality of history -- as an immediate presence of the past represented by the syn(dia)chronicities, and a deferred presence of the past in the historicity of the churches -- requires that the worlds be viewed as timepockets of each other. If viewed on the same timeline, Earth-Hawksmoor is also Earth-Dyer (1985), a possible/alternate future world of Earth-Dyer (1715).

Naming : Chatterton

From an external perspective, the relative incompleteness of the non-20th century worlds may suggest that CTN concerns a single world dealing with Charles Wychwood's investigation of Chatterton's mystery and illuminated through extreme flashbacks. Even *if* these worlds are marginal ontologies (this will be examined during the course of this chapter), seen internally they still constitute distinct worlds, requiring different adjustments from the reader's fictional ego. The worlds of CTN are set in three distinct periods of time: late 18th century, especially 1770, mid-19th century (focused around the painting of "Death of Chatterton", 1856), and late 20th century. Taking into account Pavel's statement that there might not be different "worlds strictly speaking but only world-versions ..." (1986:75), though, the worlds set in the 18th and 20th centuries split apart. The world of the Chatterton papers cannot be unequivocally taken as an alternate representation of the world in which Chatterton finds himself. Equally, Charles' version of the world does not necessarily coincide with that shared by the other 20th century characters at the close of the novel

As in both HM and DL, sections narrating different worlds are formally separated. Metatextually, the sections are less distinct -- several chapters deal with more than one world, in different sections -- and lack the rigid patterning of HM. With regards

both to temporal difference and domain of characters, each world is separated from those set in other times but not necessarily from other world-versions in same time period. Temporal difference and character domain is enough to individuate the only 19th century world -- **Earth-Meredith** -- from all other worlds.

Two different worlds set in the 18th century can be identified. The first, **Earth-Joynson**, is that projected from the papers Charles collects from Joynson's friend Pat (CTN:81-93). Ostensibly narrated by Chatterton, this world is individuated only in part from **Earth-Chatterton** by narrative instance. Earth-Chatterton, which comprises the other sections of the novel set in the 18th century, is focalized on Chatterton and narrates itself. Brooke-Rose's phrase is perhaps more apposite with regard to this world than to any other of Ackroyd's worlds, since the narrative instance is entirely unmarked. The world is presented largely in terms of direct and represented thought and speech, but gains a uniform stylistic text-ure through the elision of quotation marks and of clear separations between narrative sentences, narrated thought and direct speech. [3]

Although Earth-Joynson has quite a few characters in common with Earth-Chatterton, they are individuated ontologically and by the epistemic paths leading to them. Presented as a narrative within the fiction, Earth-Joynson is the only world in the novel directly accessible from all other worlds (except, possibly, from Earth-Chatterton). It occupies a questionable ontological position, both because it can be equally easily accessed from Earth-Prime and Earth-Charles/Earth-Vivien [4] (and, theoretically, Earth-Meredith), and because its veracity is called into question by the 20th century Joynson (CTN:221).

Charles and Chatterton do cross ontological boundaries when they meet each other on a staircase. As with other paranormal events in this novel, it is not clear whether the meeting occurs in either world, in dream(space), or in hallucination. As in HM, the space where characters from different worlds have intercourse is indeterminate, a place between the novel's worlds that does not properly belong to any of them.

In CTN, the same domain of characters appear and act in the two contradictory world-versions set in the 20th century. Charles' world-version -- **Earth-Charles** -- differs from that of the other characters only in that he believes Chatterton to have lived

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3 Brooke-Rose (1991:65) sees novels as composed of direct speech, narrated speech and thought, and narrative sentences (following Ann Banfield: Unspeakable Sentences, 1983). Narrative sentences do not imply a particular narrator. A narrative issuing from a particular instance (for instance Conrad's Heart of Darkness) does belong to the communications model, on which narratology is based. Such a narrative may be an imitation of a speech act, like Conrad's, or an imitation of a narration (for example John Fowles' The French Lieutenant's Woman), which again inserts narrative sentences.

4 See **Worlds : Reprise: Alternate Worlds in Salient Structures**, pp 50-52 above.

for many years beyond his supposed death. **Earth-Vivien**, which shares the actual-world version of Chatterton's history, is individuated from Earth-Charles mainly by this subtle but significant difference. Even though they differ, these two world-versions are not ontologically differentiated. They are one world until a choice is made between possibilities, at which point the one is actualized and the other discarded [5]. As will be shown below, the worlds are placed in oscillation, become opalescent (McHale, 1991:32); within the context of the novel Charles' version of the world is not necessarily any less stable than that of Vivien and Philip.

Naming : Dan Leno and the Limehouse Golem

The differences between the worlds of DL are far more subtle than those found in either HM or CTN. In fact, the novel does not project any clearly differentiated *worlds* so much as *world-versions*, several of which can be identified but not totally separated from each other. Narrative domains of events and characters belonging to different worlds intersect in several different ways; quite a few of the worlds are dependent on the others for their comprehensiveness and comprehensibility, even while contradicting them. Most of the world-versions (apparently) deal with the same set of events. All the world-versions save Lizzie's have the same setting in time and place, even though some of them appear to be narrated from a greater temporal remove than the others.

In general, the chapter-to-world correspondence holds, each chapter representing only one of the world-versions; but the most reliable measure for the individuation of the worlds is the narrative instance -- although even then, some of the world-versions still blur into each other. Differing from each other both in detail and interpretation, each world-version can be identified as issuing from a different narrative instance. As is in fact the case with all three of these novels, each world is presented in a different narrative style, occasionally a style linked explicitly to a differentiable narrative instance.

The transition of characters between worlds, or perhaps their multiple existence in several, is a facet less clear-cut in DL than in either of the other two novels. Certain

5 This is reminiscent of the tale of Schroedinger's Cat, designed to illustrate the consequences of relativity theory: A cat is placed into a box with a radioactive isotope. If the isotope decays, the cat dies; if it remains stable for the duration of the experiment, the cat lives. Rather than seeing this within the traditional scientific paradigm – i.e. we don't know until we open the box -- Schroedinger posits that, until the moment the box is actually opened, both possibilities are true. The cat is both alive *and* dead. By opening the box, the observer splits actuality into an actualized and a discarded version of events.

specific characters and spaces seem to belong exclusively to specific worlds, while others are present in many, if not all, the worlds of the novel. What *is* different is the perception of them in different worlds. The sense of dislocation caused by the transition between worlds shifts from the character to the reader; the reader is aware of the fact that characters are not the same in different worlds. In the world of the diary, John Cree is a killer; in Lizzie's world, an innocent.

DL makes use of a number of different narrative devices in the creation of the text: the diary of John Cree, the interior monologue of Elizabeth Cree, the transcriptions of the court proceedings, an article from the Morning Advertiser, and a number of omnipresent or at least third-person narratives. The diary is initially introduced as genuine:

> These extracts are taken from the diary of Mr John Cree of New Cross Villas, South London, now preserved in the Manuscript Department of the British Museum, with the call-mark Add. Ms. 1624\566
>
> (DL:24).

Notes such as these (similar notes precede the first trial transcription (DL:9), and the aforementioned newspaper article) are printed in italics, and are invariably couched in highly formalized language, almost legal register. This "objectified" language, stripped of any identity of narrator, creates the impression that such notes exist as metanarrative inserts, at an apparently superior ontological level of the novel. These notes serve as markers of the fiction/actuality border, but even relative to other narrative instances they do not represent "truth", as Lizzie later claims to have written the diary.

In contrast to Earth-Hawksmoor and the worlds of CTN -- especially Earth-Chatterton -- most of the third-person narratives in DL do not appear to tell themselves. Rather, they are stylistically and factually idiosyncratic, creating the impression that the information is mediated through a consciousness internal to but unmentioned by the novel. Stylistic differences are compounded by the fact that different narrative segments differ in their interpretation or knowledge of events. For instance, the diary notes that Marx lives in Scofield Street (DL 60-61), and the third person narrative of the next section assumes that John Cree is actually the author of the diary: "*John Cree* was wrong in assuming that the German scholar lived in Scofield Street" (DL:63, emphasis added). In Chapter Forty-Seven -- a transcription of the prison chaplain's visit to Elizabeth Cree -- she implies that her role was to avenge deaths (DL:268), while the third-person narrative of Chapter Forty-Nine has her as much as confessing to having been the Golem (DL:272). In fact, Chapter Fifty identifies her as such: "No doubt a longer examination

[of her brain] would have been performed if the authorities had known that she had savagely killed women and children" (DL:274).

Positing a narrator contemporary with the events to account for the novel's change in interpretation with respect to Elizabeth Cree, creates serious logical problems. Such a narrator would have to be in a position to read the diary immediately after it is written, and the omniscience to follow John Cree, Marx and Gissing and Dan Leno in some of their private moments, even while lacking access to the moments of their lives most important to the narrative. While such a projected narrator is not totally unimaginable, the fact that the external narratives contradict not only each other but also the apparently less subjective sections of the novel (such as the "metanarrative" inserts and the transcriptions) would seem to indicate a plurality of narrative instances rather than a single totally unreliable narrator. Between different sections providing different interpretations and even facts, there are enough differences in style and tone to support this suggestion.

Within the context of DL, where several narrative instances represent overlapping domains of character and event, it becomes cumbersome to attempt to label the worlds for characters. Neither can they be named for narrators, since these are largely unidentified. The more clearly individuated chapters may be simply labeled, "**The Diary**", "**The Transcript**", "**The Confession**" (Chapter Forty-Eight, which transcribes Lizzie's interview with the chaplain). **Earth-Lizzie**, Lizzie's narrative of her own life, is clearly differentiated from **Lizzie's world**, which narrates her life externally. Although the domains of characters and physical space of Earth-Lizzie largely coincides with Lizzie's World, the difference in narrated events and approach separates the two. The difference of domain and focus clearly individuates Earth-Lizzie from the other worlds in the novel, though, and it generally lacks the sensationalist and/or journalistic touches that mark most of the other external narratives.

Outside of these world-versions, several external narrative instances may be identified. In the first chapter, for instance, the "narrator" seems to be an omnipresent observer (the warder is observed in the privacy of his house), but lacks access to thoughts and emotions. The narrative uses an "objective" style, as evidenced by the use of the objective word "house" rather than "home". It largely avoids agents ("it was noticed...", "The customary incantation came to an end" -- DL:2) and makes extensive use of the passive voice ("her coffin, which *had been* strategically placed ...", "The Burial Office *was read*", "her hands *had* already *been* bound", among others -- DL:2; emphasis added). These features contribute to the objectivity of the narrative, lending it an almost legal

impersonality. The only other chapter that can without reasonable doubt be placed with this chapter is Chapter Fifty. These two **Frame Chapters** demarcate Lizzie's history.

The use of journalistic register, though, is not a way to provide objective information about the fictional world. The voices in the "journalistic" register differ with regards to their attitudes towards different characters as well as with regards to the information they are privy to; in consequence, the sections which may have provided a stable base are themselves mediated either through different speakers or a highly unreliable, even deliberately deceptive speaker. In other chapters, the narrative tone occasionally approaches similar objectivity, but regularly slips into more journalistic language. Chapter Two, for instance, uses numerous pointers to indicate journalistic register: dates, exact names and places, quotations from newspapers. At the same time it becomes sensationalist ("Who now remembers the story of the Limehouse Golem, or cares to be reminded of the history of that mythical creature?" - DL:4).

The chapters making up the **Tabloid Version(s)** -- Two, Six (?)[6], Twenty-Eight, Forty-Eight -- are individuated primarily stylistically. The tone of these chapters is melodramatic, and they are often replete with rhetorical questions. Additionally, though, and perhaps most importantly, these chapters are not focalized on any specific characters but rather convey generalities. The facts they present, in general, could have been drawn from any daily. The other chapters that employ journalistic devices contain facts that seem to be carefully researched, and attempt to weave these into a web of cause and effect, but retain the sensationalist attitude.

These chapters are not simply journalistic, though, since most of them grant access to the consciousnesses of their characters. Rather than indicating journalistic register, the detail and importation of actual-world discourses may represent an attempt at strict realism, conforming to the idea that "the difference between incomplete fictional worlds and the actual universe were one of quantity" (Pavel, 1986:108). These world-versions tend to be focalized on different and specific characters. Although some of them describe more than one character, each of them grants access to the consciousness of only one major character: Gissing (Nine, Nineteen, Twenty-One, Twenty-Four, Forty-One), Marx (Fifteen), Dan Leno (Thirty-Four). These world-versions may be identified as **Earth-Gissing**, **Earth-Marx** and **Earth-Leno**, respectively.

The three chapters describing John Cree externally are all subtly different from each other. While all of them grant access to his thoughts, only one the first of these,

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6 Chapter six appears to conflate two different perspectives. On the one hand it evinces the obsession with detail of the Jounalistic Sections; on the other it contains rhetorical questions like those which usually mark the Tabloid version(s).

Chapter Eleven, appears to have access to his diary. This chapter (which also introduces Gissing and Marx) assumes, on the strength of the diary, that Cree is a killer. Stylistically, this chapter represents a point halfway between the Frame Narrative and the Tabloid Version; it differs significantly from both in that it accesses the consciousness of John Cree, if only perfunctorily. The other two narratives that grant access to his thoughts appear to lack any knowledge connecting John Cree to the diary. Chapter Thirty-Nine, which assumes an almost objective tone, reveals John's discomfort at the change in Lizzie's behaviour. The last chapter that focuses on John Cree is Chapter Forty-Three, which describes a meeting between him and Aveline. Through narrative sentences that slide over into narrated thought the narrative grants access to the thoughts of both; they appear to play their assigned parts in a domestic melodrama, but the tension between this chapter and Chapter Eleven destabilizes both.

All "journalistic" world-versions in the novel are not narrated from the same distance. Both stylistic differences and apparent access to information vary between different narratives. Chapter Two, for instance ("Who now remembers...", DL:4) seems to be written from a larger temporal remove than, for instance, the external chapters detailing Lizzie's activities. The latter chapters, for example Chapter Five, show empathy with Lizzie's unhappy childhood, and are apparently unaware of The Confession. The chapters dealing with Gissing and Marx appear biographical, implying that they are narrated from a timepocket at least beyond the death of these transworld identities.

The different narrative viewpoints in DL cannot be reconciled or reconstructed into a single, coherent world. In a sense, each narrative constructs its own world as much as describes it; but the different worlds exist in relation to each other, with each providing different versions of events that may be used provisionally to fill the gaps in any given one. As such, none of the world-versions are complete in themselves; each exists only provisionally as a (semi-)coherent world, even if they exist in a salient structure relative to each other.

In the tabloid world-version, for instance, the Golem is a fictionalized sign representing the agency that commits the murders common (at least by implication) to the different world-versions, and only in one case assigned to a specific character. Within the world of John Cree's diary, the Golem is a name the narrator (unwillingly at first) identifies him(?)self with. Earth-Lizzie -- the world-version represented as her interior monologue can at least, if nothing else, be conveniently tagged -- makes no mention of the Golem. In the narrative containing Marx, the Golem is a murderer. If Solomon Weil's world-version is seen as a separate world-version -- technically at a

weaker ontological level, although the world-versions of the characters tend to be more coherent than those that are externally narrated -- the Golem is the embodiment of a primeval magical force. In the world-version represented by the trial transcripts, the Golem is not mentioned. It is possible to infer, by drawing information selectively from other narratives, that the Golem in this world-version is the public face of Elizabeth Cree's husband whom she killed when she recognized the connection.

Talking about a single external narrator, then, is senseless. Of course a single ordering narrator could be postulated -- theoretically -- but doing so would both require a major thesis by itself and be useless for current purposes. Rather than postulate several narrators, it may be said that DL tells itself from several different points of view. Of these, certain specific ones may be identified -- the diary, Lizzie's interior monologue, the trial transcriptions, the *Morning Advertiser* article. DL presents the reader with several different world-versions if not actual worlds, with little claim to superior ontological stability for any of them. The task at hand is, then, to (provisionally) identify the base worlds and gauge their relative stability.

TEXT : REPRESENTATION: BORDER

> It is a matter of *boundaries*. [...] Terminus [the god of boundaries] is the only god to whom Jupiter must bow.
> (Neil Gaiman: 1991)

> *Here.* In the soft places, where the geographies of Dream and intrude upon the real
> (Neil Gaiman, 1992)

According to Pavel fiction lies between actuality and myth, sharing a border with each. More than simply representing an ontological hierarchy, the three territories define

each other. Myth is used to provide explanations for actuality, where it originates; fiction issues from either myth or actuality, and simultaneously describes actuality. Myths are metanarratives; used to explain actuality, their own ontology is dependent on the belief of the faithful. Scientific metanarratives are in their turn myths, existing and empowered under an equal compact. Postmodernism erodes the borders of metanarratives, of myth, by substituting the faith in them for doubt. This dissolves the boundaries between myth and fiction, since the primary distinction between them is the faith they command. In return, fiction starts to serve as explication of the world. All the boundaries -- between fiction and actuality, actuality and myth -- become blurred.

This blurring of the boundaries between myth, fiction and reality (at least the reality of the textual world) is also apparent in the work of Peter Ackroyd. Its appearance is not simply coincidental, though. The texts deploy themselves in such a way that the boundaries are evident but also shown to be fundamentally fluid. The detailed mapping (and *naming*) of London that forms an integral part of the novels constitutes a binding of the world to a "local habitation and a name", and also defines the physical boundaries of the worlds. The local boundaries are thus fairly distinct; yet the worlds are "physically" unbound in the sense that they do not *exclude* the areas of Earth not spotlighted by the novels. This is not specific to fiction; in actuality, something out of mind one does not cease to exist. But if the borders of the territory covered by the fiction are no clearer than those covered by everyday thoughts, even the "physical" borders of the fictional worlds are complicated.

For most of Ackroyd's fictional worlds, this is hardly apparent in the case of spatial boundaries; the demarcation is no clearer than for ordinary realist fiction. Earth-Hawksmoor may focus on London, with a flashback that includes Bristol, but it makes no claims that the territories travelled by the characters represent the whole of the fictional world. On the contrary, as shown above, Earth-Hawksmoor is individuated from Earth-Dyer in part by its covalency to the actual present in terms of commonplace objects: omnibuses, television, computers. Earth-Dyer, f/vocalized through a single mind, appears more bounded; but Dyer does travel outside of London, and his mention of the Plague, a large-scale actual-world historical event, connotes the rest of the world as well.

Spatially, the easiest way to find the borders of the text is to take the term "world-version" to its extreme. While, as argued above, the fictional world is not limited in space to only a section of the world, it is possible to examine the borders of perception of narrator and characters -- and the tension such borders are under. Earth-Dyer, is narrated from one point of view only -- that of Dyer -- and the text is focalized through Dyer as well. Dyer knows only what he can perceive, or hear second-hand. This means that his

world is necessarily constructed along linear time. He has no knowledge of events until after their occurrence, he has little or no recourse to extensive libraries or data systems. Hawksmoor, however, does: instead of the section of Earth-Dyer that the reader is aware of, that centered on Dyer, Hawksmoor can see events at a distance through television. Victims can be examined by pathologists, and a widespread police force can provide intelligence from numerous sources. Perhaps in reflection of this Earth-Hawksmoor, though focalized around specific characters, is narrated in the round. Signs are shown to the readers even if they are not within the characters' field of vision (HM, 68); the refuse and the dust, always present in this world, are shown even though not necessarily noticed by the characters.

Border : Hawksmoor

Ackroyd's novels -- those set in London especially, but also LT and FL -- pay great attention to street-names. This is no less true in the worlds of HM. Such careful attention to the city may be "the mark of a true Londoner" but as a marker of the border between actuality and fiction street-names form an important node around which "reality" is distorted. The attention to actual street-names is both the most subtle and the clearest indication of fictional borders. HM takes great pains to describe the journeys of its characters through London. Most of the streets, the pubs, the squares, exist or once existed. It is, however, difficult to trace them all. Most of the streets in both worlds are actual. Some, though, are not even indicated on general maps of London. While most of streets of Earth-Dyer did actually exist, representative period maps of London are hard to find (unless, presumably, you have access to the British Library); and even a reader who can and does find one will find that many streets have been renamed over the last two centuries[7]. The reader is therefore forced to take the lists of street-names, at least beyond the obvious ones, at face value. The goods are counterfeit, however: careful -- *very* careful -- research reveals that Black Step Lane, at least, is as fictional as the Church of Little St Hugh.

7 St John's, the spire of which was designed by Hawksmoor, is situated beside what was known, until the late 19th century, as Artillery Street. Today this street is known as Druid Street, and, to quote Alan Moore, "I, for one, would love to know why".

The Church of Little St Hugh is another sample of this historiographical chicanery. Although Hawksmoor's six churches -- five completely original, one rebuilt -- are definitely his own work, the authorship of many other contemporary buildings is disputed. Hawksmoor, Vanbrugghe and Wren collaborated closely and often, so that current haggles about authorship often become fine (subjective) stylistic analyses.[8] Exactly what and how much should be ascribed to which architect is unclear, so that it is difficult to ascertain that Hawksmoor never erected a Church of Little St Hugh. It may in fact be difficult to prove that London does not and never has sported such an edifice. Not only is the church fictional, though, but also the saint it is named for.

Disproving the fictionality of Little St Hugh is itself a daunting task. The Catholic Church has a vast number of saints, and if there exists a complete list somewhere, it is not readily available to the public. What *is* public (and in fact almost general knowledge) in the West, is a limited grasp of the importance of saints in Catholicism and of the conditions of sainthood. The history of Little St Hugh which appears in HM (33) fits the familiar paradigm of the history of saints. It is a fictional history which appears mythical because it fits a common mythical pattern. Because it fits a mythical pattern, it appears to be true (or rather, it appears to be an extant myth). The reader who believes, if only for a moment, that Little St Hugh may be an "actual" saint, also believes that for someone the myth is true. Taking the existence of street, church, and saint on faith also entails a temporary investment in a mythology. From the receiver's point of view the difference between fiction and myth is the strength of commitment it commands. The faith in a mythology thus invoked by the novel partially absorbs the novel's own ontology and strengthens it by locally blurring the boundary between myth and fiction.

Another boundary with myth that is simultaneously made present and deferred by the novel is that to history. As a metanarrative constructed under and in support of the Cartesian metanarrative, established history is a myth intended to furnish meaning, to provide/dispense an explanation for/of humanity's existence. The historical myth, and by extension the myths of good and evil, causal logic, and historical influence, is weakened by the double vision of the novel: HM simultaneously supports history by incorporating actual-world events like the Great Fire and the Plague, and by ascribing Hawksmoor's six churches to a single architect, and counters it by replacing Hawksmoor with Dyer, and linear temporal influence with simultaneous influences between different timepockets.

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8 See, for example, Summerson (1978:225-228), where Hawksmoor is seen as the least of the early 18th century English architects.

The language Dyer uses to (re)present his world is yet another instance where boundaries are simultaneously foregrounded and obscured. The linguistic convolutions demarcate the world from both Earth-Prime (1984) and Earth-Hawksmoor. Metatextually, since the language appears in a contemporary text, the language divides the world from Earth-Prime (1715). A lot of the ideas and even actual phrases are original to the historical Hawksmoor, though, and the language is "a sustained and bravura feat of early eighteenth-century pastiche that is as convincing as it is absorbing" (Melville, 1985:681), so that the narrative instance appears to be at the same temporal remove as its setting. Consequently, the boundaries between actual and fictionalized writing are blurred.

Borders : Chatterton

CTN hardly uses specific mythos. Just as much as HM, though, the novel is closely concerned with the metanarrative of history. Metanarratives are in themselves mythologies: they give meaning and structure to the life or the views of individuals. History, as a collection of events, may be stable and immutable, but any structured, serialized or causal chain version of history masks a metanarrative. Even events are stable only in theory, since these cannot be recreated or completely recalled, but only represented. Epistemologically, all knowledge of even large-scale historical events such as the Black Plague is little more than hearsay. Even "objective" records of historical events provided by recording equipment such as the camera and the tape recorder can only provide information pertaining to a limited viewpoint. The appearance of objectivity of a single viewpoint is also suspect, since computer technology allows the alteration and editing of existing visual and auditory records.

As soon as history is subjected to any form of interpretation, which it needs to be in order to be of any more than academic interest, matters become even more difficult. To be able to "learn from history", it is necessary to see meaning in it, which in turn necessitates the imposition of a causal chain on events. Such a causal chain is automatically a subjective metanarrative, a mythology, since it is imposed on, among other things, decisions made by historical individuals whose minds are inaccessible today.

The accepted history of Chatterton -- that he was born in Bristol, that he wrote the "Rowley" sequence of poems, that he committed suicide in London at the age of seventeen -- is based on a set of records of events. Most standard texts on Chatterton preface the record of his suicide with "driven by poverty and lack of recognition" or something similar (this example from Rogers, 1990:279). In this (almost canonical) phrase a set of events, no less stable than any other historical set, becomes subjected to mythology. Meredith and the Pre-Raphaelites wove a complete mythology around Chatterton, the artist suffering for his art, art transcending death etc. The construction of such motives for Chatterton's suicide bears evidence of a mythological drive.

The myth of Chatterton's suicide is central to Earth-Joynson, as it is to the whole novel. Charles' discovery of a painting of Chatterton in middle age and his discovery of the Chatterton papers is common to both 20th century worlds. The proposition generated by the appearance of these artifacts, especially in combination -- that Chatterton survived his suicide and lived a full span, creating some of the great poems of his immediate literary heirs -- and particularly Charles' belief that both are "original", turns both into simulacra, simulations of copies of which the originals are lost, inaccessible, or never existed. [9] Both histories become possible, splitting-but-not-splitting the world into two alternate worlds: Earth-Charles and Earth-Vivien. Like Schroedinger's cat, both are *both* sustained and erased[10]. The assignment of a truth value to this proposition pivots on the validity of Chatterton's death certificate. Such validity, in turn, implicitly turns on the reliability of the person who signed the death certificate and included the verdict of *felo de se*. Essentially what is at stake is a hidden myth, hidden largely because it is known to be a fiction: that of the infallibility of government officials. In the absence of identity documents reproducing photographs the relevant government official would have had only the word of Chatterton's landlady to identify him by. If desired, her word could easily have been bought, leaving Chatterton at large as it were. Perhaps this does not even constitute reasonable doubt; but it shows up the instability of historical metanarratives.

Earth-Joynson, the *mise-en-abyme* world projected by the Chatterton papers, of course occasions the fission, the (re)configuration, of the novel's 20th century. This world focuses on London and, in flashbacks, Bristol. Since it is projected through a

9 The concept of simulacrums (copies or systems of copies which come to replace their original, or to displace the very idea of an original) has entered critical discourse *via* Jean Baudrillard (1988).

10 The simple explanation for nuclear fission is that it releases power by splitting atoms. The idea of splitting an atom is self-deconstructing, since atoms are not "wholes" (not, in fact, "atoms") in the first place. Rather, nuclear fission reconfigures atoms by force -- which begets more force.

single consciousness, though, the focus appears to be bounded epistemologically rather than ontologically -- that is, the *perception* of the world is physically limited, not the world itself. Linguistically, (although not stylistically) its boundaries are less emphasized than those of Earth-Dyer although not necessarily any less opaque. This can be ascribed largely to the smaller difference of current English from late than from early 18th century English.

Earth-Chatterton, which eventually proposes that Chatterton poisoned himself accidentally, subscribes without question to the known *facts* of history. As on Earth-Prime (1770), Chatterton dies of poisoning by his own hand. The border between fact and myth is emphasized by doubling the interpretations which guard the border. Earth-Chatterton, however, revises history by reconfiguring the facts as ruled by a different mythology. The only metanarrative challenged is that which supposedly explains Chatterton's state of mind at the time of his death -- the mythology of the Pre-Raphaelite Bohemian artist. Chatterton, the novel argues, has been presented with a way to make money out of imitating the styles of others, and is therefore in a celebratory mood. He has managed to contract a venereal disease, which was a common thing even -- or especially -- in his time. A friend suggests to him that he takes a mixture of arsenic and opium as a cure. This was a common form of medication well into the 19th century; but in his drunken, elated state, Chatterton takes too much of the poison and dies. The coroner, quite correctly, deduces that the young man of whom he has never yet heard in his life, took the poison of his own volition and (incorrectly) enters a verdict of suicide.

This version of events turns the death of Chatterton from a tragic suicide into a tragic accident, a trick of Fate. The border to myth is redrawn to adjoin a different mythology. This new "geographical neighbour" to facts may actually be more in line with contemporary notions (myths) of tragedy: the plays of Simon Gray and Christopher Hampton portray the tragedy of accidents of reality rather than of *hubris*, of man overreaching his subordinate position. Their tragicomedies are guided by a postmodern, post-existentialist metanarrative. This version of Chatterton's history is no more or less believable than the official history; the historical metanarrative is shown to be invented, subjectively constructed, a mythology only for believers, one fiction among many for the objective reader.

As Baker shows, Charles' habit of "eating the past" is paralleled in other characters and contexts. Mr Leno's sign (which, like other simulacra in the novel, changes from time to time) at one point reads, "Leno's Antiques. La Crème de la Crème. Come and Taste It" (CTN:42). Other characters also "eat the past" or stop themselves as they are about to, such as Meredith and Philip on first seeing the Chatterton painting.

The "process" of eating the past, while showing "another way in which the past can influence the present" (Baker, 1992:129), has interesting implications within the context of history as a set of simulacra. Charles becomes literally a consumer of the past, a *consumer* of the simulacra of the past, the narratives of the past sold by the present.

Border : Dan Leno and the Limehouse Golem

Since the complex structure of worlds in DL is composed of several world-versions rather than of different worlds as such, the ontological boundaries become almost entirely fluid. Despite the rigidity of the metatextual demarcations, the continuity of space and character between different world-versions suggests that they all refer to a single space and the same set of characters. This implied originary world, signified by various world-versions different in focus and interpretation, can never be recaptured but only projected as a possible world accessible from all the others. [11] Dispersed and lost among a set of supplementary world-versions, "real" and projected events that occur in the same fictional(ized) world cannot be completely reconciled with each other or integrated to form a univocal whole. Rather, the original world is *replaced* with a polyphony of interpretative loci/locations/locutions -- locusts, that, like Charles in CTN, eat history.

How does DL compromise ontological boundaries? Which boundaries are compromised? DL pays as much attention to street names as do CTN and HM, to much the same effect; the world-versions are seen to exist in a space parallel to the actual world. In DL the references tend to favour colloquial names: Old Jerusalem, East End, Limehouse Breach, Lambeth Marsh, Southwark. This becomes almost an anti-map, [12] since it demarcates London as a society by itself and excludes non-Londoners. The spatial map represented by the colloquial names also implies a conceptual map, though, which emphasises the presence of history in the daily presence of London. More than adding local colour, the use of colloquial names add to the apparent authenticity of the

11 Each world-version might be read as completely separate from the others, with its own set of characters, but not without radically renouncing even self-evident paralellisms.

12 This is by analogy to "anti-language", a concept of McHale's (1990:168). "An antilanguage [conducts] an implicit polemic against the standard language and its world-view [...] It creates in effect an "anti-world-view," a counterreality of its own that is dialectically related to "straight" or " official" reality" (1990:168).

narrative positions. Most of the narratives purport to emanate from the London media, and are therefore to be aimed at Londoners, by writing about and into the anti-map of Cockney London.

The border of the worlds as indicated by the focalization on particular characters are perhaps even more complex than in HM and CTN. The characters move through a landscape where all the streets and even the theatres are authentic. The London of DL is completely unaltered by urban magic, lacking even the small miracles of the other two novels. Despite this, the (re) presentation of London in the novel is extremely fragmented.

The selection of detail and focus differs radically between the different narratives, often to such an extent that a given narrative avoids areas described by others. For instance, the Gerrard home is accessed only by the John Cree diary (Ch 27, amongst others) and the Marx/Gissing narrative (Ch 28). The tabloid narratives seem to be aimed at readers from greater London, tending as they do to use general area names while steering clear of specific street-names (with the exception of actual murder sites). The playhouses appear primarily in Lizzie's interior monologue, where they form almost the entire setting. By contrast, they barely get a mention in the part of the world (world-version) illuminated by the tabloids and the Gissing/Marx narratives. The difference in focus is so radical as to constitute an ontological discontinuity, so that Lizzie's world appears detached from every other world-version in the novel (with the possible exception of that which describes her in the third person) -- detached not only from the world in which the murders are committed, but also from that generated by the trial transcripts.

In DL, the boundaries between myth and fact are redrawn not so much by the reinterpretation of facts but by making manifest the relativity inherent in interpretation itself. Established history shown to be constructed as an intersection of discourses and interpretations. History is compromised totally but indirectly through the scrutiny of the *process* of establishment, of committing history to discourse.

CTN and HM reinterpret history without major alterations of actual events. The treatment of the historical metanarrative in DL is much more radical. The events and characters investigated by the novel are for the most part *fictional*, although they closely resemble actual-world historical events. Like the events comprising "the Ripper mystery", the killings in DL occur towards the end of the Victorian era. The areas where the murders occur, Whitechapel and Limehouse, are both poor riverside areas. In both cases, many of the victims are streetwalkers, and both killers dismember their victims

after crushing their skulls with a mallet and slashing their throats. In DL, one of the victims is found in front of Hawksmoor's St Anne's Church, Limehouse, while the Ripper left a victim in an alley opposite Christchurch, Spitalfields (Moore, 1992:35). [13] As significant, though, are the similarities between the post-mortem reconstructions of the events as historical myths: both killers got their names from the media, most reconstructions (either in the novel or of the Ripper mystery) touch or implicate London intelligentsia and the upper classes, all accounts of events are in conflict.

There are also significant differences, though. The events predate the Ripper mystery by about seven years, and brush the lives of several actual-world historical figures totally unconnected with the Ripper mystery. The connection between Marx, Gissing, Dan Leno and the murders, whether those of the fictional Golem or of the purportedly actual Ripper, is clearly fictional. Karl Marx, in fact, died in 1884, well before the Whitechapel killings. However, the *prominence* and social roles of these characters provide parallels with Ripper histories. Gissing's personal life and social status parallels that of the artist Walter Sickert, whose connection to several of the Ripper victims is stressed by various investigators, Knight amongst others. Although Marx's involvement in DL is far more oblique than the role of Queen Victoria in the Ripper mystery as explored by Knight, he represents a social force of comparable stature and influence.

DL negates the privileges of "actual" history by excluding the cliched Ripper mystery in favour of a fictional killing spree, an *alternative* history. The conventional subordination of the Ripper as mythological figure to the metanarrative of linear history disperses the impact of the myth. Through the substitution of details in the novel Ripper history becomes a territory reclaimed for myth. The boundary between fact and myth is reaffirmed, redrawn, so that, shorn from factual boundaries, the serial killings regain autonomy as a mythological structure, which is invoked by the similarities between the real and fictional mysteries.

Freed from its role as minor component of the historical metanarrative, the Ripper/Golem myth itself becomes a structuring myth in DL, representing both the consummation and a microcosm of the world from which it emerges.

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13 Virtually all information on the Ripper murders are taken from Moore's research/background notes to From Hell (1991-*present*).

Viewed internally, the worlds of the novel emerge from divergent *discourses*. Each discourse shapes its world according to its focalizing center and the myths guiding it, while simultaneously using those myths to differentiate itself, to "find an own voice". Thus, the discourses utilising objective language (the introduction to the diary, the first chapter) attempt to invalidate subjectivity. The Golem is banished from these sections, which deal in fact only. In the journalistic sections, which are often those dealing with Marx and Gissing as well, the Golem is investigated as the tip of a social iceberg. It emerges as symbol of class conflict, but it also embodies the conflict between Reason and the Irrational, as well as between Art and Science. This last is a force that also forms a part of the Golem as seen by the Diary, where the killings become a (passion?) play on grandiose scale.

In the tabloid sections the facts become merchandise, the traces of the myth a condensed symbol to control the fictional masses of the novel's world. Infusing the myth with fear, though, empowers it since fear implies belief. Earth-Lizzie makes no direct mention of the Golem, but it is (as Hebrew myth) present in Lizzie's asexuality. In terms of the Golem myth as reconstructed in the novel, the sexual violence is reflected in Earth-Lizzie's fascination with transvestite/androgynous roles. During one of her excursions as The Older Brother, Lizzie meets an old Jew (probably Solomon Weil) who recoils in horror of the myth of Adam Kadmon/the *Shekhina* embodied by her androgynity (DL:154).

Both the diary and Earth-Lizzie are highly idiosyncratic and subjective, but this also makes it difficult to accept the diary as emerging from Earth-Lizzie. As narrator Lizzie is egocentric in the extreme, ascribing her achievements to her talents alone. She does not appear to attach any value to any metaphysical conceptions. While Lizzie seems capable of seeing the murders as personal expressions as art, the mystical, almost teleological function of the Golem expressed by the diary seems beyond her:

> I gave thanks on behalf of the shopman and his family. They were about to become patterns of eternity, and in their own wounds reflect the inflictions of recurrent time
>
> (DL:160).

As a vision of art, this is reminiscent of Eliot's views (which in turn contains echoes of Nietzsche and Kierkegaard). Compare "Burnt Norton":

> Time present and time past
> Are both perhaps present in time future
> And time future in time past.

> If all time is eternally present
> All time is equally unredeemable.
> [...]
> What might have been and what has been
> Point to one end, which is always present.
> [...]
>
> Time past and time future
> What might have been and what has been
> Point to one end, which is always present
> (From "Burnt Norton", Eliot, 1963:189-90; ellipses added).

The Golem myth arises from and structures the intersection of the various discourses structuring the novel into a fairly coherent pattern, or web, which connects the class, artistic, temporal and social conflicts of the world(s) of the novel. As the myth summarizes the world, though, it also gives birth to it. The world(s) of DL, the alternative history, unfolds from the myth. The novel itself mimics the process of mythologization in the different discourses of which it is comprised. The facts are examined from several different viewpoints, but never mesh into a coherent whole. Eventually the myth emphasizes the fact that its own origins are unknowable despite attempts at demystification, so that the events, their impact, their role as recurring patterns of eternity *become* the meaning of the myth.

Despite the discontinuities between the different world-versions -- or perhaps even because of them -- each world-version is stable enough stylistically and/or logically to present a version of late Victorian London. Apart from the small miracles the murders (and of course the characters as such) represent, each world-version seems in its way representational convincing. The novel does present not "the explanation" behind the Ripper murders -- but this version of history might as well have, since each version depicts circumstances which may logically have led to a serial of killings.

TEXT : REPRESENTATION: DIFFERENCE AND DISTANCE

The very appearance of transworld identities, of travellers from other worlds appearing in a fictional world, hints at a both a lessening of distance and a relaxation of boundaries between the two worlds. In Ackroyd's fiction, travellers from other worlds

are frequent. Most, however, are not on loan from other fictions (at least fictions in the commercial sense) but from actual-world history. History is as much textually constructed as fiction, though, the ontological difference being mostly a matter of belief. Marx, Gissing, Chatterton, Hawksmoor -- the identities of these figures can be reclaimed and reconstructed only from their writings and writings about them. Although the traces Marx left upon history continue to influence actuality, the spoor is that of his myth rather than of his identity (both Marx as originator of discourse, and Marxism as a metanarrative or myth). Of Chatterton, all traces have been lost but those dispersed in the Rowley poems, in which the identity is an assumed, fictional one. As an individual Chatterton exists only in his poems and in the mythology woven around him. Hawksmoor's identity may at least partially be recaptured; but he sojourns in Ackroyd's novel *incognito* -- or does he visit both worlds of the novel in different identities?

The appearance of transworld identities from Earth-Prime or its history might also blunt the difference between their motherland and fiction, since they appear to constitute equivalences of the fictional world to the actual, spaces where the borders of fiction and actual-world history overlap. Obviously, though, a double-vision is at stake. Fictionalized historical figures are after all still fictional characters. Since their world of origin is ontologically stronger than that of the fiction, the effect they have on distance and difference depends on how well they correspond to actual-world discourses about them -- on how convincingly such a character is portrayed.

Many of the transworld identities in Ackroyd's novels also function as narrators: Chatterton (?), Oscar Wilde, Hawksmoor/Dyer, John Dee. In first-person narration the influence of the narrator on distance and difference is strongly dependent on the portrayal of the character of the narrator. Focused through a single psyche, first-person narration restricts the text (and the reader) to a single-point perspective. While the fictional world is restricted to the fields of perception, understanding and knowledge of the narrator, the narrator also acts as guide. The narrator's frame of reference and ordering and interpretative structures can be assimilated ready-made, appropriated by the fictional ego as an indication of the required displacement. This eases the displacement to the fictional world. Rather than having to adjust to a distant world and characters simultaneously, the reader need only adjust to the frame of reference of the narrator. To minimize such adjustment, though, the fictional narrator has to be relatively similar to actual-world narrators, or at least to projected actual-world narrators set in the same time. An accessible, apparently transparent narrator, may very well lessen the distance to the fictional world it belongs to. A transworld identity as narrator blunts the force of the displacement by lending some of his or her (apparent) ontological veracity to the world,

some of his or her (apparent) ontological veracity to the world, thus (apparently) lessening the *ontological* difference between the reader's world and the fictional.

Much the same can be said for the style of presentation. A borrowed voice, while also occasioning an opalescence or double vision, can lessen the distance between fiction and actuality considerably if it appears authentic. The stylistic pastiche of LT does not increase the distance to the fictional world from an internal point of view, although the narrator is patently fictionalized. Rather, Wilde seems "closer" in this novel than in any other text -- even his own. The language has a dramatic lilt to it similar to that of Wilde's prose and theory, but it appears slightly more natural, more personal. Phrased in the first person, the spice of Wilde's epigrams and sharpened tongue becomes subdued just enough to sound like Oscar Wilde *being* Oscar Wilde, rather than pretending -- which is, of course, what Wilde did in virtually all his writings.

The extent to which the reader's fictional ego remains differentiated from the fictional world, or rather, the extent to which the reader is aware of such differentiation, is strongly influenced by the difference and the distance of the fictional world from the real. Peter Ackroyd's novels usually establish worlds that are situated at an **optimal distance** from the actual world rather than at a minimal distance. The texts achieve optimal distance by carefully balancing difference with the use of fictional modes, as well as by easing the reader's congress with the characters.

Difference & Distance : Hawksmoor

A close transworld identity for the historical architect Nicholas Hawksmoor, Nicholas Dyer is the most problematic traveller in Ackroyd's fiction. Dyer completes his seventh original church in 1715, almost twenty years earlier than Hawksmoor completed his sixth, and his date of birth appears to precede Hawksmoor's by some years. Apart from this, the only verifiable difference between the two is the name, assigned in turn to the 20th century detective who is set up as Dyer's nemesis. With Christopher Wren and Vanbrugghe, Dyer is the third person in the triumvirate that reconstructs London after the Fire. Dyer's artistic concerns closely echo those of his historical counterpart -- in fact, much of his discourse is quoted from Hawksmoor's writings -- and he is similarly

obsessed with alignments. [14] The language used to represent Dyer's ideas and thoughts appears true to the period, using irregular spelling and grammatical constructions, usually (but not invariably) capitalizing Ideas. Ironically, as in LT, the self-consciously borrowed voice actually aids the authenticity of the evocation of a historical character and his period.

Despite Dyer's self-absorption, he is a particularly observant narrator, who takes note of several characters and details that exist outside his immediate surroundings and thus are not necessarily relevant to his life. He notes snatches of conversation or rhymes he overhears, describes places, and mentions smells or sounds at the edge of his perception. While of little more than cursory interest to Dyer, these details are both essential to the thematic concerns of the novel and help to evoke a world that may be seen, smelled, heard, touched, tasted. In this respect Earth-Dyer is closer to the Earth-Prime than the versions given in historical documents from or about the early 18th century.

The historical distance of Earth-Dyer is compensated for to some extent by cultural economy through the use of both period English and fictional modes. The use of period English indicates the relative distance to Earth-Dyer, easing the transition by providing a map of the target territory. Dyer's professed beliefs -- buttressed by the thematic imagery, amongst others, of stone as eternal, transcending time -- alert the reader to the use of the mythical mode. This, in turn, allows relative ease of assimilation of Dyer's apparently supernatural influence on Earth-Hawksmoor. Although Earth-Dyer is situated at a significant temporal remove from Earth-Prime, the novel allows the reader to situate the world at an optimal distance.

By contrast Earth-Hawksmoor, situated at a minimal temporal remove from Earth-prime, is unexpectedly difficult to access. Although it does not diverge greatly from the actual world in detail and time, its general quality of life is very different. In Earth-Hawksmoor the focus falls heavily on the underside of life: darkness, dust, refuse. In addition, the world is filled with events and small details which are inexplicable from within a modern paradigm, such as the mysterious tramp known as "the architect" -- and the murders themselves. If Earth-Dyer is seen as Earth-Hawksmoor (1715), i.e. a past timepocket of Hawksmoor's world, the juxtaposition of the two timepockets contorts *sens* from details. "The architect's" sketches which echoes Dyer's notebook, the pathologist doubling Wren's words and actions, the 18th century killings that leave 20th century

14 Although the difference would have been but a few metres, Hawksmoor wanted to demolish neighbouring shops to perfectly align St George's in the East with other London monuments. The commissioners refused. It is on this Potter's field that the draper Marr and his household were massacred about a century later.

victims, all become indices of the instability of the present and the present "reality" of the past.

Indeed, the syn(dia)chronicities of this world seem to refer to a deeper, supernatural and ultimately inaccessible level of reality. In addition, the reader's access to the world is repeatedly subverted. It is evoked twice from the focalization of victims -- first Tommy Hill and then Ned -- who die at the end of the chapters, effectively erasing the reader's access point. When the reader is finally allowed a foothold in the world, the focalizer is Hawksmoor, an extremely private man initially motivated mostly by his occupation (Fokkema, 1991:146). Hawksmoor himself is losing his own hold on his world. His only close tie to the world is Walter Pyne, and the relationship between them is almost exclusively professional. Despite allowing the reader access to Hawksmoor's psyche, the narration too is curiously distant and apathetic towards the character. Whatever distance may be created by Dyer's approach to life and the difference of his world from actuality, his first-person narration balances against the presentation of Earth-Hawksmoor so that the two worlds are situated at roughly the same remove.

HM makes conspicuous use of narrative mode to manipulate the distance to its worlds. Dyer's archaic style and occult beliefs evoke the mythical mode, which warns the fictional ego to make allowances for a less rigid operative logic in the world. Dyer's own world, though, does not particularly exhibit traces of the supernatural; his beliefs may easily be read as those of a deluded madman. The mythical mode manipulates access to Earth-Hawksmoor, alerting the fictional ego to the fact that the world is inherently mystical, and that the characters are likely to be either totally unequal to their environment, or of titanic stature. Consequently the fictional ego does not necessarily experience the implied occult nature of Earth-Hawksmoor as a radical departure but rather looks for its signs. Tragedy -- which is a form of the mythical mode -- uses worlds that are usually implicitly mystical, to which the protagonist, although possibly superhuman, is necessarily unequal. Under the mythical mode, also, Hawksmoor can be expected to be unequal to his environment.

Epistemic paths are also used to control the detective dimension of the novel. Dyer's plans and actions are relatively clear. Hawksmoor, by contrast, is lost in a sea of inexplicable events. His life is presented as a detective novel where the clues remain missing. It is in part because the clues are missing from the 20th century that the reader is willing to connect Dyer's actions to the murders in the 20th century in spite of the fact that such connections subvert causal logic.

Difference & Distance : Chatterton

> Chatterton, inspired by medieval documents in the church of St Mary Redcliffe in Bristol, wrote poems in the name of a fictitious fifteenth-century monk, Thomas Rowley. It was an age used to fictitious authors, but Chatterton confused the issue by also contriving imitation medieval manuscripts and allowing it to be believed that he had found the real thing. [...] [He] drove himself to a death that appeared to be suicide in 1770, at the age of seventeen
>
> (Rogers, 1990:279).

Apart from these meager facts, the identity of Thomas Chatterton has been completely lost in time. What can be reconstructed about his personality from his poems is obscured by the Rowley persona, and insufficient to form a complete picture of him. The lack of an original historical identity for Chatterton makes it impossible to judge Ackroyd's portrayal of the poet in terms of authenticity.

Ackroyd's Chatterton -- which is a truly fictional character rather than a fictionalized transworld identity -- becomes a sign that attempts to fill a lack in history. Earth-Joynson fills this *tabula rasa* with/from a character-sign that stays true to the known facts about Chatterton and provides an identity which is conditionally representative. As a first-person narrative, Earth-Joynson grants access to Chatterton's thoughts and identity. It is narrated in the first person, in a style and language that appears authentically late-18th century. "Chatterton" is constructed using a wide variety of codes: his body appears and functions normally, he is embedded in a social role, the reader indirectly has access to his thoughts, his actions are supported by his personality, and the character-sign is logically consistent. It also exhibits all the signifieds of character, the modal roles of desire, power and knowledge. As a full character coherent with his world, Ackroyd's Chatterton is successfully substituted for the absent actual-world historical figure. Ackroyd's Earth-Chatterton is convincing as a whole, and the character convincing as a 17th century youth.

The identity of this "Chatterton" is placed *sous rature*, the condition erased, when the 20th century Joynson claims that the papers were faked by his ancestor. If they "really" were faked, fictionalized, Earth-Joynson's "Chatterton" is a far stronger representation of consciousness than contemporaneous actual-world discourses, such as The Castle of Otranto, or better, Joseph Andrews. Or, to move outside of fiction, accounts of personal experience:

> 'Gad,' says Mr Brown, 'the condenser's the thing: keep it but cold enough, and you may have the perfect vacuum, whatever be the heat of the cylinder.' The instant he said this, the whole flashed on my mind at once. I did all I could to encourage the conversation, but was much embarrassed. I durst not appear ignorant of the apparatus, lest Mr Brown should find he had communicated more than he ought to have done. [...] We parted, and I went home, a very silent companion to the gentleman who had given me a seat
>
> (Prof John Robinson, 1796).

> I sho^{d} be glad to know from some of you Gent^{n} learned in Natural History & Philosophy the most probable theory to account for these vegetables (as they once were) forming part of a stratum [...] These various strata [...] wind & turn about, like a Serpentine River, & we have one under a Hill *Mole Cop*, which seems to have been formed by them, as the mines are all turned by it, some to the East and others to the West .... But I have done. I have got beyond my depth .... These wonderful works of Nature are too vast for my narrow microscopic comprehension. I must bid adieu to them for the present, & attend to what better suits my Capacity. The forming of a Jug or Teapot
>
> (Josiah Wedgwood, c. 1767, emphasis and last two elisions original).

(*Extracts from* Jennings, 1995:62, 63)[15]

In both these extracts, the first a personal diary, the second a letter to an acquaintance, self-definition occurs in terms of *action* and metaphor respectively, rather than feeling or thought. Although phrased in the first person, both extracts elide experience in favour of description, thus flattening their portrayal of the minds of their writers.

As in LT or HM, the character/narrator is representational enough to "authenticate" its ontology. "Chatterton" as narrator also provides an epistemic handle for the reader, serving as "guide" to Earth-Joynson. The illusion of presence is strengthened by the continuity of "Chatterton" between Earth-Joynson and Earth-Chatterton. In the sense that the fictional world has a sign for "Chatterton" while the actual doesn't, the fictional world is in fact more complete. As such, Earth-Joynson and Earth-Chatterton are both "closer" to Earth-Prime than the corresponding actual-world timepocket.

In detail as well as in general atmosphere and quality both these worlds set in the late 18th century differ significantly from Earth-Prime. In both, the mode of narration

15 Jennings' Pandæmonium (1995. London: Papermac) is a collage of extracts from a wide variety of period texts from the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries: biographies, letters, records of conversations, scientific articles. The source references to the extracts are Jennings'.

used constitutes an attempt to compensate for distance and difference. Earth-Joynson, situated at an optimal distance through the use of first-person narration, is despite its subsequent erasure the defining glimpse of the novel's 18th century worlds. It establishes interpretative structures which are equally applicable to Earth-Chatterton. The latter world corresponds closely to Earth-Joynson, but the narrative, which slips from narrative sentences to direct thought and speech, appears to be an objective record of thoughts and events.[16] The narrative does not provide any epistemic handles to aid access; but neither does it in any way conflict with the application of interpretative structures -- whether those of the reader or those inherited from the narrator of Earth-Joynson.

On closer inspection, of course, Earth-Joynson is again ontologically destabilized by the fact that, as Baker points out, "James Dodley, and not Samuel Joynson, was Chatterton's publisher" (1992:76). The present Mr Joynson's account of the forgery of the Chatterton papers is also thrown into doubt by another inconsistency in his claim, that Chatterton "committed suicide at the age of *eighteen*" (CTN:220, emphasis added. Baker concludes, "the information gained from history might very well just be another fallible version of Chatterton's life" (1992:76).

Earth-Meredith, temporally set halfway between Earth-Chatterton and Earth-Charles, uses a different epistemic path. Set in the 19th century, the world differs qualitatively and quantatively from Earth-Prime. The omniscient narrator focuses attention away from the world toward the characters. The intrigues of the characters are "universal", equally relevant at any time or in any fictional or know actual world. Unlike Doctor Dee, Chatterton, or Dyer, these characters do not seem to exhibit alien values. They are not obsessive, do not support supernatural powers, and do not in principle regard their fellow men as inferior. The hopes, desires and opinions of the main characters are all made accessible to the reader, and those with which the characters are concerned are "still" present in the constitution of the 20th century psyche. The narrative is also fairly accessible, unlike the evasive and distant narrative of Earth-Hawksmoor, or the occasionally condescending narrative of Earth-Charles.

Earth-Vivien, the timepocket of CTN coincident with current actuality, is one of the "closest" of Ackroyd's worlds. In detail, it differs from the actual world only in small details conventionally acceptable within realism: the addition of a few characters and of an art gallery. Unlike the Church of Little St Hugh in HM, which is inserted into actual

16 As argued in the "Individuation" section of this chapter, Earth-Chatterton may be said to "narrate itself" with no awareness of a narrator.

space at an exact location[17], the gallery's location remains indefinite. Vivien is shown on her way to the gallery -- "Vivien Wychwood walked down New Chester Street toward Cumberland and Maitland" (CTN:61)-- but the exact route and location is elided. By allowing the gallery to exist in an indefinite location, the novel obscures its fictionality. This supports the suspension of disbelief -- the pretense that travel to the fictional land never took place.

The characters -- the hosts -- are unusually (for Ackroyd's fiction) *likable*. Despite their idiosyncracies and schemes, most of them exhibit love toward others. Those who are selfish and/or greedy -- specifically Stewart Merk and Harriet -- lack the intense misanthropy of Dyer or Lizzie. Additionally, they are presented with sympathy and pathos.

CTN uses a mixture of different modes. Locally, the dominant mode is low mimetic in all the worlds, but there are also some aspects about Earth-Vivien that border on the ironic mode. For one thing, a lot of the dialogue -- especially when Maitland, Cumberland, Harriet or a combination of these are present -- has to be some of the funniest in English in the last fifty years. For another, most of the fictional characters have decidedly "Dickensian" names, as do the fictional authors. Four of the main characters, for instance, carry the names of prominent members of the House of Winsor: Charles, Edward, Andrew, and Philip. There is also a Harriet; in context, this may be an ironic reference to a son of the Prince of Wales. Of the other characters, most carry names that seem to evoke their personalities, to the point where they almost sound satirical: the homosexual Joynson, descendant of Chatterton's publisher and fellow charlatan Joynson, Harriet Scrope (which almost but not quite evokes Scrooge, and is a perversion of "scope" -- something her personality lacks), the Laurel and Hardy figures of Maitland and Cumberland. The name of Harriet's muse, Harrison Bentley, is a combination of the names of two of Dickens' friends, Harrison Ainsworth and Richard Bentley (Ackroyd, 1990: 209, 221). Despite the strong humourous and occasionally even burlesque elements, though, the main characters are representative enough to keep Earth-Vivien from lapsing into vaudeville.

The use of humour actually eases the access to Earth-Vivien, which in any case differs very little from actual late 20th century London, since it modulates the commitment the tragic elements demand from the reader. The invocation of the mythical

17 Not entirely unlike Grant Morrison's Danny the Street, a sentient street which travels the world. "It infiltrates itself into other cities and they just kinda [sic] *shuffle* a little to make way for it. It usually does it at night when no one's *looking*" (Morrison, 1990:18).

mode, while having little effect on distance, helps blur the distinction between myth and fiction with regards to reception of the novel.

Earth-Chatterton and Earth-Meredith present a sharp contrast with the later timepocket. Though both focus almost exclusively on the transworld identities, these are depicted as representation with a sympathy similar to the treatment of characters in Earth-Charles. The eventual resolution of Chatterton's life is even more tragic than his official history, and suggests a mystical underpinning to the world reminiscent of true tragedy. Meredith is a bit of a self-styled tragic hero, but in this respect he is exemplary of the pre-Raphaelite movement. The use of epistemic paths -- the very fact that the novel accesses three different time periods -- also evokes the mythic mode, since it implies a grander logic buttressing the world across time.

CTN very carefully controls its epistemic paths. Earth-Chatterton is manifested mostly in the documents Charles obtains from Joynson; and yet, the document is presented without flagging the reader that it is a text-within-a-text. Since Chatterton appears as a representative consciousness from the document, the revelation of the status of his discourse creates a *sous rature* effect similar to that captured in the paintings of Andrew Wyeth.[18] The impression that someone has just been present but has left remains; even the later claim that the document itself is a fake cannot erase the impression of Chatterton's personality. Access to Earth-Chatterton and Earth-Meredith is carefully controlled and carefully timed, so that the reader is surprised time and again by the revelations offered by the worlds.

Difference & Distance : Dan Leno and the Limehouse Golem

Although all three texts under scrutiny here -- HM, CTN and DL -- are concerned with history and the (re)structuring of history, the last alone restricts its action to one time period only. Instead of evoking a handful of different timepockets, each carefully positioned in relation to the actual world and equally carefully set at an optimal distance, the later novel (presents) several world-versions situated at a similar temporal remove

18 It is impossible to do justice to Wyeth's work in words. His paintings -- mostly landscapes and/or interiors -- always have an atmosphere of loneliness, of *waiting*. These are more than landscapes without figures; they are landscapes waiting for people, or yearning after those that have left. A possible source for this effect becomes apparent if his studies are considered. Very often, Wyeth removes from the final composition figures that had inhabited the early sketches: a habit that is "enters" the paintings as a *sous rature* effect, a marked absence.

from actuality. These world-versions differ significantly from each other and from actuality in general quality. In the absence of a contemporary base [of operations], the difference and distance from *actuality* is not the only appropriate index; it is also important to gauge the same relative to comparable actual-world discourses.

One of the most effective elements the novel uses to optimize distance is the wholesale importation of actual-world discourses. This does not occur in isolation; not only are essays and viewpoints of Marx, Gissing, Dan Leno and Charles Babbage imported into the novel, but the authors of most of these viewpoints (bar Babbage) also appear in the novel as transworld identities. The sheer audacity of using as prominent a historical figure as Karl Marx as a minor character in a novel cannot but influence the ontological stability of the fictional world. In the life of Marx there are so few dark areas that any improvisations on the part of a novelist should draw immediate attention to the fictional status of the text. The fact that DL does not radically improvise on Marx's life (it would be impossible to trace every individual that ever shared a coach or a hansom with a historical celebrity) actually provides a strong anchor to actuality, with weight enough to provide a counterpoint for the obvious fictionalization of the murders. [19]

The effect is strengthened by the careful attention paid to investing Marx with more than just cursory depth. The Marx narratives (of Chapter Fifteen, DL:63-69, for instance) manifests the character's inner consciousness, especially by rendering his *perceptions*; this is occasionally reinforced by authentic-sounding (but admittedly sweeping) statements in the tabloid/investigative journalism narratives:

> On his right hand, Karl Marx was dividing his attention between Tennyson's In Memoriam and Bleak House by Charles Dickens; this might seem odd reading for the German philosopher but at the end of his life he had returned to his first enthusiasm, poetry. In his early years he had read fiction eagerly and had been moved, in particular, by the novels ...
>
> (DL:45).

Gissing, too, is evoked with great care: apart from quoting extensively from his writing, the novel faithfully represents his unusual marriage and life in addition to granting the reader access to his consciousness. Dan Leno -- whose historical "original" is inherently unknowable in part because of his private character and in part because the art in which he expressed himself survives only indirectly through reports -- is also represented faithfully.

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19 It is entirely conceivable that the events in the novel predate the actual Ripper murders by seven years exactly in order to facilitate Marx's appearance -- Marx died in 1883 (Rogers, 1990:524).

The difference between the transworld identities as presented in the novel as opposed to their appearance in actual-world historical discourses is marginal at most. They can be known in "true" histories only through words, usually in the voices of others -- whereas Ackroyd's novel pretends to grant access to their minds, which creates the illusion that they are closer in the novel to their historical counterparts than they are in their "true" biographies.

Although the transworld identities closely resemble actual-world historical figures, they still exist in a world which differs significantly from the actual in various respects. The world-version of Lizzie's interior monologue is exceptionally dark and unsanitary, only in part because it is accessed through Lizzie's unpleasant consciousness. The stages alone are bright; even the interior of the theatres reek of human sweat. It is as though the world consists only of parts resembling the seedier parts of actuality.

The Diary, in turn, is so closely restricted to the thoughts and limited perceptions of one consciousness that most of the world remains beyond the scope of the narrative. Those parts which are described are wreathed in fog:

> ... the fog was still so thick that I despaired of ever finding a driver. But then I saw a pair of bull's-eye lamps approaching from a distance [...] my words could find no passage through the fog. Then, as the cab drew nearer, someone tapped me on the shoulder ...
>
> (DL:58).

The world is mystified, obscured to the extent that its distance is dependent entirely on the consciousness of the narrator. As presented by the diary, though, John Cree appears to be a complete and complex character, which strengthens the ontology of his narrative (if not his world-version) somewhat. The trial transcripts, by contrast, are virtually useless by themselves, relying on the other chapters to provide their deixis and context relative to a fictional world. As pure dialogue, structured through legal procedure and language, though, they are not reliant on an intermediary consciousness for interpretation of their world. The form appears wholly objective, which strengthens its believability. The investigative journalism and tabloid sections, again, are respectively apparently objective and sensationalist about their worlds. Both worlds are at least as distant and different from the actual as other versions of the same time period are, though.

At least as important as the presented world is the means of presentation. In this respect, the novel strives to establish an optimum distance in all its narratives. Cultural economy in relation to fiction includes the use of different fictional modes, but it also includes recognizable period styles. As she makes allowances for genre and fictional

modes, the reader -- especially the reader familiar with prose from several different time-periods -- is prepared to accommodate different period styles. To the Earth-Prime (1994) reader, most fiction predating World War I appears slightly stilted and slow-moving. This is true of autobiography, fictional narrative, and even journalism -- the literary genres used to construct DL.

In DL, the "objective" first chapter -- which, like the heading introducing the diary, is presented at from indefinite remove from events -- states that Elizabeth Cree was hanged in 1881. This, with the first chapter, both indicates the time period and foreshadows the use of the period style. The second chapter opens in the style of a *fin-de-siecle* journal, which is confirmed as late 19th century in the second paragraph which gives the date of the first killing: September 10, 1880. The novel uses period styles for Lizzie's interior monologue (slightly stilted, self-righteous), for John Cree's diary, and for the "tabloid" sections. In fact, in the rhetorical questions and emotive metaphors and word choices, the style of the tabloid sections closely approximates that of late 19th century journalism, which placed less emphasis on the pretense of using objective language. The use of an outmoded style in the journalistic and tabloid sections is one of the reasons why the novel is able to import actual historical discourses into its own fabric without radically disrupting its continuity.

The styles themselves flag the fictional modes employed by the narratives, which correspond to those used in actual-world discourses. The tabloid sections use a self-conscious mythical mode, the sections narrated by (a) killer(s) are presented in romantic or high mimetic mode, and the sections that describe Marx and Gissing's lives externally -- as well as Lizzie's and John Cree's, for that matter -- use the low mimetic mode. Fictional modes are conventionally matched to genres to optimize distance by placing the characters at a distance appropriate to the discourse. The use of fictional modes to optimize difference and distance operate both on the level of the world(s) presented, and the (re)construction of the historical period.

The world-versions of DL are situated at some distance from actuality exactly because actual-world discourses from the same period are also situated at a distance from current actuality. Presenting the novel as a series of late 19th century discourses/world versions contributes to the distance's being *optimal*; the fictional world-versions are set at almost the same distance as actual discourses/world-versions about the same period are. This helps create the impression that the novel is actually a re-ordering of actual-world historical discourses rather than a fiction. [20]

20 Pandemonium by Humphrey Jennings is an example of a collage, an original artistic text, created by selecting preexistent texts according to thematic considerations.

TEXT: REPRESENTATION: SIZE

Size : Hawksmoor

> Actuality, it seems, is boundless both outwards (cosmically) and inwards (microscopically): the existence of sub-atomic particles reflects eternity as much as the continual discovery of new stars.
> (Philip Kuberski: Chaosmos 1994)

HM presents a universe which approaches maximality on a microcosmic level by revealing a abundance of detail within the spotlighted areas. This suggests a universe which is boundless, not only inwards, but also outwards since the universe might be expected to be equally complex at all spatial coordinates. The impression of size is the result of local overcoding rather than of the presentation of a panoramic world; of maximality in the spotlighted areas rather than of extensive scope.

Earth-Dyer, and to a lesser extent Earth-Hawksmoor are revealed in a fragmentary manner, as if by a spotlight. At any moment the spotlighted areas of the worlds are limited to the general surroundings of the focalizing characters. The area "physically" travelled by these focalizers is restricted mostly to central London. Dyer travels to Stonehenge, Ned (whether seen as an inhabitant of Earth-Hawksmoor or of both the worlds of the novel) has a flashback to his earlier life in Bristol, and both Dyer and Hawksmoor visit Greenwich occasionally. In Earth-Dyer, as narrated through a single consciousness, the spotlighted areas are strictly limited to Dyer's immediate surroundings; limited, in fact, to his actual field of perception.

The spotlight on Earth-Dyer defined by Dyer's field of perception also brings into focus the detail of the world. At any given moment the world immediately surrounding Dyer is filled with objects, sounds, smells observed by him, suggesting the inward maximality of the world. Simultaneously the rest of the world appears to fade out of focus, articulating the impossibility of grasping more than a fragment of the boundlessness of the universe. The limitation of access to the small spotlight focussed around Dyer emphasizes the darkness, the inscrutability of the world beyond. Faced with inexplicable details in the visible world, with experience hedged in by the darkness outside of the field of perception, experience of Earth-Dyer becomes claustrophobic -- both to Dyer and to the reader.

The impression of surrounding darkness in Earth-Dyer also functions on other levels, though. It becomes an expression of Dyer's unpleasant and disturbed personality, as well as a partial source for his paranoia. At night London is lit only by the lanterns and torches of coaches and travellers. Anyone native to the world, such as Dyer, has to be aware of the darkness and danger outside the small circle of light -- which is quite literally the limit of the *visible* world. Apart from the pervading darkness, Earth-Dyer coincides closely with actual 18th century London in other respects. The effects of the Fire and the Plague are still evident; much of the city still lies in ruin, and illness is still common. The darkness of Earth-Dyer is historically accurate, although Dyer's beliefs ascribe a transcendental quality to the darkness and decay. To Dyer, shadow and light are interdependent, both as physical qualities and as representative of metaphysical forces. If Dyer sets himself up as opponent to Rationalist christianity, his god is not diametrically opposed to the christian god. Rather, he conflates many gods and many aspects of gods (including Jesus) into a single, multi-faceted deity.

The focalization in Earth-Hawksmoor, rather than being confined to rigid single-point perspective, is external to the characters. Much of the detail of the world is revealed independent of the perceptions of any focalizing character:

> "What was that falling there?", one of the group asked [...] but his voice was lost in the traffic noise which had only momentarily subsided: the roar of the lorries as they were driven out of the market in front of the church, and the sound of the drills blasting into the surface of the Commercial Road a little further off, shook the whole area so that it seemed to quiver beneath their feet
>
> (HM:26).

The world narrates itself, unfolding more detail than any character could consciously notice.

The narrative often alights briefly in the consciousness of characters, shaping itself to their perceptions and occasionally prejudices. While fairly mobile, the focalization remains within the general vicinity of the main focalizing characters: Tommy Hill (chapter 2), Ned (chapter 4), Hawksmoor (chapters 6, 8, 10, 12). Before settling in Tommy Hill, though, the focalization moves through the consciousnesses of a tour guide, Tommy, and two other boys. The restless mobility of the focalization is suggestive of a furtive search, as though the world is selecting a voice through which to articulate itself. This search reveals the world's apparently endless detail. This, in turn, suggests a universe that approaches maximality; an impression which is supported by the revealed by the mobile focalization. The apparent boundlessness of the world on microcosmic levels, suggests that the world approaches maximality macrocosmically as well. The wealth of detail, even more than in Earth-Dyer, reinforces an awareness of the abundance and complexity of the world. There is, in fact, far more detail than is relevant for the narrative or even directly for the themes of the novel. The world seems to extend downward endlessly; like a fractal image on a screen, every magnification reveals new details and complexities.

Still, the widening of the spotlight on the world of Earth-Hawksmoor is no more comfortable than Dyer's paranoiac vision. The focus so strongly emphasizes the decay, the inscrutability, the chaos underlying the world that the representation of London appears as idiosyncratic and paranoid a view as Dyer's. The mythic mode evoked in Earth-Dyer is supported by the chapter links, spilling over into Earth-Hawksmoor suggesting that the decay of London is a transcendent state rather than an idiosyncratic vision. The dust and decay, beside the permanence of stone, are the only sureties in this world: decay is essential to the nature of the world, a "[pattern] of eternity" (DL,160). In this world, where so much is unknowable, mystical, a transcendental signified seems implied -- a mystical world underlying reality, of which decay is an essential aspect.

Both Earth-Dyer and Earth-Hawksmoor are expanded, supplemented, almost indefinitely by their permeability to importation, especially importation from other texts, other world-versions. Mention of the Plague and the Fire not only connotes Reconstruction London, but also opens the world to importation from actual-world historical versions of both the Fire and the Plague. As a transcontinental crisis, the Plague sets Earth-Dyer within the larger context of Europe.

Both worlds of HM are open to importation not only from historical discourses but also from other fictional texts. References to the straw men of Druidic practise connote, among others, The Golden Bough, and notably the work of T.S. Eliot -- not

only "The Hollow Men", but also, if the prevalence of dust and decay is kept in mind, "The Waste Land". The representation of time closely echoes Eliot's "Four Quartets". Of course, Eliot's work is itself highly intertextual, so that the intertextual relationship between HM and "The Waste Land" also connotes the Tarot, and the Fisher King legend -- which in turn connotes the Arthurian legend.

The references are more than an extension of the novel's referentiality. On one level, Eliot's "Waste Land" is an articulation of the prison-house of language which emphasizes language's inability to express the transcendentality to which it points. Transcendentality, an awareness of a mystic world, is a central aspect of HM as well; intertextual references multiply, doubling and redoubling, creating an abyss of untraceable reference.

Despite the fact that both worlds of the novel favour showing over telling, the referential density is very high. This is the result of the propensity of both narratives towards high detail, which in Earth-Hawksmoor is amplified by the mobility of the focalization.

Narrative domains remain fairly restricted, seldom featuring more than a handful of characters; however, Ned and Tommy Hill are each central to a narrative domain which is almost completely separate from that surrounding Hawksmoor, and yet is intimately intertwined with it. Also, the narrative domains intertwine across the two worlds through the partial reflections of characters: Tommy Hill, the mason's son, shares his name with the 20th century Thomas Hill. Walter Payne, in name and position, echoes Walter Pyne, but some actions of Pyne's are performed by Hawksmoor; Hawksmoor's actions echo, in turn, those of Wren and of Dyer.

The apparent boundlessness of the universe of HM serves only to emphasize the relative insignificance of the characters; in the face of spatial and temporal eternity, they appear as children, unable to understand the world opened up in front of them.

Size : Chatterton

CTN favours the characters over the world. Even the resolution of the central mystery, Chatterton's supposedly forged death, is more strongly dependent on Chatterton's character than on his world. Even though the meetings between Charles and

Chatterton might be seen as occuring in dreams, the novel destabilizes history as a social, a human construct, rather than as an ontological entity.

In terms of physical dimensions, the worlds of CTN are not as stable or solid as those of HM. In the latter novel the transience of mortality is contrasted sharply with the solidity of the (timeless) world, asserted by the detail revealed by the lucidity of the focus; in CTN, the cornucopia of objects is abandoned in favour of an abundance of characters, social relations and cultural acts.

In sharp contrast with HM's preoccupation with the forces transcending human life, the accent of CTN falls on constructs of civilization and society. Consequently, the worlds of the novel are represented as much by characters and the relationships between them as by the quality of the world as expressed in physical objects.

Apart from Earth-Joynson, which is (ostensibly) narrated by Chatterton, the worlds of CTN unfold from disembodied narrative positions. Even though none is restricted to a single focalizer, these are consistently focalized around, and often *through*, specific characters. Focalizers are described externally, but most of the physical detail of the worlds is revealed as observed by focalizing characters. This is true of Earth-Joynson as well; although "Chatterton" as narrator notes less occasional detail than Dyer does, and his interest is focused on documents and people rather than objects.

The novel does not discard the physical world entirely. As in HM, the movement of the focalizers spotlights different sections of the world: Earth-Joynson is set in London but contains a lengthy flashback to Bristol; Earth-Meredith is confined to a fairly limited section of London. Earth-Vivien spotlights London as well as the section of Bristol around St Mary Redcliffe visited by Charles. The action spans a larger section of London than Earth-Hawksmoor does, but the world is far less defined. Charles resides "on the third floor of a house in West London" (CTN, 13); the location of the gallery where Vivien works, too, is only generally indicated.

The worlds are described less as entities, as in HM, than as spaces for the characters to move in. The worlds also seem to set aside spaces specifically for the storage, manipulation, and creation of (simulacra of) cultural artefacts: the church attic in Earth-Joynson, where Chatterton *forges* Rowley; the haberdashery in Earth-Meredith where Meredith and Mary's *marriage falls apart*, and the attic where Meredith and Wallis *fake* Chatterton's death (which they *believe to be* the original attic); Mr Leno's shop and the gallery (where a pact *is made* to *sell* simulacra of Seymour's paintings) in Earth-Vivien. These spaces are possessed by the cultural artefacts found in them; Mr Leno's

shop, for example, is identified by his (changing) signpost and by the objects stored within.

The objects that are described, in general, tend to be specific cultural artefacts rather than abstracted facets of the world: the objects Charles sees in Mr Leno's shop, the food sacrificed to Harriet's sandwich, the books Philip studies in the library, the paintings at Maitland and Cumberland's. Any experience of nature is supplanted by the experience/representation of culture. Charles, in fact, appears to be afraid of the natural world:

> Charles looked out of the window, so lost in thought that he did not realise how his eyes took fright at the endless sky and how they focussed instead on a sparrow shivering upon a rooftop opposite (CTN:14).

Charles avoids nature, as signifying the transcendentality of death, and focuses on the living (though suffering) sparrow instead. Dust is as prevalent as in HM, but is usually found specifically on man-made objects such as the painting of Chatterton and the books in the library. Dust, in CTN, seems to signify "age" rather than decay, although nature seems to function as a *memento mori*, a reminder of mortality, of transience.

If the worlds of CTN never approach a maximal state like those of HM do, they are also more comfortable. There is less awareness of the boundaries of perception and the knowable, so that the experience of the world is less paranoiac. Instead, the insistence on the absence of originals and the proliferation of simulacra leads, at least in the case of the base world, Earth-Vivien, to an almost schizophrenic experience.

As the spaces of/for cultural artefacts are echoed in all three timepockets, the cultural activity of relationships is echoed. In fact, viewed at a further remove, the extramarital affairs ("love triangles" in Earth-Vivien and Earth-Meredith) are artefacts of culture for the late 20th century. Chatterton has a relationship with his landlady, Wallis with Mary, and a relationship develops between Philip and Vivien after Charles' death. Philip, like Wallis, reveres and admires his friend's wife almost from the moment he is first introduced.

Some of the worlds do, to some extent, extend beyond the novel. Most of Charles' and Chatterton's poetry predates the events in the novel; Vivien and Philip's affair will succeed them. Such extensions and doublings reiterate the theme of simulacra, of copies without originals:

> [He] was bewildered by a world in which no significant pattern could be found. Everything just seems to *take place*, he had said, and there's

> not even any *momentum*. It's just, well, it's just *velocity*. And if you trace anything backwards, trying to figure out cause and effect, or motive, or meaning, there is not real *origin* for anything. Everything just exists. Everything just exists in order to exist
> (CTN:232; emphasis original).

If the scope of the novel's worlds is somewhat less ambitious than that of HM, which remodels actuality, including its metaphysical rules, CTN neither radically rewrites nor supplements actuality. Rather, it articulates as simulacra the salient absence of generative moments. Like Charles' and Chatterton's, Meredith's poetry is "not present" in the novel; similarly, Harriet's writing, Merk and Seymour's painting. Seymour's paintings, and Charles' poetry, exist only as *copies*. The creative moment is dispersed/deferred among its simulacra.

The worlds of CTN tend to be fairly permeable to extratextual information, although less so than those of HM. Focussed on Chatterton's personal history, Earth-Joynson is fairly closed. It is open primarily to historical discourses about Chatterton himself, of which there is precious little, and to Chatterton's poetry. Earth-Chatterton is open to discourses about the actual-world historical 18th century; although it mentions Blake and other 19th century poets, these are denoted rather than *connoted*, leaving them outside the world of the novel. Earth-Meredith is far more permeable, connoting through Meredith and Wallis the Pre-Raphaelite myth of the Bohemian artist, the Pre-Raphaelite movement and its ideals as well as its tendency towards symbolism -- symbolism which was often fairly undeveloped and immature, denoting idealised atmospheres rather than connoting worlds of experience.

By far the most permeable world(s) of the novel is/are Earth-Charles/Earth-Vivien. The names of the characters as well as their distinctive personalities are reminiscent of Dickens; the world itself is intercut with quotations from Chatterton, Shelley and others. Charles, especially, is fond of quoting from extant works of literature. Despite the wealth of intertextual references, the references for the most part remain cursory. Being extracts from copies of copies of poems, they reflect the novel's thematic concerns, but the interplay is less complex than in HM. In this last regard three exceptions should be noted: the quotations from Shakespeare, those from Chatterton, and the references to Harrison Bentley. Shakespeare's historical identity is in doubt, so that the origin of the quotations is lost; Chatterton's poems are written as Rowley, a fictional and therefore nonexistent originator; and Harrison Bentley, whose plots Harriet copies, is completely fictional. Harriet's plots -- circumscribed rather than described -- are therefore copies from nonexistent novels originated by a nonexistent author.

Compared to the other worlds of the novel, the narrative instance in Earth-Charles/Earth-Vivien is foregrounded. The narrative is shot through with humour and intercut with quotations from Chatterton. While these intrusions into the narrative metatextually foregrounds the fictionality of the world, the humour also serves to increase the friendliness of the world. Earth-Charles/Earth-Vivien treads a careful line between near-representational characters and non-representational humour.

Size : Dan Leno and the Limehouse Golem

Apart from the discourses that cannot exist individually, like the trial transcriptions, most of the worlds of DL reveal copious detail within the focus of the spotlighted areas. As in HM, the detail both suggests a downwardly maximal world and creates a paranoiac experience of the world.

While most of the world-versions in DL implicitly approach maximality (Prussia appears nowhere in the text, but the novel cannot be said to actually *exclude* the European mainland), they do not necessarily include the same events. The appearance of actual-world characters and discourses belonging to them suggests that the worlds of the novel share a history concurrent with most of Victorian England, or at least Victorian London. Unlike HM, the novel does not as such substitute historical persons, events or locations for fictional ones, although it does introduce an ahistorical serial of killings into Victorian London (which might implicitly replace the Ripper killings, although not necessarily).

The dimensions of the worlds as suggested by the novel are fairly small with regards to space: all the narratives focus on London, and even the journalistic narratives do not imply that the events reach out beyond the city. With regards to cultural texture and complexity, though, the novel is rather comprehensive, at least when viewed as a whole. The writings and ideas of Babbage imported into the Gissing narratives bear on the increasingly machinist approach to society, as well as on the continuing/concluding industrial revolution. Marx's presence evokes the complex social changes of the period. Leno recalls the fin-de-siecle fascination with the bizarre (as does the plot of the text, and the reading matter of the author of the John Cree diary as well as of Gissing). Leno's presence further suggests the prevalence of masquerade in social intercourse. The conditions through which the killer, Gissing, Lizzie and John Cree all move are directly

related to the escalating urbanization of England, which in turn ties the novel into the larger context of England (at least in this respect). The very investigation shows a preoccupation with facts and figures, but simultaneously a tendency to dwell on the macabre.

All the narratives exhibit these indices of Victorian society, although their preoccupations differ. The links between the macabre, the masquerade and society are made explicit in DeQuincey's essay. Since the essay appears in the Gissing narrative, John Cree's diary, and one of the Leno chapters, all of these link to the almost Gothic underside of Victorian London. Gissing's life touches both the alienation of the middle class intellectual and the self-destructive poverty of the lower-class prostitute.

The novel evokes most aspects of late Victorian society *en masse*, without attempting to subdivide it into several subthemes. Symbols, or rather concretized nodes of the novel's symbolic order, are not equivocally tied to single thematic strands, but connect several different strands. The Analytical Engine, for example, is tied to aspirations of transcendence:

> [It] was a giant form of rods and wheels and squared pieces of metal, so imposing and yet so alien an artifice that he was tempted to *kneel down and worship it as if it were some strange new god*
> (DL, 117; emphasis added).

Although the context of London evokes Babylonian connotations, the Analytical Engine was intended to be used as a tool for analyzing -- and, implicitly, to minimize and label -- society. At the same time, though, it also becomes a finger pointing into the future, forecasting the computers of the 20th century. The world as (re)shaped by the Analytical Engine, as streams of isolated, coherent data, bears theoretical resemblances to the highly structured virtual realities of today's computers. The music-halls, too, are not only spaces representing Victorian escapist, leisure ontologies, but are also tied in with murder and social change. The music-hall terms referring to the lower and upper class seats -- "the pit" and "the gods" -- exhibit the ties to the supernatural, but they are also part of a vast web of synchronicity that is closely linked to the magical underside of London city planning -- Hawksmoor's churches, the pyramid, the necromantic magical residue of ritual killings on Ratcliffe Highway (originally called Redcliff Highway, when it was still the venue for the execution of criminals).

Not one of the symbols or thematic strands representing the 19th century appears in isolation. They are interwoven and interconnected to such an extent that the evocation of every one also refers to a myriad of others. In the novel, the narratives that

specifically focus on or are narrated by single characters -- Lizzie's interior monologue, John Cree's diary, the narratives observing both -- employ mostly localized focalization. In the narratives that are written in broader terms -- the investigative journalism sections, especially -- there is a combination of sweeping overview and intense local detail. The high detail, the matrices of thematic strands, the importation of actual-world discourses and the permeability to actual-world historical discourses all contribute to the novel's **referential density** being exceptionally high.

Although less so than some of Ackroyd's other novels (HM and EM especially), DL is also highly permeable to the importation of external knowledge. Even though it does not refer to a maximizing structure, a metanarrative of science or sociology, it connotes information external to itself. The thematic webs structuring the novel are by no means unique, but are connected to -- not directly drawn from -- critical understanding of the late 19th century in general. Although echoed and redoubled by the proximity of Marx, Gissing, and the Golem, the social themes evoked by the lives of Marx and Gissing as well as their supernatural interests are to some extent imported along with the characters. Marx's revolutionary political ideas, in fact, hardly appear in the novel at all, but are connoted by implication with the introduction of Marx. Even though the killer in the novel is called "the Limehouse Golem", and the dates of the killings are contradictory with those of the historical crimes, it is impossible not to compare the two. The social conditions within which they arise are virtually identical, after all, as is the mass hysteria resulting from their acts.

With regard to narrative tempo, DL is less dense than HM or CTN, re-covering much ground from several perspectives. The narrative orchestration, though, is particularly complex, even if it does not entail the redoublings of HM. There are several narrative domains, many of which share one or two characters at most with any other. Lizzie's World by itself contains enough material for a separate novel. Of the myriad characters, quite a few are reasonably fully realized. In turn, Lizzie, Dan Leno and John Cree are central to other narrative domains of their own. Dan Leno and Lizzie do not share any other narrative domain. Marx and Gissing, who apparently do not even know each other, appear in the same chapters several times, but have very little direct influence on each other's lives. Almost every chapter defines its own narrative domain; *tailors its own domain* from the cast of characters in the novel. Despite this the characters all play a role in the orchestration of the narrative.

TEXT : REPRESENTATION : INCOMPLETENESS

Incompleteness : Hawksmoor

HM conveys an impression of historical comprehensiveness by accessing two different timepockets apparently on the same time-line, parallel to actual history. Dyer's invocation of the Fire of London and the Plague -- actual-world events that spurred the rebuilding of London -- draws these events into the fictional world, supporting the spatial and temporal comprehensiveness of both the world and the novel. Much of the novel's detail serves to reinforce the presence of accepted history: apart from the streets and taverns, the presence of Wren and Vanbrugghe and -- as far as can be established -- their relationships to Dyer/Hawksmoor is historically accurate. Dyer's death, which precedes that of the historical Hawksmoor by some twenty years, is a small miracle in an otherwise historically sound timepocket. The (mostly) accurate presentation of salient nodes of actual history in the novel fosters the impression that the rest of history holds as well.

With regard to physical dimensions the worlds appear complete, especially when compared to the worlds evoked by texts contemporary to their respective time periods. The most salient element contributing to this impression of completeness is the attention to street-names paid by both novels. In addition to its detailed textual mapping, Earth-Hawksmoor also incorporates a myriad fine details: road-signs, advertising boards, bus route numbers. The novel is even comprehensive with regards to technology: a computer is used to aid the investigation, and Hawksmoor watches a sermon on television.

Apart from a fictional church on a fictional street and the substitution of the actual-world historical Hawksmoor's name for the fictional "Nicholas Dyer", neither Earth-Dyer nor Earth-Hawksmoor world diverges greatly from the actual quantitatively. By themselves, the small miracles of fictional characters and of the Church of Little St Hugh do not constitute a significant break with actuality. The conventions even of realist fiction allows for the creation of new characters, even characters named for historical figures. Within either world, even accepted history appears to hold. The radical

differences between the fictional world and the actual only become apparent when the relationship between the two worlds is taken into account.

When the worlds are viewed separately, most of the laws of cause and effect, and by extension those of physics, largely operate normally. In Earth-Hawksmoor, the laws of physics break down partially when the pathologist is unable to determine either the time of death or the murder weapons. The transgressions are momentary, and might have been small "miracles" were the events not central to the narrative of the world. The minor failure of the laws of physics at a crucial moment foregrounds the fact that, in Earth-Hawksmoor, they function only selectively.

When the novel is read continuously, i.e. when the worlds are seen in relation to each other, many correspondences and similarities become apparent. Actions in Earth-Dyer have direct consequences in Earth-Hawksmoor; characters echo each others' words and actions; murders in Earth-Dyer leave victims in Earth-Hawksmoor. Earth-Dyer seems to affect Earth-Hawksmoor, but not merely as a timepocket. The effect appears to be direct rather than in the normal cause of time, as though the two worlds are separated by space rather than by time.

The first sign manifested in the action is the mirage ~~perceived~~ by the tourist at the beginning of chapter Two (quoted above). In the novel, this is placed shortly after the mason's son, Tommy Hill, falls from the scaffold in the 18th century to take the place of Dyer's first sacrifice. The victims Hawksmoor finds at the churches all correspond to murders committed by Dyer in the preceding chapter. Wren's autopsy is echoed by that of the pathologist in Earth-Hawksmoor, as are their gestures and sentiments. Dyer's notebook disappears from his room to reappear in Earth-Hawksmoor, containing the words "Oh misery, they shall die" (HM:171) -- words written on a slip of paper by Walter Pyne, Dyer's assistant.

These syn(dia)chronicities between the different timepockets are indelible evidence of a severe violation of the laws of physics. Logic, physical laws and history are simultaneously supported and violated, their privileged positions deconstructed into a double-vision, upon which the subversive potential of the novel ultimately depends.

The apparent factual and historical completeness of the worlds is in itself conspicuous. Earth-Hawksmoor displays a proliferation of data, much of which does not seem to have any bearing on the novel. Since novels conventionally restrict themselves to relevant facts, the appearance of signboards and other details in Earth-Hawksmoor represents a conspicuous case of overcoding. The factual and historical comprehensiveness of the worlds emphasizes that in some respects, directly related to the thematic concerns of the novel, both worlds are radically indeterminate, lacking.

The incompleteness is articulated on the level of the signified: while the world is almost *too* complete, meaning is absent or unreachable. This, of course, is one of Hawksmoor's main problems: he is faced with a myriad of clues that appear to be either meaningless or exceedingly meaningful but inexplicable. The chain connecting the signifiers into a meaningful index remains elusive, so that they become information rather than data, noise rather than signal.

From the sea of reference that makes up the texture of HM several nodes emerge as symbols. Dust, decay and refuse, stone and the churches -- these are recurrent symbols, metaphors of which the referents are dispersed through endless matrices. Dust evokes mortality, disuse, time and the weight of time and history; and yet dust is also the constituent and the rests of stone. For Dyer, stone provides a bulwark of permanence against the ravages of time: "I have built an everlasting order [...]" (HM:186). In Earth-Hawksmoor though, Christchurch, Spitalfields is ringed with scaffolding in an attempt to slow the decay of the stone of the church. The stone itself decays into dust; the signifier of Dyer's everlasting order is disseminated into the referent, which itself recedes into inscrutability.

In this respect, most of the symbols in HM are condensed symbols that evoke worlds of signification and experience. Dyer's churches carry the combined weight of christian and pagan symbolism and ritual without binding either. Additionally, they connote the intratextual symbolism of the eternity of stone and architecture -- and possibly (M)asonry, although one of the sacrifices is the son of a mason. The history of the churches, in fact, weigh rather heavily: several of the Ripper victims were found near churches of Hawksmoor's -- Annie Chapman near Christchurch, Liz Stride near St Alfege's, Greenwich. In the early 19th century the family Marr were brutally murdered in their house on Ratcliffe Highway opposite Hawksmoor's St George's-in-the-east. The historical Hawksmoor had initially intended to build his church partly on exactly the same land. The churches are the most salient nodes of a web of symbols and meaning which spans both timepockets, and into which all the novel's major themes as well as the characters are drawn.

Many of the characters' actions also become articulations of the symbolic web underlying the world. Wren's autopsy represents an infraction of Cartesian science on the domain of haruspicy, augury through the reading of the entrails. Wren's re-reading of entrails is an assault of science on magic, of reason on irrationality. Autopsies represent attempts to hunt down, determine cause and effect, understand the functioning of the human body and by extension the world. As such, an autopsy is both a form of detective work and of divination. Hawksmoor's attempt to pierce the pattern of the killings, while

motivated by his occupation, also becomes an act of divination, an attempt to gauge the inner workings of the world:

> [He] was struck by the impossibility of his task. The event of the boy's death was no simple because it was not unique and if he traced it backwards, running the time slowly in the opposite direction (but did it have a direction?), it became no clearer. The chain of causality might extend as far back as the boy's birth, in a particular place and on a particular date, or even further into the darkness beyond that. And what of the murderer, for what sequence of events had drawn him to wander by this old church? All these events were random and yet connected, part of a pattern so large that it remained inexplicable. He might, then, have to invent a past from the evidence available -- and, in that case, would not the future also be an invention?
>
> (HM:157).

Science and magic, detective work and divination, become different aspects of the world, continually supplanting each other, the dominant one depending on the user. They also become forms of shaping, structuring systems imposed on the world.

The most salient pattern in Hawksmoor's investigation -- the significance of which he does not notice until the end -- is that formed by the churches. The churches are built by Dyer in a set pattern. Like the killings and Hawksmoor's investigation, though, the erection of the churches is not motivated from within but by the religion which he believes in. The inconsistency is apparent in Dyer's revulsion to the autopsy as opposed to Wren's almost inhuman detachment. Wren's lack of emotion, Dyer's emotion, become expressions of patterns formed by the swirl of order and chaos, ritual emotions as much as Dyer's constructions are ritual acts.

In a certain sense Dyer's ritual acts construct not only a pattern but also the world of Earth-Hawksmoor. Dyer's construction of the pattern of churches in turn imposes a pattern of chaos on the 20th century world. As such, Dyer becomes an ontological founder, whose beliefs and subsequent project reshape Earth-Hawksmoor if not his own world. The radical inscrutability of the metaphysical foundations of the world is made present through the churches, nodes of chaos that project into the air throughout time.

Incompleteness : Chatterton

Intimately concerned with history, CTN spans more than two hundred years, focalizing on three specific timepockets. The history and historiographical construction of "Chatterton" is a theme providing continuity through all three timepockets. The only instance of discontinuity with the history of Earth-Prime is the suggestion individuating Earth-Charles, that Chatterton lived well into the 19th century. The fidelity to history suggests that the facts of history hold not only the pockets of time and space included in the narrative, but also implicitly in the intervening time and space. The novel's concern with history as such makes it possible to extend its comprehensiveness to the whole of history.

The departures in spatial construction from actuality suggested by the worlds are mostly limited to a few small miracles: the characters, Maitland and Cumberland's gallery, the Chatterton papers. What is shown of London corresponds spatially and historically to the London of actuality. By comparison to the concentratedness of the worlds of HM, the worlds of CTN are much less detailed, much less comprehensive. Journeys less carefully mapped, most of the spaces are indeterminate, and the worlds lack the physical details of, for instance, Earth-Dyer.

The incompleteness of the physical world is to some extent compensated for by the richness of characters and characterization. While these are, in truth, "Dickensian", they are at the same time constructed very much as representational characters. Most of the characters -- Charles, Philip, Vivien, Harriet, Chatterton, Wallis, Meredith -- are constructed using the full range of codes identified by Fokkema. They eat, drink, and have sexual relations (or specifically do not, for proffered reasons); the reader is granted access (if only transitory) to their psyches; they are all described physically; all have jobs (or, again, for given reasons do not). The code of metaphor and metonomy is active in most cases, if only in the relationship of the character and his/her name. These characters have access to the modalities of knowledge and desire, although the access to the modality of power of many is limited or not ostentatiously represented.

In CTN, physical laws and even social and psychological conventions appear to act normally, and most of accepted history seems to hold. The exception is Earth-Charles: physical laws appear to hold, but history is undermined with regards to Chatterton. The radical disturbance created by the Chatterton papers in this world, however, argues that history is constructed arbitrarily not only with regards to one poet,

but on the whole. The original events and causal chains are shown to be irretrievable, undermining history at its very core: the *nature* of history.

The radical physical incompleteness of the world articulates the novel's central theme of art (cultural activity) as imitation. Harriet's plots are not her own, but imitations; the Seymour paintings encumbering the gallery are in fact the work of his assistant Stewart Merk (stew art merk? -- "merk" being an archaic Scottish coin), who is also responsible for Seymour's paintings of the last few years; Philip is writing a biography of Meredith who posed as Chatterton for a painting; the suggestion that Chatterton may have been responsible for several poems ascribed to later poets. As mentioned before, the first names of the characters are (obviously) not unique to them either. In the world of Chatterton, there are no originals. All art, and in fact all people, are copies or imitations of originals. Meaning is constituted only in the relation of elements to each other. To use the linguistic analogy again, the original signifiers are beyond reach -- if they ever existed.

The indeterminacy of Earth-Charles can, in part, be ascribed to the susceptibility to condensed symbols of its originator, Charles. The Chatterton affair, the papers and the painting, holds the promise of being concrete proof of historical fact, of pointing to an original in a world of simulacra. They allow Charles to stake a claim on history, to solidify an aspect of history by inserting an alternative original into the field of simulacra. Like Dyer, Charles becomes an ontological founder of sorts who, like Quixote, changes his private world to imitate his own world-project. And yet, while he dies in his private world, the world remains only an imitation of his world-project, or of that of the 18th century Joynson -- a simulacrum of history.

Charles' *attempt* becomes a symbolic act, an attempt to capture or control history. Instead of imbuing history with meaning, it emphasizes the intangibility of *historical* meaning; but at the same time the act gives meaning to Charles' life in the *present* by providing a cause worth dying for. Meaning is generated in the act itself rather than in its elusive success; even if it is only localized, individual meaning -- an individualist metanarrative -- meaning is transferred from the goal to the process. Locally, to his own conviction, Charles (re)builds the world according to his own understanding.

It is not only in Charles' attempt at world-building that symbolic action is shown to become meaningful. Relationships engender one another; as social artefacts relationships attain meaning as links in a chain of repetition. Chatterton's relationship with his mother is replaced by that with his landlady; Mary's with Meredith, by her relationship with Wallis; Charles' death brings into being Vivien's relationship with Philip. Chatterton, whether in life or in fame, survives his protector Joynson as Merk

survives Seymour and Harriet survives Harrison Bentley -- and Edward survives Charles. The artistic genealogy shows a similar progression, as Charles' world-project, Wallis' painting, and the self-image of Meredith are engendered by Chatterton. Here, though, the progenitor survives the progeny in fame, an affiliation echoed in the Merk/Seymour relationship. The chain takes on Oedipal dimensions as the father remains present in the symbolic attempts of the son to transcend him; but the chain retreats ever backwards into obscurity, just as the medieval origins of Chatterton's own work are by lost.

The meaning of the Oedipal chain is assigned to the meaning of repetition, the myth timeless and transcendent exactly because it enacts and re-enacts an endlessly repeating pattern.

Incompleteness : Dan Leno and the Limehouse Golem

As are most of Ackroyd's novels, DL is selectively incomplete. It touches on virtually all aspects of Victorian society, and apart from the small miracles of the lineage, existence and actions of the characters, there is little to indicate that it is heir to a history any different from that of the actual world. The representational rendering of Marx and Gissing in the journalistic investigations might even be taken to imply that the substitution of the Golem for Jack the Ripper as an event on the tapestry of history is itself no more than a small miracle. There is no reason to surmise that the 20th century of the fictional world would be any different from that of actuality.

On the novel's surface, the laws of nature do not seem to be modified either, although the mythologization of the Golem and the synchronicities suggest that there is some hidden structure to the world. Even so, not one of the world-versions is even approximately complete. Lizzie's interior monologue, for instance, excludes many events and causal chains that are essentially part of other narratives. Although most of her interior monologue is obviously set prior to most of the other narratives, it is conspicuous that even the later sections make no mention either of the Golem or of murderous intentions on Lizzie's part. John Cree's diary, by contrast, seems to be too complete to be a fabrication. It contains small details that cannot be wholly fabricated; the greatest anomaly, though, is that the author of the diary displays a teleological conception of the world. "[...] I gave thanks on behalf of the shopman and his family. They were about to become patterns of eternity, and in their own wounds reflect the

inflictions of recurrent time" (DL:160). This soliloquy, reminiscent of Eliot, is incongruous with Lizzie's almost existentialist approach. Also, the philosophy is that of an educated and well-read person -- not the sort of thing that a neophyte British Library user would pick up on and make her own. Relative to each other, the world-versions are not only incomplete but also conflicting. The investigative journalism narratives, whose style and presentation of Marx and Gissing suggests that they are epistemologically stable, credits the diary as genuine, while Lizzie confesses to the priest to having faked the diary in an externally narrated section (Ch Forty-Nine, p 273). The tabloid narrative of Chapter Fifty seems to support Lizzie's claim.

The different world-versions actually highlight each other's incompleteness. Since the incompleteness of each results from the restricted knowledge and understanding -- and ultimately viewpoints -- of events, the incompletenesses are epistemological. The truth cannot be reconstructed because the witnesses are restricted in their perceptions. Taken to extremes, though, the epistemological incompleteness becomes ontological: if a complete version of the world can only be a composite of several disparate viewpoints, then the world can never be completely known to anyone. It matters little whether the "originary" world that the different narratives are based on *actually is* complete or not: from each individual narrative viewpoint it is necessarily experienced as incomplete.

Each narrative viewpoint shapes its particular world-version. As such, each narrative **founds itself ontologically** by attempting to establish (impose) a coherent, authoritative world-version.

The supernatural, although not a preoccupation of any specific narrative, is present everywhere in the novel. Gissing compares the Analytical Engine to "some metal demon summoned by the sullen appetites of men" (DL:120); Marx and Solomon Weil's discussion rapidly digresses into cabalistic speculations; and Lizzie calls herself "the scourge of God". Babbage's Analytical Engine is explicitly linked to the pyramid in front of St Anne's, Limehouse (where Jane Quigly, one of the Golem's victims is found DL:6): "A journey towards the mysteries of London might then begin with an examination of that pyramid and the Analytical Engine; both stood in some direct relation to sorrow, and to the desire for purgation or escape" (DL:121). St Anne's, of course, was designed and built by the historical Nicholas Hawksmoor, and the pyramid is one of the more overt Dyonisiac occult symbols used by him. Within Masonic imagery, the pyramid, like the obelisk, is one of several magical male symbols used to subjugate the female principle -- making the killing of a woman next to the pyramid a highly symbolic act.

While the Masonic connection is external to DL, imported from Moore's/Knight's version of the Ripper killings, the connection to sexual magic is not. Some of the Ripper victims were found with their sexual organs removed, which is reminiscent of the dis-member-ment of Solomon Weil in DL. This fictional inversion of actual evidence might be read as an inscription of the Ripper into female-oriented history; but it may equally well be a confirmation of the androgyne theme of Adam Kadmon/the *Shekhina*. In either case, though, the implication of the sex wars as part of the origin of the Golem/Ripper is enforced.

Indeed, the murders in the novel are themselves occasionally explicitly sexual:

> [...] I *took off my ulster, jacket, waistcoat and trousers*; hanging upon the back of her door was a faded coat, *bordered with thin fur* [...] I purchased [the knife] at Gibbon's in the Haymarket for fifteen shillings and the pity of it was that, *after I had entered her, its shine would be lost for ever* [...] there was *a moan or sigh coming from her*
> (DL:29; emphasis added).

The murderer donning the "coat, bordered with thin fur" belonging to the victim is an interesting touch, evoking the ritualism of fetishistic obsession. But the murder does not only become sexual; it also becomes a magical ritual, reminiscent of those in HM and CTN. The author of the diary, supposedly the Golem, sees hirself as inscribing hir victims as "patterns in eternity" (DL:160). The murders even become a kind of prayer, a seance to summon God: "[...] I shat into [the chamber-pot]. She had been evacuated from the world, and I had evacuated. We were both now empty vessels, waiting for the presence of God" (DL:30).

The Golem becomes the priest performing the sacrifices in a bid to realize the city's "desire for purgation or escape" signified by Hawksmoor's pyramid and Babbage's Analytical Engine.

TEXT : (ACKROYD) : REPRESENTATION

In these three novels, HM, CTN, and DL, complex ontological structures are presented in which the reader is forced to move not only from the actual world to the fictional but also to move *between* different fictional worlds. The worlds vary greatly with regard to size, borders, difference and distance, and incompleteness, from the near-

maximal worlds of HM to the worlds in flux presented by CTN to the deconstructed/ing worlds of DL.

The two worlds of HM, Earth-Dyer and Earth-Hawksmoor, both implicitly approach maximality. Taken together, they radically disrupt laws of causality, substituting for Cartesian time a time-frame in which different timepockets occur simultaneously, *even while* the one timepocket contains the other as history. Much of the novel seems to point to a decidedly threatening, or at least inhumane, world of metaphysical transcendent signifieds that remain ever beyond reach. The signifiers of this transcendence include not only the ways in which Earth-Hawksmoor and Earth-Dyer, which are decidedly present, appear to function, but also the identities and actions of the characters within these worlds. In spite of the disturbing and alien atmosphere of the two worlds, both are highly comprehensive and contain near-representational characters, differing relatively little -- in appearance if not in atmosphere -- from the actual world.

Various devices -- narrative instance, narrative modes, control over epistemic pathways, use of fictional economies -- are used to situate Earth-Dyer at an *optimal distance*, unexpectedly accessible from actuality. By comparison Earth-Hawksmoor is rather difficult to access: the focalization is unstable and short-circuited twice before fixing on/around Hawksmoor halfway through the novel; inexplicable events occur; and the world seems to overwhelm the focalizing character. At the same time, though, the comprehensiveness of the world -- in terms of detail at least -- and the representational nature of the characters, foster an impression that the world differs very little from Earth-Prime (1985). This double-vision -- similarity in appearance, radical difference in the unseen laws -- places the world at roughly the same distance as Earth-Dyer. Rather than a radically different world, the novel seems to present a representational alternate version of a world that stands proxy for actuality.

CTN represents a similar double-vision. The characters are conditionally representative, fitting naturally into their worlds; but most of these worlds are compromised. Earth-Joynson's origin is questionable; the truth-value of Earth-Charles' differentiating premise uncertain. When viewed metatextually, Earth-Charles/Earth-Vivien are further compromised by the irony apparent in their representation.

The novel emphasises the social construction of the worlds rather than any transcendent metaphysics. With regards to social relations and "artefacts", the worlds resemble actuality in the miniature. The social patterns apparent in the novel seem less an imposition on the worlds than a revelatory emphasis of extant patterns. Participation in social patterns becomes a symbolic act providing localized meaning for the characters.

As in HM, most of the characters are representational or conditionally representational. The distance to the worlds of the past is optimized, making these worlds highly accessible; and the worlds concurrent with Earth-Prime are made accessible, through pathos and humour as well as the complex representation of human relationships, despite being compromised by their irony.

The myriad world-versions of DL appear to both represent and refract a (single), irretrievable world. Each world-version is radically incomplete, and many rely on the after-images of the others to present even a coherent sequence of events. Because they exist only provisionally and interdependently, the borders between world-versions become blurred despite the formal separations imposed by the chapter breaks. When applied to these worlds, the concept of size becomes highly complex. The worlds bleed over into one another; they attain *the same size* as a result of their interdependence, even though they differ vastly in presentation and focus. The radical incompleteness of the individual world-versions becomes foregrounded, though, with the result that the experience of each is claustrophobic.

The claustrophobic presentation of each of the world-versions is exacerbated by the fact that each represents a perspective which is both restricted and ideologically informed. Situated at varying distances from the underlying world, the world-versions invoke different genre and narrative modes, each becoming a discourse that more or less overtly attempts to master and control its history. The discourses subvert one another, though, as the balance between narrative modes, intertextual discourses, accessibility of character and style, and genre modes situate the worlds at roughly the same optimal distance from actuality.

Each world-version is representational both of a fictional world and, markedly in the externally narrated sections, of discourses about the fictional world. Simultaneously these discourses represent actual-world discourses about the parallel Earth-Prime timepocket. The novel represents the representation of a world that resembles actuality in most respects; or, to appropriate Elias' phrase, it "records the multiple worlds/texts within [both contemporary and Victorian-as-seen-from-the-present] culture and recognizes the *inability* to evaluate society's conflicting values" (1994:12).

The novels of Peter Ackroyd construct worlds and characters that are, at least, conditionally representational. The worlds are set at an optimal distance from actuality, smoothing over the transition of the fictional ego from actuality towards the fictional world. Characters -- and especially transworld identities -- are constructed as representational. The transworld identities resemble their actual-world historical counterparts, which heightens the ontology of the fictional worlds with respect to actuality. If the novels cannot be said to represent actuality, they do represent actual-world representations of actuality even while radically destabilizing the veracity of such representations. The interpretants/signifieds of the novels *resemble*, if not represent, actuality to a large degree.

4 Representation : READER

Ackroyd's fiction projects worlds and characters that are (conditionally) representative. A double vision, an opalescence, is established: on the one hand, the worlds and characters are representative, and even bear resemblance to actuality. On the other, the novels also contain events and relations that "belong more properly" to "Gothic" (Schütze, 1995:8) or "magic realist" (Onega, 1996: 219) fiction, which again destabilizes the worlds and characters of the novels. The representational aspects of Ackroyd's fiction function to make the worlds of the fictions more accessible, and enable identification/congress with the characters. The novels also employ other devices that are "a way of engaging the reader" (Ackroyd *in* Schütze, 1995:8), specifically the horror and detective *topoi*.

Ackroyd's fiction seems constructed to maximize the involvement of the reader. If, in Ricoeur's terms, novels "seek to place the reader in [their] *sens*", the invitation Ackroyd's novels extend to the reader "to undergo an imaginative variation of his [sic] ego" (Ricoeur, 1984:94) is particularly strong.[1]

The double vision represented by Ackroyd's fiction emerges with particular lucidity around the borders of his fictional worlds. Fiction is bounded, Pavel shows, by myth on the one side and actuality on the other. Ackroyd's novels destabilize both borders. The border to myth -- in the sense of a truth-system, a metaphysical explanation -- is *de facto* fairly abstract. Ackroyd's fictions construct new myths, new truth-systems, eroding the artificial boundaries between different myths. Similarly, social myths -- as metanarratives, or ordering systems -- are shown to be equally subjective, despite their claims to absolute, scientific truths. The border to actuality is eroded both by destabilizing actual metanarratives, and by skirting the physical boundaries through the equation of actual and fictional(ized) locales and characters.

This double-vision parallels Ricoeur's understanding of the reading situation. During the reading process, the reader is simultaneously distanced from and seduced by the text. It is in/from the tension between seduction and distanciation that the reader, guided by the text, creates new meaning. This corresponds to Pavel's idea, that the

1 **Critical Material: Ricoeur**

The material on Ricoeur used in this dissertation is drawn from A Ricoeur Reader: Reflection and Imagination (Valdès, M.J. 1991. Toronto: University of Toronto Press), which contains a large number of original essays by Ricoeur. This material has been extensively synthesized from these original essays of Ricoeur's, rather than simply taken from a handful of specific source essays. Individual Ricoeur essays *cited* from Valdès are listed separately in the bibliography if referred to individually.

In respect of the fact that the material in Valdès is largely original essays of Ricouer, and hence to avoid the ungainly "Ricoeur *in* Valdès" structure, specific references to Valdès, M.J. 1991. A Ricoeur Reader. Torontonto: University of Toronto, are given as (Ricoeur, 1991:[page]).

fictional ego temporarily takes up residence in the fictional world (Ricoeur uses the phrase "to dwell"), but takes along the processing mechanisms the actual reader applies to the actual world. At the same time, the paths leading to the fictional world(s) become part and parcel of the reading experience.

The hermeneutic tradition is concerned with gleaning an understanding of texts, and in particular of texts as documents reflecting a world-view. For Ricoeur, such understanding is not predetermined but polyvocal. The intention of the author is lost in writing and subsumed under/replaced by the "*sens*" of the text. The text is neither autonomous object nor guarded by author/ity. The text provides keys to itself and guides the reading, but it is inherently polysemic and allows for a variety of readings; it indicates a *direction* of meaning, but meaning is generated by a dialectic interaction between reader and text.

Ricoeur shares with poststructuralist thought a skepticism of absolute meaning and a conception of the world as linguistically mediated. What makes his theory particularly useful in the context of this dissertation, though, is his emphasis on the experience of time, both in actuality and in fiction, and on reading as the investigation of alternate approaches to life -- alternate "ways of being-in-the-world.

READER : RICOEUR

Central to Ricoeur's hermeneutics is the concept of **being-in-the-world**, the mode(s) in which human life is experienced. Following St Augustine, Ricoeur identifies the experience of time as definitive of human being-in-the-world. While time is always experienced in the present, though, human awareness of the past introduces a historicity, so that lived experience becomes the present of the historical past. The originality of the lived present balances against the fullness of the eternal present, in which a unitary time is recovered from among the living present and imaginary quasi-presents. The primacy of the present combined with the awareness of the past both allows time to be viewed in terms of present, future and past, and complicates the experience of time. All time is experienced in the present; but the past can be constructed in and the future projected from the present. Hence human time, as far as it is consciously experienced, is always composed of three aspects: the **presence of the present**, the **presence of the past**, and **the presence or awareness of the future**. The projection of the future from the present

constitutes for Ricoeur a being-towards-death -- simultaneously the awareness of death and temporality and a hedge against death.

Human time -- present present, future present and past present -- are inscribed upon cosmic time and form the basis of the human experience of time. Simultaneously, though, human experience occurs in terms of biological time -- the flux of the seasons, the succession of generations -- the simultaneous presence of predecessors, contemporaries and successors. Calendar time inscribes biological time onto cosmic time, culturally inscribing the private experience of time into a common history or destiny.

Life, unless interpreted, remains a biological event. Interpretation of life is necessarily a linguistic mediation of the world. The social world is highly mediated/preinterpreted in terms of ideology, culture and religion, all of which are linguistic or at least narrative constructions. Rather than in terms of structuralist models, *à la* Levi-Strauss, Ricoeur sees language as a mode of expression which serves as a metaphor for sharing lived experience. "The world [within language] is the ensemble of references opened up by texts" (Valdès, 1991:314).

Life is experienced as **event** but understood as **meaning**. Time and life are experienced as immediate; but any *reflection* on either imposes the narrative structure of human time upon experience. To reflect upon either time or life necessitates subjecting it to narrative, to forming a "life story" by combining successive presents. Simultaneously, the narrativity of personal or public history establishes man at the level of within-timeness: a past event is experienced *from* the present, becomes momentarily an imaginary quasi-present. Narrative -- whether as fiction, life, or history -- combines two aspects, the episodic and the configurational. Each moment of experience modifies the understanding of previous moments of experience and projects its own horizon of expectations. During interpretation, these moments are *configured* into a *sens*ible narrative. The experience of a narrative is similarly continuous, combining the present moment, the projection of the future, and the memory of that which is past in each single moment.

The past is experienced as a triple tension between **same**, **other** and **analogue**. The same is the action of re-enacting or rethinking the past in the face of its *otherness*, its negative ontology which is always essentially different from the present. The analogue of the past is to *see* the past *as it was*. The analogue is closely related to Ricoeur's vision of metaphor as a creative and heuristic projection: it allows the past to be understood and reviewed but not to be recreated. The present, the *now*, becomes the now of human action, implicitly the "now-that..." and "from now on...". The otherness of the past is "no

longer"; it is constructed *against* the present, but the past is also present as *traces*, the results of past actions. The traces engender a feeling of **debt towards the past**, an assumed responsibility to see the past *as* it is understood to have been. Fiction lessens the burden of this debt, allowing the past to be experienced as it *might have been*.

The hermeneutic study of a work of art combines **prefiguration** -- the impressions collected and continuously modified during the reading experience -- with **configuration** -- the construction of the succession of episodes of the narrative into a whole past -- and **transfiguration** -- the appropriation of the narrative as a possible way-of-being-in-the-world. During the initial, prefigurative reading the reader should attempt to place herself "within the sense of the work". The hermeneutic reading attempts to find keys to the work in the work itself, which are used during the configuration phase to structurally guide the unlocking of the text.

For Ricoeur, textual reference is to the field of human action and to a *productive representation* of the world. A text projects a world which redescribes actuality; in such an imaginative world, the fictional ego experiences an imaginative being-in-the-world. Texts function as *heuristic fictions*, explanatory redescriptions of the world.

Ricoeur's theory of reading is both descriptive of the reading process and prescriptive of an ideal reader; rather, the text seeks to "place the reader in its *sens* [sense/direction]". A text presents an imaginary world, and invites the reader "to undergo an imaginative variation of his [sic] ego" (Ricoeur, 1984:94).

> To the extent that readers subordinate their expectations to those developed by the text, they themselves become unreal to a degree comparable to the unreality of the fictive world towards which they emigrate.. Reading then becomes a place, itself unreal, where reflection takes a pause. On the other hand, inasmuch as readers incorporate -- little matter whether consciously or unconsciously -- into their vision of the world the lessons of their readings, in order to increase the prior readability of this vision, then reading is for them something other than a place where they come to rest; it is a medium they cross through[...] In this state of non-engagement [with action and perception] we try new ideas, new values, new ways of being-in-the-world
>
> (Ricoeur, 1985:414).

The ideal reader becomes one who is willing to apply the lessons of the text to her own understanding of her own life.

The hermeneutic process, for Ricoeur, consists first of a "naive" reading, where the reader fully accepts the invitation of the text. Secondly, the reader should question the text as to its construction, analyse the text as an aid towards understanding. Finally,

the play between the event of the reading and the meaning of the reading experience should be acknowledged.

REPRESENTATION : READER : BASES

Text : Representation constituted an analysis of the novels in terms of characters and worlds. **Representation : Reader** is an inquest into the ways of being-in-the-world -- the lessons -- offered by Ackroyd's novels. This is performed both on the level of character, where the reader investigates the ways-of-being of characters, and on the level of the reading experience.

According to Pavel (1986:57), in multiple-world situations it is usually possible to identify primary and secondary ontologies. The primary ontology is distinguished as being more comprehensive, more "real" than the secondary. In the reading situation, Earth-Prime may be said to assume the position of primary ontology. However, while the fictional ego *emanates* from Earth-Prime, it adjusts itself to conditional existence within the fiction. In Ricoeur's terms, people *dwell* in fiction as they dwell in the world: they construct their dwelling, their mode of being, take up residence, stay for a while, and think upon it.

Viewing the fiction from the perspective of the fictional ego, a new multiple-world situation arises, where the worlds may again be differentiated as primary or secondary. The reading experience and the appreciation of art or the watching of a motion picture also temporarily assigns the fictional/artistic world as the primary ontology. Film theatres are in fact designed to facilitate such a transition; intrusion of actuality upon the senses is restricted to a minimum. When the secondary worlds in a novel consist exclusively of flashbacks or hopes, such selection is fairly easy: the novel's action is focalized, at any moment, on a particular point in time and space, and it is the world containing this time-line that is the primary world. Gothic fiction (Melmoth the Wanderer, for instance), **limit-gothic** texts (such as Wuthering Heights) and modernist fiction complicate the issue. In modernist fiction, the action usually either belongs to the secondary ontology (at the hypodiegetic level, as in Heart of Darkness) or is focalized from a multiplicity of viewpoints all describing the same primary ontology (as in Faulkner's Absalom, Absalom). Interior monologue largely interiorizes the action, in a sense establishing (a) secondary ontology *within* the mind(s) of (a) character(s). One of

the hallmarks of postmodern fiction, however, is the presentation of several different ontologies which compete for primacy (*see* McHale, 1991:3-11; Lodge, 1977:30). This relativises the very idea of a single primary ontology.

The very complication of ontologies in postmodern fiction depends on the reader's attempts to assign primacy to a single ontology. If it is possible only to establish a series of primary ontologies, how may Ricoeur's concept of being-in-the-world be applied to postmodern fiction? Obviously, different characters' experience of being-in-the-world may be examined; but if the full impact of postmodern fiction is to be appreciated, it is necessary to take account of the awareness of multiple ontologies as an aspect of being-in-the-world.

The reader's investigation of the modes of being in postmodern fiction, as experienced in the reading situation, is an activity of being-in-time, situated in and controlled by the temporal dimension. Fictional worlds and characters, under Pavel's principle of minimal departure (1986:88) are reconstructed by the reader to resemble actuality as closely as possible. The reader's attempts to reconcile differences from actuality extend towards the coherence of fictional worlds and characters. Faced with a series of interconnected worlds, such attempts lead to the (provisional) adoption of a particular fictional world as a primary ontology from which to investigate the others. Although only provisionally more stable than other ontologies in the same text, this ontology becomes the **base ontology** for the fictional ego. The base ontology serves as a base of operations, a provisional point of view from which to investigate other ontologies.

It is from the base world, the analogue for Earth-Prime, that projections are made both by characters and the reader with regard to the fictional universe. Because the fictional ego *dwells*, in Ricoeur's term, in the fictional world, the possible worlds it projects have the base world as primary ontology, rather than actuality. By extension, possible worlds projected from the fiction become primary vis-a-vis actual-world fictional worlds. When a reader extends possible worlds from the actual world using components from the fictional world, the base of such possible worlds can no longer be clearly said to be the actual world. Rather, they emanate from a possible world, the base of which can be seen as being equally the actual and the fictional world. Reading CTN, for instance, the world in which Chatterton killed himself by accident becomes possible from the fictional world before the reader actually considers whether it may be possible from the actual world. To give a different example, the fictional ego's examination of the possibilities of a fictional relationship necessarily precedes any comparison of the reader to her actual social life.

Metafictionally, earth-prime -- the ontology containing the reader (onlooker, thinker, speaker) -- functions as base world. Considering the religious mindset however, which assigns primacy to the spiritual world, and the difference between world-versions provided by the media, the selection is arbitrary. For the fictional ego, several factors influence the selection of a base ontology, the most important of which is the rule of minimal departure. Fictional worlds, especially referential ones, present themselves as base worlds by relative similarity to actuality and by decreasing their distance from actuality. Narrative design is also an influential factor; primogeniture affords particular worlds, such as Earth-Dyer, provisional ontological priority, influencing their eventual relationship to other worlds.

The suitability of a world as base becomes particularly important in fiction that seeks turns on close involvement of its perusers, such as pornographic, horror, and detective fiction, all of which depends on the reader's relating the fictional situations to their actual-world situations for maximum effect. The positioning of Ackroyd's worlds at an optimal distance also invites the reader's close involvement with the novels.

The choice of primary ontology, of base, can make a significant impact on the overall reading of a book. Is CTN based in a world distinguished from the actual only by small miracles (the characters, the (forged) Chatterton papers, the specific art gallery)? Or is the world revealed near the end of the novel, to the history of which Chatterton's accidental suicide belongs, the base? The choice influences, among other things, the distance of the base world from actuality, and therefore its subversive potential, its potential to qualify or threaten actuality.

Ackroyd's fiction repeatedly presents multiple contradictory worlds, equally stable with regard to ontology. Under the threat of finding itself suspended between different temporary bases, the fictional ego has to either choose between them or accept them all simultaneously. Both options lead to an experience of dislocation. In the first instance, the fictional ego will remain aware of the arbitrary nature of its decision; in the second it has to accept an unstable version of "reality".

The focus of this chapter is to investigate how Ackroyd's texts confront the fictional ego with exactly such conundrums. To follow the dislocationary paths leading to and from various conflicting possible and alternate worlds it is necessary to locate the fictional ego at a base of operations. The identification of base worlds, though, is a part of the hermeneutical circle, emerging from the reading of the novels.

REPRESENTATION : READER : *HAWKSMOOR*

> Thus in 1711, the ninth year of the reign of Queen Anne, an Act of Parliament was passed to erect seven new Parish Churches in the cities of London and Westminster [... and the time came when Nicholas Dyer, architect, began to construct a model of the first church . . .
> (HM:1).

The narrative segment which prefaces HM, introduces and contextualizes Dyer and situates the novel in time. The preface starts in the past tense, describing in general terms Dyer's work; but as it becomes more closely involved with Dyer, the narrative shifts to the present tense. In miniature, the preface represents the passage to the fictional world. The reader is led from the recollection of the past in the present to an imaginative present in the past.

One of Baker's most astute observations concerns Ackroyd's use of tense "as a linguistic manifestation of time" (1992:112). Past timepockets are frequently related in the present tense, and present timepockets in the past. Tenses "acquire specific thematic functions within [Ackroyd's] oeuvre" (1992:112). The use of present tense to present Earth-Dyer implies that the past both influences the present and is ever-present, connoting Eliot's eternal present. In Ricoeur's terms, the present tense also implies *event* while the past tense implies reflection. The description of the past in the present tense contributes to the hesitancy between base worlds by assigning *presence* (in the (sense) used by Derrida) to the past and *absence* to the present, thus contributing to the destabilization of Earth-Hawksmoor. [2]

The preface sets the Gothic tone for the novel "[...] for a moment, there is only his heavy breathing as he bends over his papers and the noise of the fire which suddenly flares up and throws deep shadows across the room" (HM:1). This activates the code of metaphor and metonymy, linking Dyer's activity to energy and emphasizing the relation between light and darkness. As preface, though, this passage precedes the metafictional break which announces the start of the novel proper.

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2 Although she only illustrates its relevance in the early novels, Baker's observation holds for most of Ackroyd's novels, with some qualifications. HDD also presents two timepockets, but both are narrated in the past tense, refusing "presence" to both. DL destabilizes the distinction entirely, since most of the novel is written in the past tense, but none of the narratives can be said to be more stable than the others.

❖ ❖ ❖

> AND SO let us beginne; and, as the Fabrick takes its Shape in front of you, alwaies keep the Structure intirely in Mind as you inscribe it. First, you must measure out or cast the Area in as exact a Manner as can be, and then you must draw the Plot and make the Scale. I have imparted to you the Principles of Terrour and Magnificence, for these you must represent in the due placing of Parts and Ornaments as well as in the Proportion of the several Orders ...
>
> (HM:5)

The first chapter opens in the vocative. For the space of a paragraph the reader is under the impression that she is being addressed across time, in an archaic dialect, directed to take the narrative as *gestalt*, to help form the plot. The impression is, of course, imaginary, since the second person addressed is not the reader, but imbedded in the narrative. The fact that Walter Pyne is only addressed by name half a page later, though, creates a *sous rature* effect. The reader has been called, has been invited -- and hasn't. This *sous rature* effect persists as an impression of presence, of being in the same room as Dyer. Additionally, though, it establishes an "I -- you" communicative structure which emphasizes the otherness of Dyer and his world.

Modes of Being : Dyer

Earth-Dyer is presented in the first-person narrative in the present tense. To use Ricoeur's terms, Dyer situates himself within the present tense of his narrative. Although his narrative initially appears to be rendered interior monologue, Dyer does show an awareness of an audience: "I ought in method to have informed the *Reader*" (HM:49; emphasis added). Dyer appears to narrate his life following the fact, interspersing the narrative of his present with narratives of his past. As such his narrative is not interior monologue strictly speaking, but a narration of his thoughts and beliefs along with his history, granting the reader access to his thoughts.

Dyer reveals himself to be self-centred and arrogant, with little respect either for Walter or Wren. Rather than describe himself at a stroke, though, his personality has to be inferred as other, in conversation, from his actions and thoughts. His fascination with darkness and the supernatural is present in his discourse from the first: "[...] there is no Light without Darknesse and no Substance without Shaddowe [...]" (HM:5); "I build in the Day to bring News of the Night and of Sorrowe [...]" (HM:6). Dyer clearly stands in a transgressive relation to his peers, as is evident from his apparent disregard for the location of Christchurch on a mass grave (HM:7). It is only gradually, however, that the nature of his beliefs and obsessions are revealed. By allowing his discourse to reveal only brief glimpses initially, his concerns are posed as a question to the reader, opening up a specific horizon of expectation. This horizon -- the reader's understanding of Dyer's metaphysical beliefs -- is reached only provisionally.

From the point of view of the reader, Dyer's metaphysical beliefs refer to an alternate world in a salient structure to Earth-Dyer (situated on ***figure 3***, p141 at Earth-Dyer$^{\infty}$). Very little of this world is ever revealed; but Dyer's references to his beliefs function as gradual articulations of the *relations of alternativeness* separating his religious world from his base world.

Dyer's churches represent an attempt to defer death perpetually. Through this ontological project, death is always both absent, and present in his thoughts. His attitude towards Wren and Walter seems to stem from his reading their presence as signs of death. While they shy from such orientation towards death, though, Dyer celebrates it not only in his beliefs but also through the building of his churches. Christchurch is erected on the site of a lime-pit; beside it, Dyer builds catacombs, a labyrinth for the dead. It is exactly through his glorification of death that Dyer attempts to move beyond it.

Dyer's declaration of faith sounds like an insane combination of all possible "pagan" beliefs, with christianity reread as subordinate to these:

> [...] Sathan is the God of this world and fit to be worshipp'd [...] The inhabitants of Hispaniola worship goblins, they of Calcutta worship the statues of the Devil, Moloch was the god of the Ammonites, the Carthaginians worshipped their Deity under the name of Saturn and it is the Straw Man of our Druides. The chief God of the Syrians was Baal-Zebub or Beel-Zebub, the Lord of the Flies [...] He is called Baal Saman among the Phoenicians, by which is meant the Sunne. Among the Assyrians he is call'd Adrammalech, and also he is called Jesus, the brother of Judas. [...]
>
> (HM:21).

The transgressive nature of his faith is textually indicated in his own words: "[...] I, the Builder of Churches, am no Puritan nor Caveller, nor Reformed, nor Catholick, nor Jew, but of that older Faith which sets them dancing in Black Step Lane" (HM:20). From within the christian faith -- under which Dyer is inscribed as an architect of christian churches -- Dyer's faith is anti-christian. By the end of the first chapter, Earth-Dyer remains inscribed under the christian paradigm, and Dyer in absolute opposition to christianity. This is also the understanding of Fokkema and Baker (among others), who resolutely describe Dyer as diametrically opposed other -- as "satanist" and "evil".

Dyer's character is far too complex to be hedged by such a simple label, as evidenced when he is awoken from a nightmare by his servant Nat Eliot. Where Dyer's existence is a continual affirmation of death and decay -- one of the first things he notices on waking is his own "stinking Breath upon the Sheets" (HM:43) -- Nat Eliot's is directed towards life and its sustenance. Nat fawns on his master, worrying over his sleep, his health, his eating habits. This care appears to be a specific instance of his basic character; he has noticed a mouse warming itself by the fire and has fed it some milk. Dyer's observation emphasizes the radical contrast in their natures: "This Boy would feel sorry even for the Stones I break" (HM:43). And yet, Nat's devotion is also an answer to the pity Dyer offered him, as a sickly, stammering youth. Dyer cured him (by "magick art", HM:145), and his keeping him on "out of Pitie" (HM:43), despite Nat's essentially "good" nature, is evidence that Dyer's misanthropy is not universal.

If not complete, Dyer's dislike of people is well-supported by the psychological coding: he lost his parents to the Plague, wandered around the city as an orphaned beggar, where he was found by Mirabilis who introduced him to the occult. He shared his parents' dying moments, and as beggar endured the scorn and pity of passersby.

In recounting his history Dyer offers the reader a view both of his past life and of his present experience of its recollection. His recollections, narrated alongside the record of his present life, shape his present dislike of Wren and his enlightenment ideas, and his own obsessive view of death and decay as the ruling forces of the world. Mirabilis'

teachings inform the design of Dyer's churches, so that each contains "a Signe so that he who sees the Fabrick may see also the Shaddowe of the Reality of which it is the Pattern or Figure" (HM:44). Apart from the terrifying aspect of his churches, the design of the churches and the number of pillars are determined by numerology and occult theory.

Dyer experiences time as complex; where Wren sees the aftermath of the Fire as an opportunity to appropriate his own time, Dyer experiences the weight of history, his debt to history, as governing his time. For this reason he seeks simultaneously to perpetuate the patterns of eternity, building his churches on ancient sites, and to imprint his own designs on time, in the belief that his stone churches will govern time. Dyer also needs to fix his being-in-space, though; he feels uncomfortable and contracts fevers when away from home (HM:59). When he visits Salisbury Plain, (HM:61), he experiences Stonehenge as solid, as drawing him into the flux of time. Dyer builds his churches in a fixed pattern, so that they may act like Stonehenge, anchoring space while allowing time to become fluid. The churches become a way of ruling and controlling space, functioning as strange attractors for the temporal flux.

Dyer's profoundly mystical experience of Stonehenge stands in sharp contrast to that of Wren, who attempts to reduce the structure's effect to geometrical equations and symbols. By comparison to Dyer's emotional capacity, especially in the face of temporal markers, Wren's Reason appears to be an escape mechanism, a way of disavowing experience as event. If the things that move Dyer are esoteric, his reactions often appear "genuine". His reverence for Stonehenge and his reaction to the vagabonds living in Limehouse are equally emotional. He hears them sing,

> A Wheel that turns, a Wheel that turned ever,
> A Wheel that turns, and will leave turning never,
>
> (HM:66)

and breaks down: "and then a confused Hurry of Thought and Dizzinesse came upon me like a Man often meets in a Dreame. I ran towards them with outstretch'd Arms and cried, Do you remember me? I will never, never leave thee! I will never, never leave thee!" (HM:67). Dyer's pattern upon infinity is not one of loneliness, but of companionship in terror. His affirmation of death is not exclusive; rather, time and its sign, death, become the basis for a true "brotherhood of man".

Dyer sees architecture not as opposed to but allied to "nature". "All things Flow even when they seem to stand still, as in the hands of Clocks and the shaddowes of Sun-dials", he tells Walter (HM:87). The shadows moving on his churches signify flow or change, the passage of time through and over life. Dyer's view of death as ruling life is

integrated with his view of nature as mystical. His glorification of the gods of destruction and death is also, paradoxically, an affirmation of his experience of life.

From Walter, Dyer learns that there are those in the office who speak against him. While the criticism is directed at his ideas, that which he is most afraid will be discovered -- his private beliefs and his project of a city-wide temple -- remain secret. Dyer is increasingly made aware of his position as pariah. He is more upset by the distrust than his misanthropy would suggest (Why do the Living haunt me when I am among the Dead? -- HM:89); but as long as he is seen as eccentric, his projects and his power remain hidden. He sees the distrust as provoked by his own misanthropy. He does have reason to fear, for the Black Step Lane assembly has been destroyed in a witch-hunt (HM:91).

> Pitie I cannot [have], for I am not so weak; but it is not to be believed that he who holds the Knife or the Rope is without his own Torment.
>
> My Inke is very bad: it is thick at the bottom, but thin and waterish at the Top, so that I must write according as I dip my Pen. These Memories become meer shortened Phrases, dark at their Beginning but growing faint towards their End and each separated so, one from another, that I am not all of a peece. Here laying beside me is my convex Mirror, which I use for the Art of Perspecktive, and in my Despair I look upon my self; but when I take it up I see that my right Hand seems bigger than my Head and that my Eyes are but glassy Orbs: there are Objects swimming at the Circumference of the Glass [...]
>
> (HM:92).

This reverie follows the telling of the third sacrifice, at St George's-in-the-East in Wapping. As Fokkema asserts, "it is a system *outside* Dyer which makes him a murderer rather than any urge which can be understood psychologically" (1991:146). The murders are not motivated by any force internal to Dyer, but by his religion. Far from finding pleasure in the sacrifices, Dyer's own experience of reality, of time and space and self, is distorted by his undertaking. The moments of sacrifice, as the posts between life and death, concretize the histories of his victims and themselves take on weight in Dyer's own history of himself. Yet their effect escapes their author, becoming a part of his design. As discrete moments in his life story, they do not fit a narrative pattern. Rather, they are "dark at their Beginning" (HM:92), each presenting itself as a separate moment of reality, so that Dyer's experience of the presence of the past is splintered into a set of disjunctive moments. Consequently, Dyer experiences himself as increasingly fragmented and distorted, separated from reality.

St Georges-in-the-East arises where "all corrupcion and infection has its Centre" (HM:92). The area is a rookery, home to criminals and prostitutes, and is infamous for insanity and violent death. Dyer lists numerous murders that occurred in the vicinity. The murderous character of the area, which is affirmed and confirmed by his church, also stirs his own thoughts. His passage through the area is as haunted as that of any passerby; Dyer hears murderers and their victims cry out to one another.

In characteristic psychological motion, Dyer proceeds to describing a haunt of sadomasochistic homosexuals, then to an autopsy performed by Wren. He requests his reader to "anatomise the mind" (HM:95) of Wren. This indicates, on Dyer's part, an ability to examine the modes of living of others. He juxtaposes his description of Wren's "filthy Curiosity to pore in Humane Corses and so to besmear himself that he might trace each Nerve and all the private Kingdom of Veins and Arteries" (HM:95), his autopsy, against a tale of a masochist who shared an inn with Dyer. The implication is -- and Dyer does not make an explicit link -- not only that the mind of Wren and of the masochist are equally corrupt, but that the two stories concern the same mind, and the same person.

Dyer's description of Wren's autopsy is then also intended as a description of the operations of his mind. Wren's enthusiasm for autopsy is emphasized by contrast to the reaction of the coroner, who leaves the room, and refers to "the poor, poor girl" (HM:97). He dissects the body, not to gain knowledge -- for it is apparent that he already understands anatomy -- but from a private pleasure, and in this instance, to educate Dyer. Wren's autopsy is extensive; it is not enough for him to find that the woman was murdered, but he continues to examine her internal organs and uterus. Wren's attitude, even more than the autopsy itself, becomes an infraction of privacy, especially as he objectifies life and death as "the Union and Dissolution of little Bodies or Particles" (HM:97).

Dyer's reaction to the presence of death, and to the autopsy, is strictly opposed to that of Wren. His narrative of the event focuses his distaste for and disapproval of Wren. This is emphasized by the structure of his narrative. He intercuts his account of Wren's soliloquy on anatomy with fragments of abuse overheard from the sailors, and draws attention to Wren's relaxed attitude *en route* to the gate-house where the body lies. As Wren dissects the corpse Dyer experiencing "a Roaring in [his] ears". In answer to Wren's lecture he tells of a lady who turned with disgust upon herself at the thought of her own internal organs. Wren's dismissal sets Dyer's opinion: "The meerest Rake-hell has a finer Philosophie" (HM:97).

Dyer's abhorrence is not of death itself, but rather of Wren's objectification of it. Wren mentions that the Romans "held it unlawful to look on the Entrails" (HM:97). Allied as closely to Wren's rationalism as it is, though, the autopsy becomes an act of haruspicy, an attempt capture the meaning of life, and to ultimately demystify it. By contrast, Dyer's experience of death is profoundly mystical. On looking on the murdered woman's face, he experiences her last moments and "the first Agonie of her Pain" (HM:97). By an act of sympathy, her experience becomes his, so that he feels "his Hand around *my* throat" (HM:98; emphasis added). To Dyer, death and decay is not an explicable phenomenon, but in itself an explanation, a sign of eternity.

The visit to Bedlam, too, is significant of the modes of existence of Dyer and Wren. Both enjoy visiting the asylum, which appears to be a popular entertainment for Londoners. Some of the inmates appear to have access to the 20th century, "of Ships that may fly and silvered Creatures upon the Moon" (HM:99). In these stories Wren finds more than mere curiosities, observing that "there is a Grammar in them if I could but puzzle it out" (HM:99). Dyer, however, sees the asylum as a sort of microcosm of his world: "This is a mad Age [...] and there are many fitter for Bedlam than these here confin'd to a Chain or a dark Room [...] and what little Purpose have we to glory in our Reason [...] when the Brain may so suddenly be disorder'd?" (HM:99). Wren appears uncomfortable with this suggestion. To Dyer, reason seems a flight from reality, a pattern imposed on reality; accepting chaos and irrationality and decay is an intrinsic part of his way of life.

It is in the intimation of sense in the irrational discourse of the "Demoniack" that Dyer is disturbed. The madman claims that he has augured their future, but the chart he mentions -- "the Quadrature of a Magnet, in the Sextile of the Twins that always go in the shade" (HM:100) -- does not fit any extant astrological ordering systems. "Thus have I puzled all thy Scholarship," he says, and when Dyer laughs he turns on him "What more death still Nick, Nick, Nick, you are my own!". Dyer is disturbed by the fact that the madman (demoniack) knows his name. Truth emerges from irrationality, even as in Dyer's own "pattern"; "one Hawksmoor will this day terribly shake you" (HM:100). In this sense, Dyer realises that there are others who share his secret insight into the world, and yet the madman's message cannot make sense to him.

Dyer's own "list of Wonders" is not the tabulated rationale of Wren's oddities, but concerns the supernatural and the influence of the imagination upon the real. To him the world is "mundus tenebrosus" (HM:101), a shadowy world; where the figures of reason are built upon air, and the darkness always spreads, engulfing reason. This is in part

Dyer's excuse for his religion, in part warning to others: "Men that are fixed upon *matter, experiment, secondary causes* and the like have forgot there is such a thing in the World which they cannot see nor touch nor measure: it is the Praecipice into which they will surely fall" (HM:101). His churches are not only an affirmation of but also bear witness to the irrational and to darkness. More than merely honoring his religion, his churches leads the viewer to acknowledge the mystery beyond: "[L]ook upon my Churches [. . .] and do you not wonder why they lead you into a darker World which on Reflection you know to be your own?" (HM:102).

Dyer is not, himself, exempt from fear. He receives a blackmail note, and irrationally concludes that it is from Yorick Hayes, a colleague at Scotland Yard whom he dislikes and distrusts. He eventually kills Hayes, on the strength of his suspicion, as his sacrifice for the fourth church (HM:150). Later, as Walter lies dying, he admits to having written the letters (HM:184).

Dyer's obsession with "Corrupcion" also manifests itself as a stress on the physicality of bodily functions. He is very aware of the effects of his own illness. He associates bodily functions, such as defecation or farting, both with physical decay and mental corruption, especially that of Wren. The association between corruption and bodily functions extends and culminates, at least initially, in sexuality. Describing Wapping, he expands on "the House for Buggaronies next to the High-way, where grave Gentlemen dress in Women's cloathes, then patch and paint their Faces" (HM: 94). His disgust is plain, but his imaginative description also indicates his fascination. He uses this description as introduction to his examination of Wren's mind. The tale and the circumscription of Wren's self-flagellation are amplified by the juxtaposition of his soliloquy on anatomy with sexual vulgarities, to provide a figure for Dyer's perception of his mental corruption.

In contrast to his religion which remains a constant, a strange attractor, Dyer's sexuality develops as he grows more intimate with death. His initial reaction to the advances of Mrs Best is contemptuous; he describes her as "a clownish woman, a Relict daubed thicker with Paint than her Sceleton is with Flesh so that she appears very much like a Mossoleum" (HM:46). Although he bites his tongue, his intended words to her are vicious:

> 'Twas not the Muse but her strong beer that stung
> Her Mouth being stopt, the Words came through the Bung
>
> (HM:47).

Later, while he pursues Hayes, his immediate reaction is still fraught with disgust and contempt, but he chooses to "make [him]self pleasing to her [...], for in the wide World who [is] there to trust besides?" (HM:128). He still recoils from her advances, but now he is "at a Loss what to say" (HM:128).

While Hayes is not the first victim he converses with (he has a long conversation with Ned), Dyer's pursuit of Hayes is conducted on far more familiar terms. He takes Hayes to several pubs to make him drunk, then leads him to the church of St Georges Bloomsbury. The hunt becomes a seduction, and the final moments are ambiguous:

> And so we crept, both of us Laughing, to the Place where the Pipes were being laid. He bent over to look at this work, tho' he could see but little, and then I stroked him and put my Hands around his Neck. I owe you a Pass, *I whispered*, and now you shall have it. He made no Crie, and yet it is possible that I myself uttered one [...]
>
> (HM:150).

Hayes' murder is the first with erotic overtones, but it is also the only murder committed for Dyer's own sake rather than as a sacrifice alone. Dyer's reaction is also unusual; he is overcome with fear, which is gradually replaced by elation. In this state he is approached by a prostitute. He requests her to flog him, assuming the same masochistic sexuality that he so reviled in the homosexuals and in Wren.

The last sacrifice Dyer performs, that of Thomas Robinson, is overtly a seduction. In beggar's clothes Dyer returns to his childhood, and by St Alfege's Thomas Robinson comes across him. Dyer approaches him, his light and frivolous tone evidencing his disturbed mental state to both the reader and Thomas Robinson:

> How do you do my little Honey, *says I*, How do
> you do my Sweetheart?
> At that he was much affrighted and said, For
> God's sake who are you?
> I am your pretty Maid, your merry Wren.
> And will you show me the Church yonder so that
> we may hug in its Shaddowe?
>
> (HM:182).

Dyer's fear and reverence of death, which inform his fear and disgust of sexuality, becomes a courtship. His sexuality becomes intimately linked both to a will to live and

to a yielding to death and decay. He offers death as sex, realising that both are equally part to life and death.

Dyer grows increasingly paranoid as his pattern nears completion; but he is also less careful. He defends his belief in the irrational to Wren and later Vanbrugghe, in the latter case actually giving away the game: "Just as in the Narration of Fables we may see strange Shapes and Passages which lead to unseen Doors, so my Churches are the Vesture of other active Powers [...] I wish my Buildings to be filled with Secresy, and such Hieroglyphs as conceal from the Vulgar the Mysteries of Religion. These occult ways of Proceeding were treated of by the Abbot Trithemius in his very learned and ingenious Discourse de Cryptographica ..." (HM:180-1). It is then that he attempts to recapture an earlier mode of being, that of beggar. Dressed in rags "the fearful Lightness in [his] head [passes] away and in [those] Beggar robes [he] is once more fastened by the Earth: in that manner, all [his Fears and anxious Perplexities [leave him]" (HM:182). This return to his childhood culminates in his curling up like an embryo by St George's, Bloomsbury. It is in this state that Thomas Robinson comes across him. Dyer assumes a light banter which borders on insanity and invites him to "hug in the Shaddowe" (HM:182) of the church. On this occasion, as with Walter, Ned and Nat, Dyer does seem to exercise some unidentified personal power over another individual. "I see no Church, *says he*. But these were desperate Words, for he was tied like a dead Bird to a Tree".

Dyer's character is defined by a pattern of indices that refuse integration according to reason. Dyer, in fact, seems unwilling to commit himself to a single, unchanging character: "Each Humour makes way for another and cannot be recollected once it has passed" (HM:149). Apparently simultaneously to his misanthropy, he "loves" people: Nat Eliot, Ned, Thomas Robinson, the vagabonds in Limehouse. His pattern of churches reflect his faith, but is also intended to bring others to an awareness of the omnipresence of death. His own constant awareness of death allows him intense emotional experiences, something apparently lacking in the characters who represent reason

Dyer's being-in-the-world, and hence his character, is strongly influenced by his religion, his metaphysical beliefs. Many religions construct their metaphysical realms in reified terms (although these are often taken to be metaphorical). Christianity, for example, constructs the "New Jerusalem", the Silver City, where God sits in judgment surrounded by seven flames. The metaphysical world to which Dyer's religion refers cannot be reconstructed. In part, this is because his religion refuses summary into single

terms. Even the many names which signify his deity (HM:21-2) testify to the radical inscrutability and indivisibility of his metaphysical world. Dyer defines his religion in terms of signifiers which have no fixed meaning, and which mingle in a carnivalesque structure. It is only in terms of the relations of alternativeness that his religion can be defined: it is *other* to rationalist christianity, both opposing and swallowing it; it allows for the eternal presence of time while embracing constant flux and change; it views death as transitory, and as a motivation and for and affirmation of life; it refuses good/evil dichotomies.

Standard western systems of thought are clearly unable to capture either Dyer or his religion. If an approximation of the *sens* of Dyer's being-in-the-world is to be made, it must needs be done from systems of thought that do not remain bound within judaeo-christian oppositions. One such system is suggested by the character generation/description system of the Dungeons & Dragons role-playing game.

In Dungeons & Dragons, character **alignment** is circumscribed by *two* sets of attitudes, the first approximating the character's attitude towards the structures of the universe (or lack thereof) and the second his or her attitude towards people. The first set comprises Law (or Order), Neutrality, and Chaos. A Lawful character believes that the universe is ultimately structured, and that he is a part of that structure. He might be in rebellion against what he sees as the Order of the Universe, but he firmly believes in it. A Chaotic character is individualistic, though not necessarily obviously so; he believes that apparent order masks total disorder. A Neutral character believes that the universe is essentially in balance. The second set, that denoting morality, has bearing on a character's attitude towards himself, society and others. It consists of Good, Neutral and Evil. A Good character supports 'universal' values, such as helping those in need and being honest. An Evil character takes pleasure in doing harm to others, and a Neutral character will attempt to further its own cause (usually) without directly causing harm to others. To keep the grid from slipping back into a binary system with a middle ground, "the three terms should be seen as the points of a triangle, each pulling away from the others" (Gygax, 1984:18). The term "neutral" is perhaps unfortunate, evoking a simple balance between order and chaos. Viewed "externally", it could be argued that order and chaos is untenable as a binary opposition. Order itself is not an equilibrium, but a *system* of differences. If a system of differentiation becomes too complex and contains too

many subdivisions the concept of "order" becomes untenable since the pattern is no longer visible. [3]

In this system, Dyer would be *chaotic neutral*, rather than evil, since otherness from christianity does not automatically imply satanism. Appropriately, according to Gygax, "this alignment is usually played by madmen". Such a definition describes Dyer as experienced (though not necessarily as *articulated*) both by himself and by the fictional ego internal to the reading experience. Dyer is experienced as *other* in part due to the preconceptions of the reader, but to a large extent because he sets himself up as other to the order reigning in his world. "Chaotic neutral", and other suspensions of preconceived binary oppositions, allow the fictional ego to investigate and appropriate Dyer's way of being-in-the-world *as* otherness.

3 An example from Kuberski's Chaosmos might help to clarify matters. The "order" of the universe is based on differences in potential energy, on differentiation -- a chaotic aspect. "Although entropy means the increasing 'disorder' in a system, this disorder comes about by an incremental diffusion and balancing of energy which finally results in "heat death', a perfect distribution of energy so that no further interactions can occur. Entropy, rather than a principle of chaos, could be considered the means of a perfect harmony or equilibrium. Negentropy [the opposite of entropy], on the other hand, is the contradictory movement toward greater and greater order in a system -- 'order' here defined as an increasing imbalance or disorder in the distribution of energy" (Kuberski, P. 1994. Chaosmos. Albany: State University of New York.) Entropy simultaneously represents a state of both extreme chaos (since nothing functions) and a state of extreme order (since everything is the same).

Modes of Being : Hawksmoor

Introduced as analogue for the reader into the more accessible world of the novel, Hawksmoor guides one aspect of the reader's discovery of his world. According to Fokkema's model, Hawksmoor is a fully realized character -- he eats, moves, has a father, a definite vocation, desires knowledge. The codes constructing character, the modalities of character, are all fully operative. Yet Hawksmoor is not a free entity: his knowledge, understanding and actions are all strongly influenced by his world.

Fokkema (1991:146) argues that Hawksmoor's actions, no less than Dyer's, are motivated not by an inner drive but by his vocation. In this sense Hawksmoor finds himself motivated by forces beyond himself: his initial investigation is the direct result of an assignment given to him as detective. Hawksmoor does seem to be interested on his own behalf as well, though. His "[impatience] to see it for himself" (HM:109) derives from his own temperament, his own taste for mysteries.

Initially at least, Hawksmoor displays a certainty, a self-confidence, that serves as a mark of power. His arrival at the third murder site strongly asserts his identity:

> [...] as soon as [the inspector] saw Hawksmoor *striding* towards him, he switched [his tape-recorder] off and stood up, grimacing at a pain in his back. Hawksmoor *chose not to see it* and *came very close*: "I am Detective Chief Superintendent Hawksmoor, and this is my assistant Detective Sergeant Payne: your Divisional Superintendent has been in touch with you about my involvement?"
>
> (HM:110; emphasis added).

Upon learning that the body has been moved he treats the inspector with the arrogance of one used to power

> Hawksmoor examined the man's uniform. "Perhaps you have been told, inspector, that you must never move the body until the investigating officer has arrived?"
>
> "But the father came, sir --"
>
> "Never move the body!" And then he added, "Where has it gone?"
>
> (HM:111).

This first introduction of Hawksmoor establishes his position and his personality as self-assured, curious, professional, providing a horizon of expectation for his future actions and behaviour.

At the morgue, Hawksmoor repeatedly stresses the importance of time and of timing. To Hawksmoor the spatial dimensions of the murder -- the body, the visual images -- remain "broken and indistinct" (HM:113). To reconstruct the murder as event, he needs to be able to bind the disparate elements into a narrative of sorts:

> Only the phases of time could be known clearly: the quickening and deepening of respiration at the first shock of the hands around the throat; livid congestion and laboured respiration as the grip tightens and consciousness becomes confused; infrequent respiration, twitchings, loss of consciousness; terminal vomiting and death. Hawksmoor liked to measure these discrete phases, which he considered as an architect might consider the plan of a building: three to four minutes for unconsciousness, four to five minutes for death (HM:113).

Hawksmoor relies on a reconstruction of the being-in-time of the relation between killer and victim to reconstruct the murder. His reconstruction (a possible world projected from the past) incorporates the historical context of murders as well as more specific patterns. As such, he is unwilling to simply assume -- as Walter does -- that the killer is insane (HM:125). His contextualization relies on historicised patterns of murder (HM:117), placing his interpretation occurs at an intersection of historical and his own fictionalised time. "The recent cases of strangling [... seems] to him to be quite unusual -- to be taking place at the wrong time" (HM:117) because they do not fit the pattern of 20th century murders. These murders are out of pace not only with historical patterns, though, but also locally. The pathologist is unable to construct a timetable for the death, resulting in Hawksmoor's inability to concretize a narrative for the murder: "If I knew the end, I could begin, couldn't I? I can't have one without the other" (HM:114). The belief in the linearity of events and of time implicit in this statement of Hawksmoor's, and his confidence, betray his belief in rationalism, Newtonian physics and the Cartesian unitary self.

The elements of the murder, though, are resistant to a linear reading of time. The body heat indicates that the murder is between four and six hours old; but the bruises suggest a murder time at least two days prior. The only certainty is that he was last seen at six the previous night. Hawksmoor's confidence rings as empty as his belief in linear time. Despite his display of power towards the inspector, he cannot alter circumstances: the body has been moved, "the atmosphere of the murder [has been] already destroyed" (HM:111). In establishing his power and confidence, the novel hints at his eventual inefficiency in terms of the modality of power.

Hawksmoor's initial bafflement with the case results from his inability to conceive a solution that does not honour the laws of physics. He cannot reconstruct the events of the murders because he cannot construct the alternate world in which they occur, a world in which laws of physics do not hold across relations of alternativeness. As Hawksmoor realizes the multilevelled incongruency of the murders, he starts to modify his perception of time. By the end of chapter six he no longer insists on the beginning-middle-end structure of time of Newtonian physics, but is willing to concede that "perhaps there is no beginning, perhaps [he] can't look that far back" (HM:126).

This realization seems to result, at least partly, from the parallel between his investigation of the case and his understanding of life in general. At the police station off Brick Lane he overhears a conversation between two junior officers, and repeats snatches from their conversation "to see if their shape or sound accounted for their position in the sequence which the two men were unfolding" (HM:117). His study of people becomes an investigation, a search for patterns. But this conversation, like the one with his father (HM:121-122) and his contact with Mrs West (HM:119) does not fit into any pattern that he can understand: "And he saw no reason for them; and he saw no reason for the words he himself used, which came out of him like vomit, which carried him forward without rhyme or meaning. And the lives of these others gripped him by the throat and kept him huddled on his seat" (HM:117-118). He cannot see the pattern in these events, as he cannot yet see the beginning of the murders: "'I never know where anything comes from, Walter. [...] Where you come from, where I come from, where all this comes from.' And he gestured at the offices and homes beneath him" (HM:126).

On his way to the next murder scene, Hawksmoor's faith in rationality seems to be restored. He lists the photographs and scale maps he will require for his investigation, details from which he expects to logically reconstruct the murder. Narrative sentences slip over into narrated thought, combining the authority of the narrative and the immediacy of his thoughts:

> He [prides] himself on his acquaintance with chemistry, anatomy and even mathematics since it [is] these disciplines which [helps] him to resolve situations at which others [tremble]. For he [*knows*] *that even during extreme events the laws of cause and effect still operates*; he [can fathom the mind of a murderer, for example, from a close study of the footprints which he [leaves] behind -- *not, it would seem, by any act of sympathy but rather from the principles of reason and of method* (HM:152-3; emphasis added).

The reader's perspective on Hawksmoor's mind, however, allows glimpses of the irrational, denied to Hawksmoor, hiding behind his conscious thoughts. Hawksmoor remembers some apparently irrelevant lyrics; his rational preoccupation masks his excitement at entering the murder scene. Most significantly, he does not register the words on the plaque above the church, towards which his eyes are drawn. The words on the plaque are nevertheless presented to the reader: St Mary Woolnoth was founded by Nicholas Dyer. The importance of the plaque for Hawksmoor's purposes is of course apparent to the reader only because of her familiarity with Earth-Dyer and the events thereon.

Events conspire to remind Hawksmoor of the "impossibility of his task" (HM:157). Mary, the woman who found the body, appears to have no awareness of time, and little of space; and Hawksmoor realizes how complex the case is:

> The event of the boy's death was not simple because it was not unique and if he traced it backwards, running the time slowly in the opposite direction (but did it have a direction?), it became no clearer. The chain of causality might extend as far back as the boy's birth, in a particular place and on a particular date, or even further into the darkness beyond that. And what of the murderer, for what sequence of events had drawn him to wander by this old church? All these events were random and yet connected, part of a pattern so large that it remained inexplicable. He might, then, have to invent a past from the evidence available -- and, in that case, would not the future also be an invention? It was as if he were staring at one of those puzzle drawings in which foreground and background create entirely different images: *you could not look at such a thing for long.*
> (HM:157; emphasis added)

Although unwilling to conceive of past and present as an opalescent double structure, the effect of this epiphany stays with Hawksmoor, eventually leading him towards irrationality and his unreal meeting with Dyer. He starts to notice countless, disjointed, apparently disconnected details: "The music of a popular song ... a door closing, a boy dropping a coin in the street, a woman turning her head, a man calling" (HM:158). He starts to doubt the ontology of his own world, existing only as he invents

it second by second (HM:158). Walter notices his frailty, his growing self-doubt, even though he is still able to structure the investigation in terms of what he is looking for (HM:159). Returning to the investigation at St Mary Woolnoth, he sees his face in plastic sheeting at the archaeological excavation site. Outside his attention is occupied by a tramp drawing a "figure of a man who had put a circular object to his right eye and was peering through it as if it were a spy glass" (HM:162). He returns to the station to interview a young man who has confessed to a murder. As often happens, the man is innocent. In him, and in others who accuse themselves of crimes they did not commit, Hawksmoor recognizes an alternative version of himself, what he might become: "[experiencing] blind panic and then rage as [he stares] at [his] life" (HM:164). In the face of this realization, Hawksmoor still retains his outward arrogant self-confidence (HM:162-3).

He receives a letter outlining the murder area (HM:166), and realizes that a pattern is forming. The pattern is very vague, though, and Hawksmoor becomes angry and harsh towards Walter. Going home he is paranoid and attempts to evade any possible pursuer [Walter does follow him]. Again the small details which detach themselves from the continuum of the world draws appear as disturbing, unintelligible signs.

Walter, in turn, studies Hawksmoor, and follows him covertly. He is concerned by his superior's "sudden rages, and no less abrupt retreats into silence, his tendency to walk off by himself as if walking away from the case altogether [...] combined with his apparent inability to make any progress in his investigations of the murders" (HM:168). While he sees his watch on Hawksmoor as safeguarding his own career, his actions speak of both his own investigation of Hawksmoor's life, and obsessive behaviour on his own part.

Hawksmoor's behaviour becomes irrational; while investigating the murder at St Alfege's, Greenwich, he breaks off suddenly and runs over the summit to find the meridian. As his sense of time gradually collapses, he attempts to situate himself in space. Like his search for the murderer, this search proves unsuccessful. His frustration becomes agony: "The pattern, as Hawksmoor [sees] it, [is] growing larger; and, as it expanded, it [seems] about to include him and his unsuccessful investigations" (HM, 1985:189). The evidence becomes totally irrational and scattershot; he finds a package by his door containing "the architect's" sketch, as well as several other sheets containing phrases in brown ink (HM:191). Attempts to locate the man are unsuccessful, but finding the first note, the one indicating the spatial relationships between the murder

sites, Hawksmoor realises the connection between "the architect" and the note; that the paper probably came from a memorandum pad used at a doss-house. Hawksmoor is elated: "it was as if he had climbed higher and, seeing much further into the distance, had lost his fear" (HM:191). The realization seems to bring back all of Hawksmoor's previous confidence, signified (in him) by a brusque and arrogant manner towards the guard and the two tramps at the shelter. Walter, however, affords the reader a different view of Hawksmoor's behaviour: "[He] looked at him running ahead, beneath the grey London sky, and pitied him" (HM:191). For Walter, Hawksmoor's excitement is another step away from him, from rationality.

It is in this state, beyond rationality, that Hawksmoor finally makes progress. He guesses that "the architect" is the murderer, and realises that he would recognise Hawksmoor. Walking past Christchurch, he "[feels] a wave of disorder -- and, with it, the sensation that someone [is] looking at him" (HM:196). Spinning around, he loses his spectacles and accidentally breaks them. His relief -- "Now I won't be able to see him" (HM:196) -- indicates his growing paranoia. On the streets of Whitechapel -- Hawksmoor, with his knowledge of times and places appropriate to murder, would probably know, though not realise consciously, that this is where Jack the Ripper once walked -- Hawksmoor does see a man with hair like tobacco on the other side of the street. He runs after him, and his call is not that of the authority of the law, but of a friend or a lost child: "Wait! Wait for me!".

After this last chance has slipped away, Hawksmoor searches fruitlessly among the tramps on the street, finally venting his frustration in a desperate parody of his old confidence. He stamps out a fire, around which several tramps huddle for warmth. "But still they made no noise and Hawksmoor, disgusted at himself for behaving in a manner which he had not foreseen, turned away. As he walked back he called out into the air, 'I don't want to see any more fire, do you understand me? No more fire!'" (HM:197).

Further attempts to locate the architect fail. An identikit issued through the media leads to the harassment of several tramps but "[does] not materially [assist] the investigation of the six murders. Hawksmoor takes to walking the streets; on occasions he believes that he is being followed, but he finds himself "treading the same paths as before" (HM:198), around the churches. He pins the pages of the notebook up against the walls of his room. In the presence of these papers, clues that lead nowhere, and faced with his debt toward the past and the past of the future, he starts to realise that the stakes are higher than he had expected, and that he is losing:

> And it was while he sat there, scarcely moving, that he was in hell and no one knew it. At such times the future became so clear that it was as if he were remembering it, remembering it in place of the past which he could no longer describe. But there was in any case no future and no past, only the unspeakable misery of his own self.
> [...] it seemed to him that he had lost his connection to the world and had become much like one of the cardboard figures in a puppet theatre
>
> (HM:199).

Together with his sense of position, of place, Hawksmoor feels his self, his dream of a unified identity, slipping away. He realises that it is his inability to interpret the facts, to shape them into a coherent narrative of past, present, future, that causes him and his world to fall apart.

> "In your experience, Walter, do any two people see the same thing?
> "No, but --"
> "And so it's your job to interpret what they have seen, to interpret the facts. Am I right?"
> [...]
> "And so the facts don't mean much until you have interpreted them?"
> "That's right."
> "And where does that interpretation come from? It comes from you and me. And who are we?" Hawksmoor raised his voice. "Don't you think I worry when everything falls apart in my hands -- but it's not the facts I worry about. It's me."
>
> (HM:200).

Hawksmoor is taken off the case; his life seems bereft of meaning, and he loses awareness of his being-in-time. Watching television one night, he sees a church service -- a church service in Christ Church, Spitalfields. As the camera lingers on the plaque outside he recalls that St. Mary Woolnoth, as well as St Alfeges ("the Greenwich church" (HM:214)) had also been erected by a Nicholas Dyer:

> He allowed the knowledge of the pattern to enclose him, as the picture on the television screen began to revolve very quickly and then to break up into a number of different images. Where before the churches had been for him a source of anxiety and of rage, now he contemplated each one in turn with a beneficent wonder as he saw how mightily they had done their work: the great stones of Christ Church, the blackened walls of St Anne's, the twin towers of St George's-in-the-East, the silence of St Mary Woolnoth, the unbroken facade of St Alfege's, the white pillar of St George's Bloomsbury, all

> now took on a larger life as Hawskmoor contemplated them and the crimes which had been committed in their name. and yet he sensed that the pattern was incomplete, and it was for this that he waited almost joyfully
>
> (HM:214).

In an encyclopaedia Hawksmoor finds Dyer, and a listing of his churches, including the seventh, the church of Little St Hugh beside Moorfields. He returns home and collects the pages from the notebook, knowing that the pattern is almost complete. Here, toward the end of the case, his oscillation between inertia and obsession, fear and desire, echoes Dyer's early ambivalence towards death:

> [...] it was the end, and this unanticipated and uncertain climax might yet rob him of his triumph: his will was emptied, replaced by the shape of moving things
>
> (HM:215).

He forges towards the church, finally entering its darkness, and finds "his own Image" beside him. Here, all perception becomes flux; sounds and echoes, light and shadow, shape and reflection blend into one.

***Hawksmoor* : Base worlds**

HM initiates the reader directly into Earth-Dyer, leading the fictional ego from present to past. The entry is gradual: from Earth-Prime, the fictional ego moves to an indeterminate, intermediate world (Earth[-] on figure 3, overleaf). The relations of alternativeness specify that Dyer stand in for the actual-world historical Hawksmoor (theoretically situated at Earth-Prime (1715)), and that Earth[-] has access to Earth-Dyer. From Earth[-], the reader moves to Earth-Dyer. The only aspect of the relations of alternativeness specified at this stage is that Earth[-] has direct, non-linear access to Earth-Dyer. As filtered through Dyer's mind, though, Earth-Dyer assigns the reader the role of other. Dyer's position as first reader places a ban on extensive action in the world: the reader may question Dyer extensively, but understanding of the world is deferred by the filter of Dyer's consciousness.

Within his world, Dyer functions as an authority; any attempt to understand the world beyond his discourse becomes an act of defiance. Although Earth-Dyer's

invitation and comparative ease of access as well as the mysteries evoked by Dyer spurs the reader to an active act of decyphering, the reader can never feel "at home" in Earth-Dyer. She remains a guest, although one inclined to explore the world as far as possible, and she remains other to the world. The reader may either attempt to base herself in Earth-Dyer, or accept the role of other unquestioningly and investigate the world from a distance, basing herself in Earth[-]. Earth[-] is virtually *terra rasa*, a radical lack which invites comprehensive importation of actual-world information.

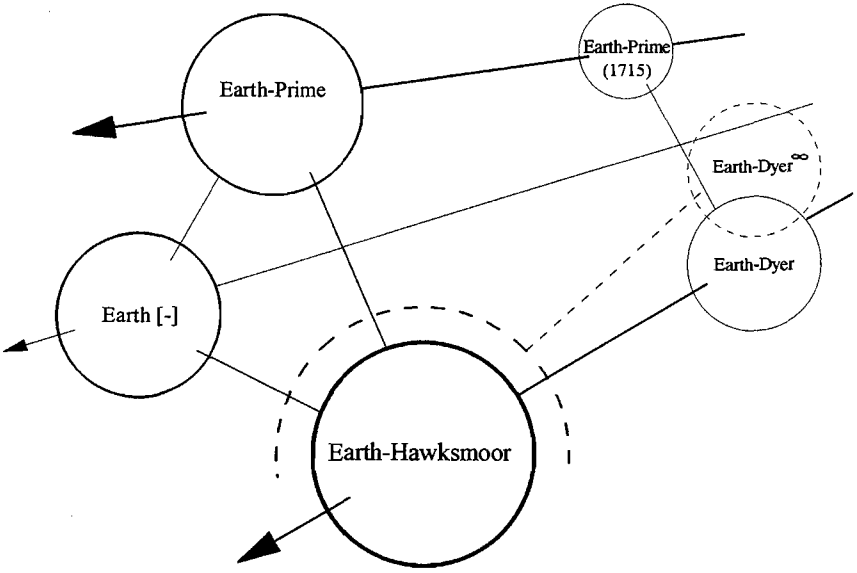

Figure 3 The worlds of Hawksmoor

The second chapter introduces Earth-Hawksmoor. Because of its radical difference from Earth-Dyer, Earth-Hawksmoor cannot be directly accessed from Earth-Dyer (although such access may later be retrospectively projected). If seen as a totally different world, Earth-Hawksmoor may be accessed directly from Earth-Prime. Given the parallel ending/beginning structure, it is more likely that the fictional ego withdraw to

Earth[-] before accessing Earth-Hawksmoor.[4] In either case, though, the relevant relations of alternativeness specify that there is some connection between Earth-Dyer and Earth-Hawksmoor.

Earth-Hawksmoor appears to be more accessible than Earth-Dyer, both because it is temporally closer to the reader, and because it is not as severely mediated/guarded by a single consciousness. As a result, the cornucopia of detail in Earth-Hawksmoor, emerging from an impersonal narrative instance, becomes marginalia to the world rather than to the psychology of a subject. The external narration "leaves openings" for the reader and allows the reader privileges of observation over the characters, not least of which is access to the other world of the novel.

This entry into Earth-Hawksmoor is marked (or rather not) by a "searching" point of view. While the focalization can move freely between different points, the reader cannot: at each present moment, the aforegoing focalization still remains as a presence of the past. This presence of the past invites the reader to play, to propose possible focalizers. The settling of the focalization on Tommy Hill is provisional, affording the reader other vantage points in addition to her observation of Tommy Hill and her experience of his feelings and fears. Tommy Hill, as main focalizer in the chapter, becomes a sort of anchor to the world, offering the reader the chance to

> explore [his mind] in the third person narrative, take all the narrative procedures through which [she] makes judgments on the thoughts, feelings, actions of third persons, and transfer them into first person narrative, thereby creating a pseudo-autobiography
> (Ricoeur, 1984b:294).

Such exploration, however, is not tied to Tommy Hill exclusively. The reader retains the freedom to interpret, and to approve or disapprove. The ending of the second chapter leaves the reader with hopes, expectations and memories of Tommy Hill's life. As a sudden exit/expulsion from Earth-Hawksmoor at a critical moment, the unresolved strands of Tommy Hill's being-in-the-world remain as projected possible worlds (not illustrated), as unresolved expectations. These unresolved expectations remain a vivid presence of the past even while the reader re-enters Earth-Dyer.

Unresolved expectations mark Part One of the novel. Dyer identifies himself as other, as transgressive of the rules of his society as well as alien to it, even as the

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4 If a possible future reading of HM were to be projected, say from 2012, the reader's fictional ego would necessarily follow this route. In such a case, Earth[-] is likely to demand importation from Earth-Prime (1985) in order to facilitate access to Earth-Hawksmoor.

structure of his narrative turns each revelation into a set of questions and expectations. Each of the two chapters which allow entry into Earth-Hawksmoor proposes an alternative mode of being, creates sets of expectations, and then ends on a cliffhanger, expelling the reader with a set of unresolved mysteries. The relative similarity of Earth-Hawksmoor (Ned/Tommy) to Earth[-] and Earth-Prime invites the reader to dwell in these worlds. The expulsions prevent the fictional ego from unreservedly setting up base in Earth-Hawksmoor and interrupt the construction of possible worlds of expectations, leaving the fictional ego dithering between different worlds.

Part Two introduces Detective Superintendent Hawksmoor. Although investment in Hawksmoor is initially compromised by the *sous rature* effect lingering after the disappearance of first Tommy and then Ned, he provides a relatively reliable anchor in Earth-Hawksmoor. Apart from the relative similarity of Hawksmoor's mindset to that of actual 20th century subjects and the similarity between his world and the reader's, he is introduced into a position roughly congruent with that of the reader. Hawksmoor's life is as full of mysteries as the narrative of Dyer, whose secrets lie mostly within himself. By contrast, the mysteries facing Hawksmoor are largely external to himself, even as they are external to the reader (as are Dyer's). The reader is therefore placed in a position of analogue *vis-a-vis* Hawksmoor: both are tempted to solve the riddle of the murders in Earth-Hawksmoor. The text places the reader in the position of detective, inviting her to attempt to solve the mysteries of the novel: not only Hawksmoor's murder case, but also Dyer's otherness (alterity?) and the relation between the two.

The importation of elements from the detective genre, and the subsequent positioning of the reader as detective impacts on the reader's experience of the novel. As in detective fiction, the novel demands from the reader a heightened responsibility for epistemological investigation. The reader becomes sensitized to her responsibility to collect and collate clues, in order to finally integrate these in an attempt to solve the mysteries represented by the novel. In the worlds of HM, all information becomes possible clues, which draws attention to the details of the novel and their *sens*. Together with the demand of the relations of alternativeness that Earth-Dyer and Earth-Hawksmoor be related to each other, this epistemological search for answers prompts the reader to scan both worlds in an attempt to resolve the mysteries of the novel. Finally, of course, the novel is not a *whodunnit* nor even properly a *howdunnit*, but a novel about *ontological* questions. In retrospect, the reader is required to investigate the question, "what was at stake?"

The textual links between the close of each chapter and the start of the next ("[...] the Starres at Noon" (HM:25)//"At noon they were approaching"(HM:26); "[...] he saw

the face above him" (HM:42)// "The face above me [...] (HM:43)) indicate that the two worlds are connected. The reader may realize that events in Earth-Hawksmoor are connected to those in Earth-Dyer by the end of chapter 2 ("But he was falling from the tower as someone cried *Go on! Go on!*" (HM:42). It is very possible, though, that such an interpretation will remain tentative at least until the start of the third visit to Earth-Dyer. In the mean time, the distinct differences between the worlds keep them apart.

Chapter Three ends with Dyer's meeting with, and sacrifice of, a vagrant called Ned. Chapter Four, which is set in Earth-Hawksmoor, starts with a free focalization which gradually focuses around a tramp called Ned. The two worlds represent very similar sets of events, but form two distinct worlds and two distinct narratives. This repetition occasions a sort of ontological *deja vu*, where the reader experiences from different perspectives the same things happening in different worlds.

The re-entry into Earth-Hawksmoor is once again into London, but in the absence of Tommy Hill, the reader is cast adrift in the world. The focalization closes in on Ned, but Ned's restless discomfort and chaotic modes of thought and perception make it very difficult to identify with him. The reader is left with a lot of freedom but no stability, no anchor, no guide in the fictional world. The chapter again closes on a cliffhanger, with a more specific threat than does Chapter Two:

> Then he [...] contemplated the futility of his life. He had come to the flight of steps which led down to the door of the crypt and, as he sensed the coldness which rose from them like a vapour, he heard a whisper which might have been "I" or "me". *And then the shadow fell* (HM:86; emphasis added).

Earth-Hawksmoor is presented as complex, and in the third person, which allows the reader more freedom in the world. However, the stability of the reader's access to the world is repeatedly compromised as the first two realizations of the world each focalizes on a different set of characters, and leaves them under a threat. The links to Earth-Dyer, which also link Tommy and Ned to Dyer's victims, create an *expectation* of their deaths. The expectation is not confirmed, however, before chapter 6, so that it remains an active aspect of the horizon of expectation. Life on Earth-Hawksmoor is experienced as uncertain and unstable.

By the close of Part One the reader is more familiar with Dyer and his world than with any other character or with Earth-Hawksmoor. Yet the reader remains other to Dyer and his world, while Earth-Hawksmoor is fairly accessible and resembles the world of the 20th century reader more closely. By denying the reader other characters to

investigate and to anchor her to either world, the text attempts to goad the reader into investigating Dyer's way of being-in-the-world. Such investigation, in Ricoeur's terms, necessitates "the appropriation of an alternative mode of being" -- an identification. The introduction of Hawksmoor in chapter 6 provides the reader with a character for investigation in a more familiar world. Unlike Tommy and Ned, Hawksmoor is introduced directly by the narrative, which opens to him speaking. This represents a shift or a break in the pattern, hinting that Hawksmoor's fate differs from that of Tommy and Ned. Even so, the reader's past experience raises the expectation that Hawksmoor is likely to disappear at the end of the chapter as did Tommy Hill and Ned. From the reader's point of view, investment in Hawksmoor is therefore conditional rather than immediate.

Still, Hawksmoor is immediately introduced into the same mystery that the reader has been immersed in. His words, the dialogue between him and Walter, confirm the expectations of Tommy Hill's and Ned's deaths raised earlier. The disappearance of Tommy and Ned is a mystery to Hawksmoor, a mystery to be investigated and solved. In this, Hawksmoor is placed on similar footing to the reader, since both attempt to solve the crimes. The reader's vantage point allows her privileged access to both worlds, allowing her to compare Earth-Hawksmoor to Earth-Dyer and to find/generate meaning from the apparent connections between them. As Hawksmoor's attempt to solve the series of crimes becomes inextricably bound up in a gathering of understanding of his world, the mystery facing the reader is not only to solve the crimes, but also to investigate the relations between the two worlds. On the level of the murder mystery Hawksmoor stands in for the reader, collecting information and connecting threads. Both Hawksmoor and the reader function as detectives.

The text presents Hawksmoor as analogue for the reader. The reader, while experiencing the fictional worlds as reader, is led to simultaneously *see* Earth-Hawksmoor *as Hawksmoor sees it*. As a result, the reader is invited to understand and experience the novel not only from a privileged point of view, but also to experience Hawksmoor's worlds as he comes to understand it.

A particular aspect of this understanding is the projection of Earth-Dyer$^{\infty}$, the world projected by Dyer's metaphyscial beliefs. Dyer writes this world in *signs* in his timepocket: the murders, the churches, his notebook. In Earth-Hawksmoor -- or Earth-Dyer (1985) -- Hawksmoor reads the very same signs. Both Hawksmoor and Dyer are unaware of the parallels, but to the reader it seems as though Dyer's metaphysical world subordinates Earth-Hawksmoor to itself. Earth-Dyer$^{\infty}$ is therefore present in the same

incarnation in both of the novel's timepockets -- inasmuch as the incarnation of a chaotic world can ever be seen to be "the same". Both Earth-Dyer and Earth-Hawksmoor are reinscribed under a its metaphysical system, which encompasses the christian as well as other faiths. The conflation of Dyer and Hawksmoor occurs under the sign of *chaos*, the disruption of distinctions between self and other, and good and evil. Hawksmoor's, and even Dyer's, inability to grasp Earth-Dyer$^{\infty}$ argues that all ordering systems are ultimately reductive.

The expansion of Earth-Dyer$^{\infty}$ to include Earth-Hawksmoor also unites the two worlds. Under its eternal present, Hawksmoor and Dyer become one -- the name "Hawksmoor" is restored to its "rightful" owner. One possible reading is to see the novel as the representation of an **ontological loop**. The version of history presented by the novel may be "true" in all possible ways up to the moment Dyer and his alter ego are reunited; at that point, though, it is erased and replaced by history as we "know" it today, twelve years after the "fact".

REPRESENTATION : READER : *CHATTERTON*

If the plenitude of HM resides in the detail of the world(s), that of CTN is projected primarily in the detail of the characters and their interaction. The being-in-the-world of Charles, Vivien, Harriet, of the characters in CTN, is marked by their relations to each other and to social institutions: marriage, production, literature, art, history. Related to this social being-in-the-world are the idiosyncrasies of the characters and their dialogue.

CTN has two prefaces. The first is a short biographical note on the poet, as might appear in any dictionary of literature; it includes a note on Wallis' painting of Chatterton (and also, disturbingly, on an unknown "contemporary portrait" of him; see also Baker, 1992:60). This preface serves at least two functions. In the first place, it serves to remind (or inform) the reader of who Chatterton was, making sure that the reader is familiar with the accepted version of history into or against which the novel is constructed. But the first preface is also inside of the novel, being conspicuously numbered "[1]" -- as that of HM is not. If there is any reason for this, might it not be to note the accepted history, not as authoritative, but simply as institutionalised? Secondly, then, this preface may serve to draw attention to the accepted history as a social

institution. In any event, it points the reader towards a horizon of expectation with regard to Chatterton -- whether as historical character/personage or as a social construct.

The second consists of extracts, some slightly altered, from the novel CTN. Outside of the context they receive later, each of these extracts is focused on an aphorism which introduces a thematic concern.

> "The wanderer's] eye will search for me round every spot,
> And will, -- and will not find me
>
> (CTN:2).

The poem recited by Chatterton relates to the notions of simulacra and *différance*. [5] Chatterton's disappearance is not only into either death or hiding in his own time, but also into literature in historical time. His presence in literature, though, becomes a *trace* (in both the Derridean and Ricoeurian senses of the word) of which the origin -- the historical identity/ego of Chatterton -- cannot be recovered. The "immortality" of Chatterton as irrecoverable trace in Wallis' painting is proposed by Meredith, who also broaches the theme of forgery (as pretense and reproduction). Harriet's misquotes point toward the fate of the poet, dissolving first into madness and then into time and "English Literature"; while the correspondence of Charles and Chatterton conjure up visions and the presence of the past.

Additionally, the second preface introduces as characters Chatterton, Meredith (as "model" poet), Wallis (as painter), Harriet Scrope (as "[having] given [her] life to English literature" (CTN:3), Sarah, and Charles Wychwood. Each extract establishes a characteristic of a character -- Chatterton's intensity, Meredith's love of puns, Harriet's pretentious misquotation, Sarah's contrariness, Charles' illness and visions -- serving as an introduction to the being-in-the-world of that character. Importantly, it introduces the characters *together*, bringing together different times.

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5 "Central" to the theories of Baudrillard and Derrida respectively, these terms seem to have entered general philosophical and literary-theoretical discourse. As terms from outside of Chatterton, these simultaneously function as explanation and are imposed on the continuum of the novel.

Modes of Being : Charles

> As soon as he turned the corner, he looked for the House above the Arch
>
> (CTN:7).

The idea of "looking for something", searching for something not present, introduces the idea of a search in the very opening of CTN. Charles is, in his own right, as much a detective as Hawksmoor is; the motif of an continual search remains attached to Charles throughout the novel. Even before he is identified by name, Charles speaks, looks around and interprets his surroundings. His remark, "There are no souls, only faces" (CTN:7), appears first as a universalized declaration. The comment, however, accompanies his examination of the houses surrounding him: houses with facades (faces) with "pilasters copied from the eighteenth century" (CTN: 7), even though these are incongruous with the rest of the appearance of the houses. Like the narrative's familiarity with the surroundings and the character, the houses cannot be exactly dated, only the lost originals, the souls, of which the pilasters are copies.

Charles' personification of the houses is followed by a conversation with a dog. This tendency to form projections of others, of alternative modes of being onto others extends also to people; his realization that "the high voice he had heard from the stairs was actually that of Mr. Leno himself" (CTN:8), implies that he had expected the opposite.

Charles' way of viewing the world is revealed by the narrative mode, which constantly slips between narrative sentences and narrated thought. Charles' perception of the world is at once visual and narrative, projecting as he does chains of events that might have led to his visual interpretation: "spoons *apparently flung into* a cracked fruit dish from a great distance [...] a heap of large dolls with their various limbs tangled together *as if they had been shot* and *thrown* into a mass grave" (CTN:8; emphases added). Charles' is a being-in-the-world, a being-towards-death burdened with (or inspired by) an inordinately large debt to the past, a necessity to provide pasts. This debt weighs him down so that his projections of the future all emanate from a lost past or into a lost present: "We can always reach [the country] if we want to. Anyone can" (CTN:7); "I could have been a flautist" (CTN:9). "Everything is possible" (CTN:9), but nothing is actualized. Many of the actions Charles does undertake seem to be motivated by a momentary realization of his letting go of the present, of a debt towards the future. His

decision to actually sell the books (which he expects to be valuable) is a point in case: "for the first time in many months he recognised how poor he was and how much poorer he was likely to become" (CTN:10).

Charles' debt towards the past is manifested in his fascination with old things: the books on flautistry, the two paintings of Chatterton, the papers he later finds. But his love of old things is not necessarily invested in the things themselves. Charles finds them, keeps them for a while and attaches future projects to them, then discards or trade them. Old things become new thrills, new interests, if only temporarily; they become emblematic of things he *might have* become, of alternate modes of being.

Related to this is Charles' habit of *projecting* an alternate being-in-the-world; not only in his guess as to the owner of the high voice at Leno's, but also in his naming of Edward; the Idolater, the Unprepared, the Impossible, the Ungenerous. The Unemployed. His attempts to invent pasts, to project alternate modes of being, become substitutes for their experience, and, for him, ultimately come to stand in for the lack of direction of his own life. This is apparent also in his reaction to his own intermittent headaches; "he had seen a doctor, who had diagnosed migraine and given him some pain-killers; this had perfectly satisfied Charles, who considered the naming of his condition almost equivalent to the curing of it". Afraid of the reality of the headaches and their possible consequences, Charles allows the name to stand in for the act required to deal with them. Charles is generally afraid of reality, and especially afraid of the emptiness of open spaces:

> Charles looked out of the window, so lost in thought that he did not realise how his eyes took fright at the endless sky and how they focussed instead upon a sparrow shivering upon a rooftop opposite. Its left wing seemed to have decayed and the air trembled around it; Charles' eyes shifted again, trying to erase that image"
>
> (CTN:14).

The wounded sparrow, in turn, suggests impotence and failure to conquer the sky, and death, which is itself an endless emptiness, things Charles turns from because they embody his own fears. Reality, for Charles, signifies emptiness and death. His is a being-towards-death, but he substitutes his awareness of death for a series of fascinations and names.

The one face of/from the past that is able to draw Charles' attention and keep it, is the painting he finds. In part, this is due to the painting itself: both Charles and Philip notice the peculiar intensity of the eyes, and others -- Vivien and Edward especially -- are frightened of it. At least as much of Charles' obsession with the painting and with the

papers must be ascribed to desires within himself, though. To Charles, Chatterton offers a peculiar alternate mode of being, as a poet who received no recognition in his own time but did eventually earn everlasting fame. If the papers were to be proven real, Chatterton would even have been successful while alive, although obscure. Additionally, though, the papers and the painting offer Charles a chance to change the past *in* the present, to concretise an imaginary mode of being.

It is not only relics from the past that are neglected by Charles. In his social relationships, belonging to the present, he is often revealed to view things -- and people -- as of momentary interest only. His and Philip's discussions of the present are cursory only; even recent acquaintances, such as Harriet, are out of mind when he does not sustain contact. "Harriet Scrope was the somewhat elderly novelist for whom Charles had briefly worked as a secretary [...] that had been four years ago, but still Charles spoke of her with affectionate familiarity -- that is, when he remembered that she existed" (CTN:20). This is, perhaps, why he is so easily distracted -- Charles lives in the (temporary) resurrection of the past, and the projection towards the future.

This is true even of his treatment of Vivien's present, and specifically her job. The fact that she is employed of course allows him to construct alternate futures and leave them unfulfilled; but it is a fact he refuses to acknowledge: "he [...] rarely mentioned her work and, when she [...] wanted to discuss some problem or argument at the gallery, he assumed a slightly puzzled expression -- as if he was not at all sure that he knew what she was talking about" (CTN:41).

Charles returns to Mr Leno's shop, to find that the painting was bought from Joynston's, in Colston Yard, Bristol. As he approaches the mystery, Charles' illness increases. He wakes up the next morning from a bed full of brown sweat. His throat aches and he experiences extensive hallucinations: he goes to a cafe where he drinks from a cup in which the tea is cold on the left side and hot on the right, and where everyone "[feeds] off small piles of chemicals" (CTN:46). [6] It is not clear whether the figure, apparently Chatterton, that approaches him in the park is "real" or hallucinatory; but the young man discusses Charles' illness with him. The identities becomes blurred, and one of them admits to being sick; and later, when reality has reestablished itself, Charles is assertive: "I was sick once [...] but I'm better now" (CTN:47). Charles' affirmation is an attempt at gaining a hold on his presence, and hence his future. On the

6 Baker (1993:99) refers to this sequence as Charles' experience of "double-time", (apparently) reading it as "displaced fantastic" (McHale, 1991:80). With an eye to Ricoeur's idea that metaphors gain their meaning only within the context of the text in which they appear, *I* prefer to read it as hallucination, which to me seems more in line with the truth/falsehood, original/simulacrum thematics of the novel.

train to Bristol with Philip the next day, while eating a copy of Great Expectations, he feels good enough to joke with him.

In Bristol, Charles seems happy when the "network of ring-roads and pedestrian 'walk-ways'" (CTN:49) lead them a dance, so that they reach their destination by a roundabout way. On the strength of his newfound assertion over reality Charles walks blindly -- and calmly -- into the traffic. Even though he seems oblivious of the very real traffic, he finds Colston's Yard without much effort. He enters the Joynston's Bramble House premises alone while Philip visits the church. "Pat", the man who meets him, seems rather less real. As with Dyer, the narrative itself sets up the abnormality of Pat, making a point of Charles' "casual" reactions, as if Pat's "were the most reasonable statement[s] he had ever heard" (CTN:51). Perhaps because the finds the situation already alien, imaginary, Charles is comfortable enough in these surroundings to echo Pat's playful, almost coy tone.

Although Charles seems to be taking all this in stride, accepting the most outrageous of social situations as though he may have imagined them, the papers he receives from Pat unnerve Charles. Philip has picked up a leaflet on Chatterton in St Mary Redcliffe, and the phrase "everlasting fame" depresses Charles. Charles is in search of the originary Chatterton, but Chatterton's fame emphasises his own failure. Charles appears to be both obsessed by and frightened of his quest; the ambivalence echoes his own projects towards fame. Charles' headaches seem to be caused by his work, as well as interfering with it. As soon as he mentions the possibility of fame coming from the Chatterton papers (to Edward), he starts feeling the beginnings of a headache. He empties the bags with "a furious enthusiasm" (CTN:61), but as soon as he sees the contents as a treasure ("pieces of eight") he sinks onto the sofa in a nauseous fit.

The headaches, more directly, appear to be connected to failure. As illness, they are harbingers of death, the awareness of which Charles is at great pains to avoid. To attempt, to succeed, is to fight death; but to fight death it is necessary to acknowledge it, to acknowledge that one will someday be gone. With Flint, Charles comes close to articulating this truth, but does not appear to realize it. Instead he skirts the issue of Flint's success: how much Flint got for his latest novel, how much he paid for his word processor. Money reifies the social contract, as success has captured Flint in his being-towards-death. What Charles values in the Chatterton manuscripts is not the possible fame or financial success, but the opportunity to project a "true" future and past. As stated above, this set of and past are interdependent.

Charles is caught in a double-bind. His illness, his failure and his involvement with the Chatterton mystery all signify death, of which he is afraid. As his conviction

concerning Chatterton's fraud grows, his private reality becomes more and more solid. He moves towards Earth-Chatterton but away from Earth-Vivien, his physical link, his body, decaying. Even when he acknowledges towards himself that his body is failing, he attempts to hide it from Vivien. It does, however, find expression in his care for others, as he becomes obsessed with Edward's health (CTN:125).

To assuage Edward's worries that Chatterton, or at least Chatterton as represented by the painting, is trying to hurt Charles, he takes Edward to the Tate Gallery to show him the Wallis painting. He notices how fragile the bridge looks, and realises that he must have looked at it the same way all his life without noticing that it reminded him of death. In the Tate, Charles stands riveted amongst paintings of nature, "of gorges, ravines, abysses and wild oceans" (CTN:131) -- exactly the things that he used to subconsciously ignore -- until Edward asks directions from a museum guard and has to take him by the hand and lead him towards the painting. The paintings Charles notices seem to reflect his position in history: the recent paintings show figures in "brooding or unquiet configurations, some of them carrying heavy burdens and some of them sitting dejected" (CTN:131); those of the 18th century are "solid and complete", dominating their landscapes. The seventeenth century faces seem furtive, "looking out from dark corners of panelled interiors or smiling in the shadows". "Charles could see in each face the life and the history; he did not want to leave the world in which his own face was their companion". The last articulates Charles' fear of death: these faces live beyond their time, accompanying each generation of the living, while (most of) the living disappear when they die. As he watches the painting, Charles sees himself lying there, and Vivien watching over him. He has to agree with Edward's claim that Chatterton is not dead yet; he seems to also acknowledge that the search *is* doing him harm.

At at the celebratory party Charles conceived with great enthusiasm it is as though he is left out of the social equations. For reasons of their own, the others talk around and over him. Charles, however, seems not to notice, as he attempts to introduce his topic, Chatterton, into the conversation. In his enthusiastic eulogy he quotes a poem to prove that "there are true poems because there are true feelings, feelings which touch everyone"; a poem about the omnipresence of death. In his last conscious moments, he admits that he, too, will die. He admits why he keeps on writing:

> "It is a dream of wholeness, and of beauty. All the yearning and all the unhappiness and all the sickness can be taken away by that vision. And the vision is real. I know. I've seen it, and I am sick"
> (CTN:152).

All of Charles' cheer, then, all his creation of a world of his own, has been an attempt to create wholeness and beauty; the projection of ways of being, the sharing of his joy and knowledge with the dog, with Edward, with Philip, with Vivien.

Modes of Being : Earth-Meredith

Earth-Charles/Earth-Vivien's serving as base for the reader does not relegate Earth-Meredith is a not a mere extension to it. As a world in its own right it presents independent ways of being-in-the-world, in Meredith, Henry Wallis and Mary.

Posing as Chatterton for Wallis, Meredith argues his ontological position within the painting. He seems less concerned about posing than to bring his point home to Wallis: that the ideal, represented in art, shapes reality. According to him, Wallis wants him for his "face, but not [him]self" (CTN:133). The painting will become the ideal representation of Chatterton, but by extension also of Romantic ideals. Meredith's ontological questioning is intricate though apparently intellectual only. When Mary asks him to accompany Wallis home because of the fog, he uses the natural phenomenon as a metaphor for indeterminacy, "What fog is that, my dear?" (CTN:133). In front of Mary, in his social relationship with her, Meredith puts on an artificial manner. Mary notes that he seems more natural on paper (CTN:141); before her he becomes a model, an image not only of a poet but also of a person.

Although he is more at ease with Wallis, waxing enthusiastic about a recent exhibition he has seen, the tension between reality and what he prefers to call "verisimilitude" (CTN:137) pervades both his personality and his conversation. He repeatedly returns to the subject of the reality of the painting, finally concluding that, although the various stages of the painting will prove "delightful" (CTN:139; primarily in the sense of "causing delight"), Wallis will have created "a costume drama, a tragic scene worthy of Drury Lane" (CTN:140). The subjectification of someone or something by art both strips it of origins and places it in an eternal present.

Despite his insistence that the visible things are "stage props, mere machinery" (CTN:140), Meredith feels very strongly about his disbelief in material things. It is only when he voices his thoughts to Wallis that he himself escapes the insubstantiality of the persona he shows to Mary. He himself sustains the first impression he has given her, although there is more to him than his part in what he calls "modern love" (CTN:144). Meredith traps the reader in his own meta"fictional" speculations. His being-in-time is directed, if anything, away from the present; he fails to see his own debt to the past, and intellectually disavows the reality of appearances. Despite this he has no problem assuming appearances; he adopts "Chatterton's last attitude without thought" (CTN:156) for the second sitting. Cutting himself off from the past, experiencing the present as unreal, Meredith is able neither to make projections into the future nor investigate the modes-of-being of others. He is unable to see Mary's discontent, and is surprised and hurt when she decides to leave him.

Mary refuses to fit the pattern of "modern love" or any other pattern Meredith's perception imposes on her. Her being-in-time encompasses past, present and future. To her, the present needs to contain a projection towards the future. "I wish [...] that you had some [fancies]" (CTN:136), she tells Meredith. Engaging with the present also necessitates emotional interaction, not Meredith's assumed intellectual cynicism. Meredith's "modern love" is also meant to name and render ineffectual her biting remarks. These are more than petty cruelties; rather, they are the signs of her discontent, attempts to share her experience with Meredith. Unlike him, she cannot attempt to live in an unchanging present. While the expression of Meredith's being is vocal (textual, constructing/"meaning"), Mary's is sensual and silent (event). She is aware of the immediate presences of shadows, of smells, of details, and takes pleasure in examining the tools of Wallis' trade (CTN:154). Meredith's professed love of detail is of detail in representation "I detest the grand effect, unless it springs from small things" (CTN:135). He fails, for instance, to notice that Wallis has bought different furniture *resembling* the furniture in the garret. It is, however, not George's sentiments which frustrate Mary but their *representation*, since this is the only form in which he shares them with her. "But he is always in Masquerade" (CTN:160), she says; and where he experiences the tension between pretense and real as an ontological problem, she experiences it merely as disruptive of their relationship.

Wallis, like Mary, immerses himself in the present. He, too, notices the small details, the fall of light and shadow, the shifting of the clouds. He wishes to capture moments, to turn them into ideal forms. He is aware, as George is, that art fixes history

in verisimilitude rather than realism; but for him art becomes ideal, a trace of history which shapes the present.

The relationship of George and Mary, and theirs with Wallis, flow to reestablish itself around the Chatterton portrait, with George losing all reality to the painting. Here, as in HM and in Earth-Chatterton, embracing the present necessitates leaving the past behind. In CTN, the poet becomes a spirit of change, or transformation.

Chatterton : Reader

While it is not a detective story as such, CTN makes use of mystery in a similar manner as does HM. The entry into the novel is structured to introduce the reader into a mystery. The first preface sets up expectations concerning the importance of Chatterton in the novel; the second functions as a "teaser", briefly but not comprehensively introducing a handful of characters. The preface introduces strings of expectations, hinting at the characters' idiosyncrasies and their concerns, without exploring them. The entry into Earth-Vivien is also marked with mystery, as far as the reader is concerned. The narrative introduces Charles and the House above the Arch as though already familiar with them, even though the reader is not. In itself, this emphasizes the gap between the reader's knowledge and that of the narrative, transferring the search motif, Charles' curiosity, to the reader.

The Lenos are a mystery by themselves. Their existence, though vivid, is evoked only by outward description from Charles' point of view of their almost disembodied remarks and actions. Although their dialogue resembles music-hall patter, they hardly appear as stock characters, so that they become -- and remain, even when Charles returns later -- systems signifying irrecoverable modes of being, figures of perpetual mystery and delight in the novel. While the novel never shows any promise of exploring their mysteries, the first visit to the Lenos' shop arouses expectations of surprise and of mystery.

It is also at Leno's that Charles first encounters the painting:

> It was a portrait of a seated figure: there was a certain negligent ease in the man's posture, *but* then Charles noticed how tightly his left hand gripped some pages of manuscript placed upon his lap, and how *indecisively* his right hand *seemed* to hover above a small table [...] He was wearing [...] a costume which might have seemed too byronic, too

> young, for a man who had clearly entered middle age. [...] Charles particularly noticed the eyes. They *seemed* to be of different colours, and they gave this *unknown* man (for there was no legend on the canvas) an expression of sardonic and even unsettling power. *And there was something familiar about his face*
>
> (CTN:11; emphasis added).

For the reader as much as for Charles the painting is marked as an object of mystery. Charles is drawn to it as soon as he sees it. The painting is described extensively, but the description is inconclusive, opening several questions to Charles -- and to the reader, since the description is from Charles' viewpoint. Almost as soon as he gets home it is clear that the painting represents a mystery Charles intends to solve. Much of his attention for the rest of the chapter -- and the novel -- focuses on the painting. Set up as an object of mystery, many of the reader's expectations regarding Charles accrue to the painting -- a mystery which deepens as Philip deduces that it is of Chatterton, an impossibility if the historical claim of the first preface is accurate.

Earth-Vivien/Earth-Charles is offered as base for the reader, on the strength both of its closeness and its primogeniture, as being the first world evoked by the novel. It retains its priority despite the complexity and ease of access to other, radically different worlds of the novel. The repeated returns to Earth-Vivien also has the consequence of weakening the ontological status of the other worlds *vis-a-vis* the reader, so that they serve to deepen and explain the base world.

Earth-Vivien is primarily focalized through Charles for the larger part of the novel. Charles, a literary detective, becomes the main analogue for the reader in the novel. As in HM, the quest and position of the detective is transferred to the reader. The reader is led to investigate different modes of being and compare different clues and propositions in an attempt to solve Charles' mystery. However, the nature of Charles' world is radically different from that of HM. The worlds of CTN are primarily socially constructed in the interaction between the world-versions of the different characters, of which those of Harriet and Meredith are merely the most extreme examples.

Almost all of the characters project alternate modes of being, not only from themselves but also on to others. Harriet, especially, is particularly fond both of pretending to be someone else and projecting possible modes of being onto others, whether sentient or non-sentient. She talks to sandwiches and shares her innermost secrets and concerns with Mr Gaskell (her cat). Ironically, her greatest fear is of being "found out" as a forger, even while her whole social life is a series of disguises and pretenses. She speaks to an imaginary Miss Wilson (who seems unreal even when present) before she starts her telephone conversation with her "particular friend Sarah

Tilt" (CTN:28); she renames the streets around her home; she adopts a cockney persona towards a blind man. Under the protection of his blindness, she extends this persona endlessly, inventing a dead taxidermist husband and near-blindness for herself. Harriet appears to enjoy the irony of lying to the old man until she actually starts to "enter the darkness which [enshrouds] him" (CTN:30). Whether to keep knowledge of her own cruelty from herself, or only for her own pleasure, she inverts the tale when she retells it to Sarah Tilt. Harriet's life is an endless series of parodies and rewrites, the result of her inability to "remain introspective for long [...] She could penetrate a little way into herself but then the procedure went into reverse and she was forced upwards again into the world: the experience was like falling" (CTN:29). Sarah has noticed "how age and relative fame had rendered Harriet less peaceful: the more she wrote, it seemed, the less coherent her personality became" (CTN:32). Harriet's constant reinvention of reality and of herself lead, like Charles', away from the world.

Although none of the main characters can be reduced to the sum of their quirks and oddities, most of them do have idiosyncrasies that mark their social congress. Charles, for instance, makes no secret of his love of puns, especially in order to express "profound" thoughts; Andrew Flint's "rather sonorous rhythms" (CTN:19) are imitated by Charles long before the Flint himself is introduced. In some cases, there is a marked difference between the social speech of a character and his or her private thoughts, or between the way a particular character treats others. Like other characters, Charles and Philip have developed certain modes of communication, certain ways of approaching each other that are unique to and representative of their relationship. One instance is Philip's weekly visits: "He always [brings] two bottles with him on his weekly visit and, when he [offers] them rather sheepishly, Charles [is] always surprised by the gift" (CTN:17). Charles is more serious with Philip than by himself, or with Edward; they have unspoken codes and taboos concerning their subjects of conversation, and what they are willing to say about their contemporaries. (A similar arrangement is also in effect when Charles visits Flint, who keeps finding occasions to slip into the kitchen to check "a small card on which he had written down a list of topics for conversation" (CTN:73). Sometimes the codes, the mask, the social identity of a character seems to swallow his or her discourse completely, so that they appear to prove Charles' early declaration: "There are no souls, only faces" (CTN:7). This is the case with Harriet, whose dotty private banter differs very little from her approach to Charles or Cumberland. Even though Harriet's discourse becomes moth-ridden with eccentricities, there are always hints of a "true" identity. Sarah, for instance, is never fooled by Harriet; and Harriet's own thoughts escape her speech patterns.

Each character has different social *roles to play.* Their peculiarities mask their true identities, but also allow communication with other characters. In many cases the social face of a character leads to humourous remarks or situations. The identities of the characters set up sets of expectations, not only for each other but also for the reader, who is led to interpret statements and to interpret remarks, even as the focalization allows the reader to move between the points of view of different characters, viewing one character while speaking and another while listening. The novel attempts to lead the reader to identify momentarily with different characters, to assume different roles in different social contracts.

Earth-Vivien and Earth-Meredith, especially, concern characters who are always *pasticcio.* Charles' social personality is influenced by his company; Harriet can never be experienced as herself by anyone, but is always mediated by invented personalities or insincere, amusing remarks; Meredith is always a model, whether a model poet or a model of "modern love". Even the minor characters, like Cumberland and Claire, and the walk-ons (the Lenos, Maitland, Pat) are irrecoverable, hidden behind the facade of their public personas. While these are often amusing and even endearing, they are false and imitated faces, forged for the benefit of social interaction.

From the privileged point of view of the reader it is clear that this perpetual reinvention, this constitution of reality through an endless series of imitations, copies, and forgeries, is a constant of the world(s) of CTN. Not only the characters are involved in the masquerade. The initial security invoked by the first preface is superseded by the premise of Earth-Charles, that Chatterton forged his own death, which is in turn erased by the claim that Earth-Joynson is itself a forgery. Earth-Meredith focuses on the forgery, the idealization of Chatterton's death, perpetrated by characters who are all in one sense or another forgers. Finally, the reader's entry into Earth-Chatterton presents Chatterton as accidentally *forging* (making) his own death.

Echoed and re-echoed throughout the novel, simulacra -- of modes of being, of works of art, of poets and poems, and plots that are copies of which the originals are irredeemably lost -- make up the world of the novel. Although Seymour's later paintings are by Merk, they are in Seymour's style, and there is no telling at which point they became Merk's paintings. Harriet's plot echoes that of "Harrison Bentley's" The Last Testament (CTN:69), which in turn concerns a secretary who fakes the style of the writer who had employed her, and which -- metatextually -- echoes the title of one of Ackroyd's

own novels. Meredith models the dead (?) Chatterton; and Charles in turn, in his imagination, takes the place of Meredith (CTN:132).

The theme of simulacra is echoed in the interaction of characters, in the social role-playing of the novel. The fluid triangle of George, Mary, and Wallis is echoed by that of Charles, Vivien and Philip.

In CTN, the conduct of characters is geared less towards communication than towards appearances, towards creating a complex social tapestry. Characters talk at or past one another, rather than *to*; they seldom if ever know each other's mind, and even more rarely are able to influence each other.

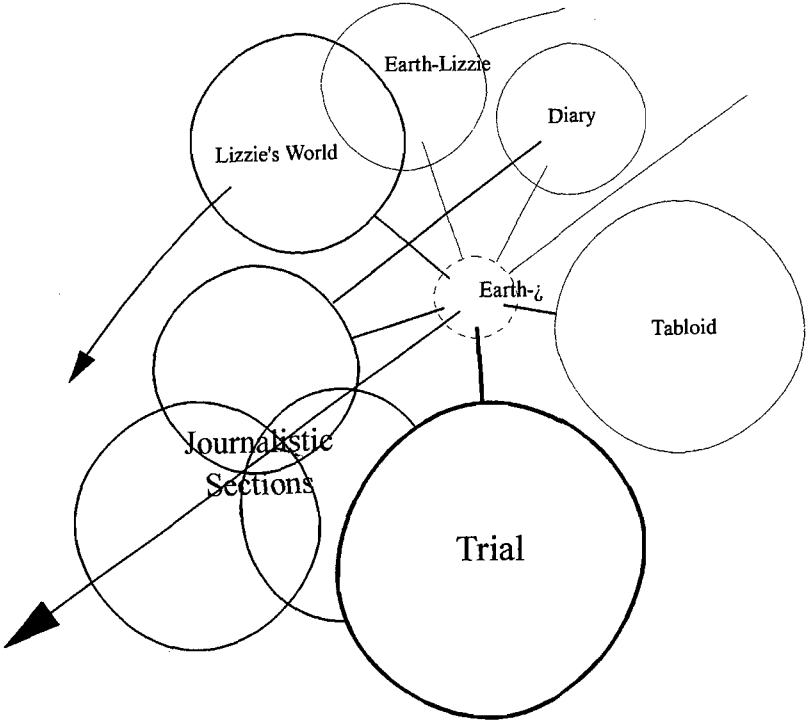
Thrown between different characters, constantly shifting perspective, constantly faced with characters who show their faces rather than their souls -- whether as disembodied figure or an entity inserted into the worlds of the novel -- the reader takes the same part in the social role-playing, assuming a series of different perspectives and beliefs, of different masks, of simulated identities, in order both to interact and cope with the premises of the novel.

REPRESENTATION : READER : *DAN LENO AND THE LIMEHOUSE GOLEM*

DL offers a multiplicity of different world-versions and modes of being-in-the-world. The many different narrative modes, and the characters they access, each provides a different entry into a world-version. The world-versions differ radically from each other, and are situated at various distances from Earth-Prime, even though they appear to have the same -- or a very similar -- referent.

Figure 4 approximately represents the worlds of DL.

***Figure 4** : The worlds of Dan Leno and the Limehouse Golem*



The variety and limitations of the world-versions, and the difficulty of accessing many of them, make it difficult to assign a single base ontology. The most extensively portrayed world-versions -- Earth-Lizzie, The Diary, and the trial transcriptions -- form uncomfortable propositions as base worlds at best. The trial transcriptions, while seemingly the most "objective" world-version of all, render but a very restricted section of a world; they contain a record of events, but no mode of being. Earth-Lizzie and the Diary both offer modes of being, but the diary is itself limited in access to the "originary" world (situated at Earth-¿ to indicate its radical inaccessibility), to external reference. Earth-Lizzie is the most comprehensive, but is filtered through an unpleasant psyche, making identification very difficult. The easiest mode-of-being to assume is that allowed by the "Objective Narrative" -- the authoritative, impersonal stance. Although this is indeed possible in the very first chapter, the only other chapter which unequivocally

allows this position is the second-to-last. No other narrative is epistemologically (fairly) secure as well as comprehensive.

As in CTN, the different worlds could be seen as accessed directly from actuality. However, the extent to which they refer to the same (or parallel) *fictional* domains of events and characters, as well as the fact that the *form* and *style* of the narratives demand mediation through the importation of knowledge about similar actual-world discourses, makes it more viable to access them through a projected intermediate world Earth[-]. Neither this world nor Earth-Prime are represented on ***figure 4***, for reasons that should become clear below. In each case, the relations of alternativeness differ, although some of the worlds are "directly" related to each other. All of the worlds are related to Earth-¿, and *via* Earth-¿ to each other. The relation to Earth-¿ is necessarily incorporated into the relations of alternativeness between other worlds.[7]

Although it offers no base ontology for the reader from which to do so, the novel does allow the investigation of different modes of being. Most of the characters -- not least the author of the Diary -- are, in Fokkema's terms, conditionally representative. The reader has access to the psyches of Lizzie, Dan Leno, Marx (if only momentarily), Gissing, and John Cree, although such access is often compromised by the epistemological and ontological instability of the world-versions.

Modes of Being : Elizabeth Cree

The novel presents three different approaches to Lizzie: her autonarrative, the trial transcripts, and a narrative about her. The most extensive of these is **Earth-Lizzie**, her own narration of her life. Lizzie's autobiographical narration is consistently phrased in the past tense, reflecting both her memories of events and the state of mind current to her narrative. It therefore both narrates the present world-version of Lizzie, and projects a past world **Earth-Lizzie'**. The identity which emerges, though interesting, is harsh and unpleasant.

Lizzie's own narrative opens with her unhappy childhood as the illegitimate only child of a sanctimonious christian mother. According to her, she was always unloved;

7 Few of the worlds are *necessarily* directly related to each other. None of the tabloid versions, for instance, appear to have any access to Earth-Lizzie. Relations of alternativeness are therefore indicated only in specific cases, such as the access to the diary displayed by one of the journalistic sections.

her mother cursed her for her illegitimacy, and often hurt her. Lizzie, in turn, curses her mother who knelt "through the night, calling upon Jesus and all the saints to preserve her from hell" and paper the walls with Bible pages, but who would call Lizzie evil and prick her genitalia with needles. She judges her mother, not only for her hypocrisy, but also for her own illegitimacy. While she does retain from christianity a repressive morality, her conception of people does not allow for moral change; she says of her mother "a reformed whore is a whore still" (DL:12). For Lizzie, the ubiquitous presence of her own past traps others in theirs.

Lizzie's attitude towards her mother's religion is ambivalent. She invokes phrases such as "God forgive her" and appears to believe in judgement and damnation, consigning her mother to hell. Her judgment of others' sexuality continues to be shaped by christian morality throughout her life, but she has no sense of grace or salvation.

Although darkened by Elizabeth's narrating personality, the initial chapters depicting Lizzie's World recall a *Bildungsroman*. Her description of her early years (her "beginnings"), her desire to leave the home of her childhood, the unexpected luck she has on starting on her way into the world ("The ferryman knew me well enough, and would not take my penny from me -- so I came over to the Mill Bank with more coin than I expected!"; DL:15), her attraction to the music-hall, the description of her route to central London, with barely a thought of home -- all of this is cast in the shape of popular late 19th century fiction, recalling (for instance) Great Expectations.

Lizzie is simultaneously aware of her remembered presence in the past and her present knowledge of the world's potential danger projected onto the past. She remembers this past being vividly and in detail. The sensuality of her past experiences -- involving smells, sights, and sounds -- articulates her excitement, which momentarily obscures the unpleasantness of her narrating consciousness. Lizzie describes her feelings as she leaves Lambeth Marsh: "with a lighter heart I continued my course beside the shops and houses; I was alive with curiosity, and never once did it occur to me that a young girl was in any danger among these streets" (DL:15). There is a sharp contrast between her adult knowledge and the immaturity of her younger self, which throws into doubt the accuracy of her current interpretations of past actions. It is possible that she had once been, to some extent, innocent (to the reader, at least, such an impression is strengthened by her representation in Earth-Lizzie, discussed below).

> They collected ten shillings for me after the funeral, when we gathered in the Hercules tavern, and I cried a little for the sake of it. I can always produce the goods
>
> (DL:51).

If Lizzie had once been innocent, her adult, narrating consciousness seems determined to disavow any humane emotions experienced by her younger self. Her discourse exhibits a constant tension between emphases on her ignorance and righteousness on the one hand and on her callous pragmatism on the other. She recalls dancing in the empty room, where she had scraped the Bible page from the walls after her mother's death ("my mother descended into hell at last, having been taken there *by the fever*" (DL:50; "emphasis added"), and "grabbing" her mother's coat -- taking care to mention that she "had measured [her]self against it even as she lay upon her bed in death" (DL:51).

Lizzie's memories, both present and past, often return to her mother. Her strongest moments on the stage are punctuated by her hatred for her mother. Closing her first performance, as "[she] danced upon the stage, [she] had the most pleasurable sensation that [she] was stamping upon her grave" (DL:105). Later, she saw her mother -- not in real women, but "in the spirit of the funny females whom Dan impersonated.

Elizabeth as narrator seldom intervenes in her recollection of her first days at the theatre. As a young girl in strange and wonderful surroundings, she was overawed by the music-halls. Her memories retain her childish sense of wonder, and are untainted by adult cynicism. She remembers phrases and events which could cast a shadow over her first memories of the theatre, such as Dan's intervention when Uncle spins her on the stage: "I know what point you would like to put to her, Uncle" (DL:75). However, she refrains from superimposing interpretations based on later experience and knowledge on her memories of wonder. The sense of wonder in these recollections, and her present refusal to interfere with this past, projects the (relative) innocence of her younger self. It is as though the present Elizabeth is trying to regain not only the promise of paradise in Dan Leno's invitation to join them, but also her past innocence.

Lizzie's account of her theatre days are often couched in religious or pseudo-religious terms. For her, the old terms for the lower seats and the gallery -- the "pits" and the "gods" -- acquire new force, signifying liberation and paradise. "In my old life", she says when comparing her youth in Lambeth Marsh and that in the theatre, "I had seen things darkly, but now they were clear and brilliant" (DL:52), recalling I Corinthians 13:12. In her memory, leaving a theatre feels like "being expelled from some wonderful garden" (DL:53). She retains her first view of Uncle, as a "blessed creature who lived

within the light" (DL:54), in her narrative despite what she learned about him later. For Lizzie, joining the theatre is akin to absolution, allowing her to annul her debt to the past and take up a new life.

Her saviour in this new life is Dan Leno, who becomes a role model of sorts to her. She investigates Leno's being-in-the-world, as genius, professional and idol. He initially saves her from Uncle's attentions, although she did not realize it at that stage. She noticed only the quiet authority he, though only fifteen, has over the rest of the company. In a world of decadence, Dan always remains "a gentleman" (DL:175).

Lizzie recognizes as a source of Dan Leno's genius his "infinite fund of pathos and comic sorrow" (DL:96), and ascribes it to "some little piece of darkness in his past" (DL:97). Although her own past is filled with darkness, she realizes that she herself lacks both pathos and sorrow, and is surprised at her own aptitude for comedy:

> I never knew where the comedy came from. I was not a particularly funny female off the stage, and I suppose that in some ways I was even prone to misery. It was as if I had some other personality which walked out from my body every time I stood in the glare of the gas, and sometimes she even surprised me with her slangster rhymes and cockney stuff
>
> (DL:106).

By comparison, she sees Dan as being able to control his stage personalities. "Dan was only fifteen then, but he played so many parts that he hardly had time to be himself. And yet, somehow, he was always himself. [...] it was always Dan conjuring people out of thin air" (DL:108). Lizzie's own impersonations leave her drained. She has no clear recollection of herself during and after stage performances: "I was always overwrought after my performances -- and, to judge by Doris's concern, a trifle hysterical -- but after a while Little Victor's Daughter would fade away and Lizzie would come back" (DL:106).

It is perhaps in unconscious imitation of Dan's success at playing funny females that Lizzie assumes her second comic personality, that of Little Victor's Daughter's Older Brother -- or The Older Brother, as s/he comes to be known. As much as Little Victor's Daughter, The Older Brother, seems to be separate from her personality. In Ricoeur's terms, Lizzie projects fictional selves to investigate alternate modes of being (each of which occasions an experimental alternate world-version projected from Lizzie's past, which is in turn projected from her present by her narrating self . . .). She refers to both in the third person, as though watching someone else: they had their own clothes and they were "sometimes uncontrollable" (DL:107), "doing" acts Lizzie's (projected) sense

of propriety would have kept her from. Even when Lizzie decides to take her cross-dressing to the streets, she still sees The Older Brother as a person outside of herself:

> Of course he never wore his stage clothes, which were a trifle too short and too shabby, and he had bought for himself a whole new set of duds. He was a scamp, as I said, and liked nothing better than to stroll through the night like a regular masher; he would cross the river down Southwark way and then wander by Whitechapel, Shadwell, and Limehouse. He soon knew all the flash houses and the dens, but he never set foot in them: he had his fun by watching the filth of the town flow along
>
> (DL:153-4).

In the telling, Lizzie refuses personal involvement and responsibility, letting her characters stand in for her. Relating her encounter with a Jew (possibly Solomon Weil), she reveals that she sees not only Little Victor's Daughter and her Older Brother as separate from her narrating identity, but also Lizzie: "When he looked up, he saw *Lizzie* beneath the male and recoiled [...] in that instant, *she* struck out and knocked him to the ground" (DL:154; emphasis added).

Lizzie's identity, like Harriet's in CTN, is a continuous series of assumed personas. As in CTN, her different identities are useful for different social roles. For the theatre people, "[she] invented a whole history which made [her] much more interesting to [her]self" (DL:107). When Uncle blackmails her with his knowledge of her cross-dressing adventures, and his conjectures as to Little Victor's death (DL:184), she assumes the sadistic role he requires of her. Her eventual identity as Mrs John Cree becomes itself a role of which she seems very proud. Comparing herself to Aveline Cree, she muses on how "extraordinary [it is] how some women can escape their backgrounds altogether while others remain trapped in them" (DL:222). This judgment, of course, cannot erase its origin, the fact that it emerges from her own self-definition in terms of her debt towards the past.

Her judgment of Aveline Mortimer stems naturally from her feelings of superiority. From her first moment in the theatre, her religious vision of theatre life intimates her sense of her own destiny. Returning to the theatre, she went "up into the gods. This was where [she] belonged, with the golden angels all around [her]" (DL:52). She explains her perfect ease with the stage in metaphysical terms: "I believe that in a past life I must have been a great actress" (DL:96). When she stumbles across The Older Brother, she feels exalted in her androgyny: "I could be girl and boy, man and woman, without any shame. I felt somehow that I was above them all, and could change myself at will" (DL:153). She remains at (virtually) all times assured of her own talent, even

when as Mrs Cree she finishes her husband's play: "I must admit I have a certain talent for dramatic composition" (DL:231). Even *in retrospect*, she believes in her own talent.

From her assumed superior position, it comes naturally for Elizabeth to project weaknesses onto others, and to judge others while overlooking her own wrongs. As a child she gleefully tormented her mother, arguing that the latter's illness was the judgment of God. She is quick to punish Little Victor for his advances, even as she allows him "to look up me for a few moments" (DL:101). As Mrs Cree, she judges Aveline on the grounds of her poverty, and John for his "ungovernable lust".

The judgment of her narrating self, however, bears signs of a need to justify herself, not only to whoever her listener might be, but also to herself. Her renewed interest in John Cree she ascribes to a fancy that "the death of Uncle must have affected [her] more than [she] realised" (DL:211). She justifies the moral judgment she passes/passed on her mother by the latter's assumed licentiousness, and she is eager to point out the difficult circumstances from which her behaviour arose: "you can imagine -- how much now rested upon my own shoulders" (DL:13). She plays the whore for Uncle because "I was only a defenceless artiste. Half the men and women of London would already have branded me as shameless for doing the halls, and the rest would be happy to believe the worst. It was in my best interest to keep Uncle sweet" (DL:185).

In her attempts at self-justification, Lizzie arbitrarily and selectively imposes chains of causality and responsibility. She admits the connection between stabbing her mother with a needle and her mother's illness and eventual death, but acknowledges only her culpability for the first flow of blood. The long-term consequences, probably septicaemia caused by the needle, she assigns to God's judgment. Uncle dies three months after she has started beating him; although she admits to being "rather rough with him" (DL:185) and thinking "that Uncle's heart was [not] up to it" (DL:186), she refuses responsibility for his heart failure, blaming it on his drinking habits. Without understanding John Cree's feelings about Misery Junction, she finishes it and performs it, refusing to accept responsibility either for the failure of the play or for the ensuing changed atmosphere in the house. Even when she deliberately sets the scene for someone else's failure she blames their own weakness. After refusing to have intercourse with John, even when they marry, she hires Aveline for the express reason of drawing his attentions away from herself. Her (retrospectively) professed reason is selfless: "Fortunately my dear husband was too much of a gentleman to force himself upon me, and I appreciated his courtesy to the extent that I decided to repay him" (DL:225). She forgets this, however, when she feels the need to humiliate them, blaming Aveline's "loose morals" (DL:225) and John's lust.

Lizzie's self-justification serves to occlude her debt towards the past. Only by disavowing her own responsibility can she escape from her childhood and her acts to assume a new identity. Each new assumed identity arises in the death throes of the previous; the stability of Lizzie's being-in-the-present depends on the selective, mercenary chains of responsibility and causality she imposes upon events. She absolves her/self (whether as narrator or as actor), to be able to project her faith in herself into the future.

In the light of Lizzie's ambitions, it is significant that the only moment on stage she clearly remembers as belonging to *her* rather than a character is during the abortive performance of Misery Junction "amid the drunken cheers and laughter, I found myself to be changed. It was as if I were alone in the theatre, like some hard and self-sufficient jewel which shines out among ordure" (DL:242).

From her childhood, Lizzie retains obsessive scruples about sex. She refuses to see her sexual organs as part of her: "There is a place between my legs which my mother loathed and cursed" (DL:13). She feels highly uncomfortable with her own sexuality. For her, sexuality is always *other*, always belongs to someone else. Abstinence in fact seems to strengthen her feelings of superiority. She repeatedly condemns others for their sexuality -- her mother, Little Victor, Uncle, Aveline, John Cree, and eventually the murdered prostitutes (in Lizzie's World and The Confession). She herself reacts severely, and often violently, to any sexual advances, even John's after their wedding.

Despite her disgust of sex, she is not above using the desires of others to manipulate them. Even though reacting severely to Little Victor's attentions (DL:101) reminding him that she is always "an innocent", she allows him to peer under her dress. Later, her ministrations to Uncle earn her his silence and a place in his will. Even her advances to John Cree are not wholly innocent; her protestations for propriety's sake that "[they] could not be so much in one another's company without clarifying [their] position to the world" (DL:215) only gain strength through their admission of the conventional expectations of the world. Lizzie gains power by enforcing her (current) world-project onto the perceptions of others.

On stage, too, she manipulates the libidinous thoughts of others to ensure her success. Submerged bawdiness becomes a central feature of her act, even though her narrating self, perhaps a little too offhandedly, claims innocence for her younger self:

> I used to kill them with "I Don't Suppose He'll Do it Again for Months and Months and Months". I never saw the dirt in it, not me, and I delivered it as a harmless little song about a wife whose husband took

> her once a year on a steam-boat outing to Gravesend. It must have been the way I pronounced "do", but they used to scream
>
> (DL:106).

She as much as admits that the bawdiness behind her stage character's innocence was deliberate: "Little Victor's daughter was the young virgin who said quite innocent things -- how could she help it if she was was open to misconstruction?" (DL:149), although, even to Dan, she keeps up pretenses: "could I be blamed for all the chaff and laughter in the gallery?" (DL:150).

Lizzie's pretense of innocence towards Dan is also an attempt to imitate him. When he auditions her, he admonishes Uncle for his "blue" humour. His reticence regarding bawdy humour echoes her own aversion to sexuality. Lizzie, in fact, initially plays on his decorum in order to enlist his sympathy: "[...] I could see no harm in playing the orphan girl. 'I am quite alone in the world, and the landlord will not see his way to letting me stay unless I -- share his rooms with him'" (DL:77).

This manipulation of Dan's finer sensibilities is merely one of the first instances of her opportunism. At her mother's funeral, she (claims to have) "*produce[d]* the goods" (DL:50; emphasis added), receiving ten shillings for her tears. Under the pretense of an homage to Little Victor, she launches her own career on the stage from his coffin (as it were). Uncle's blackmail attempts earn her five hundred pounds and his photographic equipment. It is only upon learning of John Cree's expectations that she really becomes interested in him, and then uses the pretense of Uncle's death to elicit his sympathy and interest.

Probably because it is primarily the stage for Lizzie's next character, her relationship with John Cree is indeed a Misery Junction. During the initial stages it appears very romantic; after he interrupts Uncle's initial advances, Lizzie admits to often thinking of him. Although her interest is piqued by the news of his expectations, she ascribes her advances on him to the shock of Uncle's death. They go on long walks, talking much, but from her reaction it is apparent that she is not particularly interested in his being or concerns. She dismisses, rather than tries to understand, his fascination with the poorer areas of London: "He said they inspired him -- well, as I have always said, there is no accounting for tastes" (DL:214). Since Uncle's death, Lizzie had "dreamed of leaving the halls and advancing upon the legitimate stage" (DL:214). Even while courting, Lizzie's thoughts turn upon the successes she may have "[w]ith John Cree as [her] writer and patron" (DL:214), rather than of any shared achievements.

Upon marriage to John Cree, Lizzie also re-assumes her religious airs. She cannot "wait to be converted to his own religion" -- Catholicism -- since "all the hall folk

had a fondness for it" (DL:215). Her sexual reticence reveals its full implications, as she refuses to have intercourse with him, and she condemns him for his "ungovernable lust". As he loses inspiration for his play, she also "urge[s] upon him the *virtues of concentration and perseverance*" (DL:230; emphasis added). Her most selfish act, however, is to take it upon herself to finish his play. By doing so, she denies all that he hopes for and believes in; yet she cannot grasp the enormity of her transgression against him.

She hires Aveline as a whore for John, ostensibly as an act of gratitude; when they do sleep together, she uses their relationship to strengthen her hold on both of them. It is perhaps fitting, then, that this abortive relationship brings about miscegenation. Aveline becomes pregnant with John's child. Lizzie insists that it "is an abomination, and must be killed" (DL:257). In her rejection of the child, she echoes her mother's rejection of herself. She affirms Death in birth, as her mother did. Natural time, the succession of generations, is simultaneously affirmed and denied in the face of historical time. Lizzie's denial of her past constitutes a negative reinscription of natural time upon historical, social time: an erasure of the social being-in-the-world under natural being-in-time.

***Dan Leno and the Limehouse Golem* : Reader**

Apart from Marx, Gissing and Leno, Lizzie is the only character of whom a coherent identity can be "objectively" traced. John Cree, who is a pivotal character in the novel, is presented through such a cacophony of narratives that there exists virtually no recoverable truth about him. The reader is left to attempt either a separate reconstruction of each different account of him, or to arbitrarily select a set of propositions to piece together a single reading. In either case some unresolved mysteries remain.

Earth-Lizzie, although constituting a single account narrated by the same consciousness, is in fact only the *most coherent* of different accounts. Lizzie as experienced by the reader is described from many different perspectives; but even her own narrative necessitates interpretation and choosing between contradictory impressions -- choices which, to the reader, are all the more difficult because the only way to verify them is by correlation with the other narratives which describe her.

There are several contradictions internal to Lizzie's narrative, of which the simultaneity of her insistence on her younger self's innocence and her worldly-wise

pragmatism is one of the easier ones. Although this may indicate little more than the discrepancy between her younger and her adult selves, the implications of the answer circle much wider than the account of her history, touching on her current personality and hence on the overall interpretation of the novel.

Lizzie provides two possible motives for her interest in John Cree. Under the one, she largely reacts to his approach; under the other, she actively hunts and captures him. The reader's first encounter with John Cree in Lizzie's World is through her narrating self's aside following a change meeting: "He was well-spoken, and his eyes were as pale as the marshes. Of course I could never have known that one day he would become my husband; that he was John Cree" (DL:82). The aside raises expectations as to how the relationship would come about, but also, by convention of the autonarrative genre, invites an interpretation of it as indicative of a romantic side to Lizzie's being. This expectation appears to be confirmed by Lizzie's reaction to John's interruption of Uncle's amourous advances: "But, from that time forward, I often thought of Mr John Cree" (DL:109).

Lizzie's admission that the news of his expectation heightened her interest breaks the chain of a romantic interpretation. A mercenary motive is inserted, relegating the projected actualised world-version (as romantic) to the status of alternate world. As a result her claims that it was Uncle's death which drove her into John's arms ring hollow, while her later thoughts of success "with John Cree as [her] writer and patron" (DL:214) sounds true.

Any reading of Lizzie's motives, though, needs to pass through the discrepancy between her adult and younger self. Given her narrating self's tendency to stress her manipulative abilities, either motive may be imposed, inserted to influence her unidentified audience.

The same can be said about any assertion Lizzie's World makes about the younger Lizzie. Lizzie's earliest thoughts on the theatre admits her wonder and delight, emotions associated with innocence. This expression is corroborated in Earth-Lizzie, where her first experience of the music hall is narrated from an external point of view. Earth-Lizzie is free of the shadows cast by her adult self.[8] Through its emphasis of Lizzie's unfamiliarity with these bright surroundings, Lizzie appears as any young girl. She reacts to the music-hall, and especially to Dan Leno's performance, with awe and intense

8 It has been argued above (in **Text : Representation**) that this is a different world-version from Lizzie"s World, and that its protagonist is therefore a different character-sign than the one evoked by Lizzie's own narrative. This suggestion is taken up again below, although the two world-versions influence each other and the (irrecoverable) referent is the same. Earth-Lizzie, however, indelibly forms a part of the reader's experience of Lizzie"s being-in-the-world.

emotions. The narrative is sympathetic towards this young Lizzie, pointing out that "Leno had assuaged the misery of her life" (DL:20). Earth-Lizzie describes a girl as innocent from a (supposedly) epistemologically more stable point of view than Lizzie's own memories. Even when she returns, her indifference towards her mother is explained by her being "worn down by the excitements of the evening" (DL:20). Lizzie's projected lost innocence contrasts sharply with the woman she has become who narrates her autobiography. It invokes the reader's sympathy, reinforcing the causal chain Lizzie projects in her own narrative which suggests that she is no worse than her environment has made her. For the reader, the past and the present versions of Lizzie become intertwined, each mediating the reception of the other.

The ambiguity of the reader's first exit from Earth-Lizzie -- indicating either Lizzie's innocent care for her mother or a first act of the unpleasant woman she is to become -- may corroborate either Earth-Lizzie's description of the girl as innocent or the hatred projected from Lizzie's World:

> Eventually Elizabeth brought her [mother] a cordial she had prepared with her own hands, and forced her to drink it. "Don't look so simple, Mother," she whispered. "You're very nicely, thank you" Then she began to rip down the pages of the Bible which had been pasted to the walls.
>
> Her mother was given a pauper's funeral two days later, and the night after the burial Elizabeth returned to the theatre in Craven Street [...]
>
> (DL:20-1).

This, and similar ambiguities, mar(k) all accounts of Lizzie's life. The most marked, of course, are the deaths of Lizzie's mother, Uncle, Little Victor, and Doris. The accounts of their deaths, except for Lizzie's mother's death, are unique to Lizzie's world. Invariably, they die of apparently natural causes shortly after some involvement with Lizzie. Although, in Earth-Lizzie, she claims responsibility for their deaths (DL:272), her own narrative projects a protectiveness onto John Cree, which is corroborated by the John Cree observer. According to her, John Cree knew of both Little Victor's and Uncle's attentions to her. In fact, while the temporal proximity of their deaths to their involvement with her is suspicious, such suspicion may well be extended to John Cree as well.

Why not simply accept Elizabeth's claim, after the facts, that she killed everyone? Lizzie's world contains evidence that she (apparently arbitrarily) projects different causal chains onto events to support either her own innocence or her own cruelty. It also

suggests that she is "a professional", able to seize on any opportunity to improve her own and her audience's view of her; and that she often takes a role suggested to her by an outside agency. Her first act is modelled on Little Victor's, her cross-dressing on Dan's. It would therefore be entirely in keeping with her character, especially as she is already condemned to death, to seize John's role, to claim his glory for herself.

The radical indeterminacy of Earth-¿ assigns to the reader the task of projecting chains of cause and responsibility onto the novel, by *choosing* between the accounts of different characters, and of the diary, on the strength of her understanding and knowledge of the characters. Her choice depends, to a large extent, on the path she chooses to navigate through the different worlds, on the veracity she assigns to each world-version. Such choice, even more than in CTN, necessitates active involvement with characters.

Very few of the world-versions constructing the novel even pretend to be reliable. The trial and confession transcripts both provide only a record of discourse, and rely on other sections for coherence and reference. Even the "objective" narrative is destabilized, occupying as it does only two short chapters of the novel. The newspaper sections, which *ought to* provide a relatively reliable record of events, at least, are themselves unreliable.

The nature of newspapers demands that news be made available as soon as possible, so that they are perhaps the most immediate record of history available. Newspapers tend not to have time to distort events much. When they do, the discontinuity of their fictionalizations gives the lie to the news. DL rarely uses the newspaper genre as such, casting its "news" into a variant style -- that of the tabloid press. By importing a genre entirely familiar to the actual reader in her own being-in-the-world, the novel also invokes the conventions of reception for that genre. By presenting the journalistic reportage -- potentially one of the more stable world-versions -- in tabloid style, the novel completely destabilizes objective knowledge of its originary world, even while rendering it in a familiar form.

Newspapers, by virtue of their immediacy, also have the potential to construct or support metanarrative mythologies: the state of the economy, of violence, "normative" values. In this sense, the instability of the tabloid sections of DL emphasizes their mythologizing role. Theoretically, since fairly few of the chapters of the novel refer directly to the Golem or the killings, the possibility exists that all events related to the Golem are fictions created by the tabloid press. In the absence of an objective correlating world-version, though, the reaction caused by the papers would be equally real if the

events were fictional as if they were real. Fiction may be raised to the level of actuality, and so to the level of myth, since it is belief that gives myth its ontological strength.

Of course the *events* referred to in these tabloids are fictional; this does not prevent the journalistic tone from obtaining a certain credibility, simply because the fictional newspapers are at least as credible -- within the fiction -- as actual-world tabloids.

The assumption of a tabloid narrative that John Cree was the Golem (DL:63), later refuted by another (or the same?) tabloid, complicates the issue even further. The claim reinforces the expectations raised by a first reading of the novel's beginning. John Cree's diary is introduced *before* he is introduced in Lizzie's World, which provides first a possible motive (obsessive protectiveness) for him to kill Little Victor and Uncle, and later, in his physical rejection and psychological manipulation and humiliation at Lizzie's *hands*, a motive for avenging himself on women. The external narratives which depict John Cree show his obsession with De Quincey's work, and later -- during his marriage -- hints at his conception of himself: "He realized, too, that in Aveline Mortimer he had found a poor girl who might redeem him" (DL:252). Does John feel that he is in need of redemption because of Lizzie? Or because of his own crimes? Why is it necessary that a girl as poor as a prostitute redeem him?

It is impossible to resolve the novel's mysteries with an unequivocal answer. Any route chosen by the reader leaves threads of unresolved expectations hanging. In the process of navigating the different world-versions and propositions, the reader needs to herself become a detective -- since the detective provided by the novel, inspector Kildare, is completely ineffectual and has access to almost none of the information -- needs to, therefore, assume a role. The role consists of more than merely piecing together clues, however; the crucial clues are hidden in the personalities of the characters. The reader is called upon to take a stance towards the characters, to interrogate them, to understand their ways of being-in-the-world.

Such role-playing takes place among a network of fictional world-versions which offer a plenitude of possible actions, decisions and most importantly *positions*. The narratives are directed towards no identified listener, allowing the reader to take up a position in relation to them. The position the reader decides to assume, whether as attentive listener, curious detective, naive believer, or a friendly ear to a particular character, controls her reception of the information provided by any single world-version. The radical (and throughout the novel, spreading) indeterminacy of Earth-¿ can only be combated by the reader's *active* (re)construction of the originary events. Thus

the base world, Earth[-], surreptitiously *becomes* Earth-¿, a virtual world constructed by the reader within the *sens* of the text. The actions required of the reader take place in a **virtual reality** provided by the text.

The virtual reality of the text is a fictional space that allows real action, actions which influence the reader's understanding and reception of the characters, the different world-versions, and the originary world of the novel. In this sense the reader's actions and judgments also influence the other characters. But by learning to act in the virtual reality, the reader also learns of others' being-in-the-world.

REPRESENTATION : READER : DETECTION, ROLE-PLAYING, VIRTUAL REALITY

In the three novels under discussion the *topos* of detective fiction, of the mystery, invites the reader to an active participation in their interpretation. By extension the novels foist onto the reader the role of detective. In HM and CTN the reader's role as detective parallels a detective in the novel itself, an intratextual analogue, but in DL the reader *stands in* for a wholly ineffectual (and largely absent) detective. Role-playing by the reader is not limited to the role of detective, however; markedly in Dan Leno but also in the other two novels the reader is invited to take up a variety of positions and re/act in a number of ways, each of which has a different influence on her reading of particular characters and of the novel as a whole. The actions of a reader influence the reconstruction of the fictional worlds and characters, and through role-playing and interpreting the novel the reader also investigates alternative modes of being and approaches to being. The worlds offered for the reader as role-playing scenarios offer numerous options for interpretation, and for "changing" the characters; as (conditionally) representative worlds in which the reader may (partially) influence received "reality", and which offer the reader possibilities for learning skills, the fictions may be termed **virtual realities**.

The *topos* of detective fiction functions on a number of levels.[9] In the first place, it signals to the reader an increased emphasis of her epistemological responsibility. The conventions of reading for the detective genre set up a *game* between reader and text: the reader is called upon to attempt to solve the mystery before the textual detective does. Secondly, the detective *topos* sets up a contract with the reader which promises clues by which the perceptive reader may unravel the novel. The promise of clues, combined with the insistence on the reader's epistemological responsibility, in turn emphasises the importance of minor details and the construction of causal chains. As such, it extends the reader's expectations to active curiosity and investigation, placing the reader in analogue to an intratextual detective in HM and CTN, and *as* detective in DL, where the intratextual detective is dysfunctional.

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9 Related to the use of the detective *topos* in Ackroyd's fiction is the *topos* of horror fiction. In horror, *events* involve the user's fictional ego at a primal, emotional or pre-emotional level. This *topos* is not extensively explored in this dissertation because it appears in roughly half of Ackroyd's fiction only. (The deteetive *topos*, role-playing games and virtual realities figure in some capacity in all the novels, with the possible (and partial) exception of The Great Fire of London (1982) and LT (1983).

Through the detective *topos* the reader is assigned the role of detective. The clues provided by the novel are not limited to data and causal chains, though. The nature of the clues -- or of the red herrings, in Dan Leno and to a lesser extent CTN -- require more than intellectual operations to interpret. The latter novel explores its themes largely through characters; the impact of the influence/plagiarism/masquerade theme can be adjudicated only through the investigation of the characters of Chatterton, Harriet, Stewart Merk, George Meredith and others. The propositions of the novel largely turn upon how convincingly they can be defended through Chatterton's character and the lost Joynson's talent for forgery. In DL, interrogation and interpretation of the characters -- based on emotional and intellectual interaction -- are essential to the interpretation not only of the themes but even of the sequence of events depicted by the novel. Even in HM, the interpretation of events require the reader to (temporarily) renounce established modes of thinking and the (momentary) appropriation of others -- in other words, to temporarily believe things she does not necessarily otherwise believe.

The reader interacts with characters and tests propositions by temporarily assuming a role. The reader is, in fact, invited to participate in a role-playing game, to continuously construct and revise her fictional ego in order to cope with characters and events. In CTN the invitation to role-playing is extended, in part, by the presence of other players -- Harriet, Charles, Flint, Cumberland. DL not only provides fellow role-players in the characters of Elizabeth Cree and Dan Leno, but also forces the reader to assume different positions *vis-a-vis* the different narratives. These positions require not only the construction of an epistemological position as addressee, but also of a set of beliefs and interpretations regarding the narratives. *Under an assumed/ a constructed identity* the reader negotiates the worlds of the novels; the constant shifts in position and interpretation necessitates the adjustment of this fictional ego, the learning of different approaches and beliefs to the worlds of the novels.

The universes presented by the novels -- comprising both the localized time-pockets of, for instance, Earth-Chatterton or Lizzie's World, and the "universes" projected by these worlds in interaction -- are designed to facilitate role-playing. The worlds are situated at optimal distance, balancing distance and difference with narrative modes and ease of access through specific epistemic paths. The worlds are coherent and convincing enough to function as representative worlds. Within the worlds themselves, though, and also when seen in interaction as the universes of the individual novels, indeterminacy not only invites but necessitates (inter)action on the part of the reader. As representative worlds facilitating and demanding action, the novels present virtual

realities which function as playgrounds, test laboratories, and tutorial rooms for the theories and interactive skills of the reader.

If, in retrospect, the universes of the novels may be called virtual realities with the potential for *teaching* modes of being, or aspects of modes of being, it should be possible to establish the *sens* of the lessons, the rules of the role-playing games for the particular novels. The rules of the games are established, largely, by the relations of alternativeness. The novels teach modes of being by *placing* the reader within particular modes of being, rather than simply offering them for investigation. In general, the reader is placed within modes of being that are articulations of particular themes.

Common to all the novels is the placement of the reader in the position of detective. The use of the detective fiction *topos* leads the reader to be attentive to and to investigate the smallest details as potential clues. As all objects and events are potentially significant for the solution of the mysteries posed by the novels, the reader comes to experience the fictional universe *in toto* as significant. With every aspect of the fictional universe *significant* in the strongest sense of the wor(l)d, the fictional universes become mystic. Pointing to lost or inaccessible signifieds, the fictional universes either become signifiers of a transcendental signifying space (transcendental, *beyond*, both in the sense of surpassing the fictional universe and that of being inscrutable from a lower ontological level). This is true even for CTN with its perpetually shifting signifiers, where the forces -- whether human, social or metaphysical -- which drive the transformations are both beyond human knowledge and have undeniable transformative effects. The reader is invited to become a detective, an investigator of the finest significance of worlds and of the metaphysical forces which influence them.

In HM, in particular, the forces influencing the world are metaphysical in the purest sense of the word. Whether Dyer's god(s) are "real" in the novel or figments of the imagination, they are represented by Dyer and by his churches, his "everlasting pattern". As long as *someone* believes in them, they continue to affect the world, if only through their representatives. The pattern drawn by the churches -- a pentacle some five kilometres across, underlying the street plan of London (the hub of the old Empire) is not only beyond human scales of time and spatial conception, but is also occult, hidden, from normal human ken. Its hidden nature establishes the pattern as other, as alien and therefore dangerous to the human consciousness. This pattern itself implies human agents, human believers, whose purposes are in turn occult. The pattern, both psychologically and socially, represents danger, a reminder of death; the reader's experience of the world of the novel becomes a continuous *memento mori*, a reminder of

her being-towards-death; a reminder not only of her mortality, her debt towards the "past" and the future, but also of the "past's" debt towards and influence on her own life.

The concepts of past and future, in HM, become themselves shadows as the two timepockets influence each other. The reader is led to accommodate, if only temporarily and "inside" the fiction, an unconventional view of time. The reader is confronted not with one but with two equally radical models of time, both equally valid, both equally disturbing. A linear reading of the novel is possible only if the churches are taken as "soft places", around which time loops and whorls and timepockets are open to each other's influence. Since the influence -- and especially the disruptive influence -- occurs mainly from past to present, from Earth-Dyer to Earth-Hawksmoor, a linear reading destabilizes the latter, which serves as base world for the reader, and exposes it as ultimately empty, devoid of meaning, and dependent on Earth-Dyer. Embracing the other option, a simultaneous vision of time destroys all ontological boundaries as yesterday, today and tomorrow flow together so that the outcome of every action becomes unpredictable, and every bit of information has its meaning beyond the reach of the onlooker.

On the surface, the modes of being articulated in CTN are differentiated mainly by different possible explanations of Chatterton's disappearance. The modes of being, however, are articulated not as a set of simple choices. Rather, the only way to adjudicate the truth-claims of the various world-versions is to engage the characters, if not on their own terms, then on the terms of the social reality within which they dwell. The veracity of Earth-Joynson hinges on assigning relative truth-values to the propositions that it issues from Chatterton and the unattainable Joynson, respectively. The only corollary in this respect is the reader's understanding of the 20th century Joynson (who claims that the narrative is forged) and of Chatterton as presented in Earth-Chatterton and in his *traces*, the proof of his penchant for forgery.

It becomes necessary for the reader to engage in a relationship with the characters. The modes of being articulated in CTN turn on the concept of role-playing; not only with the characters of CTN and the absent Joynson, but also with the other characters who take part in the role-playing game: Charles, Harriet, Meredith, even minor characters like Flint and Cumberland. The reader's fictional being-in-the-world is guided as a continuous temporary assumption of different attitudes and roles. Socially constructed as an endless succession of simulacra, CTN's universe is itself schizophrenic, providing different overlapping readings of the same "originary" (for it is a novel in which all origins are lost) events/history/universe. The only way to avoid the schizophrenia of Earth-Chatterton, produced by the polyphony of simulacra explaining

the world, is to avoid more than cursory attachment to the truth value of any of the propositions/artefacts.

DL describes a universe as schizophrenic as that of either of the other two novels. Unlike either, it does not provide a base world for the reader from which to operate. Rather, the discordant discourses constructing the novel are all equally unstable epistemologically. In the absence of both (comparatively) stable world-versions and a base world, the reader is left to establish her fictional ego within the novel, not only epistemologically but also ontologically. Amongst a cacophony of equally unstable world-versions, the reader is required to assume numerous beliefs, relationships, and positions in order to interpret not only the thematic concerns but also the plot itself.

Most of the discourses are attached to actuality by the presence of actual-world discourses or historical characters. Some, the tabloid sections especially, echo actual-world discourses both in their style and their epistemological stability. The actuality border is distorted by the presence of these discourses, which suggest that the fictional worlds share artifacts and history, at least, with the actual. To some extent, the obvious fictionality of the murders is mediated through such distortion. The new contexts are coherent enough that the fictional elements fade to details in realistic worlds -- the logic of the fictional world-versions is sound enough that the general quality of the worlds is convincing, even if some facts are clearly fictional.

DL is in part a rewriting of the Ripper history -- and not only of the history itself, but also of the very construction of the history. The Ripper mystery itself articulates the rewriting and reinterpretation of history. In part because the murders were never solved, they have provided a source of endless fascination for a great many investigators over the past century. New theories continually crop up; as is the case with biography fashions can be traced as influencing the theories. Early theories cast a working-class man as the villain; recent theories (such as Knight's, adopted by Moore) have relied strongly on conspiracy theories, arguing that the murders were committed by a Freemason recruited by the Throne to deal with a blackmail threat. As always, the recent theories seem to provide the most extensive theory yet; even so, much of it is still conjecture. As in the case of Chatterton's death, and even that of Jim Morrison (formerly of the rock group The Doors), in the absence of absolute fact truth has become reliant on the conviction of the argument.[10]

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10 Morrison reputedly died of a heart attack in his bath in 1971, several months after his abuse of drugs had stopped. As far as can be established, the body was seen only by his lover, Pamela Courson, and the coroner. Ms Courson died two years later. The doctor who signed the death certificate could not be found again.

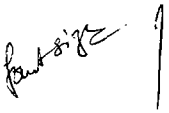
The Ripper mystery is an area of history remarkable for its obscurity: a space constructed at the meeting-place of numerous discourses and other wild guesses. As such, the Ripper mystery is an area where the borders between actuality, fiction and myth are blurred even further than they are within the areas of history where traditional metanarratives hold. Similarly, DL constructs its own space using a variety of fictional and actual historical discourses, each of which differs enough from the others both in content and in approach to emphasize their provisional status. The different versions of the events surrounding the (fictional) serial killings in the late 19th century are not all situated at the same temporal remove, and provide different theories and represent different investigative approaches. Like the theories on the Ripper murders, these theories are stronger in their reconstruction of logical chains of events than they are in their use of actual fact. Of course, in the novel the murders themselves are fictional; but the novel compensates somewhat for this failure by incorporating more prominent figures into its fabric than most of the theories do. In other words, from any point of view other than that of the researcher, the characters in any Ripper history might as well be fictional, whereas several of those in DL belong to actual-world history. The ontological position of the Ripper investigations are weakened by the fact that the characters can never be more than shades, whereas Marx and Gissing left traces on society itself.

The identity/position constructed by the reader can only be established in relation to the other discourses of the novel. The discourses constructing the novel are in constant competition, mediating and qualifying each other. The reader's position/fictional identity/interpretation becomes yet another discourse, arbitrating between different discourses while unable to attain absolute dominance of the interpretation of the novel. As an indefinite voice among others issuing from an equally unstable ontological and epistemological position, the fictional identity of the reader becomes as much a self-mythologization as John Cree's diary is, sustained only by the force of the belief in its own ontological superiority.

As if in emulsion the different discourses -- including that constructed by the reader -- present a single *gestalt* without becoming or providing a solution. The reader's fictional ego/position is *threatened* by the other discourses, in danger of being negated by them, just as the different world-versions are suspended in the fluid projection of a single world -- a world which is *replaced* by its simulacra.

5 TEXT, READER, WORLD : Outside the novel?

> [It] may be the function of the most corrosive literature to contribute to making a new kind of reader appear, a reader who is himself suspicious, because reading ceases to be a trusting voyage made in the company of a reliable narrator, becoming instead a struggle with the implied author, a struggle leading the reader back to himself
> -- Paul Ricoeur (1987)



Tanger: "[You] have to do certain things. To convince your world that you belong in it..." John Ney Rieber (1995)

Peter Ackroyd's novels, while concerned with issues postmodernism has claimed as its own -- ontology, the fictionality of history, the reality(ies) of fiction, the fragmentation and fictionalization of the self -- are representative of a break with the 'paradigmatic' novels of postmodernism. While self-consciousness remains a feature of Ackroyd's novels, especially in the careful appropriation of historical discourses but also in phrases that operate simultaneously on the textual and the metatextual levels ("And so let us beginne [...]" (HM:5), the novels consistently show a return to (conditionally) representative characters. Viewed singly, the separate worlds of the novels also are largely representative, and despite their temporal removes, easily accessed. Virtually all Akcroyd's novels -- LT (arguably) being the single exception -- further make extensive use of mystery and detective fiction in order to extend an invitation to the reader to become actively involved in their interpretation. Both the concept of role-playing -- whether under coercion by the novel into a position or (largely) voluntarily, as active interaction with the characters -- and that of the novel as presenting a 'virtual reality' for experience can fruitfully be applied to the rest of Ackroyd's oeuvre as well as to the three novels approached so far.

FL and HDD each presents at least two fictional detectives. In the first, Mark Clare and Damien Fall both probe the mysteries of the universe, the one through archaeology, the other through astronomy. As they develop their quests, they -- and the

reader -- realize that they are investigating the very same inexplicable signs inscribed on different surfaces: Damien in the heavens, Mark below the ground. A succession of possible solutions are presented, as the mysteries are variously ascribed to aliens, spirits, and the last descendants of an ancient family of pagan priests -- who might themselves be alien. Role-playing in the novel, apart from the detective role, consists of finding a position in the world of the novel from which to solve the mystery. The presentation of the world flows between styles, occasioning different readings -- as a realist novel in the Dickensian tradition, or as a science fiction pulp, or as a horror tale. The novel's world blends realism with parody, present stylistically as well as in the names of the characters.

HDD resembles HM in many respects. Each novel presents two different timepockets, the past narrative a partial pastiche of the language of the time it represents. The 20th century protagonist functions as a detective who attempts to solve the mysteries of the house, London, and the past. As in HM, elements from mystery and horror fiction are combined with ease of access to a complex world to place the reader in the position of a detective at a superior position to that of Matthew. The cardinal difference, though, is that *both* narratives are auto-narrated and presented in the narrative past, as reflection on the characters' being-in-the-world.

Like Matthew, Dee is engaged upon an investigation of the mysteries of his world, and becomes as much a fictional analogue for the reader. The searches of both are overt, but since both protagonists are more familiar with the techniques of their exploration -- Dee with alchemy, Matthew with research -- than with the object or the result of their investigations, their quests echo that of the reader. The echoes and influences of each world upon the other is less insistent than in HM, but extend in both directions of time -- Matthew hears Dee's voice and sees his homunculus, even as Dee (by proxy of Edward Kelly) sees Matthew in his globe. Eventually, though, both narratives meet in an occult place, a timeless London. The stakes of the investigation, as in HM, turn out to be the fabric of the universe, the meaning of life itself.

In both timepockets, the reader is reliant on the observations of the protagonist to convey the world, and guided by his -- the protagonist's -- interpretations. Interpretation -- of what is real, what is fictional, what is fictionally real, etc -- becomes dependent on the mediation of the protagonists. In both cases, the protagonists function as analogues for the reader. At the same time, the respective quests have their origins in the perception of the protagonists. It is necessary -- at least to some extent -- to trust the observations of Matthew and Kelly.

As auto-narrated worlds, both are focalized through their respective narrators, so that interaction with other characters is largely guided by the interpretations of Matthew

and Dee. The reader does have enough freedom to form her own opinions of other characters, though. Dee's own obsessions interfere with the objectivity of his narrative; Matthew's detailed but fairly naive descriptions of others and of events, allows the reader to perceive them without offering a ready-made interpretation. In this way, the reader can still assume different roles towards different characters. In the cases of Kelly and Daniel, such interaction becomes vital to the interpretation of the novel. Although Kelly's character suggests a charlatan, his scrying stone visions echo events from his 'future', from Matthew's life. Whether fabricated or real, their meaning comes from this parallel as much as from Dee's investment in their importance. Matthew experiences both visual and auditory hallucinations, which often echo Dee's words and actions. The two timepockets cross-refer to one another, but eventually seem to point toward the hidden London, Abaddon, a mystical place from whence they draw strength, inspiration and peace. The nature of the hidden London is obscured, though, read differently by Matthew and Dee.

The same events which lead to the collapse of Matthew's sense of self also lead to the reader's understanding of the mystical nature of the universe of the novel. Contrary to Matthew's beliefs and understanding, Daniel is revealed to be the 'consort' of Matthew's departed father; indications are that Matthew understands himself to be Dee's homunculus, learning his first original steps in his 20th century world.

Although the role-playing dimension of HDD is more limited than that of DL, the novel's universe is equally a virtual reality. Both worlds qualify each other, lending a dreamlike quality to otherwise largely representative worlds. The novel's universe leaves large 'dark areas' -- the scrying stone, the hidden London, the mystical fields and bridge seen by both Dee and Matthew at the novel's close, the relationship between these two characters and Matthew's own personality. Within these dark areas the reader is to a very large extent free to create her own meaning, interpretation, even narrative of events.

LT is concerned, largely, with questions of identity: as author, as social and private person. Presented as a diary of the last days of Oscar Wilde, the novel articulates Wilde's private narration of his own life, his own being-in-time. Although at a metatextual level the novel is clearly fictional, the events it reconstructs are not. The border between fiction and actuality is distorted in a unique way, at least as far as Ackroyd's oeuvre is concerned: the ideas, events, and even the character of Wilde appears *and may also be* accurate, even though the diary *in actuality* issues from Ackroyd's hand. Ackroyd reconstructs Wilde and appropriates his discourse so convincingly that he appears *more* real, more honest, than in any of his own writings, where he is hidden behind a persona. Written, as a whole, into an inilluminable

historical dark area -- that of Wilde's understanding of himself -- the reader is placed, as it were, in dialogue with the dead. Role-playing consists of placing Wilde as narrator in relation to the world, by tracing his own idiosyncratic understanding of characters and events, by gauging the discrepancies between Wilde as presented in his 'actual' writings and in Ackroyd's novel. Presented as a complete being-in-the-world, the dialogue invited by the novel invites a comprehensive investigation of Wilde. To investigate Wilde, the reader needs to reconstruct him as a real (as opposed to, but approaching actual) person in relation to her own understanding of self and others. The novel is a virtual reality inasmuch as any other person is; all action, however, is necessarily related to Wilde in some way.

The most playful of Ackroyd's universes is that presented in EM. The base universe, Earth-Tim, is largely coherent and closely approximates Earth-Prime (Edwardian); but it is surrounded and influenced by a large constellation of alternate worlds. Focalized by Timothy Harcombe, who is recollecting and recombining images, ideas, memories (much as his father used to do with others' memories), the world provides an easily accessible -- and, for a change, largely pleasant -- analogue for the reader. He recalls his life as a continual being-in-the-world, constructed in terms of the past in the present, the present in the present, and the future in the present, even as the reader's own narrative understanding of the world is constructed. Throughout the novel, Tim is less a stand-in for the reader than a guide. In a lighter world, the investigative/detective dimension of Earth-Tim is less insistent than it is in Ackroyd's other novels -- but the reader does need to collect and collate clues in order to cope with Timothy's experiences. Once again, the detective dimension of the novel becomes the *locus* for role-playing on the part of the reader, but the nature of the clues -- dreams, visions, other fictions -- are playful, demanding momentary acceptance only.

The ontological nature of the alternate worlds of the novel is uncertain. Do they exist only as visions, or does Tim 'really' enter the worlds of 'English Music'? Many of the worlds -- Earth-Byrd, to name one -- approach the reality of their Earth-Prime counterparts, especially in the wealth of sensual experience they offer. They appear to exist independently of Tim, who dwells in them briefly as agent and visitor, presaging the reader's experience in the manifold worlds of the novel. The intertextuality of the worlds -- both in the Kristevan sense, as dialogues between conceptions of life, and the Bloomian, as constructed on other texts -- becomes a part of the game. Like the poems in HM, the actual-world discourses of DL, and the transworld identities scattered through Ackroyd's novels, the texts from which the alternate worlds of EM originate belong to both the fictional universe and the actual. Rather than simply elevating the ontology of

the fictional universe, though, they interrogate and weaken that of the actual universe. As the reader is led to trace the alternate worlds back to their manifold sources, she explores the influence of English music -- literature, music, art -- on the perceptions and preconceptions of her fictional ego, even as Tim finds these alternate worlds influencing his own. Tim finds that his identity is constructed on and shaped by the artifacts of his culture. The metatextual reconstruction of the worlds is internal as well as external to the novel, an investigation of Tim's as much as of the reader.

Ackroyd's fiction articulates various experiences of being-in-the-world as virtual realities, within which the reader (via her fictional ego) can explore alternative [?] modes of being. Such exploration entails the suspension of preconceptions and ideas (if held, even implicitly), such as the linearity of time, the 'objective' nature of the world, and the unified ego represented in terms of rationality, uniqueness and originality, self-comprehension, self-determinism and rationality. The reader is invited to assume different roles, suspending her own identity and temporarily accepting alternative [?] modes of being.

Because fictional propositions are processed in the same way as actual ones, even if the two are distinguished ontologically, operations of the fictional ego are actual. If alternate modes of being are investigated through fictional role-playing, the alternate operations developed in the process constitute actual experience, actual skills developed. Therefore, although the assumption of various roles is an operation of the fictional ego, the 'skills' developed during the reading experience belong to the actual reader.

The modes of being posited by Ackroyd's novels resemble, in many ways, human modes of being-in-the-world as experienced in the late 20th century and as reconstructed by poststructuralist theories. The reality of DL, for example, is constructed on an intricate set of counter-contradictory discourses, each of which provides an interpretation of a series of events. The reader is left to position herself amongst these discourses, to establish an individual interpretation which can never have more ontological validation than any of the others. The world is defined by the reader's interpretation.

The discourses constructing the novel closely resemble actual-world discursive forms; and, in fact, the larger part of human being-in-the-world is constituted by reactions to a variety of discourses, of world-versions. The mass media supplies not only a variety of interpretations of sequences of events, but also forms the only system of reference points for the originary events themselves. The events, as those of CTN and DL, are obscured, deferred through a series of interpretations, and eventually -- from the point of view of the mass media user -- become virtual events of which the essence is

irrecoverable. Actuality -- 'reality' -- is a matter of arbitrarily constructing a personal world-version to which ontological strength is assigned on *faith*. Any semblance of a stable world-version is supported by the strength of commitment of its users; to be able to say, "this is real" requires the raising of a particular narrative to the level of myth.

The perpetual remythologization of actuality also includes a revision of 'society's debt to the past. The reconstruction of the past, from a distance and incompletely, is a recurrent obsession in contemporary society. As if in response, Ackroyd's novels invite placement in and dialogue with both 20th century and historical ideas, becoming less constructions of the past than of actuality.

Insofar as personal identity is defined by one's reaction to different discourses/events, it becomes itself as much a construct as the reality within which it locates itself. As in DL, actual being-in-the-world entails a continuous, simultaneously interactive construction of self and world(-version). A sense of self requires the selection of specific reactions among many different possibilities, the arbitrary construction of a narrative which differentiates the self from the environment. Such selection gains its value through the belief invested in it by the individual; the self becomes a (necessary?) mythological construction, even as Lizzie and the author of the Diary establish their identities through a process of self-mythologization. The reader, of course, needs to follow a similar process of self-construction, self-mythologization, of the fictional ego if she is to try to establish a coherent reading of the novel. The skills acquired in the mythologization of the fictional ego may be marked as experience for the self-mythologization required by actuality, the process of simultaneously constructing the actual world in which the self dwells, and the self which constructs the actual world to dwell in.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Notes on the Bibliography

1 **Primary Texts**

To simplify reference elsewhere, entries in the bibliography gives the original publication date first, then the date of the edition used in this dissertation.

2 **Graphic Narratives**

Since the Handleiding vir Bibliografiese Styl does not include a reference format for graphic narratives, it has been necessary to establish such a reference style. Bibliographical entries indicate the author of the text of the comic, as well as the artist(s) who are instrumental in articulating the graphic narrative:

GAIMAN, N., *with* BOLTON, J., HAMPTON, S., VESS, C., JOHNSON, P. 1992. The Books of Magic. London: Titan.

The same principle is followed with comix, although the format for comix acknowledges both the serial nature of the publication and the autonomy of single issues:

GAIMAN, N. *with* THOMPSON, Jill. 1992. The Parliament of Rooks. *The Sandman* (40), August. New York: DC Comics.

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