

Papers in English & American Studies XXII.  
Acta Iuvenum I.

# DISTINGUISHED SZEGED STUDENT PAPERS

Edited by  
ATTILA KISS





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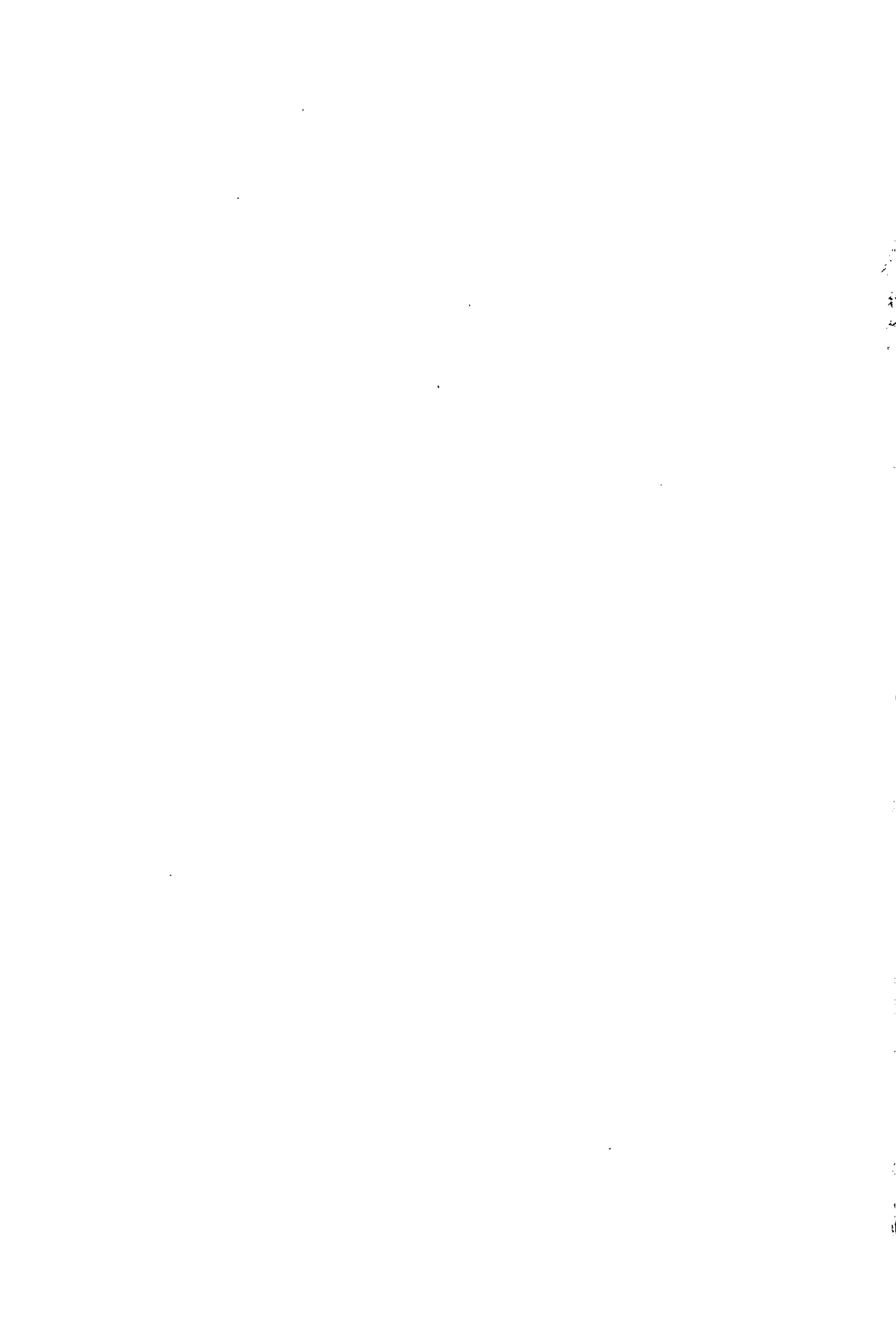
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*Balogh Erzsébet*

## Hungarian Students' Language Attitudes towards Regional American English Accent Varieties<sup>1</sup>

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### 1. Introduction

By the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century interaction among people has become more and more complex. Indeed, in today's world we interact and communicate with a great number of people day by day, in general personally but in some cases also via other means of communications, most often through the media, the Internet or mobile phones. As these people all have different personalities, in order to form a picture of them we often grasp back to our (pre)conceptions that we have developed on the basis of our interactions with people we know well. Besides, we tend to simplify these conceptions; therefore, most often what we develop of other people is a generally common stereotype rather than an accurate picture (Wells 1982a, 28).

In personal, face to face interactions, not only physical appearance but also speech plays a major role in our perception of others. Nevertheless, when we are not able to see the speakers themselves, the only means that may help us to form a picture of them is the way they sound; therefore, the language or dialect other people speak affects to a great extent how we judge them. Indeed, in most cases it is other people's accents that lead us to create a stereotypical picture of the speaker. On the basis of their accents, first we attempt to identify where the speakers come from or where they live at present; second, with the help of stereotypes we place them into different categories where we immediately attribute to them characteristics that we associate with the categories in question. This way, even if we cannot see the speakers, for example, when we are talking on the telephone, their speech serves as a ground for forming an attitude towards them, that is, solely on the basis of what we hear, we feel that we can safely judge the others' beauty or handsomeness, or their intelligence or honesty (Wells 1982a, 29).

The question might arise whether the above described process works this way regardless of what accent we hear. In the last few decades, language attitude research has proved that we are able to form our attitudes on the basis of other people's accent when it is part of our native language. An example for this is provided by Wolfram and Schilling-Estes (1998, 34), who claim that American people form attitudes towards other Americans on the basis of their accent. In other words:

When listeners hear a Southern accent, they identify the speaker as being from a Southern dialect region and they may automatically assign (perhaps unconsciously) a set of character traits to the speaker. These traits may range from such positive qualities as warmth and hospitality to such negative attitudes as poverty and lack of intelligence.

However, it is very well possible that when non-native (non-American and non-English speaker) listeners hear the same Southern accent, they do not attribute any characteristics to the speakers. Unfortunately, the amount of research about non-native speakers' language attitudes towards

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<sup>1</sup> A reanalyzed version of this paper appeared in Ewa Waniek-Klimczak (ed.) *Issues in Accents of English*. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008: 150–168.



their second or foreign language accents and speakers has been quite limited so far. A few studies in this field have found that listeners who do not speak or know a language cannot identify and judge its speakers (Simpson 2001, 297). Yet, as, for example, Alford and Strother (1990, 492) claim in their article about native and non-native speakers' attitudes towards selected regional accents of American English, non-native speakers of English also have „strong opinions of U.S. accents”.

All in all, when our native language and its accent varieties are concerned, in general we base our judgments about other people on concepts we inherited and share with our community. Therefore, if we hear somebody speaking with an accent that is a variety in our native language, most probably we will be able to identify the accent as well as assign certain character traits to its speaker. However, we do not know whether the same happens when we hear accent varieties that do not belong to our native but to a second or foreign language. This phenomenon is interesting especially for two reasons. First, since in a controlled language learning process language learners face situations where a great emphasis is placed on paying attention to accents. That is, learners' pronunciation is continuously corrected, and, at the same time, they are requested to produce native-like pronunciation and avoid speaking with a foreign accent. Apart from that, the majority of the teaching materials teachers utilize, for example, in listening comprehension exercises, are based on standard-accented speech. These two issues might lead to non-native speakers developing stereotypical attitudes towards native speakers of their second or foreign language who do not speak with the accent non-native speakers are accustomed to (Preston 1989, 88–94).

In this paper, after a theoretical overview of language attitude and language attitude studies, I attempt to investigate whether non-native speakers are able to develop similar attitudes towards speakers of accent varieties of their foreign language as its native speakers do. In particular, using a questionnaire, I examine whether there is a difference between how non-native speakers of English, specifically, Hungarian students who have been learning English as a foreign language in Hungary, and native speakers, that is, American students whose native language is English, differentiate between and evaluate two American English regional accent varieties. Furthermore, my aim is to investigate and contrast the attitudes native and non-native speakers of English have towards speakers of two regional American English accent varieties, that is, towards Southern and General American English accents. I believe that since in foreign language teaching it is not common to use teaching materials with various accents in the classroom in listening comprehension practice, and foreign language learners are often corrected whenever their pronunciation is not similar to standard pronunciation, they develop stereotypical attitudes towards different English accent varieties and their speakers. These attitudes might be similar to native speakers' attitudes even though the reasons behind them may certainly be very diverse.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1. Language attitudes

Attitude is an interdisciplinary term that is widely used not only in sociology and social psychology, but it has also become a term in linguistics, in particular in psycholinguistics and sociolinguistics (Borbély 1995/1996, 311). In sociology and social psychology, attitude is defined in general as one's action or reaction in a certain manner, often as a positive or negative evaluation, to anything which is capable of being the object of an attitude, for example, a human being, a group, an institution or any abstract notion (Oppenheim 1973, 106; Bainbridge 2001, 82). In fact, this action or reaction is composed of three elements, i.e. feelings towards the objects of the

attitudes, beliefs connected to them, and the behavior that accompanies the (re)action given to the attitude-objects. Thus, when attitudes are investigated, it is essential to be able to separate these action/reaction-components from the attitudes themselves, that is, to be aware that, for example, feelings are solely the parts and not the equivalents of attitudes (Edwards 1982, 20).

Within the realm of psycholinguistics and sociolinguistics, the object of attitudes to which the general public may (re)act in a positive or negative way is language; therefore, in psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic studies the term language attitude is applied. Language attitude has been defined in various ways by sociolinguistic researchers but most of them agree that the definition of language attitude has two dimensions. On the one hand, it refers to people's attitudes towards a certain language itself (Fasold 1984, 147). However, these attitudes towards languages should not be confused with the beliefs that are connected to the languages in question. For example, people might believe that one language or another is beneficial for their career; yet, at the same time, they may detest this language (Edwards 1982, 20). On the other hand, language attitudes show not only people's attitudes towards one or another language, but they also reveal what attitudes people have towards the speakers of that particular language (Fasold 1984, 147). Since, beyond other factors that enable us to judge other people's character traits, it is unquestionably language that plays the most important role in such evaluations (Wolfram and Schilling-Estes 1998, 35).

In the next sections of this paper, these two dimensions of the definition of language attitudes will be elaborated on in detail to have an even more precise picture of the nature of language attitudes.

## 2.2. Language attitude studies

According to the definition, literally, language attitudes refer primarily to people's attitudes towards certain languages (Fasold 1984, 147). Nevertheless, language attitude studies do not only involve different languages as the object of their investigation, but also different dialects and accents. In fact, originally, in the 1950s, language attitude studies were developed to study attitudes to different languages. These were mainly bilingual studies where researchers wanted to examine to what degree attitudes towards two different languages differ in the case of native versus non-native speakers. However, after early studies of attitudes to different languages, monolingual studies rapidly spread, and interest in attitudes towards different dialects and accents emerged among researchers (Preston 1989, 11).

The results of these studies have shown that, on the one hand, most of the time respondents clearly differentiate, beside languages, between particular dialects and accents as well; on the other hand, they have stereotyped attitudes towards most of these languages, dialects or accents (Preston 1989, 51). According to Honey (1997, 99), solely the fact that people realize the differences between, for instance, certain dialects, carries in itself the potential for positive or negative evaluations. Even though people are generally not aware of making such evaluations, they are fairly widespread among the general public. What is more, since often only simplified general characteristics of certain speech forms are taken into consideration by the evaluation, they are, in fact, inaccurate. In the linguistic literature, these socially shared evaluations which describe certain languages (dialects or accents) in an oversimplified manner are called linguistic stereotypes<sup>2</sup> (De Klerk and Bosch 1995, 18).

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<sup>2</sup> These linguistic stereotypes are not equivalents of the linguistic stereotypes that are connected to Labov's name (Labov 1994:77-78).

In this part of the paper, beyond investigating each of the attitude objects of language attitude studies in detail, a brief overview will be given of the nature of linguistic stereotypes that are attached to the particular languages, dialects and accents in question.

### 2.2.1. Language

Several language attitude studies examine attitudes towards whole languages. In the case of these studies, the actual objects of attitude are different languages that are considered as single entities (Chambers and Trudgill 1998, 5), such as, for example, French, Italian or English. In these studies, subjects are asked if they consider certain languages "beautiful", "ugly", "sweet sounding" or "harsh" (Fasold 1984, 148).

The first language attitude study of this kind was carried out by Lambert in the late 1950s (Lambert et al. 1960, cited in Preston 1989, 50). In this study, the researchers wanted to examine to what degree native speaker French Canadians' and native speaker English Canadians' attitudes differ towards two different languages, towards Canadian French and English. The results of this study showed that both French and English Canadians had stereotyped attitudes towards these languages since they gave higher ratings to English than to French in many categories.

Subsequent language attitude studies of the same nature have provided evidence that stereotypes exist not only towards French and English but towards other languages as well. In fact, the public view that some languages are clearer and/or easier and/or more aesthetically pleasing than others is held commonly worldwide (Lodge 1998, 28; Andersson 1998, 50). For example, many people think that Italian is a "musical" language (Lodge 1998, 29), or that it is "elegant" and "sophisticated" (Giles and Niedzielski 1998, 85), or that it is "beautiful", whereas other languages are "ugly" or "harsh" (Honey 1997, 99).

### 2.2.2. Dialect

Besides investigating different languages, attitude studies might also be monolingual and focus on dialects, that is, on different varieties of a particular language that diverge from each other in morphological, syntactic, and/or lexical structures (Lippi-Green 1997, 43). Although several language attitude studies have examined attitudes towards dialects of particular languages, such as, for example, Dutch (van Bezooijen 2002), Turkish (Demirci 2002), and, in many cases, Hungarian (Kontra 1997; Fodor and Huszár 1998; Veress 2000; and Sándor 2001); the vast majority of monolingual research has been conducted in the United Kingdom and in the United States towards varieties of English (Cheshire 1991, 26).

As a matter of fact, in the United States a great amount of attitudinal dialect research has been carried out to measure attitudes towards regional dialects, that is, dialects that can be associated with the speech characteristics of a geographical area (Wolfram and Fasold 1998, 95; Mesthrie et al. 2000, 45). Among others, Preston in his Hawaii study reports on attitudes towards regional dialects (1993, 344–347). In this study, residents of different US states were asked first to draw the dialect map of the United States, and then rank these dialect regions. The results showed that respondents, even though they did not have the same opinion of the physical boundaries of the regional dialects, distinguished between the speech areas and assigned positive and negative labels to them. Whereas midwestern and inland northern dialects were evaluated with such stereotypical labels as "standard", "normal" but, at the same time, "snobby" and "very distinguished", southern dialects were labeled as "nonstandard", "incorrect" but "friendly" and "down-home".

Other than regional dialects, attitudinal dialect research has also examined attitudes towards social dialects, that is, dialects that can be associated with a group of people defined by their social, occupational or ethnic background (Wolfram and Fasold 1998, 95; Mesthrie et al. 2000, 45). Such social dialectal experiments in the United States often focus, for example, on African

American Vernacular English (AAVE). In one such study (Trudgill 1994, 39–40) respondents were asked to listen to two different sets of speakers, and decide which set of speakers was White and which one was Black. In most cases, the identification of the speakers was correct, which shows that Americans can assign speakers to one of the two ethnic groups on the basis of their speech. In subsequent studies, participants were not asked to identify but rather to evaluate the speakers of AAVE (Wolfram and Schilling-Estes 1998, 12). The results of these studies showed that some features of AAVE are socially stigmatized by mainstream American culture.

All in all, as the results of the above mentioned studies show, American people are able to distinguish between most American English dialects. Furthermore, similarly to languages, stereotypical values such as “nonstandard” or “familiar” are assigned to American English dialects (Wolfram and Schilling-Estes 1998, 7).

### 2.2.3. Accent

Generally, dialects are associated with a regionally or socially defined group of people (Wolfram et al. 1999, 1–3). In fact, this phenomenon can be observed in connection with accents as well; namely, accent features are also distributed over geographic, socioeconomic or ethnic space (Lippi-Green 1997, 42; Finegan 2004, 26–27). However, literature on language attitude studies clearly differentiates between the terms dialect and accent. According to the simplest explanation of this distinction, the difference lies in the concept that dialects may involve all subsystems of language, while accents involve only pronunciation (Wells 1982a, 1). In other words, whereas the term dialect, in general, is utilized to refer to varieties which are grammatically, lexically and phonologically different from other varieties, the term accent, in particular, refers to how people pronounce a variety which is phonetically and/or phonologically different from other varieties (Chambers and Trudgill 1998, 5).

In linguistic research, accent is generally used as a complex term comprising segmental features, that is, speech sounds and their combinatorial possibilities (Simpson 2001, 293), and prosodic elements, that is, patterns of intonation, pitch contours, stress and tempo of speaking (Lippi-Green 1997, 42). Yet, attitudinal studies, where attitudes towards different accent varieties are investigated, apply the term accent as a synonym of a pattern of pronunciation (Wells 1982a, 1).

Since research started in this field, the actual objects of most accent evaluation studies have been accent varieties of English, particularly of American English. In fact, an immense amount of English accent variation exists (Cheshire 1991, 7), of which the majority is regional, that is, associated with special geographical areas. For example, in the case of the United States or Australia or Canada, we can identify American, Australian and Canadian accents of English, respectively. Constituting the largest accent region of the world, American English accents have always provided the widest ground for investigation in accent evaluation research (Simpson 2001, 294).

Among others, Wells (1982b, 470), Simpson (2001, 294) and Finegan (2004, 26–27) claim that within American English further distinctions can be made. According to Finegan (2004, 26–27), American English accents can be divided into ethnic, socioeconomic and regional varieties where ethnic varieties refer to the accents of diverse ethnic groups in the United States, such as, African Americans, Latinos, Asian Americans and Native Americans. Further, socioeconomic accent varieties are formed by accents of the different socioeconomic status groups of the United States. For example, lower-ranked socioeconomic groups, such as working-class Americans, pronounce [d] instead of [ð] in *this* and *brother* or [t] instead of [θ] in words like *think* or *with* more often than higher-ranked socioeconomic groups, such as middle-class Americans.

Eventually, taking geographical features into consideration, American English accents can be grouped into three main regional accent varieties that form the Eastern, the Southern and the General American accent regions (Wells 1982b, 470; Simpson 2001, 294). Thus, according to both Wells and Simpson, Main, New Hampshire, and the eastern parts of Vermont, Massachusetts, and Connecticut belong to the Eastern accent region; the Southern states form the Southern accent region; and the rest of the Union belongs to the General American accent region. These three accent regions and a few salient phonological features that are characteristic of the majority of varieties belonging to these regions will be described in detail in the next section of this paper.

### 2.2.3.1. Regional American English accent features

As a matter of fact, General American accent, which is sometimes also referred to as Network English, is, by no means, a single unified accent (Wells 1982b, 470). Essentially, it reveals no marked regional features, in other words, it does not comprise either eastern or southern characteristics (Wells 1982a, 10). For example, in contrast to most Eastern and Southern accent varieties where /r/ is usually dropped in words like *far*, *mark*, or *card*, General American pronounces /r/ when it occurs after a vowel in the same syllable (Finegan 2004, 23). With regard to this, to be able to constitute a more accurate representation of the General American accent, the Eastern and the Southern American accents ought to be examined further on.

Accent varieties of the Eastern American region usually entail r-less accents (Wells 1982b, 470). In other words, one of the most important phonological features of the region is that /r/ is not pronounced after vowels in words like *car* or *far*. In addition, the tendency to monophthongize the diphthongs is the strongest in this region (Wells 1982b, 531); thus, it occurs most often in the Eastern American accent region that diphthongs are turned into monophthongs (Wolfram and Schilling-Estes 1998, 70). Finally, in this region, the vowels of *cot* and *caught* are merged, so that *Don* and *Dawn*, *wok* and *walk* are homophones, that is, they are pronounced indistinguishably (Finegan 2004, 24).

In southern American English, several characteristic features can be found that make the Southern accent easily distinguishable both from the General American and the Eastern American accents. In connection with vowels, one of the key features of this accent is the *pin—pen* merger, in which merger the vowel [e] is raised to [ɪ] before nasals so that words like *pin* and *pen* sound both very much like *pin* (Wolfram and Schilling-Estes 1998, 71; Tottie 2002, 211; Finegan 2004, 25). Furthermore, Southerners often pronounce diphthongs as monophthongs, and say, for example, [a] instead of [ai] as in *fine* or *time*, leaving off the [i] glide from the [ai] diphthong (Wolfram and Schilling-Estes 1998, 70), or pronounce *tie* and *toy* so that they sound like *tab* and *taw*, respectively (Finegan 2004, 25). Nevertheless, at the same time, in Southern accent varieties, several monophthongal vowels are realized as diphthongs. For example, a glide is regularly added to vowels which are not typically glided in other varieties, such as in *bed* and *Bill* so that the words sound almost as two-syllable sequences, that is, *beyud* [beyəd] for 'bed' and *Biyul* [biyʊl] for 'Bill' (Wolfram and Schilling-Estes 1998, 73). Another example is the [ɔ] vowel in the words *thought* and *small*, which is quite often diphthongized and pronounced as [ɔʊ] in the Southern accent variety (Wells 1982b, 540). Indeed, according to Wells (1982b, 531), in words such as *sing* or *thing*, where most accents have [ɪ], southern speech might have [i], [eɪ] or even [æɪ] plus [ŋ]. Another interesting phenomenon that provides the Southern speech a typical characteristic feature is the Southern drawl. It indicates, first of all, a recognizably slower speech; second, it shows the lengthening of vowels, especially in stressed, accented syllables. Sometimes the accented syllables are even accompanied by diphthongization and other modifications (Tottie 2002, 211; Wells 1982b, 529). Regarding consonants, there are three features that are widespread in the whole Southern region and characterize Southern accents as such. The first element is the



non-rhoticity of the Southern accent (Wells 1982b, 470; Wolfram and Schilling-Estes 1998, 69). Second, before [r], for example, in *shrink*, instead of [ʃ] often [s] is pronounced. Finally, most of the time the words *isn't* or *wasn't* are realized with [d] rather than with [z] in Southern speech (Wells 1982b, 553).

#### 2.2.3.2. Attitudes towards American English accents

Researchers started investigating the general public's attitudes towards the different American English accents in the 1960s, and since then a great number of accent evaluation research has been conducted. One of the first studies in this field was carried out by Labov in the 1960s on the social stratification of English in New York City (Labov 1973). His survey focused on how native speaker Americans of diverse social class backgrounds rated varieties of New York English that differed only in some phonological variables. Labov found that non-rhotic pronunciation was generally rated much lower by the respondents. Beyond Labov, Tucker and Lambert (1969), Fraser (1973) and Rey (1977) carried out further research and examined attitudes toward different accent varieties of American English. Tucker and Lambert (1969, cited in Preston 1989, 50–51), for example, investigated the attitudes of Northern White, Southern White and Southern Black male and female students to taped voice samples of different American accents. Moreover, Fraser (1973, cited in Cheshire 1991, 26) investigated attitudes towards Network English, Black English and a number of regional American accents. In addition, Rey (1977, cited in Preston 1989, 85) analyzed potential employers' attitudes towards White and Black accents. All of these studies showed that the less accented varieties were preferred while the more heavily accented varieties were downgraded by respondents.

Whereas the above mentioned studies focused exclusively on native English speakers' attitudes towards the different accent varieties of American English, subsequent research in the 1980s started concentrating on non-native speakers' reactions to the various American English accent varieties. Eisenstein and Verdi (1985, cited in Alford and Strother 1990, 483) investigated whether nonnative speakers of English could perceive differences among Network English, New York English and Black English. They found that the respondents were able to recognize the differences among these varieties even in the early stages of their English acquisition. Subsequently, Strother and Alford (1988, cited in Alford and Strother 1990, 483) examined whether there was a connection between how well non-native speakers scored on an English pronunciation test and their ability to differentiate among regional American accents. The results showed that there was no significant correlation between the respondents' pronunciation and their ratings of the individual accents. In Alford and Strother's next research (1990), native and non-native speakers' attitudes were compared towards various regional varieties of American English. In this study, the subjects listened to and rated taped samples of southern, northern and midwestern American English accents. On the basis of the study the researchers concluded that non-native speakers, in general, rated all three regional accents higher than native speakers did. What is more, whereas native speakers rated southern accents slightly higher than midwestern accents, non-native speakers reacted to these accents just the opposite way, that is, they ranked midwestern accents higher than southern ones.

Of the studies that have recently been conducted regarding attitudes towards American accents, three are related to my current research. One of these studies was carried out by Bayard and his colleagues (Bayard et al. 2001) where New Zealand, Australian and American students' attitudes were examined towards New Zealand, Australian and American English. A relevant finding of this study is, besides that all three nationalities found the American accent variety the most favorable, that already one phonologically different accent feature may imply a significant difference in the evaluations (Bayard et al. 2001, 40). In two other studies Hiraga (2005) and Soukup (2001) examined British and American people's attitudes towards regional accent vari-

eties of American English. They both found that, in general, Network American was significantly more favored than other regional American varieties; moreover, the Southern US accent was marked negatively by the respondents.

On the whole, these studies reveal what attitudes the general public conveys towards accents in general, and towards American accents in particular. As a matter of fact, people generally disregard the linguistic point of view that every speaker of a language has some accent or other (Simpson 2001, 295). Indeed, they judge other people who speak with an accent that has a special position, that is, considered correct at a given time and place, as being accent-free (Wells 1982a, 33). However, when a speaker's accent is far from this "correct" variety or from their own, people recognize at once that accents exist (Derwing 2003, 568). In addition, contrary to the linguistic claim that all accents are of equal value (Simpson 2001, 295), in most cases, as the above cited studies also vindicate, people attach positive as well as negative stereotypes to the accents and mark them with such labels as "beautiful" or "good" or "incorrect" (Preston 1989, 94). Furthermore, the majority of attitude research claims that the degree of accent affects the evaluation; in other words, the broader the accent seems than the variety that is considered to be correct, the less favorably it is judged by the hearers (Cheshire 1991, 26–27). All in all, in connection with American English accents, Hiraga (2005, 304) and Soukup (2001, 66) found that whereas the respondents' attitudes – regardless of whether they are British or American – are significantly more positive towards the General American accent, and, at the same time, they are rather negative towards Southern American English. Regarding non-native speakers of English, Alford and Strother (1990, 492) concluded that they generally evaluated the American accents higher than native speakers did.

### 2.3. Characteristic traits attributed to speakers

When people hear other people speaking with an accent that is different from theirs, first of all, they attempt to identify where the speaker comes from: where s/he grew up or where s/he lives at present (Wells 1982a, 8). At the same time, the accent people hear evokes simplified and standardized stereotypes in them, which are formed by the often inaccurate common knowledge of their community or society (Wells 1982a, 29). As a consequence, the hearers judge these accents as "good" or "incorrect" or "snobbish" (Simpson 2001, 295). What is more, on the basis of the preconceived stereotypes, they assign, most of the time unconsciously, all kinds of characteristic traits to the speaker. For example, on the basis of the speaker's accent, hearers might form an opinion about the speaker's political view, their mental abilities, or reliability (Wells 1982a, 30). Indeed, this refers to the phenomenon that is defined as the other dimension of language attitudes, that is, not only languages, dialects or accents are evaluated by the general public, but people's judgments also extend to the speakers of these languages, dialects and accents (Fasold 1984, 147), whereby different character traits are attached to these speakers (Wolfram and Schilling-Estes 1998, 35).

Indeed, language attitude studies, beside investigating people's attitudes towards various languages, dialects or accents, are concerned with how people evaluate the speakers of the languages, dialects or accents in question (Ryan et al. 1982, 9). Regarding this aspect of language attitude studies, two major issues have to be taken into consideration in connection with research in this field. First, it needs to be specified which methods and techniques enable researchers to measure people's attitudes towards other people based on their speech; second, the evaluative dimensions have to be selected along which the hearers judge the speakers and assign characteristic traits to them. In the next sections of this paper, these two issues will be elaborated on in detail.

### 2.3.1. Measurement of language attitudes

According to Ryan et al. (1982, 7–8), language attitude research employs three types of measurement techniques in general. First, language attitudes can be inferred by analyzing the societal treatment of the different varieties of languages, dialects or accents. This technique involves studying, for example, official language policies as well as autobiographies; in other words, cases that do not explicitly ask respondents to express their reactions. Second, people can be directly asked questions about their attitudes, for example, how they evaluate the different varieties of languages, dialects or accents or their speakers. Nonetheless, in most cases, direct questioning is an unsuitable method to elicit attitudes; first because people might respond in a way that is expected of them, thus not reveal their prejudice even if they have some (Preston 1989, 11); second, the outcome of studies applying the direct method mirrors rather the respondents' beliefs than their attitudes. The third method for observing language attitudes attempts to obtain people's actual attitudes towards the speech characteristics of language, dialect and accent varieties and towards their speakers in an indirect way, that is, without them knowing that their language attitudes are being investigated (Ryan et al. 1982, 8).

In the field of sociolinguistics, one of the most common indirect methods measuring language attitudes is the matched-guise technique (Fasold 1984, 149–150). This technique was introduced by Lambert and his associates (Lambert et al. 1960) to examine how people react to speakers reading the same passage in different languages or with different accents. In fact, the challenge in this method is that researchers aim to keep all, except speech, variables constant; therefore, they try to eliminate speakers' individual voice characteristics (Preston 1989, 12) by choosing speakers who are able to speak fluently in at least two clearly diverse ways. The procedure of such studies is the following: the speakers are asked to read out a brief text in the two languages or with the two diverse accents they are capable of speaking. The speech samples are tape-recorded and played to the respondents as if they came from two different persons. The respondents associate each recorded voice with an image of a different speaker (Bailey 2003, 134), and judge the speaker's social and linguistic characteristics on the basis of the voice sample (Wells 1982a, 30; Bainbridge 2001, 82). As the same person provides both samples, respondents, in fact, react to the speakers themselves (Fasold 1984, 150).

Although the matched-guise technique is applied across the world as the most frequent method to investigate language attitudes, it has often been criticized by researchers (Cheshire 1991, 27). The basic problems that occur in utilizing the matched-guise technique are reviewed by Fasold (1984, 152–154). He claims that the matched-guise technique has, first of all, validity problems, that is, it might not really measure what it is supposed to measure since listeners might evaluate the speakers on the basis of their reading performance and not on the basis of the variety they use. Furthermore, it is rather artificial to ask people to judge others only by voice samples.

As a consequence, current studies and papers suggest and endeavor new ways in language attitude research both in selecting language varieties and in collecting the data (Garrett 2001, 627). For example, instead of utilizing guises who could read the same passage with two different accents, Hiraga (2005, 295–302; see also subsection 2.2.3.2.) decided to use one speech sample from each accent by different speakers whose accent is representative of that particular variety. This way, he might not be able to control all the variables; nevertheless, it decreases the artificiality of the study. Furthermore, he collected data about the respondents' language attitudes in three ways: (1) rating speech samples as usual in matched-guise studies, (2) filling in a questionnaire with open and closed questions, and (3) a debate among the subjects on the reasons for their answers in the questionnaire. All in all, utilizing more methods to measure attitudes, the study is likely to provide a more precise picture of the respondents' language attitudes than any previous research did.

### 2.3.2. Evaluative dimensions

In fact, language attitude studies concentrating on attitudes towards languages, dialects or accents ask respondents which variety of languages, dialects or accents they prefer; what is more, they are asked to judge the varieties as “correct”, “beautiful”, “good” or “bad”. Besides, when the focus of language attitude research is on attitudes towards the speakers of certain languages, dialects or accents, respondents rate speakers with the help of semantic differential pairs, that is, they have to opt for which character trait they find more appropriate regarding the speaker, for example, from the “friendly-unfriendly” or “polite-impolite” semantic pair (Preston 1989, 11–12). The semantic pairs constitute a semantic scale with the opposite character traits at either end with numbers from 1 to 7 or with five or seven empty spaces between them. Thus, if listeners find the speaker unfriendly or intelligent, they mark the scale close to the word “unfriendly” or “intelligent”, respectively. As a result, the mean evaluation number of the individual character traits indicates to what degree the speaker is judged to be unfriendly or intelligent (Fasold 1984, 150–151).

In the early days of language attitude research a pattern evolved in respondents' ratings on semantic differential scales. Namely, they clearly separated the speakers, and rated them higher or lower on the character traits of two dimensions, that is, on social status and group solidarity (Ryan et al. 1982, 8) where social status includes qualities such as, for example, ambition, wealth, success, and education; and such qualities as, for instance, kindness, likeability, friendliness and goodness belong to solidarity (Chambers 1995, 225). Since then numerous studies have proved that this classical pattern exists, whereby prestige dialects or accents are rated high on the status but low on the solidarity dimension; and local/regional dialects or accents score high on solidarity but low on status dimensions (Giles and Ryan 1982; Bayard et al. 2001, 23).

Despite the evidence of this two dimensional pattern, there have always been attempts among researchers to rearrange the character traits along more than two dimensions, and thus analyze the results this way. For example, Lambert (1967, cited in De Klerk and Bosch 1995, 24) categorized the character traits along three dimensions: competence (*intelligent, educated, effective, rich*), personal integrity (*honest, helpful, reliable, polite, rigorous*), and social attractiveness (*friendly, attractive, kind*). Along these dimensions, an overall finding of research is that speakers of prestige varieties are evaluated in general higher on competence but lower on personal integrity traits than speakers of non-prestige varieties. At the same time, non-prestige speakers are rated more favorably in terms of personal integrity and social attractiveness (Giles 2003, 389).

Beyond Lambert (1967), there have been several attempts to provide further dimension-structures. For example, Zahn and Hopper (1985, cited in Garrett 2001, 630) applied a superiority (*intelligent, rich, prestigious*) – social attractiveness (*likable, honest*) – dynamism (*enthusiastic, confident*) tripartite structure of dimensions for their research. Moreover, Giles (2003, 388) describes the character traits employed in attitude research again along different dimensions than the previously mentioned studies, namely, along competence, solidarity and dynamism. Apart from that, Garrett (2001) claims that there are even more dimensions than three, however, he does not specify them in more detail.

Most of the research on native speakers' attitudes cited in subsection 2.2.3.2 investigated people's attitudes not only towards varieties of regional American English accents, but, with the help of semantic differential scales, also towards the speakers of these varieties. On the whole, these studies claim that speakers from the Southern US regions, for example, from Louisiana or Georgia, are rated more negatively than speakers from Boston (Cukor-Avila and Markley 2000). In particular, these studies have found that in the United States, when American listeners hear other Americans speaking with a southern accent, a picture of a “poorly educated” and “barefoot” person comes into their minds; that is, they evaluate the speaker rather negatively in terms of traits related to competence. Besides, although northern accents evoke rather posi-

tive judgments on the competence dimension, in other words, people speaking with such accents are considered to be more intelligent and more educated, at the same time, they are rated more "impersonal", "unfriendly" and "dishonest" than their southern counterparts (Preston 1989, 93). Nonetheless, as studies on non-native speakers' attitudes towards speakers of diverse regional American English accent varieties have not analyzed non-native speakers' judgments along the above mentioned evaluative dimensions, it cannot be stated whether non-native speakers assess Americans speaking with a southern or another regional accent the same way as native speakers do.

### 3. The research questions

In general, the purpose of this present study is to examine and compare the attitudes of native and non-native English speakers towards speakers of selected regional American English accents. First of all, I intend to investigate whether American students display the same patterns of attitudes that have been presented in the previous subsections, namely, whether they also consider Americans speaking with southern accents in overall more negatively than speakers who have a General American accent. More specifically, I am interested in whether General American accent speakers are rated more positively on competence traits and more negatively on personal integrity and attractiveness traits than their southern counterparts.

Furthermore, I would like to observe whether Hungarian students for whom English is a foreign language are able to differentiate between the different regional American English, that is, between the Southern and General American, accents. What is more, my aim is to examine what attitudes non-native English speakers have towards the speakers of these accent varieties. Finally, I would like to compare and contrast the attitudes of the native and non-native English students to see if their evaluations display similar or different patterns in the overall speakers evaluation and the speakers' judgments along the evaluative dimensions of competence, personal integrity and attractiveness.

## 4. Methodology

### 4.1. Subjects

The non-native respondents included 75 Hungarian students, all of whom were first-year English and/or American Studies majors at the University of Szeged. They have been learning English as a foreign language on average for 9.27 years, and the average age of the predominantly female (70%) group was 19.8 years. Of the 75 only three had spent more than four weeks in an English-speaking country; two of them had been to Canada for 2 and 5 months, respectively, and one of the subjects had spent 9 months in London.

The native control group consisted of 7 American undergraduate students who had come from the United States to Hungary for five months as exchange students. So, at the time of the research, they had been studying at the Hungarian and East-Central European Studies Center at the University of Szeged. Five of them were females, and two of them males. The average age of the group was 20.6. Two of them came from Oregon, and five of them from Wisconsin.



#### 4.2. Data collection

Despite the several methods that exist in language attitude research, in this study one relatively simple attitude measurement technique was utilized to gain information about the subjects' language attitudes. Namely, a questionnaire was designed (see Appendix A), and four speech samples (see Transcripts in Appendix B) were taped and played to the respondents who were requested to evaluate the speakers on the basis of the speech samples along the semantic differential scales of the questionnaire.

The questionnaire was divided into three parts. The first three questions asked participants to provide some personal data, such as, for example, their age and nationality. The second part consisted of questions from four to six, designed in the first place for the Hungarian respondents to compile information about their experience with different English accent varieties, that is, whether they spent a longer time in an English-speaking country, and what kind of connections they had with native English speakers, if any. The last section, (Question 7) provided the semantic differential scales for the informants on the basis of which they had to evaluate the speakers.

The semantic differential scale consisted of a six-point scale and nine semantic differential pairs that were selected along three dimensions to conform with Lambert's categories (1967, cited in De Klerk and Bosch 1995, 24). The semantic differential pairs comprised nine opposite character trait pairs along three categories: *intelligent, educated* and *rich* of the competence dimension; *honest, reliable* and *polite* of the personal integrity category; and *friendly, attractive* and *entertaining* of the social attractiveness dimension. The nine trait pairs were randomly ordered in the questionnaire. The speakers were requested to judge the speakers in terms of nine character traits on a scale of one to six. Generally, five or seven point scales are applied in language attitude research; yet, I chose six since I wanted the respondents to choose between a negative and a positive evaluation of the speakers unequivocally.

For the speech samples, four speakers were selected from a database on the Internet, from *The Speech Accent Archive* (2005), who all read the same short paragraph fluently (see Appendix C). All four speakers were males, aged between 52 and 67 years. Two of them came from the North and two of them from the South: from Arcadia, Wisconsin, and Detroit, Michigan; and Atlanta, Georgia, and Pine Bluff, Arkansas, respectively.

In fact, the four speakers were chosen to be the representatives of two varieties of regional American English accents. Speakers 1 and 3 were representatives of the Southern variety, and Speakers 2 and 4 of the General variety of American English accents. Whereas the speech samples of Speakers 2 and 4 revealed no marked regional features, Speakers 1 and 3 spoke in a very broad accent, Speaker 1 displaying 7, Speaker 3 about 15 characteristic features of the Southern variety of American English accent that made them easily distinguishable from the General American accent speech samples<sup>3</sup>.

#### 4.3. Procedure

The data was collected at the University of Szeged; the speech samples were taped and played to the respondents who listened to the samples and filled in the questionnaire in three groups. Before listening to the samples, all the American and Hungarian students were asked to fill in Questions 0 to 3 or Questions 0 to 6 about their background, respectively (see Subsection 4.2).

<sup>3</sup> Among other phonological features, some characteristics for the Southern accents in this study are the following: the vowel [e] is raised to [ɪ] before [d] in *Wednesday*; [a] is pronounced instead of [aɪ] in *five*; the [ɔ] vowel in the words *small* and *call* is diphthongized and pronounced as [ɔʊ]; and [ei] is pronounced in *think* instead of [ɪ].

Afterwards, the subjects were instructed clearly about the task in their native language, that is, in Hungarian for Hungarian students and in English for American students. They were told that they would hear four people reading the same passage, and they were asked to listen carefully to the voices and rate each of the four speakers on a scale of 1 to 6 in terms of the descriptions they see in Question 7 but leave out any categories where they feel unable to evaluate the speaker. Once respondents filled in the first part of the questionnaire, the speech samples were played to them. After each sample, though, the tape was stopped to enable the respondents to have enough time to make the judgments. The fact that there was no preset time for the breaks turned out to be the appropriate procedure since whereas the American students were ready with their evaluations by the end of each passage, and therefore the next sample could be immediately played, Hungarian students needed sometimes a minute or more to go through all the adjectives and fill in the questionnaire with their judgments.

The respondents participated in the study in three groups. In the first group there were 40 Hungarian students who were listening to the speech samples with the help of a tape-recorder according to the original design of the study. However, my attention was drawn to the fact that this way the respondents had difficulties with the perception of the speech samples because of the echo in the classroom and of the rather poor quality of the tape recorder. Therefore, the rest of the data was collected in one of the language laboratories of the University, where respondents were able to put on earphones and listen to the speech samples under excellent conditions. The second group consisted of 35 Hungarian, and the third group of the 7 American students who all provided the data in the language laboratory on two subsequent weeks.

## 5. Results

After the respondents rated the four speakers on the 6-point scale, the original ratings were encoded using values from 1 to 6 – higher ratings being closer to the positive adjective pole (intelligent, attractive, etc.). The mean values were then calculated, and presented in forms of tables and figures.

Tables 1, 2 and 3 display the results according to the groups of respondents with a rating of 1 being the highest and the most positive. In each category, the highest, that is, the most positive scores are in bold, and the lowest, the most negative ones are italicized.

Besides, the results are also presented in Figures 1 and 2 showing respondents' scores along three dimensions, that is, competence, personal integrity and attractiveness, where *competence* includes the mean values of the traits *intelligent*, *educated* and *rich*; *personal integrity* involves the traits *honest*, *reliable* and *polite*; and *attractiveness* summons the main values of the character traits *friendly*, *attractive*, and *entertaining*. Also in this case, higher scores signify more positive and lower scores more negative evaluations.

### 5.1. American students' evaluations

Table 1 shows American respondents' ratings of the speakers' characteristics. In a summary rating, American students rated Speaker 4 the most positively, scoring him a mean value of 4.25. Speaker 3 was rated the most negatively receiving the lowest score of 2.13. The two other speakers were judged nearly equally, that is, Speaker 1 received 2.99 and Speaker 2 2.92. In particular, Speaker 4 was ranked most favorably in education, intelligence, politeness and reliability, and the least favorably in being entertaining, attractive, rich and honest. All in all, he was rated rather positively in all except one trait, that is, in the *entertaining* category. Speaker 3

was rated the most negatively in every category, and specifically negatively in attractiveness, scoring the lowest mark 1 that none of the other speakers received in the study. Apart from that, his entertaining ability, his wealth and intelligence were also rated rather negatively. The highest scores he received in politeness, reliability and honesty; however, these ratings are still more negative than other speakers' mean values on these traits. Speakers 1 and 2 received similar ratings, though, Speaker 1 was rated more positively in friendliness, honesty, wealth, and being entertaining than Speaker 2. At the same time, Speaker 2 was judged more favorably in attractiveness, politeness, and reliability than Speaker 1.

TABLE 1  
American Respondents' Mean Ratings of Speakers of Regional Varieties of American English  
(*n* = 7)

Characteristics	Speakers			
	Speaker 1 (Southern)	Speaker 2 (General)	Speaker 3 (Southern)	Speaker 4 (General)
attractive	1.40	2.16	1.00	3.85
polite	3.42	3.71	2.71	4.57
reliable	3.28	3.57	2.71	4.57
rich	2.28	2.00	1.85	4.00
entertaining	3.83	2.71	1.42	3.14
intelligent	2.50	2.57	2.00	4.85
educated	2.57	2.57	2.42	5.00
friendly	3.85	3.57	2.42	4.33
honest	3.85	3.42	2.71	4.00
<i>m</i>	2.99	2.92	2.13	4.25

Figure 1 below shows how the four speakers were evaluated along three dimensions, that is, competence, personal integrity and attractiveness. As it can be seen from the graphs, Speaker 4 has a rather different pattern from the other speakers. Namely, he is judged most negatively along the attractiveness and most positively along the competence dimension. At the same time, Speakers 1, 2 and 3 were evaluated the most favorably on the personal integrity dimension. The pattern is similar in case of the first two speakers, in other words, Speakers 1 and 2 are both rated the least favorably on competence traits; whereas, Speaker 3 was judged the most negatively on the attractiveness dimension.

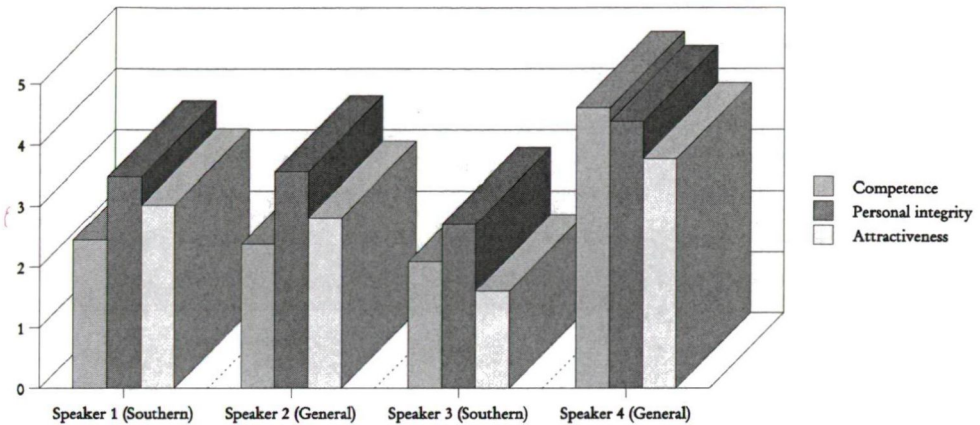


Figure 1: American students' evaluation of four regional American accent speakers along three dimensions.

## 5. 2. Hungarian students' evaluations

Tables 2 and 3 show the results of the two Hungarian groups, where Group 1 listened to the four speakers from a tape recorder, and Group 2 in the language laboratory. The results of the two groups show exactly the same patterns although they display slight differences in the individual ratings on the character traits as well as in the mean values. On the whole, Hungarian students rated Speaker 4 the most positively on every character trait and with mean values of 4.34 and 4.62. Speaker 2 was judged as the second most positive by both groups with mean values of 3.48 and 3.61. Speakers 1 and 3 were rated nearly the same by the Hungarian respondents, namely, Group 1 scored them 2.99 and 2.98, and Group 2 3.03 and 2.94, respectively. With these ratings, Hungarian students judged Speakers 1 and 3 the most negatively of the four speakers.

TABLE 2  
Hungarian Respondents' Mean Ratings of Speakers of Regional Varieties of American English (using a tape recorder)  
(n = 40)

Characteristics	Speakers			
	Speaker 1	Speaker 2	Speaker 3	Speaker 4
attractive	2.45	3.15	2.55	4.25
polite	3.35	3.92	3.22	4.62
reliable	3.43	3.69	3.23	4.42
rich	2.97	3.48	3.15	4.31
entertaining	2.07	2.70	2.47	3.95
intelligent	3.41	4.05	3.35	4.74
educated	3.20	3.87	3.50	4.60
friendly	2.72	3.00	2.57	4.36
honest	3.34	3.52	3.25	3.81
<i>m</i>	2.99	3.48	3.03	4.34

TABLE 3  
Hungarian Respondents' Mean Ratings of Speakers of Regional Varieties of American English  
(using earphones)  
(n = 35)

Characteristics	Speakers			
	Speaker 1	Speaker 2	Speaker 3	Speaker 4
attractive	2.65	3.08	2.75	4.71
polite	2.97	3.74	3.00	4.80
reliable	3.28	4.38	3.22	4.43
rich	2.70	3.48	3.51	4.46
entertaining	2.11	2.68	1.94	4.28
intelligent	3.51	3.94	3.09	4.85
educated	3.57	3.92	3.38	5.02
friendly	2.79	3.25	2.27	4.60
honest	3.31	4.09	3.35	4.43
<i>m</i>	2.98	3.61	2.94	4.62

Figure 2 below shows how the four speakers were evaluated along the three dimensions by all the Hungarian students. As the pattern of evaluation along the three dimensions is proven to be the same by both Hungarian groups, the results are presented this time consolidated in one figure. The graphs display that Speakers 1 and 2, and Speakers 3 and 4 have similar patterns. In other words, Speakers 1 and 2 are evaluated most positively along the personal integrity and most negatively on the attractiveness dimension, whereas Speakers 3 and 4 are judged most unfavorably on the attractiveness and most favorably on the competence traits.

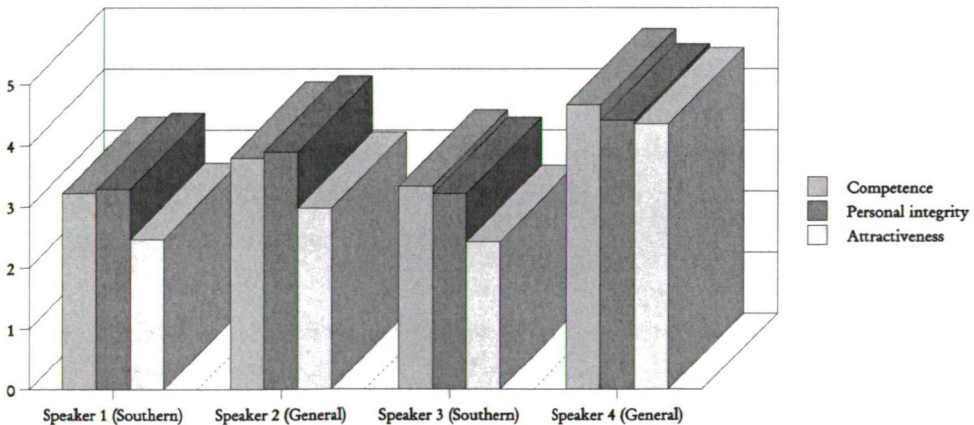


Figure 2: Hungarian students' evaluation of four regional American accent speakers along three dimensions

## 6. Analysis of the Results

At the core of the data analysis are, on the one hand, comparisons of the mean values provided by the American and Hungarian students. On the other hand, the results are contrasted with each other and with the results of previous studies in order to answer the research questions.

### 6.1. American students' attitudes towards regional American English accent varieties

As mentioned before, one purpose of this study has been to examine what attitudes American students have towards Southern and General American English accent varieties and their speakers. In particular, the study has had the aim to examine whether American students' evaluations display the same patterns of attitudes that have been demonstrated in previous language attitude studies; that is, first, whether they judge Southerners, in general, more negatively than speakers of other American English dialects; and second, whether they evaluate Southerners more negatively on competence traits and more positively on personal integrity and social attractiveness traits than they evaluate other speakers who have a General American accent.

All in all, American respondents' judgments in this study seem to support only partially the findings of previous research in this domain. First, Soukup (2001) claims in her study that the Southern US accent is marked more negatively by Americans than other American English accent varieties. This outcome has been supported by the present study as well, since, in the overall speaker evaluation, the two Southerners together (Speakers 1 and 3) were rated more unfavorably than Speakers 2 and 4 who had General American accents. Nevertheless, this result has been induced solely by the evaluations of Speakers 3 and 4 since, as the results in Table 1 and Figure 1 show, Speaker 1, who has a Southern accent, and Speaker 2 with General American accent, were rated nearly equally. What is more, they were ranked lower than Speaker 4, one of the General American accent speaker, who was judged the most favorably of the four speakers; and, at the same time, they were evaluated higher than Speaker 3, one of the Southerners, who was assessed the most unfavorably by the respondents. In fact, these ratings contradict Bayard and his colleagues' results (Bayard et al. 2001), according to which already one phonologically different accent feature may imply a significant difference in the evaluations, as in this study, Speaker 1, a Southerner whose accent did not incorporate more than 7 distinctive phonological features, was not evaluated as negatively as Speaker 3, another Southerner who had a Southern accent with about 15 distinctive features.

Nonetheless, the outcome of the present study seems to corroborate Cheshire's study (1991), on the basis of which she claims that the broader an accent is, the less favorably it is judged by the respondents, since Speaker 3 with the broadest Southern accent was rated the most negatively; Speaker 1 with less Southern characteristic accent features was judged slightly more positively, and one of the General American English accent speakers, that is, Speaker 4, was evaluated the most favorably. Speaker 2 appears to be an exception in this case since although he is a General American accent speaker, he was not judged more positively than one of the Southerners.

Second, Lambert and other linguists' finding in connection with evaluative dimensions (Lambert 1967, cited in De Klerk and Bosch 1995; Giles 2003), according to which speakers who have a General American English accent are judged more positively on competence and more negatively on personal integrity and social attractiveness traits than their Southern counterparts, does not seem to be confirmed in the present study since the evaluations of Southerners and their counterparts with General American accent do not display this pattern. Instead, one of the Southerners (Speaker 1) and one of the General American accent speakers (Speaker 2) show the above mentioned structure, that is, they, and exclusively they, were rated more positively on

personal integrity and social attractiveness than on competence traits. Interestingly, Speakers 3 and 4 show different patterns; in other words, apart from the fact that they are both judged the most unfavorably on the attractiveness traits, Speaker 3 was evaluated the most positively on personal integrity, whereas Speaker 4 was judged the most favorably on competence traits.

On the whole, the results of the current study point out that those American students who participated in the study have rather negative attitudes towards a Southerner with a very broad Southern accent, and, at the same time, more positive attitudes towards another Southerner who speaks with an accent that shows fewer Southern features. However, their attitudes towards the two other speakers whose accents are without any Southern features are rather ambiguous. That is, although they reveal the most positive attitudes towards one of the General American accent speakers, they plainly do not distinguish in the evaluations between a Southerner with less broad accent (Speaker 1) and the other General American accent speaker (Speaker 2) since they assess both speakers equally. The possible reasons for this phenomenon might lie, on the one hand, in the order of the speech samples, that is, the fact that Speaker 2 is placed between two Southerners may lead to him being more negatively evaluated than expected because of the influence Southerners' unfavorable rankings exerted on his evaluation. On the other hand, Americans might be unable to differentiate between the various regional American English accents unless these accents have a greater number of phonological features that distinguish one variety from the others. What is more, even if they are able to recognize the individual regional accent varieties, it is very well possible that they will not assess speakers of one variety more negatively if this variety has solely some distinctive features that mark it different from other varieties. Nonetheless, as the results were inferred from seven American students' judgments, this phenomenon cannot be generalized for the entire American population.

## 6.2. Hungarian students' attitudes towards regional American English accent varieties

Beyond examining native speakers' attitudes towards Southern and General American English accent varieties and their speakers, the main goal of the study has been to focus on and investigate what attitudes non-native, specifically Hungarian students have towards these accent varieties and their speakers.

The results of this study will first be analyzed by contrasting them to and comparing them with findings of previous research about non-native speakers' attitudes towards their foreign language. In general, the results in Tables 2 and 3 and in Figure 2 confirm fully the outcomes that have been concluded by Eisenstein and Verdi (1985, cited in Alford and Strother 1990) and Alford and Strother (1990) in their previous studies about non-native speakers' attitudes towards their foreign language, that is, English. According to Eisenstein and Verdi (1985, cited in Alford and Strother 1990), non-native speakers are able to recognize the differences between accent varieties of their foreign language. As the results of this study also show, Hungarian respondents plainly separated the two regional American accent varieties, and evaluated the speakers differently on the basis of their accents. In particular, in the overall speaker evaluation the two Southerners, Speakers 1 and 3, were both judged equally, and, at the same time, the most negatively by the Hungarian respondents. Speaker 4, that is, one of the General American accent speakers was rated the most positively of the four speakers, whereas Speaker 2, the other General American accent speaker, was evaluated half way between Speaker 4 and the most negatively ranked Speakers 1 and 3. In addition, Alford and Strother (1990) claim in their research about native and non-native speakers' attitudes towards various regional varieties of American English that non-native speakers rank all regional accents in general more positively than native speakers do. This finding has also been verified by the present study since Hungarian respondents evaluated all four speakers distinctly more favorably than American respondents did. Even

though there is no significant difference (0.01) between American and Hungarian students' mean values of Speaker 1, the scores of the three other speakers' mean values demonstrate a greater difference between the evaluations, that is, the difference between the mean values is 0.62, 0.85 and 0.23 in the case of Speakers 2, 3 and 4, respectively. All in all, Hungarian respondents assessed each of the four speakers more favorably than their American counterparts by providing higher scores in the assessments of the speakers.

As a matter of fact, a great number of previous research on native speakers' attitudes towards regional American English accent varieties and their speakers has analyzed the respondents' rankings along the various evaluative dimensions, that is, on competence, personal integrity and attractiveness traits. These studies found that speakers of prestige varieties are evaluated in general more positively on competence traits than speakers of non-prestige varieties. At the same time, non-prestige speakers are rated more favorably in terms of personal integrity and social attractiveness (Lambert 1967, cited in De Klerk and Bosch 1995). Investigating the Hungarian students' evaluations of the four speakers along the three dimensions of the character traits in the present study, the previously mentioned pattern appears not to hold since, first, all four speakers are evaluated by the Hungarian respondents the most negatively on the attractiveness dimension. Moreover, Speakers 1 and 2, and Speakers 3 and 4 display the same structure in the further evaluation. In other words, whereas Speakers 1 and 2 were rated the most favorably on the personal integrity trait, and they were evaluated the most unfavorably on the attractiveness dimension, Speakers 3 and 4 were judged the most positively on the competence dimension, and the most negatively on the attractiveness traits. On the whole, in comparison with former research results, in this study the two Southerners were not judged more positively on competence traits than the two speakers of the General American English accent varieties. Simultaneously, General American speakers were not rated more favorably in terms of personal integrity and social attractiveness than the speakers with Southern accents.

Even though in this study neither of the American and Hungarian respondent groups' evaluation patterns display similarities to previous studies' evaluative patterns, at this point, their ranking models ought to be contrasted in order to find out whether their patterns are different or similar to each other. In fact, Hungarian students' overall evaluation patterns of three speakers are different from the American students' evaluative dimension patterns while it is similar in the case of Speaker 4. That is, American students rated one Southerner (Speaker 1) and one General American accent speaker (Speaker 2) more positively on personal integrity and social attractiveness than on competence traits, and judged both the other Southerner (Speaker 3) and the other General American accent speaker (Speaker 4) the most unfavorably on the attractiveness traits, yet, they were evaluated the most positively on personal integrity, and on competence traits, respectively. Similarly to the American respondents' assessments, Hungarian students evaluated Speakers 1 and 2 the more positively on personal integrity traits, however, in contrast to the American respondents, they rated them the most negatively on the social attractiveness traits. What is more, although Speakers 3 and 4 show a similar pattern in the Hungarian students' evaluation, one of these patterns is fairly different from the American respondents' evaluations. In other words, even though Speaker 4 was assessed similarly by both respondent groups, namely, the most positively on the competence and the most negatively on the attractiveness dimension; Speaker 3 was evaluated differently by the American and Hungarian respondents. In fact, whereas Speaker 3 was generally judged the most unfavorably on the attractiveness traits by both respondent groups, American respondents judged him the most favorably on the personal integrity, and Hungarian respondents evaluated him the most favorably on the competence traits.



To sum up, we can see from the results that also Hungarian students, similarly to native and other non-native speakers of English, have stereotypical attitudes towards Southern and General American accents and their speakers. In fact, their attitudes towards Southerners and their accents are less positive than their attitudes towards General American speakers and their accents. This phenomenon might be explained by various reasons. First of all, these foreign language learners are trained consistently and almost exclusively, both in perception and production, on English accents varieties that are considered standard in British and American English. In other words, it occurs rather rarely that in the classroom, for example in listening exercises, Hungarian students are exposed to texts with accents different from those that are considered standard. In addition, not only in the classroom but also in the framework of language exams, learners are urged to pay constant attention to correct pronunciation.

Nevertheless, as Strother and Alford's analysis (1988, cited in Alford and Strother 1990) and the current study also reveal, in itself the perception and production of accents that are considered correct will not contribute to the phenomenon that learners of English develop negative attitudes towards speakers whose accents are different from the standard. In other words, Strother and Alford (1988) found that there is no significant correlation between how well non-native speakers score on English pronunciation tests and their ability to differentiate among regional American accents. Furthermore, the results of this study show that those Hungarian students who regularly listen to diversely accented speakers express the same negative attitudes towards Southerners as students who are almost never exposed to variously accented speech. Therefore, beyond Hungarian students' having a good pronunciation and listening to standard varieties, there have to be other reasons why they have rather negative attitudes towards Southern American English accent and its speakers.

Besides, a further explanation for Hungarian students' negative attitudes towards Southern accents and their speakers might be that the concept and development of stereotypes and negative attitudes that are originally embedded in their native language are transferred to their foreign language. That is, the notion of stereotyping and stigmatizing exists already in people's native language; therefore, Hungarian students are also able to make judgments about other Hungarian speakers' physical appearance and mental abilities on the basis of their speech, even if they cannot see these speakers. Afterwards, in the English language classroom, they might face the same notion; this time in connection with their foreign language, since the curriculum and the teachers can make them recognize that "correct" and "incorrect" varieties are present in their foreign language as well. As a consequence, they will be able to differentiate between speakers with standard and non-standard accents; furthermore, they might attach the stereotypes derived from their native language to the foreign language, and thus consider non-standard, particularly, Southern accents more unfavorably than accent varieties that are closer to the standard. Naturally, native and non-native speakers' negative attitudes might root in diverse backgrounds since whereas native speakers' negative attitudes are likely to be directed towards Southerners themselves, non-native speakers can associate their negative attitudes with all speakers who speak with a non-standard accent.

## 7. Limitations of the study

The results of this study should not be overgeneralized because (a) there was a specifically small sample size in the case of the American respondents, and (b) the methodology utilized in the study was solely a modified version of the matched guise technique despite the fact that different types of methods ought to be employed to gain a more precise picture of the respondents' language attitudes.

As a matter of fact, a relatively small number of Americans study in Szeged, therefore, it was rather problematic to form a control group of American respondents with a suitable size for the study. Nevertheless, the great amount of research that has been conducted recently on American people's attitudes towards regional American English accent varieties has enabled me to take the outcome of these studies in consideration as one basis of argumentation, and form a fairly clear picture of Americans' attitudes on the different accent varieties from the previous studies in this field.

In subsection 2.3.1 of this paper, a detailed argumentation serves the purpose to introduce and analyze the most appropriate methodology that is applied, in general, in attitude studies. However, because of certain restrictions, the methodology employed in this study was modified into a less sophisticated version. Indeed, the limitations of the methodology of this study are twofold. First, as it was unfortunately hopeless to find guises in Hungary who could manage to speak with two regional American English accents authentically, the matched guise technique was altered in a way that there were no guises among the selected speech samples. Instead, four different speakers' speech samples were utilized, who were representatives of the Southern and General American accent varieties, and every effort was made to control for age, background, and voice quality in addition to the accents being used. Second, solely one type of measurement technique, a questionnaire, has been used although to gain a more precise picture of the respondents' language attitudes, additional techniques ought to be applied, such as, for example, interviews or debates. This offers ground for further research for which this study can provide the basis.

## 8. Conclusion and implications

Nowadays, more and more language attitude studies are being carried out in order to identify the linguistic stereotypes people have about language. These studies are most often conducted on attitudes people have towards different varieties of their native language, concentrating most often on the various dialect or accent varieties of the language in question. At the same time, although a significant number of attitude research has investigated foreign language learners' motivations and preferences in connection with foreign languages, language learners' attitudes towards dialect or accent varieties of the foreign language they learn and towards their speakers have rarely been analyzed.

In brief, the aim of this study has been to fill this gap and examine foreign language learners' attitudes towards certain accent varieties of their foreign language. In particular, I have attempted to find out what attitudes Hungarian students have towards two accent varieties of the foreign language they learn, that is, towards Southern and General American English accent varieties, and how their attitudes compare to the attitudes of native speakers of American English. Specifically, I have collected data about how American and Hungarian students evaluate two Southern and two General American English accent speakers on nine character traits.

Then, I have contrasted the respondents' judgments to each other as well as to the outcome of previous research in this domain whereby the results confirm virtually all findings of previous studies. On the basis of this I claim that negative attitudes towards non-standard speakers and the accent variety they speak, in this case, towards the Southern accent variety of American English and its speakers, exist not only among native language speakers but also among foreign language learners.

In fact, one of the reasons why Hungarian students have rather negative attitudes towards more heavy accents might be attributed to the fact that, in the foreign language classroom, stu-

dents of English are most often exposed only to the standard accents of the foreign language. So, when they hear a different accent, they downgrade it and consider it “bad” or “incorrect”. Indeed, knowing how students react to language features that might not be part of the foreign language curriculum clearly indicates that there is a need for teachers to handle in favor of widening the scope of teaching materials and including all sorts of accent materials in the foreign language classroom. In addition, beyond drawing attention to and making students aware of the fact that these biases exist, counteractions might be significantly easier.

The study has addressed the attitudes English learners have towards American English accent varieties spoken by native speakers of American English. Nevertheless, as Hungarian students are most likely to face English speakers in a European context, it would be interesting for further research to gain insight into their attitudes towards the different foreign accents of English and their speakers, and to find the stereotypes Hungarians might have about these non-native English speakers, and could, this way, lessen the negative attitudes Hungarians have towards other nations.

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## Appendix A

### Questionnaire

I need the following data for my sociolinguistic research about language attitudes. I treat the data confidentially. If there is a question you do not want to answer, please, skip it and go on. Thank you very much for your time and contribution.

0. Date:
1. You are: (a) female (b) male
2. Your age:
3. Your nationality:
4. For how long have you been learning English?
5. Have you spent a longer time (more than 4 weeks) in an English-speaking country?
  - (a) yes (b) no
  - 5.1. If yes, in which country were you and for how long?
6. Do you usually listen to native speakers of English (teachers, friends, in the media)?
  - (a) yes (b) no
  - 6.1. If yes, what nationality are they?
7. Now, listen carefully to the following voices, and rate each of the four speakers on a scale of 1 to 6 in terms of the following descriptions. Make ratings only where you feel that you can make judgements confidently.

#### Speaker 1

attractive	1	2	3	4	5	6	unattractive
polite	1	2	3	4	5	6	impolite
reliable	1	2	3	4	5	6	unreliable
rich	1	2	3	4	5	6	poor
entertaining	1	2	3	4	5	6	boring
intelligent	1	2	3	4	5	6	unintelligent
educated	1	2	3	4	5	6	uneducated
friendly	1	2	3	4	5	6	unfriendly
honest	1	2	3	4	5	6	dishonest

#### Speaker 2

attractive	1	2	3	4	5	6	unattractive
polite	1	2	3	4	5	6	impolite
reliable	1	2	3	4	5	6	unreliable
rich	1	2	3	4	5	6	poor
entertaining	1	2	3	4	5	6	boring
intelligent	1	2	3	4	5	6	unintelligent
educated	1	2	3	4	5	6	uneducated
friendly	1	2	3	4	5	6	unfriendly
honest	1	2	3	4	5	6	dishonest

## Speaker 3

attractive	1	2	3	4	5	6	unattractive
polite	1	2	3	4	5	6	impolite
reliable	1	2	3	4	5	6	unreliable
rich	1	2	3	4	5	6	poor
entertaining	1	2	3	4	5	6	boring
intelligent	1	2	3	4	5	6	unintelligent
educated	1	2	3	4	5	6	uneducated
friendly	1	2	3	4	5	6	unfriendly
honest	1	2	3	4	5	6	dishonest

## Speaker 4

attractive	1	2	3	4	5	6	unattractive
polite	1	2	3	4	5	6	impolite
reliable	1	2	3	4	5	6	unreliable
rich	1	2	3	4	5	6	poor
entertaining	1	2	3	4	5	6	boring
intelligent	1	2	3	4	5	6	unintelligent
educated	1	2	3	4	5	6	uneducated
friendly	1	2	3	4	5	6	unfriendly
honest	1	2	3	4	5	6	dishonest

## Appendix B

## Transcripts from the Speech Accent Archive (2005)

Speaker 1 (male, 57, from Atlanta, Georgia):

[p<sup>h</sup>ɪz kaʊl<sup>ɪ</sup> stɛlə æsk hə rə  
 bɪŋ dɪz θɛɪŋz wɪð hə ɹɪəm  
 nðə stəʊɪ sɪks spɪnz ʌf ɹɪf  
 snou p<sup>h</sup>ɪz faɪv θɪk slæɪbz ʌ  
 blu: tʃɪz ɛn mɛrbi ə snæk<sup>ɪ</sup> fɔɪ  
 hə bɪldə bɑ:b wɪ ɹɪlso nɪd eɪ  
 smɑʊl<sup>ɪ</sup> p<sup>h</sup>læstɪk sneɪk ʌ bɪg<sup>ɪ</sup>  
 tɔɪ frɒg<sup>ɪ</sup> fə ðə k<sup>h</sup>ɪə dz ʃɪ kɪn  
 skʊp<sup>ɪ</sup> ðɪs θɛɪz ɪnʊ θri: rɛd<sup>ɪ</sup>  
 bæ:gz ɛn wɪ wɪl<sup>ɪ</sup> goʊ mɪ:t hə  
 wɪnzdi æt ðə tʃɛɪn stɛɪʃɪn]

Speaker 2 (male, 60, from Arcadia, Wisconsin):

[plɪz kɔl<sup>ɪ</sup> stɛlə æsk ə rə bɪŋ  
 nɪs θɪŋz wɪð hə ɹɪəm nə stəʊɪ  
 sɪks spɪnz ʌv ɹɪf snou pi:z  
 faɪv θɪk slæɪbz ʌb blu: tʃɪz ɛn  
 mɛrbi ə snæk<sup>ɪ</sup> fəɪ hə bɪldə  
 bɑ:b wɪ ɹɪlsoʊ nɪdɑ smɔl<sup>ɪ</sup>  
 plæstɪk sneɪk ɛnə bɪg tɔɪ ɹɪo:ɡ  
 fə rə kɪə dz ʃɪ kɪ skʊp dɪz  
 θɪŋz ɪnə θri: rɛd bæ:gz ɛn wɪ  
 wɪl goʊ mɪ:t hə wɛnzdeɪ æt  
 də tʃɛɪn stɛɪʃɪn]

Speaker 3 (male, 52, from Pine Bluff, Arkansas):

[pli:z kaol ste:lə æsk hæ: tʊ bʌŋ  
ðəiz sθeɪŋz wɪθ hæ: flʌm ðə  
stowə: sɪks spəʊnz əv frɛʃ snəʊ  
pə:z fə:v θɪk slæʊbz ə bləʊ tʃeɪz  
ɛn meɪbi ə snækʔ fə: hə: brʌðə  
ba:b wi: əlsoʊ nəɪd e smaol  
plæstɪk snæɪk æn e bɪg tʰɔ: fɪəʊg  
fə: ðə ki:dz ʃi: kɛn skʊp ðɪz θeɪŋz  
ɪndə θri: ɹɛd bæ:gz æn wi: wəl  
gʊs tə mi:t hæ: wɪnzdeɪ æt ðə  
treɪn steɪʃən]

Speaker 4 (male, 67, from Detroit, Michigan):

[pʰɪ:z kaolʰ stɛ:lə æsk hæ: rə  
bʌŋ ðɪs θeɪŋz wɪθ hæ: flʌm ðə  
stɔ: sɪks spʊ:nz əf frɛʃ snəʊ  
pʰɪ:z fə:v θɪk slæ:bz əf blu:  
tʃi:z æn meɪbi ə snækʔ fə: hə:  
brʌðə ba:b wi: əlso nɪd ə  
smo:lʰ pʰɪ:stɪk snæɪk æn ə bɪgʔ  
tʰɔ: frɔ:gʔ fə: ðə kʰɪdz ʧi: kɛn  
skʊpʔ ðɪ:s θeɪŋz ɪntʊ θri: ɹɛdʔ  
bæ:gz æn wi: wɪlʰ gʊs mi:tʰ hæ:  
wɛzdeɪ æt ðə treɪn steɪʃən]

## Appendix C

### The text the four speakers read out

Please call Stella. Ask her to bring these things with her from the store: Six spoons of fresh snow peas, five thick slabs of blue cheese, and maybe a snack for her brother Bob. We also need a small plastic snake and a big toy frog for the kids. She can scoop these things into three red bags, and we will go meet her Wednesday at the train station.



Balogh Erzsébet  
Hungarian Students' Language Attitudes towards  
Regional American English Accent Varieties

In spite of the fact that attitudes of native speakers of English towards various regional varieties of US English have been investigated thoroughly in the past decades, the number of studies that have been carried out to examine non-native speakers' attitudes towards regional accents is rather limited. This paper intends to fill this gap and, after an overview of language attitude research in general and in this particular context, it examines what attitudes non-native speakers have, in comparison to native speakers, towards specific regional accents of U.S. English. The respondents in the current study were American and Hungarian students from the University of Szeged who, with the help of a modified version of the matched guise technique, listened to tapes of the same passage read by four male native speakers, of whom two were from the southern and two from the general American accent groups. Respondents then judged the speakers along nine character traits; the evaluations were compared and contrasted to each other and to the outcome of previous research in this field. The results confirm the findings of previous language attitude studies, whereby the current study first indicates that Hungarian students are able to perceive differences in regional accents of U.S. English; second, it points out that both the actual values and the patterns of the judgments of the Hungarian students differ from those of the American students.

## Representation of Velar Palatalisations in Non-linear Phonology

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### 1. Introduction

Palatalisation is a very common phenomenon. It is a type of place assimilation and assimilatory processes are frequent in general, because they are accomplished by an elementary operation of autosegmental phonology, *spreading* (McCarthy 1988). However, non-linear phonology has not yet succeeded in finding an optimal solution for a uniform representation of the different types of palatalisation.

Palatalisation is a complex phenomenon including several sub-processes. Namely, it can be described as either raising or fronting or both raising and fronting of segments. In some cases, palatalisation is an addition of secondary articulation, while in others it is a shift of place of articulation. Furthermore, affrication and spirantisation sometimes accompany palatalisation. For all these reasons, a consistent representation of all the palatalisation processes is hard to achieve.

Palatalisation also raises the question of coronals, their place of articulation and their unmarkedness. Linguists concerned with this issue usually take one of the following three major standpoints in the debate. There are linguists, e.g. Paradis and Prunet (1989), who think that coronal underspecification is principle-based and, therefore the Coronal node is not present in the underlying representation of segments. Yet others, Clements (1988) for example, regard coronals as having no special status and therefore having the Coronal node present underlyingly. The representatives of the third standpoint are Avery and Rice (1989), who think the Coronal node should be present underlyingly only in those cases where coronal consonants contrast with each other. In other words, they opt for a parametric underspecification of the coronal place of articulation.

As the framework for my analysis of palatalisation processes, I chose a combination of two non-linear theories, Government Phonology (GP) and Feature Geometry (FG). Contemporary phonological research has already established the supremacy of autosegmental phonology over the classical generative *Sound Pattern of English* (henceforth SPE, Chomsky and Halle, 1968) approach. I draw attention only to some of the major advantages of non-linear over linear phonology.

Linear phonology is not able to represent sounds and phonological phenomena in a clear and natural way. In SPE, phonological operations are separated from the representation of sounds. The aim of non-linear phonology is to define phonological processes as a direct consequence of phonological representation.

Another aim of non-linear phonology is to eliminate over-generation of phonological processes that characterises SPE due to its arbitrariness. “[T]he goal is to construct a model which generates a set of phonological processes that as closely as possible approximates the set of processes we observe in the world’s languages” (Harris 1994, 6).

I opted for non-linear phonology using privative phonological primes. In unary features or elements, depending on the theory, redundancy rules are incorporated in the representation of

the segments and therefore they reflect the underspecificational relations between them more straightforwardly<sup>1</sup>.

In the third section of the thesis, I show an overview of palatalisation processes. I focus on the different representations of palatalisation in Slavic languages and in English. My aim was to summarise research in this topic and to point out to some discrepancies and remaining questions. In the subsection of this chapter (3.1.), I am dealing with the question of productivity, since palatalisation appears as a post-lexical and lexical phonological change as well as phonological distribution. In section 4.1, I give a short summary of element and syllable theories in non-linear phonology. Government Phonology is presented in 4.2, a summary of the main principles of Feature Geometry in 4.3, and how the two are combined in an Element Geometry approach in 4.4. Subsection 5.1 offers a possible solution for the representation of palatal assimilation in FG, subsections 5.2. and 5.3. show how segments taking part in palatalisation phenomena, as well as the phenomena itself can be represented in EG. The following part analyses the issue of coronality and velarity and their representation in non-linear phonology. Sections 5.7. and 5.8. outline the revised representations of palatal assimilation following the principles adopted in 5.6. and 5.7. A summary of findings and remaining questions is found in section 6.

## 2. Literature Review

For the analysis of palatalisation in this thesis, I use data from Ancient Slavic, Serbian and English. The sources of Proto-Slavonic data are Slavic Historical Linguistic textbooks Đorđić (1975), H. Tóth (1996) and Vuković (1974). Đorđić gives an overview of Old Church Slavonic's grammar. Professor H. Tóth's *Introduction to Slavic linguistics* is a detailed account of the history of Slavic languages from Proto Indo-European to Old Church Slavonic with an emphasis on Proto-Slavonic's sound system and morphology. Vuković's textbook is a phonetic study of historical development of sounds found in Serbian. He discusses each vowel and consonant phoneme separately and shows all the phonological changes a given phoneme went through.

The sources of Serbian data are two university textbooks, Stevanović (1964) and Simić and Ostojić (1989). On the one hand, Stevanović's 1964 book is the best-appreciated grammar book of the Serbian language. It gives a very detailed account of all the phonological processes in Serbian. On the other hand, Simić and Ostojić's 1989 university textbook in phonology is similar to a reference book in that it only lists the relevant facts with very little or no examples. However, it contains all the necessary data structured systematically and logically.

The source of English data is Harris (1994). It is a clear and comprehensive survey of non-linear phonology. It specifies the terms used in a non-linear theory through examples and explanations of their background. Besides Harris (1994), some other articles served as theoretical background for the Government Phonological aspect of my paper. One of them is Kaye, Lowenstamm and Vergnaud (henceforth KLV 1985), which introduces segmental composition in Government Phonology. It elaborates on the notions of charm<sup>2</sup> and headedness, the notions crucial to how elements compose complex segments. The other work discussing the main principles of Government Phonology is Harris (1990). It investigates segments through lenition processes, establishing evidence for the element-based composition of sounds. It also contains

<sup>1</sup> In the debate whether simplicity or complexity is more marked, I take the side of those who claim that the simplest is the least marked and the most complex is the most marked.

<sup>2</sup> Charm is a notion that was abandoned in later works of Government Phonology.

a brief summary of the main points of phonological theory development, from linear phonology through Dependency Phonology to Feature Geometry and Government Phonology.

Harris and Lindsey (1995) discuss the Element Geometry approach and some crucial controversial issues in Government Phonology, such as the representation of coronals. They draw attention to the necessity of reformulating the 'coronal' element. They are, however, against completely abandoning the *R* element because it would require reanalysis of other segments as well. The glottal segments, for example, would lose their status of being the only 'placeless' consonants.

In contrast to this view, Backley (1993) argues for a rejection of the 'coronal' element, motivated by the fact that the coronal *s* violates the Complexity Condition in the English *s+C* clusters. Namely, *s+C* clusters cannot be analysed as branching Onsets because *s* can license not only approximants, but also nasal and oral stops. For this reason, *s+C* clusters must be analysed as coda-Onset clusters, where *s* is governed by *C*. Since the governee must be less complex than the governor, *s* should be less complex than *C*. However, this is not the case in *s+glide* initial clusters, where the glide is less complex than *s*. Consequently, Backley proposes a reformulation of coronal obstruents as less complex by excluding the 'coronal' element from their representation.

Rubin (2000) argues for the representation of 'coronality' with the element reserved for 'palatality' in standard Government Phonology. According to him, 'coronality' can be expressed with a palatal element in the head-position and 'palatality' can be expressed with the same element in the governed position. His view of phonological structure is syntactically motivated.

Paradis and Prunet (1991) summarise the phonetic and phonological findings regarding coronals, their representation and their behaviour in the world's languages. They emphasise the special status of coronals as being the most frequent consonant place of articulation. They analyse the behaviour of coronals from three standpoints: phonetic, Underspecification and Feature Geometry standpoint.

The representatives of the latter standpoint are Lahiri and Evers (1991) who offer an alternative solution to the representation of different palatalisation processes in a Feature Geometry model. They, after Bhat (1978), classify the different types of palatalisation into three major groups. According to them, each type should be represented differently.

Besides Lahiri and Evers, the source of the basic Feature Geometry notions I use in the thesis is Clements and Hume (1995). The article contains an analysis of distinctive features and their organisation into class nodes. It is consistent and deductive, but the use of unexplained terms makes the paper hard to understand for a reader who does not have appropriate background knowledge of Feature Geometry.

Besides the above, there are several key articles on the topic of palatalisation. One of them is Clements (1976). He abandons the idea that palatalisation takes place in two separate steps, and argues for palatalisation as a one-step assimilatory process. He states that the most credible feature for grouping those sounds that are active in the process of palatalisation (i.e. front vowels and coronal consonants) into a natural class is the feature [+coronal]. Furthermore, Clements examines the effects that such a reformulation of front vowels may have on other sounds and gives necessary evidence to support the validity of his statement.

Darden (1989) discusses palatalisation in Russian. According to him, palatalisation is a morphophonological rather than a purely phonological rule. In other words, he places palatalisation in the realm of morphology instead of phonology, because the relevant phonological environment for palatalisation has disappeared.

A formal discussion of palatalisation processes as presented in three different Feature Geometry models is given in Jacobs and van de Weijer (1992). The authors analyse the advantages and disadvantages of the three models and offer a new approach to the problem.

Szpyra (1997) is also working in a Feature Geometry framework, but she concentrates exclusively on palatalisation in English. She illustrates her statements with a large number of examples and counter-examples of palatalisation. Her article is a clear summary and critique of recent Feature Geometry models.

### 3. Overview of Palatalisation Processes

Palatalisation is a place assimilatory process in which consonants assimilate to a following (or, as in a type of Proto-Slavonic palatalisation, to a preceding) front vowel or palatal glide. According to the *degree* of assimilation, we can differentiate **three main types of palatalisation** (Bhat 1978, Lahiri and Evers 1991, Jacobs and van de Weijer 1992):

- |  |                    |
|--|--------------------|
| 1. addition of secondary articulation                | p - p <sup>j</sup> |
| 2. shift of coronal place of articulation            | t - t <sup>j</sup> |
| 3. shift of velar place of articulation <sup>3</sup> | k - t <sup>j</sup> |

#### (1) The main cases of palatalisation

The first type of palatalisation is common in Russian, for example. Each place of articulation is susceptible to this change triggered by front vowels or the palatal glide. However, "for dental and alveolar consonants all high vowels can cause such secondary articulation, often leading to strident sounds such as [s] or [ʃ], that is, with or without concomitant change of place" (Lahiri and Evers 1991, 81).

The second type of palatalisation occurs in English and Polish, for example. It affects only coronal consonants, dentals and alveolars. English alveolar consonants change into palato-alveolars (postalveolar) and Polish dentals and alveolars change into alveopalatals (prepalatals) when followed by a front vowel or a palatal glide.

In English, palatalisation is common at word boundaries where the first lexical item ends in an alveolar and the following word starts with a palatal semivowel, as shown in (2) (Harris 1994, 118). Jacobs and van de Weijer (1992) state that for this type of palatalisation the palatal glide is a "stronger environment" and the front vowels are a "stronger environment" in the palatalisation of velars. They support their claim by stating that in the underlying representation the palatal semivowel is specified only for the Coronal Node (present in coronals), whereas the front vowels are specified only for the Dorsal Node in their UR (present in velars). In other words, the palatal glide forms a natural class with coronals and front vowels form a natural class with velars.

- |                     |                               |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|
| bet you, hit you    | [t] + [j] - [t <sup>j</sup> ] |
| did you, would you  | [d] + [j] - [d <sup>j</sup> ] |
| kiss you, bless you | [s] + [j] - [ʃ]               |
| buzz you, faze you  | [z] + [j] - [ʒ]               |

#### (2) Examples of palatalisation in English across word boundaries

<sup>3</sup> I am using Jacobs and van de Weijer's (1992) definitions.

There are also examples of word-internal palatalisation (Harris 1994, 5, 89):

i[sj]ue	–	i[f]ue	ti[sj]ue	–	ti[f]ue
[tj]une	–	[tʃ]une	vir[tj]ue	–	vir[tʃ]ue
[dj]une	–	[dʒ]une	resi[dj]ue	–	resi[dʒ]ue

(3) Examples of word-internal palatalisation in English dialects

Szpyra (1997, 1341), after Chomsky and Halle (1968), contributes some other examples of palatalisation that take place inside words:

expre[s]	–	expre[f]ion	fa[s]e	–	fa[f]ial
vi[z]ible	–	vi[ʒ]ion	revi[z]e	–	revi[ʒ]ion
depar[t]	–	depar[tʃ]ure	fac[t]	–	fac[tʃ]ual
gra[d]e	–	gra[dʒ]ual	procee[d]	–	procee[dʒ]ure

(4) Some more examples of word-internal palatalisation in English

The third type of palatalisation involves the fronting of velars. Velar obstruents become palato-alveolar or alveolar obstruents. Front vowels and the palatal glide are the triggers of the process. This phonological phenomenon is present in all Slavic languages since it happened in the early period of Proto-Slavonic<sup>4</sup> as a part of the tendency called ‘syllable harmony’ (‘szótagharmónia’, H Tóth (1996)). This tendency included phonological changes such as palatalisation, yodisation and umlaut. Yodisation will be discussed later, under 2. Umlaut refers to the fronting of back vowels after palatal consonants.

One explanation of the ‘syllable harmony’ tendency is the aim to create fricatives and affricates and thus “fill in the empty slots” (“üres-hely elmélet”, H Tóth (1996)). Namely, Proto-Slavonic inherited a rather ‘one-sided’ consonantal inventory from Indo-European in the sense that there were only two fricatives, [s] and [z], and only one affricate, [dʒ]. A natural tendency of languages is to create a balance in their phonemic inventory. In the case of Proto-Slavonic the tendency was to create fricatives and affricates which were missing from the original set of sounds.

The processes jointly called ‘palatalisation’ in Proto-Slavonic can be divided into three sub-groups (Vuković 1974, Đorđić 1975, H. Tóth 1996) discussed below.

## 1. Palatalisation

### 1.1. First velar palatalisation (regressive)

According to relative chronology, first velar palatalisation is the oldest palatalisation change. It occurred in first century A.D., before the ‘monophthongisation’ of diphthongs. Velar [κ, γ, ξ] became palato-alveolar [tʃ, (dʒ >) ʒ, ʃ] when followed by front vowels *ī, ī, (ē >) ě, e, ē<sup>5</sup>*. (Even a could cause palatalisation, but only when it developed from *ě*).

<sup>4</sup> Proto-Slavonic is the period in the history of Slavic languages that followed Indo-European. Linguists estimate to have been spoken between 1500–1300 B.C. and 4th century A.D. Proto-Slavonic was followed by a period of Balto-Slavic, which lasted approximately until the 9th century, when Old Church Slavonic (OCS) language developed. OCS was spoken until the 11th or 18<sup>th</sup> century, depending on the nation.

<sup>5</sup> I am not using IPA symbols but traditional Slavic historical linguistic symbols, because there are no exact data on the pronunciation of these vowels. Thus, *ī* stands for a long high front vowel, *ī* is its short counterpart, *ě* is a vowel called ‘yat’ which developed from the long mid front vowel, and is the front mid nasal vowel.

Proto-Slavonic:	вѣ[k]e	>	вѣ[tʃ]e <sup>6</sup>	‘wolf VOC SG’
	dru[g]e	>	dru[ʒ]e	‘friend VOC SG’
	său[x]itei	>	său[ʃ]itei	‘to dry INF’
Serbian:	NOM SG		VOC SG	
	čove[k]	-	čove[tʃ]e	‘human’
	Bo[g]	-	Bo[ʒ]e	‘God’
	du[x]	-	du[ʃ]e	‘ghost’

The consonantal clusters [σk, ζγ] in Proto-Slavonic were also affected by this change, and resulted in [sk] > [ʃt] and [zg] > [ʒd] in OCS and Serbian<sup>7</sup>. The examples are from contemporary Serbian:

	NOM SG		GEN SG		ADJ	
	vosak	-	od vo[sk]a	-	vo[ʃt]an	‘wax’
	mozak	-	od mo[zg]a	-	mo[ʒd]an	‘brain’

### 1.2. Second velar palatalisation (regressive)

The second and third velar palatalisation happened largely at the same time, between second and fourth century A.D. Their results are the same as well, velar [k, g, x] became alveolar [tʃ, (dz >)z, s]. The difference between them is in the environment triggering the process and in directionality. Second velar palatalisation took place before ĭ, ě that developed from the diphthongs äi, öi.

Proto-Slavonic:	[k]äina	>	[ts]ěna	‘price NOM SG’
	dru[g]i	>	dru[z]i	‘friends NOM PL’
	dău[x]i	>	du[s]i	‘ghosts NOM PL’
Serbian:	NOM SG		DAT SG / NOM PL	
	ru[k]a	-	ru[ts]i	‘hand’
	knji[g]a	-	knji[z]i	‘book’
	siroma[x]	-	siroma[s]i	‘poor people’

The consonantal clusters [kv, gv] also underwent second palatalisation before ě, ĭ, but only in South and East Slavic languages (and in OCS):

[kv] > [tʃv], e.g. *cvet* in Serbian, whereas *kwiat* in Polish and *květ* in Czech,  
 [gv] > [zv], e.g. *zvezda* in Serbian, whereas *gwiazda* in Polish and *hvězda* in Czech.

<sup>6</sup> Ѣ was originally the symbol for a so-called ‘reduced vowel’ that developed from a short front high vowel ĭ. There was another reduced vowel in Proto-Slavonic that was formed from the short back high vowel ü and it was represented as ѣ.

<sup>7</sup> According to the historical linguistic textbooks these sounds were affricates in OCS (Đorđić 1975, Vuković 1974).

### 1.3. Third velar palatalisation (progressive)

This phonological process is progressive, since it happened after the vowels *i*, (*i* >) *ь*, *ь*. Vowels that developed from diphthongs *äi*, *öi* did not trigger it, therefore, we can conclude that third velar palatalisation is “actually earlier than second velar palatalisation and antedates the ‘monophthongisation’” (Kristó 2003, 2).

Proto-Slavonic:	ätī[k]ās	>	otь[ts]ь	‘father NOM SG’
	kьn [g]	>	kn [z]	‘duke NOM SG’
	vī[x]ь	>	vь[s]ь	‘all NOM SG’

Serbian <sup>8</sup> :	PERFECTIVE	-	IMPERFECTIVE	
	navi[k]nuti se	-	navi[ts]ati se	‘to get used to INF’
	ta[k]nuti	-	ti[ts]ati	‘to touch INF’
	ma[k]nuti	-	mi[ts]ati	‘to move INF’

## 2. Yodisation / Iotation

Historical sources mention another phonological phenomenon as part of the ‘syllable harmony tendency’. This phenomenon is called ‘yodisation’ (Kristó 2003, 3). The term comes from the Greek alphabet ‘yod’ for the palatal glide. Textbooks, however, do not analyse this process together with palatalisation processes, but deal with it separately. There are three subtypes of yodisation according to when it happened in time: late, earlier and earliest. All places of articulation are susceptible to the change. Different places of articulation, however, result in different segments. The following examples are from modern Serbian, although the alternation I am dealing with is the late yodisation of Proto-Slavonic.

2.1. When a palatal glide follows a labial, an epenthesis of a lateral happens and the process results in a palatal lateral.

	[m, b, p, v] + [j]	-	[mʎ, bʎ, pʎ, vʎ]	
INFINITIVE	PARTICIPLE	>	PARTICIPLE	
lomiti	- lo[mj]en	>	lo[mʎ]en	‘broken’
ljubiti	- lju[bj]en	>	lju[bʎ]en	‘kissed’
kupiti	- ku[pj]en	>	ku[pʎ]en	‘bought’
poplaviti	- popla[vj]en	>	popla[vʎ]en	‘flooded’

2.2. Yodisation of dentals has the same results in OCS as the palatalisation of [sk, zg] clusters. In other languages, including Serbian, the results are different:

[t, d] + [j]	-	[tʃ] [dʒ] in OCS		
	-	[tʃ̣] [dʒ̣] in Serbian		
INFINITIVE	PARTICIPLE	>	PARTICIPLE	
posvetiti	- posve[tj]en	>	posve[tʃ̣]en	‘devoted’
ograditi	- ogra[dj]en	>	ogra[dʒ̣]en	‘enclosed’

<sup>8</sup> Productive in Serbian even today in forming imperfective from perfective verbs.



2.3. Yodisation of alveolars yields their palato-alveolar counterparts, or in the case of liquids, their palatalised counterparts:

		[j] > [ʃ, ʒ, ʎ, rʲ, ɲ]		
INFINITIVE	PARTICIPLE	>	PARTICIPLE	
prošiti	- pro[sj]en	>	pro[ʃ]en	'proposed to'
maziti	- ma[zj]en	>	ma[ʒ]en	'fondled'
voleti	- vo[lj]en	>	vo[ʎ]en	'loved'
goniti	- go[nj]en	>	go[ɲ]en	'chased'

2.4. Interestingly enough, yodisation of velars had the same results as first velar palatalisation. We can trace back the origin of [tʃ, ʒ, ʃ] sounds by looking at the same type of morphological change affecting sounds other than velars (Đorđić 1975).

		[ɸ] > [tʃ, ʒ, ʃ]		
NOUN	ADJECTIVE	>	ADJECTIVE	
mleko	- mle[kj]an	>	mle[tʃ]an	'milky/dairy'
sneg	- sne[gj]an	>	sne[ʒ]an	'snowy'
sluh	- slu[xj]an	>	slu[ʃ]an	'to listen'

In sum, there were three historical processes that are together referred to as 'syllable harmony': palatalisation, yodisation and umlaut. The latter involves change of vowels, whereas the first two include change of consonants. The trigger of yodisation is the palatal glide and the triggers of velar palatalisations are front vowels. I am dealing only with the representation of consonantal place changes in this thesis. I am focusing on first and second velar palatalisation because their representation is disputable.

### 3.1. Productivity

Productivity is the characteristic of a process to affect newly created or borrowed words. Productivity in morphology means that we can derive new words or inflect nonsense words on the basis of a certain model. Productivity in phonology refers to the characteristic of phonological changes to apply whenever the conditions for them are satisfied. A phonological change produces new sounds in the phonemic inventory of a language, whereas a productive morphological derivation produces new words in the lexicon of a language.

We can therefore conclude that palatalisation is no longer a productive phonological change in Serbian. It does not affect borrowed words nor produce new sounds. As evidence that palatalisation is no longer productive in modern Serbian, there are certain noun declination paradigms in which the change of velars into palato-alveolars is not consistent. One of them is the paradigm of the noun *učenic* 'student':

	SINGULAR	PLURAL
NOM	učenik	učenici
ACC	učenika	učeni[k]e
GEN	učenika	učenika
DAT	učniku	učenicima
VOC	učeni[č]e	učenici
INST	učnikom	učenicima
LOC	učniku	učenicima

(5) The paradigm of the noun *učenik* in Serbian

According to Harris (1994), a phonological phenomenon is either an alternation or a distribution. The former is a dynamic change where both the relationship between the alternating segments as well as the context in which the alternating sounds occur can be specified phonologically. Distribution, however, is rather a “form of static pattern which emerges from the phonological shape of morphemes as these are represented in the lexicon” (4). Therefore, we can conclude that palatalisation was a phonological alternation in the early period of Proto-Slavonic, and in contemporary Serbian it is phonological distribution. During historical development of different Slavic languages it “passed into frozen, unproductive morphology” (Clements 1976, 98).

Darden, however, states that “despite its age, this change [palatalisation] survives as a productive alternation in word formation in all modern Slavic languages” (1989, 41). In my opinion, he is referring to shift of coronal place of articulation in Polish or to addition of secondary articulation in Russian, because they are productive phonological processes even today. Velar palatalisations, however, are not.

There are cases of non-productive velar-coronal interference in English as well. For instance, the phenomenon Harris (1994, 21) refers to as velar softening is similar to second velar palatalisation. The velar [k] appears as alveolar [s] in certain contexts.

elektri[k] – elektri[s]-ity  
 criti[k] – criti[s]-ism  
 mysti[k] – . . . mysti[s]-ism

## (6) Examples of velar softening in English

As we will see in the last section, autosegmental phonology actually does not generate velar palatalisations as phonological alternations. In other words, velar palatalisations cannot be represented straightforwardly as a phonological change in autosegmental phonology, without making adjustments to the theory. This, however, is not a problem if velar palatalisations are not phonological changes in any “contemporary” language (including Serbian). Namely, this means that non-linear phonology is approaching its main aim, to avoid over-generation and to generate the inventory of phenomena found in the world’s languages.

## 4. The Framework

### 4.1. Linear versus non-linear perspective

As I have already mentioned in the Introduction, the classical generative, SPE-type of phonology is what is today referred to as linear phonology. The term comes from the purely linear

arrangement of segments and morphosyntactic boundary symbols. Sounds are represented by matrices of distinctive features. These features express two types of information: phonetic information characterising segments ([coronal], [anterior], [back]) and information characterising relations between segments ([syllabic], [stress], [long]). Non-linear frameworks divide the two types of information. Features (or elements, depending on the theory) represent the phonetic part and hierarchical structure represents the relation between segments.

Linear phonology describes phonological phenomena with the help of rewrite rules. Their general format is  $A - B / C \text{ \_\_\_ } D$ , where A is the input, B is the output, C and D are the environment of the process. In this form, linear phonology is not able to give account of the frequency asymmetry. Namely, the representation in SPE does not show us which processes occur more and which less frequently in languages. For example, palatalisation of velars before front vowels is rather frequent, whereas retraction of palatals before back vowels is rare. In spite of this fact, both processes are expressed in an equally simple manner in linear phonology, implicating that the two processes are equally frequent (Anderson and Ewen 1987, 18–19):

- |  |   |                          |
|--|---|--------------------------|
| C                                      | V |                          |
| (a) [+back] → [-back] / \_\_\_ [-back] |   | palatalisation of velars |
| C                                      | V | V                        |
| (b) [-back] - [+back] / \_\_\_ [+back] |   | retraction of palatals   |
- (9) Frequency asymmetry

Another drawback of the linear theory is over-generation. This is the cover term for representing processes which do not ever happen in natural languages. An example is the following rule:

- sonorant + coronal + anterior + continuant + strident + voiced	→	[- anterior] /	- sonorant - coronal - anterior - continuant - strident - voiced
z		Z	k
[dʌk] + [-z]	→	[dʌk <sub>3</sub> ]	

(10) Rewrite rule of a non-existing phonological process

In the original rule, the suffix voiced [-z] changes into its voiceless counterpart after the voiceless [k] sound. In the above example I have changed [-voiced] into [-anterior]. The theory allows this rule, but we do not find an example for this rule in natural languages.

Another disadvantage of SPE is that it is not able to represent the markedness of sounds. According to non-linear phonological theories that work with privative elements or features, less marked sounds should be represented as simple segments and more marked sounds should be represented as complex segments. Unfortunately, SPE does not reflect this logic, since all segments are represented with the same number of distinctive features. For example, the high front unrounded [i] and the high back rounded [u] are less marked than their front rounded counterpart, the [y]. In linear phonology, however, all three of them are represented with the same number of binary features:

$\left[ \begin{array}{l} [i] \\ - \text{consonantal} \\ + \text{syllabic} \\ + \text{high} \\ - \text{back} \\ - \text{round} \end{array} \right]$	$\left[ \begin{array}{l} [u] \\ - \text{consonantal} \\ + \text{syllabic} \\ + \text{high} \\ + \text{back} \\ + \text{round} \end{array} \right]$	$\left[ \begin{array}{l} [y] \\ - \text{consonantal} \\ + \text{syllabic} \\ + \text{high} \\ - \text{back} \\ + \text{round} \end{array} \right]$
--	--	--

In GP, however, [i] and [u] are composed of only one phonological prime and [y] is composed of two primes, which reflects the fact that [y] is more marked than [i] and / or [i]:

[i]	[u]	[y]
x	x	x
		^
I	U	I U

(12) High vowels represented with unary elements

In non-linear phonology all existing phonological phenomena can be described by two main operations, *delinking* and *spreading*.

delinking		spreading		
x x x x	→	x x x x	→	x x x x
				/
n i x t		n i x t		n i x t

(13) Compensatory lengthening in English

This is the consequence of hierarchical structure. In autosegmental phonology, two planes and association lines between them create the structure. Adding an association line is called *spreading* and removing it is called *delinking*.

I chose a combination of two non-linear theories, Government Phonology (GP) and Feature Geometry (FG), that Harris and Lindsey (1995) call Element Geometry (EG). GP is a minimalist approach representing segments and phenomena with a minimal set of phonological primes and governing and licensing relations between them. FG represents segments with a hierarchical structure. According to McCarthy (1988, 85), “[T]he representations postulated by FG simultaneously provide a plausible interface between phonology and articulation and describe common phenomena with a simple, almost minimal set of operations.” Consequently, a combination of the two theories offers a balance between a minimal set of means and a hierarchical structure.

#### 4.2. Government Phonology

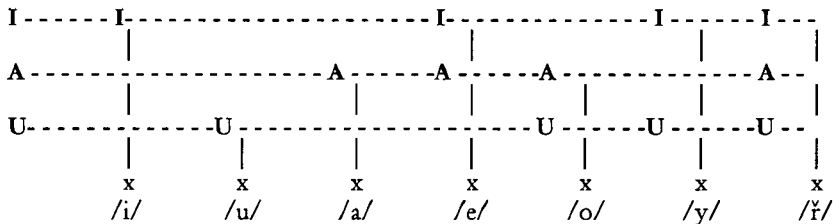
According to GP, “autonomous pronounceable elements defined as fully specified feature matrices” are the ultimate constituents of segments (KLV 1985, 311). Vowels and consonants have the same place of articulation elements. Out of these elements, there is one that is never present in the representation of vowels, the ‘coronal’ element R. Some linguists believe that the presence of this element is not well-justified. The other three resonance elements are: the element I that embodies ‘frontness’ in vowels and ‘palatality’ in consonants, the element U responsible for ‘roundness’ in vowels and ‘labiality’ in consonants, and the element A, the representation of ‘lowness’ in vowels and the element in uvular and pharyngeal consonants.

Besides the elements for place of articulation, consonants have manner elements as well: N for 'nasality', h for 'noise' and ? for 'stop'. The element ? is present in oral and nasal stops and laterals, but it is absent from fricatives. The element h is present in all released obstruents (i.e. stops, affricates and fricatives) and it is absent from all unreleased stops as well as from the sonorants (Harris 1994).

The structure of segments consists of two planes of representation: the *melodic tier*, which codes qualitative information, and the *skeletal tier*, which codes quantitative information. Planes are connected by association lines. As I have already mentioned, all phonological processes can be described by two operations: spreading and delinking.

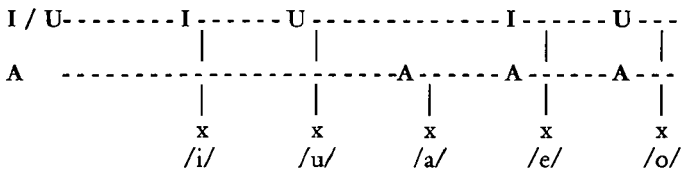
Since elements are pronounceable, independent units, they can stand on their own in a segment, or they can combine to form compound segments. Element-composition is illustrated with phonological primes as colours (Harris 1994).<sup>9</sup> Each colour can stand on its own, but we can also mix two or more basic colours to create new colours or new shades of the same colour. If we add more of a certain colour, it will become dominant. In the context of phonological primes, the dominant colour – element – is the head of the phonological expression. For example, the sound /e/ is composed of two primes, two elements, and its head is the element

I.



(14) Hungarian seven-vowel system with three lines (Harris 1994, 101)

Furthermore, elements are posited on autosegmental planes or lines, which are labelled according to the marked feature value of the given element. Sometimes the lines are fused, which expresses the fact that elements on fused lines cannot combine in a single segment. The most common fusion of this sort occurs with the U ('round') and I ('front') lines, indicating that such languages do not have front, rounded vowels (such as [y] and [ø] present in Hungarian). Consequently, such a vowel-system has two lines and five vowels:



(15) A five-vowel system with two lines (Harris 1994, 101)

<sup>9</sup> Natural Phonology (van de Weijer 1994, 55) has first adopted this resemblance between phonological primes and colours.

The traditional features representing laryngeal contrasts among consonants are *voiced* and *voiceless*. However, these features are unable to satisfy both the phonetic and the phonological aspect of the laryngeal dimension. Elements that are proposed instead are *slack vocal cords (L)* and *stiff vocal cords (H)*. The advantage of this distinction is the fact that some languages have a neutral-voiceless contrast (e.g. English), others have a voiced-neutral contrast (e.g. French), while yet in others all three kinds of consonants are present (e.g. Thai). What is more, there are languages in which the *L* and *H* elements can combine, resulting in ‘voiced aspirates’, for example in Gujarati, which has four categories of laryngeal representation (Harris 1994). Since the laryngeal opposition is irrelevant for the discussion of palatalisation in this thesis, I will not include the laryngeal elements in the representations of sounds.

The theory of constituent structure in standard GP recognises two major components: Onset and Rhyme. In the latter, the vocalic position is the Nucleus and the post-nuclear consonantal position is shortly called coda. Each Onset should be followed by a Nucleus and each rhymal position should be followed by an Onset. Furthermore, the Onset Maximization Principle says syllabification should render as many consonantal positions as possible to Onset positions:

*Onset Maximization Principle*

Syllable-initial segments are maximized to the extent consistent with the syllable structure conditions of the language in question.

*Onset Licensing Principle*

An Onset head position must be licensed by a nuclear position.

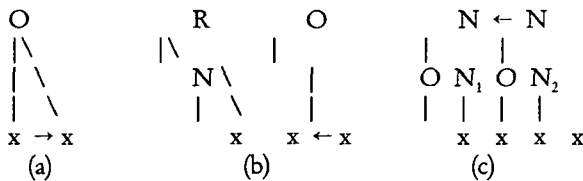
*Coda Licensing Principle*

Post-nuclear rhymal positions must be licensed by a following Onset.

(16) Principles of GP (Polgárdi 2000)

The notion of licensing is taken from syntax and it refers to the “mortar that binds together all components of the phonological hierarchy, both prosodic and melodic” (Harris 1994, 154). Licensing in GP is directional and local.

A special type of licensing is government. It is a “binary, asymmetric relation holding between two skeletal points” (Polgárdi 2000, 3). Government relations are strictly directional and strictly local. There are three main types of government. Constituent government holds within a constituent, for example, in a complex Onset (17a). Inter-constituent government holds between two adjacent constituents, for instance, between a coda and a following Onset (17b). Finally, Projection government is the relation between constituents on the same projection (17c).



(17) Government relations in GP (Polgárdi 2000)

Note that constituent government is head-initial, inter-constituent is head-final and projection government is parametric, it can either be head-initial or head-final.

One of the most important principles of GP is the Binariness Theorem, according to which all constituents must be maximally binary. In other words, there are no complex Onsets with three consonants, there are no superheavy Rhymes where a coda follows a long vowel. An effect

of the theorem is the exclusion of the syllable as a constituent in GP, since a syllable with an Onset and a long vowel (two positions in the Rhyme) would automatically violate it.

Besides the above conditions, phonotactic restrictions regulate the internal structure of constituents in GP. Therefore, a branching Onset can only be an obstruent followed by a liquid or a glide. In a branching Nucleus, the second skeletal point should be an off-glide or the second part of a long vowel. In a coda-Onset cluster, two combinations are well formed: a sonorant followed by an obstruent and an obstruent followed by a plosive.

For the characterisation of empty nuclei, two major principles are developed, Projection Principle and its more restrictive version, Proper Government.

#### *Projection Principle*

Governing relations are defined at the level of lexical representation and remain constant throughout a phonological derivation.

#### *Proper Government*

A nuclear position A properly governs a nuclear position B iff

- (i) A governs B from right to left
- (ii) A is not properly governed
- (iii) there is no intervening governing domain

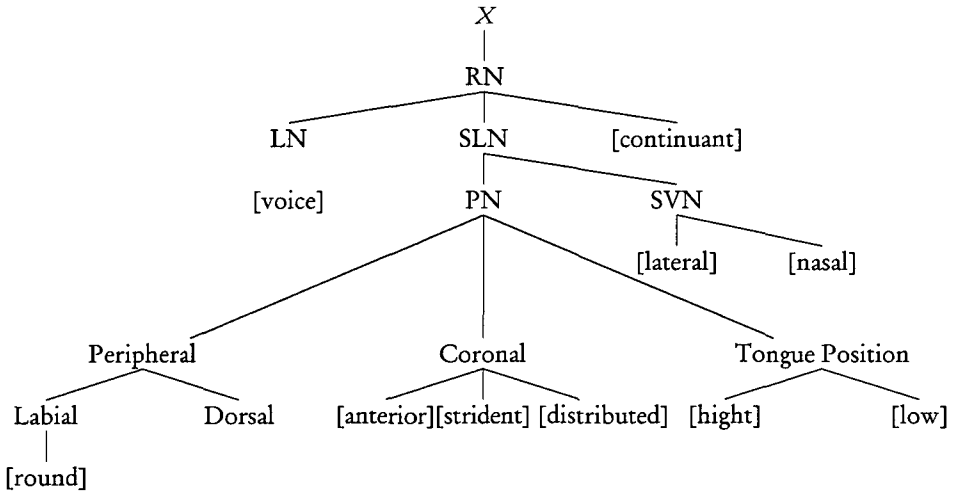
(18) Projection Principle and Proper Government in GP (Polgárdi 2000)

The Projection Principle expresses the characteristic of GP to avoid resyllabification. Namely, resyllabification changes relations between the constituents and according to this principle, relations established underlyingly remain constant throughout the derivation. The other constraint accounts for the occurrence of empty nuclei, present in phenomena such as syncope or vowel-zero alternations.

### 4.3. Feature Geometry

Feature Geometry groups features acting as a unit in phonological rules under the same higher-level node. This theory represents sounds as “hierarchically-organised node configurations” (Clements and Hume 1995, 249). The highest node is the Root node, comprising all melodic properties, from it branch the class nodes grouping the features functionally, and on the lowest level are the terminal nodes representing the features. The terminal nodes are the content nodes. The whole set of phonological processes can be described with only two operations: spreading and delinking of either a terminal or a class node (Clements and Hume 1995).

Paradis and Prunet (1991) discuss a synthesis of different Feature Geometry models and present a solution as presented in (19). This hierarchical model places all terminal and class nodes on separate autosegmental tiers. The terminal nodes are binary, whereas the class nodes are unary.



(19) Feature Geometry model of representation (Paradis and Prunet 1991, 24)

The Root Node branches into the node [continuant] and into a Laryngeal and a Supralaryngeal Node. The latter branches further into a Place Node and a Spontaneous Voice Node. The Spontaneous Voice Node is present only in sonorants, which do not have a Laryngeal Node, because they are inherently voiced, voicing is not contrastive to them. The Place Node gathers Peripheral, Coronal and Tongue position class nodes, the latter after Lahiri and Evers (1991). The Peripheral node further branches into Labial and Dorsal articulators, whereas the Coronal node branches into [anterior], [strident] and [distributed] terminal nodes.

McCarthy states that there are “two distinct hypotheses about the internal organisation of the Place Node” (1988, 99), the Place of Articulation Theory (POA) and the Articulator Theory (AT). POA distinguishes consonantal places of articulation according to the different values of [coronal] and [anterior] where the coronal segments are “produced with the blade or tip of the tongue” and anterior segments are “produced with any articulator with a primary constriction inclusively forward of the palato-alveolar region” (99). Consequently, labials are [-coronal], [+anterior]; dentals and alveolars are [+coronal], [+anterior]; palato-alveolars are [+coronal], [-anterior] and palatals and velars are [-coronal], [-anterior], etc.

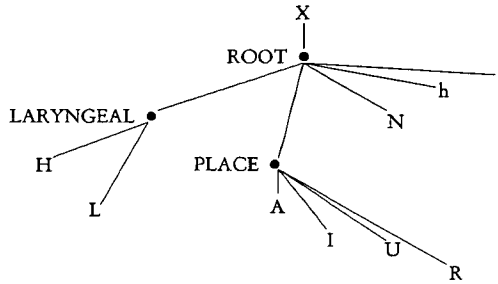
AT, however, “distinguishes segments by the active articulator making the constricting gesture rather than by the place of articulation” (99). The Place Node thus branches into the Labial, Coronal and Dorsal class nodes. According to McCarthy (1988), AT has several advantages over POA. First, POA bases its division among segments on the feature [anterior], which is rather problematic, since this feature “cannot be defined either in acoustic or in articulatory terms”. Second, AT is able to represent complex segments such as labio-velars, double stops, clicks. McCarthy also brings some other evidence from phonological processes, which I will not discuss here.

#### 4.4. Element Geometry

A combined theory of GP and FG gives a fuller account of phonological processes. In my opinion, it is a clearer and more comprehensive way of representing sounds. The reason why elements can be grouped into nodes is that they form natural classes in the same way as segments



do. Phonological processes have access to only one unit in a representation. Consequently, phonological primes, elements in this case, must be hierarchically structured, as in (20).



(20) A melodic geometry model of representation (Harris 1994, 129)

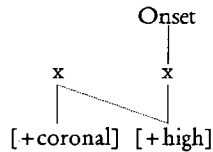
The terminal nodes are represented by elements. The Root node branches into the Laryngeal and Place node. The ‘manner’ elements are connected directly to the Root node, because there is no phonological process in which they behave as a unit, so they cannot form a class node of their own. The Place node dominates the resonance elements listed above. The Laryngeal node dominates the laryngeal elements H and L.

Harris and Lindsey (1995) argue for an Element Geometry approach in the context of investigating the representation of lenition processes. According to them, this theory is “freed of articulatory bias” characteristic of orthodox feature theory and is “able to represent lenition in a uniform and direct manner” (Harris and Lindsey 1995, 77). In my opinion, the same is applicable to assimilatory processes such as palatalisation.

## 5. Representation of Palatalisation

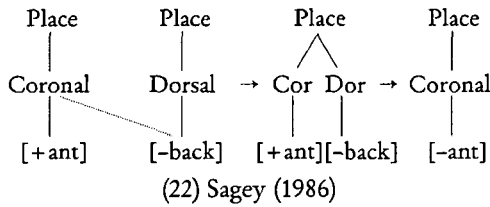
### 5.1. Representation of palatalisation in Feature Geometry

Phonologists working in the FG framework have made several different proposals for the representation of palatalisation. Szpyra (1997) gives a summary of FG analyses of palatalisation in English and refers to works of Borowsky (1986), Sagey (1986) and Lahiri and Evers (1991). According to Borowsky (1986), for example, palatalisation can be expressed with “spreading the feature [+high] from a high front segment which is associated with the Onset” (Szpyra 1997, 1351):

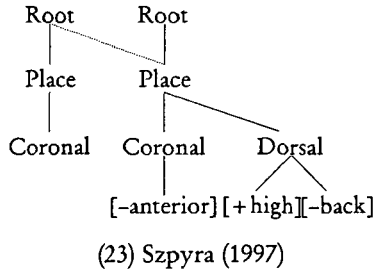


(21) Borowsky (1986)

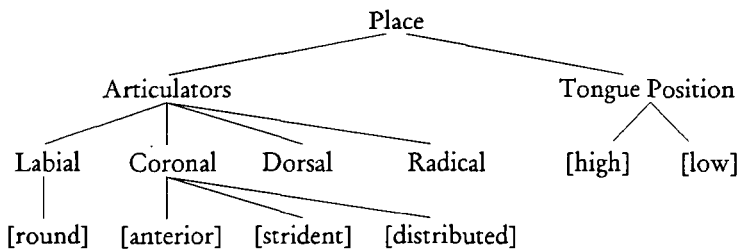
Sagey (1986), however, claims that palatalisation actually consists of two processes: the spreading of the feature [-back] onto the coronal, which by a default rule becomes [-anterior].



According to Szypra (1997), palatalisation is an assimilatory process in which the Place Node of the trigger spreads onto the preceding segment.



Lahiri and Evers (1991) discuss not only palatalisation in English, but palatalisation processes in general. They base their proposal of the representation of palatal assimilation on an alternative Feature Geometry model. They follow the requirement that a valid Feature Geometry representation must have the following abilities: “the ability to express multiple articulations naturally, the ability to characterize vowels and consonants by a single set of features in order to capture natural classes without duplication and the ability to express assimilatory (spreading) processes like palatalization” (Lahiri and Evers 1991, 86). Consequently, they adopt the model of representation as follows (only relevant nodes are included):

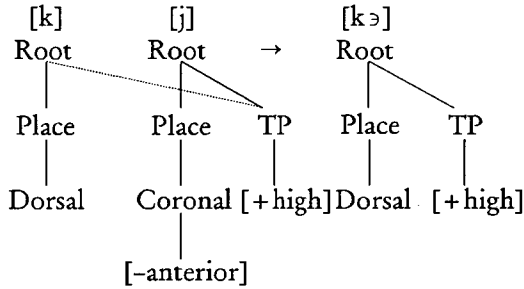


(24) Lahiri and Evers's (1991, 87) Feature Geometry model

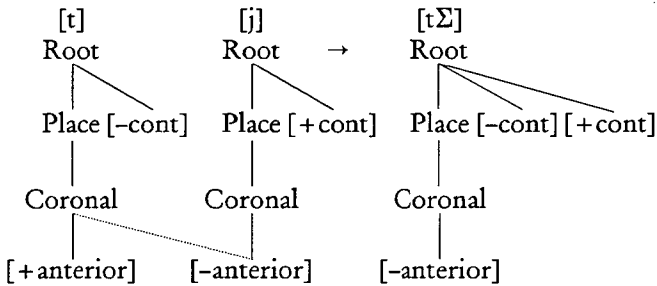
The above model is a merger of Sagey's (1986) and Clements's (1985) proposals. It uses the same resonance features for vowels and consonants grouped under the Articulators node. There is also a separate node specifying the position of the tongue. The tongue Position node dominates the traditional height features, [high] and [low]. They are binary, as opposed to the articulators, Labial, Coronal, Dorsal and Radical, which are unary. The Radical node represents gutturals (glottal, uvular, pharyngeal sounds), while the feature [round] represents labial consonants and round vowels. There is no feature [back], since the Dorsal node represents [+back] and the

Coronal node represents [-back], an example of two unary articulators replacing a binary distinctive feature.

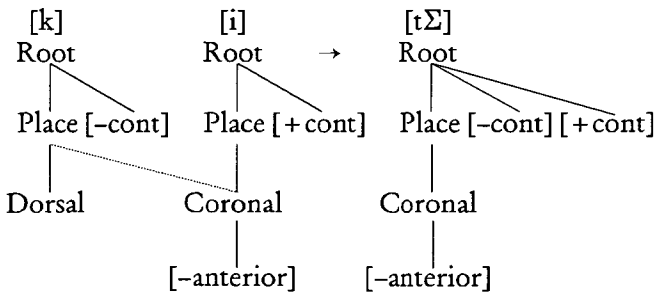
Lahiri and Evers (1991) characterise each subtype of palatal assimilation differently. In their model, addition of secondary articulation is spreading of the feature [+high], shift of coronal articulation is spreading of [-anterior], and fronting of velars is represented with spreading of the Coronal node together with its feature [-anterior], followed by delinking of the Dorsal node.



(25) Addition of secondary articulation to all places of articulation



(26) Alveolars becoming palato-alveolars

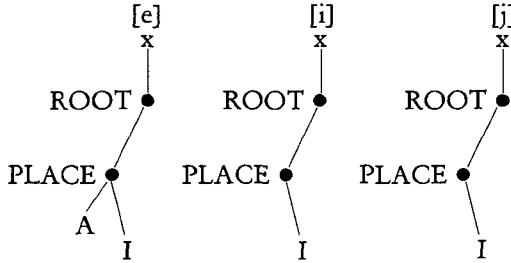


(27) Fronting of velars

The above FG models characterise each subtype of palatalisation differently. Consequently, their analysis misses a generalisation of the different phonological processes jointly named palatalisation. In my opinion, although different subtypes of palatalisation affect different places of articulation and have different outcomes, the core of the processes is the same.

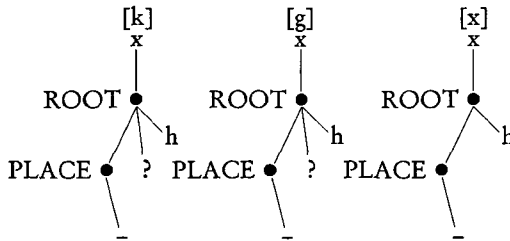
## 5.2. Representation of segments in Element Geometry

According to the EG model I adopt in (20), segments taking part in the palatalisation processes in English and Serbian have the following representations:

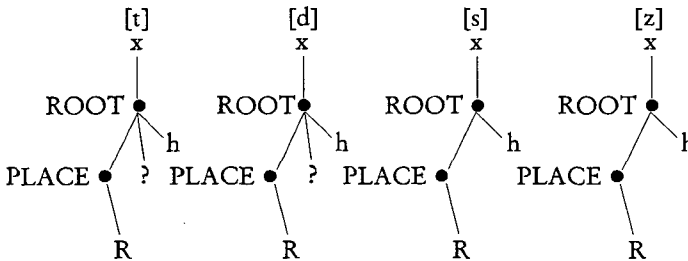


(28) Front vowels and the palatal glide, the triggers of palatalisation

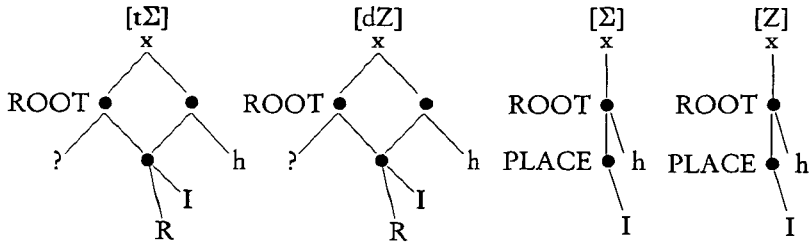
Note that [i] and [j] have the same melodic composition, the element I. They differ only in syllabic position: [i] is always in the nucleus and [j] can only be in non-nuclear (Onset and coda) positions.



(29) Velar stops and fricative, subjects to shift of velar place of articulation



(30) Alveolar stops and fricatives, subjects to shift of coronal place of articulation

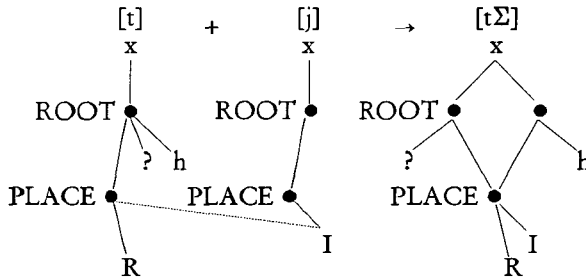


(31) Palato-alveolar affricates and fricatives, outcomes of palatalisation

Note that segments [k] and [g], [t] and [d], [s] and [z], [tʃ] and [dʒ], [ʃ] and [ʒ] differ in voicing, which cannot be seen from the above representations, since I omitted laryngeal elements from their representation (section 4.2.). Segments [k, t, tʃ, ʃ] are voiceless, whereas [g, d, dʒ, ʒ] are voiced. Affricates [tʃ] and [dʒ] are represented with two root nodes and one place node in standard GP theory, since they are quantitatively simple and qualitatively complex segments.

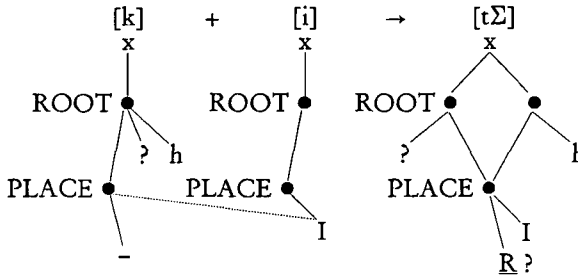
### 5.3. Representation of palatalisation in EG

If we follow the representations of segments in (28), (30) and (31), palatalisation in English can easily be represented with the spreading of the element I. Namely, this element is absent from the subjects of the process, the alveolar [t, d, s, z] segments, but present both in the triggers and the outcomes.



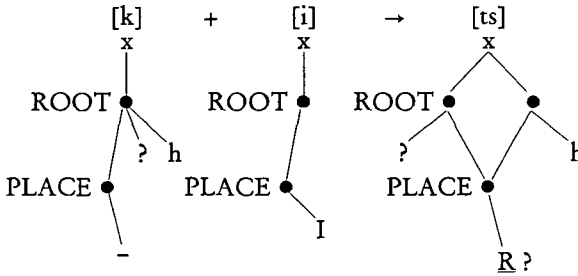
(32) Representation of palatalisation in English

The situation with the velar shift of place of articulation is somewhat different, though. Namely, velars are placeless consonants; hence, they have neither the coronal element nor the palatal element in their underlying representation. The outcomes of the process have, however, both of these elements. The element I can spread from the triggers of the process, since the front vowels and the palatal semivowel have this element in their representation. The question is where the element R spreads from, as it is absent from the representation of the triggers of palatalisation.



(33) Element Geometry model of first velar palatalisation in Slavic

The situation with the second velar palatalisation is even more complicated. Namely, the outcomes of second velar palatalisation are alveolars, which only have a coronal element in their representation.



(34) Element Geometry model of second velar palatalisations in Slavic

Consequently, the question of representation of velar palatalisations in Slavic involves the issue of the coronal element in standard GP and the issue of representation of 'coronality' in general.

#### 5.4. Representation of coronality in non-linear phonology

The question of coronals and their representation in different phonological theories has been a research topic of many phonologists. The cornerstone in this field is Paradis and Prunet's (1991) survey. The authors of the volume present both phonetic and phonological data to support their view about the special status of coronals.

The uniqueness of coronals is substantiated by internal and external evidence. Internal evidence refers to phonological phenomena happening in the grammar of a language. External evidence is data from speech acquisition, speech errors or language games. Namely, research showed that *the first consonants children acquire are coronals and labials*.

The most apparent data include the occurrence of coronals. Namely, coronals are the most frequent consonants in the world's languages. Each language has at least one coronal stop (except for the Hawaiian language), and if there is only one fricative in a language, most of the time it is the coronal /s/ (Paradis and Prunet 1991).

Coronal consonants have a looser distribution than other consonants. The coronal voiceless /t/ occurs more frequently in word-final positions than any other voiceless or voiced stop (Szigetvári 1994). The manner specifications of coronals involve a greater range of varieties than any other place of articulation. In other words, coronals contrast more in manner terms than other consonants (Paradis and Prunet 1991). They are also most prone to assimilation processes. Furthermore, consonantal harmonies usually involve coronal harmonies. In some languages, only coronals are invisible to vowels.

All these data have led phonologists to consider coronals as the most unmarked, most neutral consonants. Closely related to the theory of markedness is the theory of underspecification. Unmarked segments need not be specified in the underlying representation because their surface representation is predictable.

There are, however, two underspecification theories: **radical** and **contrastive underspecification**. The former argues that only one, the marked value of the feature is present in the UR, the other is filled in by a default rule. The latter claims, however, that only contrastive features are specified. In contrastive specification theory, the specification of a feature depends on the phonemic inventory of a language.

Consequently, the two theories make different predictions. For instance, if a language has three stops, labial, coronal and velar, in radical underspecification theory one of them is not present in the UR. In contrastive specification theory, however, all three contrast with each other, therefore, all three will be present in the UR.

There is also a third approach, a merger of radical and contrastive specification theories. Paradis and Prunet (1991) refer to it as **modified contrastive specification**. Avery and Rice (1989) are its major proponents in the context of coronal underspecification. According to them, “the Coronal node is present in the underlying representation of any two phonemes (in an inventory) that differ only in a feature that is dominated by the Coronal node (such as [anterior])” (Davis 1991, 49–50). For example, [s] and [ʃ] contrast in ‘anteriority’, consequently, the Coronal node is present in their UR, whereas in [t] it is not, since [t] does not contrast with any other segment in ‘anteriority’.

Avery and Rice (1989) and Davis (1991) claim that the markedness of coronals is a parametric, language-specific property depending on the phonemic inventory of the language. Davis (1991, 59) concludes that “the different realizations of morpheme structure constraints that are found in languages as English and Arabic provide support for a theory of underspecification in which the presence of the Place node for coronals is a parameterized option”.

In standard GP, ‘coronality’ is represented with the element **R**. However, the exclusion of the coronal element from the inventory of vowel resonance elements is completely arbitrary. Consequently, the element **R** is not capable of representing the natural class of coronals and front vowels correctly.

Backley (1993) examines the status of the coronal element with respect to the *s*+*C* clusters. Based on the behaviour of the consonant /s/ when preceding a consonant or a consonant cluster word-initially, he argues for leaving the coronal element out of the inventory of elements. He states that the existence of *s*+*C* clusters can only be explained if the coronal element is left out from the representation of this and other consonants.

Szigetvári also supports eliminating the coronal element from the resonance element inventory “thus rendering coronals less complex than other places of articulation and, what is more important, placeless, which means behaving differently in assimilations affecting or triggered by place, and this is born out by an impressive amount of evidence” (1994, 218).

Harris and Lindsey (1995) are also of the opinion that the element **R** is not able to characterise the special status of coronals properly. They, however, think that abandoning the element

R is a radical step because it would eliminate ‘coronality’ from phonology. Consequently, coronal place of articulation would become part of phonetic implementation, similarly to glottal place of articulation.

Related to the issue of representation of ‘coronality’ is the representation of ‘velarity’ in standard GP. Namely, according to certain phonologists, for example Szigetvári (1994), velars are also unmarked segments. Their representation in standard GP consists of an element that has no salient properties, the neutral element @. This element manifests itself only when it is the head of a segment, as is the case in velars.

Contrary to this view, Van der Hulst (1994) claims that velars are placeless segments. Consequently, they are marked, because according to him, empty structure is equally marked as complex structure. Only simplicity in the sense of having only one “thing” – one element, one feature – is unmarked. Velars are therefore placeless and marked and coronals are the least marked segments because they are specified for only one place element.

In this thesis, I adopt the view that velars have a place specification. In my opinion, velars have one place element as well as coronals and labials. I elaborate the details of this proposal in the following section.

### 5.5. An alternative solution

I propose an alternative solution after van de Weijer (1994). Since he works in Dependency Phonology (DP), I am adopting only the proposals concerning the melodic content of segments. Namely, the DP approach recognises three different dependency relations. The phonological primes in an expression can be mutually dependant of each other, one prime can govern the other and there can be no relation between them at all. Consequently, DP is not compatible with standard GP, because in GP the relations are strictly unidirectional, whereas DP allows bidirectional dependency relations as well.

Van de Weijer (1994) proposes to represent segments with the following inventory of phonological primes.

- I – frontness, acuteness, sharpness, palatality
  - A – lowness, compactness, sonority
  - U – roundness, gravity, flatness, labiality
- (35) Van de Weijer’s DP elements

“The phonetic interpretation of these elements corresponds to a number of (related) acoustic and articulatory properties” (1994, 5). In other words, there is agreement between van de Weijer’s DP resonance elements, Jakobson’s acoustic features and the articulator-based SPE features.

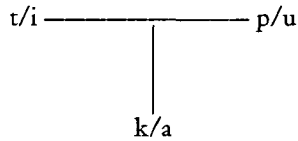
In van de Weijer’s approach ‘frontness’, ‘lowness’ and ‘roundness’ refer to place of articulations in vowels, while ‘palatality’, ‘sonority’ and ‘labiality’ refer to place of articulations in consonants. In other words, consonants and vowels have the same resonance elements. He supports his view with a number of phonological processes in which vowels and consonants interact directly. For example, the vowel /e/ is rounded before the labial consonant /v/ in the Savo dialect of Finnish, consonants are labialised before the high back rounded vowel /u/ in Bantu languages. Vowels are fronted after coronal consonants as in Maltese (or FeʔFeʔ-Bamileke) and coronals are dorsalised before or after back vowels as, for instance, in Maxakalí or Axininca Campa.

In this thesis, I adopt the representations proposed by van de Weijer (1994) for several reasons. I agree with him that vowels and consonants should have the same set of elements because



they interact in different phonological phenomena. Certain linguists observed that the basic inventory of resonance features for vowels and consonants can be traced back to three main phonological primes which can be arranged in a triangle or a triangle-like system.

Van der Hulst (1994), for example, refers to the Jakobsonian T-model in establishing the optimal theoretical background for his model.



(36) Jakobson's T-model (Hulst 1994, 459)

We can associate each point of the T-model with an element from van de Weijer's model, so that t/i corresponds to the element I, p/u corresponds to the element U, and k/a corresponds to the element A.

Van de Weijer's proposal resembles Articulator Theory in Feature Geometry (section 4.3). AT deals with three main places of articulation connected to three active articulators: Labial, Coronal and Dorsal. Each articulator can be associated with a resonance element. The Labial articulator is embodied in the element U, the Coronal in the element I, and the Dorsal articulator in the element A.

There is also "intuitive" evidence from certain ancient languages. Classical Arabic, for example, belongs to the group of Semitic languages and has template morphology, which means that it has root morphemes consisting of consonants only. Interestingly enough, triconsonantal roots in Classical Arabic are usually composed of a labial, a dorsal and a coronal segment.

Stop inventories in Proto Indo-European and Classical Greek can also be analysed in the Articulator Theory. Namely, Proto Indo-European had labial, coronal and velar stops with contrasted in voicing and aspiration (see *Appendix*). Classical Greek also had labial, coronal and velar stops. It contrasted voiceless non-aspirated p, t, k; voiceless aspirated ph, th, kh; and voiced b, d, g.

We can therefore conclude that labial, coronal and velar are the basic places of articulation in the world's languages. This is substantiated by frequency data. According to UPSID (The University of California, Los Angeles Phonological Segment Database, Crystal 1998, 212), most languages have stops with three places of articulation, labial, coronal, dorsal. The fourth most common place of articulation is the palatal. Consequently, a phonological theory should account for this phenomenon and the optimal solution is van de Weijer's proposal.

To sum up, I adopt a model with I, A, U elements as defined in (35). I support the view that these elements are the same for vowels and consonants. The relations between elements in an expression and between segments in a domain are governing and licensing relations of standard GP as formulated in section 4.2.

### 5.6. Palatals as complex segments

Following van de Weijer (1994), I adopt the "strongest hypothesis possible, namely that *all* places of articulation other than labial, coronal and velar involve some type of phonological complexity" (97). Consequently, the representation of palatoid segments, that is, segments that are not plain alveolars or plain dorsals, is complex as well. Palatals, palato-alveolars and alveopalatals are complex corono-dorsal segments.

Van de Weijer's proposal is not new. Clements (1976) claims that the natural classes of vowels and consonants taking part in some phonological phenomena can be best expressed by rendering them to the same feature. In his opinion, the feature [+coronal] is most convenient for describing the front vowels and coronal consonants active in palatalisation. What is more, Clements (1976) states that redefining the front vowels as [+coronal] helps us understand some other phonological alternations such as high vowel reduplication in FeʔFeʔ-Bamileke, a language of Western Cameroon, or a sound shift in Tibetan. Rubach (1995) also agrees with Clements in that first velar palatalisation is described better as spreading of the feature [+coronal] than spreading of the feature [-back].

Keating (1988) makes this proposal based on X-ray data according to which both articulators play a role in the formation of front vowels and palatals. In other words, palatals and palatoids are equally complex, as for instance, labio-velars and should be represented with double-articulation.

Lahiri and Evers (1991) in their FG model group the front vowels and the coronal consonants under the Coronal node. In other words, they refer to front vowels as coronal, non-anterior segments and group the output and the triggers of palatalisation under one natural class.

In van de Weijer's model palatoid segments have a front and a dorsal element in their representation. An expression where a palatal governs a dorsal element refers to palato-alveolars and a dorsal governing a palatal element stands for alveopalatals or palatals, depending on the phonemic inventory of a given language. A great number of languages, for example Irish, Norwegian, Komi, Margi and Paez, contrast a palatal and a palato-alveolar fricative. They have the following representations:

I	I	A	A
	A	I	
/s/	/ʃ/	/ç/	/x/

(37) Representation of fricatives in Paez

Palato-alveolar and alveopalatal fricatives, which are contrasted in Polish, are represented in the following way (van de Weijer 1994, 107-108).

I	I	A	A
	A	I	
/s/	/ʃ/	/ç/	/x/

(38) Representation of fricatives in Polish

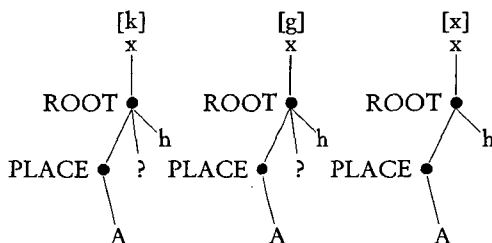
According to van de Weijer (1994) even identical elements can combine. For example, dentals are represented as having two I elements. Since standard GP does not allow this kind of an extension of the theory, namely, including two identical elements in an expression, I propose a different solution.

English, for example, contrasts dental fricatives [θ, ð] and alveolar fricatives [s, z] and stops [t, d]. In my opinion, their melodic content is the same, and the differentiation is achieved by rendering different heads to their expressions. The alveolar stops have the stop element ʔ as their head, the alveolar fricatives have the noise element *b* as theirs, and the dental fricatives are headed by the element I. A problem arises if a language contrasts both alveolar and dental stops and fricatives.

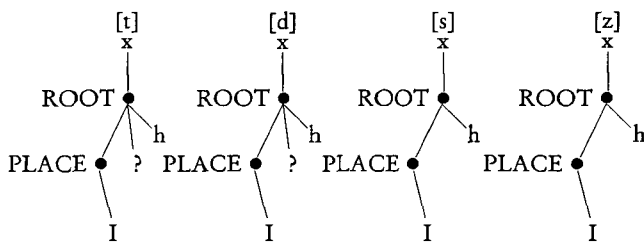
To sum up, I adopt van de Weijer's three-element model of place of articulation. The three elements are embodiments of 'labiality', 'coronality' and 'velarity'. The elements can combine thus creating complex segments such as palatals. Namely, all segments that are not plain alveolars (including dentals) or plain velars are complex corono-dorsals segments. Consequently, palatals are complex segments as well, made up of a coronal and a dorsal element.

### 5.7. Revised representation of segments and palatalisation in Element Geometry

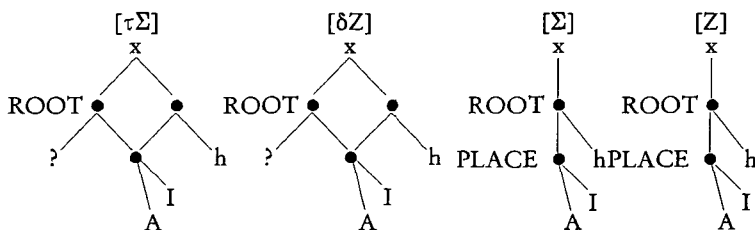
According to sections 5.5. and 5.6, segments taking part in palatalisation in English and Serbian have the following representation.



(39) Revised representation of velars

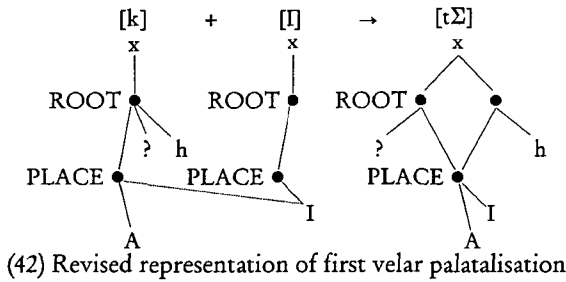


(40) Revised representation of alveolars

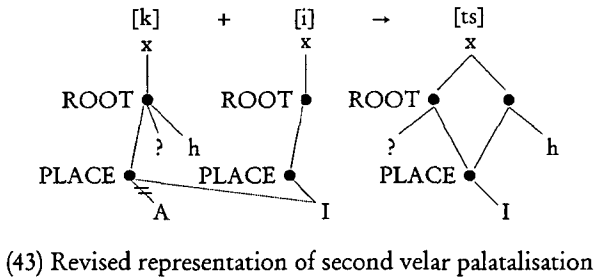


(41) Revised representation of palato-alveolars

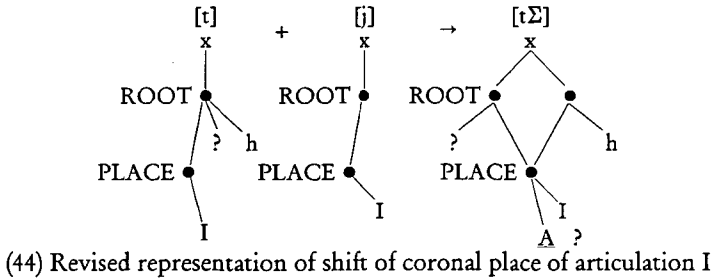
Following the revised representations of segments taking part in palatalisation processes, first velar palatalisation can be defined as spreading the 'palatal' element from the trigger of the process on the input of palatalisation.



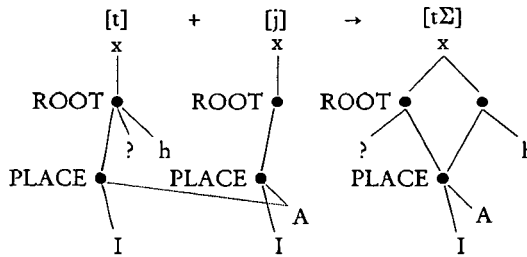
The second velar palatalisation is also represented with spreading of the element I from the trigger to the subject of the process, but in this case, with a concomitant delinking of the dorsal element.



However, following the representations from section 5.7, the question is how to represent shift of alveolar place of articulation. Namely, if we do not adopt the view that the palatal semivowel [j] and the high front vowel [i] are complex coronal-dorsal segments, the dorsal element present in the outcome of alveolar palatalisation has nowhere to spread from.



If, however, we adopt the view that the triggers of palatal assimilation are complex segments expressed with both a coronal and a dorsal element, shift of alveolar place of articulation could be represented with spreading of the element A.



(45) Revised representation of shift of coronal place of articulation II

This move, however, would contradict the phonetic definition of palatal assimilation. Namely, the spreading of the element ‘low’ cannot in any way represent palatalisation, which “as a technical phonetic term, refers to the superimposition of a high front tongue-body position on a separate primary articulation, such as a primary articulation with a tongue blade” (Keating 1991, 39).

A possible solution is to redefine the element A as the element responsible for tongue body positions similarly to the Tongue Position node in Feature Geometry. This would also justify placing velars and front vowels in one natural class as having the element A in their representation. In this case, we are faced with the problem of representation of the low back unrounded vowel [a], which was the embodiment of the element A up to this point.

However, a proposal of redefining the element A is ad hoc in nature. It entails a redefinition of the whole set of elements. Contrary to this kind of “tricks”, our aim is to search for well motivated constant solutions that lead to an improvement of the theory.

A possible answer to the question of uniform representation of different palatalisation processes is that Element Geometry does not generate velar palatalisation as a phonological change and it is not a phonological change in any language. We have seen that the representation of dental and alveolar palatalisation poses no problem for the Element Geometry model, since it is still a productive process not only in Russian and English but some other natural languages as well. Velar palatalisation, however, is a non-productive phonological phenomenon and the theory does not predict it. This may not be accidental, but could be a cause-effect consequence. The theory may be able to signal unproductive phenomena by not generating them automatically. In other words, non-linear phonology may be closer to its main aim: the elimination of over-generation.

## 6. Conclusion

The aim of the thesis is to summarise recent research in the topic of palatalisation. Furthermore, it is an attempt to find a uniform representation of the different palatalisation processes.

As the background for my research, I chose a combination of two non-linear phonological approaches, Government Phonology and Feature Geometry, known as Element Geometry. This approach adopts the element theory of standard GP and places its unary elements in a hierarchical structure. The structure is necessary to represent phonological phenomena in a clear and natural way. Namely, in non-linear phonology, “representations and operations are two interacting modules” (McCarthy 1988, 105). That is, if the representations are correct, the operations will follow automatically.

An overview, classification and certain morphological background of palatal assimilation in Proto-Slavonic, Serbian and English precede concrete phonological representation of the segments and processes. I conclude that velar palatalisation is not a productive phenomenon in Serbian, whereas it was in Proto-Slavonic. I adopt an element theory where the elements for vowels and consonants are identical. I also opt for a representation of palatoid segments as complex coronodorsals. I achieve a uniform representation of palatalisation as spreading of the element I.

However, certain other issues emerge, for instance, the embodiment of the element A. I propose certain adjustments to the theory of Element Geometry, the effect of which serves as further evidence for establishing that EG does not generate velar palatalisation processes. In my opinion, further research is needed on the topic of synchronic-diachronic phonology in order to establish the principles concerning the representation of diachronic processes.

## Appendix

### Phoneme Inventories of the Different Stages of Serbian Language

#### Proto Indo-European

##### *vowel system:*

	FRONT	BACK	
		UNROUNDED	ROUNDED
HIGH	i, ī		u, ū
MID-HIGH			
MID-LOW	e, ē		o, ō
LOW		a, ā	

##### *consonant system:*

	LABIAL	ALVEOLAR	PALATAL	VELAR	LABIO-VELAR
SONORANTS	m, w	r, l, n	j		
FRICATIVES		s, z		x	
AFRICATES					
STOPS	p, b	t, d		k, g	k <sup>w</sup> , g <sup>w</sup>
ASPIRATED	bh	dh		gh	g <sup>w</sup> h

#### Proto-Slavonic, early period

##### *vowel system*<sup>10</sup>:

	FRONT	BACK	
		UNROUNDED	ROUNDED
HIGH	i, ī		u, ū
MID-HIGH			
MID-LOW	e, ē		o
LOW		ā	

<sup>10</sup> Note that ā, ō > ā and ā, ō > ō. The vowel system contained diphthongs ǎi ǎu ǎi ǎu as well.

*consonant system:*

	LABIAL	ALVEOLAR	PALATAL	VELAR
SONORANTS	m, w	r, l, n	j	
FRICATIVES		s, z		x
AFRICATES				
STOPS	p, b	t, d		k, g

**Proto-Slavonic, late period***vowel system*<sup>11</sup>:

	FRONT	BACK	
		UNROUNDED	ROUNDED
HIGH	i	y	u
MID-HIGH	ь	ѣ	ѓ
MID-LOW	e ě		
LOW	ě	a	

*consonant system*<sup>12</sup>:

	LABIAL	ALV	ALV-PAL	PAL-ALV	PAL	VELAR
SONORANTS	m, w	r, l, n			r <sup>l</sup> , ʎ, ʝ, j	
FRICATIVES		s, z	ʃ, z	ʃ, ʒ		x
AFRICATES		ts, (dz)	tʃ, dz	tʃ, (dʒ)		
STOPS	p, b	t, d				k, g

**Serbian***vowel system:*

	FRONT	BACK	
		UNROUNDED	ROUNDED
HIGH	i		u
MID-HIGH			
MID-LOW	e		o
LOW		a, ā	

*consonant system:*

	LABIAL	ALV	ALV-PAL	PAL-ALV	PAL	VELAR
SONORANTS	m, w	r, l, n			ʎ, ʝ, j	
FRICATIVES		s, z	ʃ, z	ʃ, ʒ		x
AFRICATES		ts	tʃ, dz	tʃ, (dʒ)		
STOPS	p, b	t, d				k, g

<sup>11</sup> The table is taken from Kristó (2003, 2). Symbols ǫ, ě represent nasal vowels.

<sup>12</sup> Taken from Đorđić 1975, 43.

Serbian<sup>13</sup>

vowel system:

	FRONT		BACK	
			UNROUNDED	ROUNDED
HIGH	i			u
MID	e			o
LOW			a	

consonant system:

	LABIAL	ALV	ALV-PAL	PAL-ALV	PAL	VELAR
STOPS	p b	t d				k g
FRICATIVES	f v	s z		ʃ ʒ		x
AFFRICATES		ts	tʃ, dʒ	tʃ dʒ		
NASALS	m	n			ɲ	
LIQUIDS		l, r			ʎ	
GLIDES					j	

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<sup>13</sup> Simić, Radoje and Branislav Ostojić 1996: *Osnovi fonologije srpskog jezika* [The basics of the Phonology of Serbian language], Univerzitet u Beogradu, Beograd.



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Fischer Mónica  
**Representation of Velar Palatalisations in non-linear Phonology**

The paper is an attempt to find a satisfactory formulation of palatalisation. It searches for an optimal representation of the sounds taking part in the palatalisation process. Namely, there are three subtypes of palatalisation: addition of secondary palatal articulation, shift of coronal place of articulation and shift of velar place of articulation. The trigger segments of all three subtypes of palatalisation are front vowels and the palatal glide. The paper adopts a combination of two non-linear theories, Government Phonology and Feature Geometry, as its framework. This combination is named Element Geometry. In an Element Geometry based approach, sounds are represented as hierarchically organised structures. The terminal nodes of the structures are the unary elements of GP, and the elements grouped functionally form the class nodes of the structures. Each phonological process is either spreading or delinking of a terminal or a class node. Consequently, palatalisation is viewed as an assimilatory process with insertion of an association line. The paper examines data from English and Serbian. English palatalisation is a case of 'palatal' element spreading, whereas first velar palatalisation in Serbian raises the more general issue of the representation of the 'coronal' element. Namely, the outcomes of first velar palatalisation have the 'coronal' element in their representation, although that element is absent from the representation of both the input and the trigger segments. The alternative solution suggested in the paper is to adopt a three-element inventory that is the same for consonants and vowels. According to this system, coronality is expressed with the element for 'palatality'. Alveolars and dentals are represented as having only this element, whereas palatals are complex coronal-dorsals having both a coronal and a dorsal element in their expression. Consequently, velar palatalisations are represented as spreading the 'palatal' element and a uniform representation of palatal assimilation is achieved.

*Cora Zoltán*

## Aesthetic Aspects of the Gothic Revival: An Essay in the History of Culture

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### Preface

Choosing history of culture as a field of research demands great efforts from the investigator since he has to deal parallel with history, literature, philosophy and arts. My primary aim to analyse the Gothic Revival in relation to its ethical, moral and aesthetic questions was to enhance our understanding of how Gothic was brought about, and how aesthetics could serve cultural and political endeavours beyond art and beauty. Out of many issues within the realm of Gothic I will try to approach this complex topic by focusing on mainly the aesthetic aspects of this period. My studies of history and Latin, and our discussions in Anikó Németh's classes in Victorian art have encouraged me to apt for this topic.

Throughout my five year long studies I have been influenced by most of my lectures and I would like to thank for their support and the knowledge they have offered me. I also want to express my particular gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Anikó Németh, for giving me regular help, encouragement and valuable pieces of advice in my orientation and research. I am also grateful to Prof. György E. Szőnyi whose lectures on British arts and iconography have provided me with suitable approaches to the topic, and on the other hand, to Dr. István Mészáros who has sincerely supported me with the translations of French texts I have used in my study. My thanks should also go to my acquaintances, family, and friends for their patience and care towards my work.

### 1. Introduction

#### 1.1. Opus Gothicum

One of the most widespread and influential artistic movement which England has ever produced, the Gothic Revival, was such a search for medievalism in a modern age that gradually gained its own 'consciousness' and meanings. This study will make an attempt to look at the efforts to reclaim and recreate Gothic style. Gothic Revival denotes a wide scope of field, that is, it is not only an artistic but a cultural process of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century that includes literature, aesthetics, politics and arts. Therefore, the following questions may arise here:

- What were the principal reasons for the development of Gothic semantics by which I mean adherent values of arts, aesthetics, politics and culture in England?
- How did this semantics expand in culture and society in competition and exchange with Classicism?
- What kind of framework could architecture offer to Gothic semantics during the Gothic Revival?

In accordance with these questions my hypothesis is the following. Due to the fact that the Revival, as I have already mentioned, expanded on various cultural dimensions and carried a vast medieval heritage with different associations, inherent political connotations, and an overall artistical tradition, Gothic was able to compete with Classicism in the formulation of the English national artistic realm. In this context, an own interpretation of the process of the widening and structuring of the semantics of the Gothic will be offered on the basis of a possible analysis of the history of culture. In doing so my aims are:

1. A throughout analysis of the medieval heritage and the political theory accompanying Gothic.
2. To offer a better understanding of the Revival by examining the various forms of the Survival as well.
3. As far as the 18<sup>th</sup> century is concerned, to investigate the landscape park and “garden Gothic” as well as ruin reconstructions to be able to understand and conceptualise the aesthetical change in the second half of the century.
4. With regard to the 19<sup>th</sup> century Revival, to provide a comprehensive interpretation of a widening Gothic semantics through secular and ecclesiastical buildings.
5. To examine the theory of A. W. Pugin which culminated in the (re)construction of the Houses of Parliament.

In my investigation and interpretation I will use different primary<sup>1</sup> and secondary<sup>2</sup> sources and apply the theories of Kenneth Clark, Chris Brooks, Arthur O. Lovejoy, and Paul Frankl. To be able to achieve my aims my study will follow this structure.

In the second chapter I will examine the concept of Gothic in the Renaissance theory of architecture which attributed the name *Gothic* to the medieval style. In connection with premodern legacies, it is important to show what connotations Gothic acquired before the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Subsequently, I will briefly look at the question of the 17<sup>th</sup> century Survival, and also ascertain the beginning of the Revival by a legitimization of a political theory that expressed itself in the Gothic semantics which was exploited by early English revivalists, such as Laud and Cosin. This manifestation will provide historical associations as well.

In chapter three I will investigate aesthetic changes in the 18<sup>th</sup> century that reformed and reclaimed Gothic as a natural style which culminated in the development of the *landscape park*. Historical associations, developed by antiquarianism and literary criticism, have made it possible to “translate” Gothic to domestic architecture. At this point, I will discuss the architecture of Strawberry Hill and other castles from this period to support my argument.

<sup>1</sup> Chris Brooks, *The Gothic Revival* (London, 1999); Kenneth Clark, *The Gothic Revival* (Trowbridge & Esher: John Murray, 1962, First ed. 1952); Charles L. Eastlake, *A History of Gothic Revival*, 1872, reprint. (Leicester, Leicester University Press, 1970, with an introduction by J. Mordaunt Crook); Paul Frankl, *The Gothic. Literary Sources and Interpretations through Eight Centuries* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1960); Arthur O. Lovejoy, “The First Gothic Revival and the Return to Nature.” In *idem*, *Essays in the History of Ideas* (New York, Capricorn Books, 1960), 136–163; Samuel Monk, “The seventeen-sixties: sublimity, psychology, and original genius.” In *idem*, *The Sublime. A Study of Critical Theories in XVIIIth Century England* (Ann Arbor, 1960), 101–133, 154–163. For the theoretical background of semantics and visual representations, see Szőnyi György Endre, *Pictura and Scriptura: hagyományalapú kulturális reprezentációk huszadik századi elméletei* (Szeged: JATEPress, 2004).

<sup>2</sup> Secondary sources include pictures, figures, and literary texts referred to later in the study. In the case of German and Italian texts where it is not indicated otherwise, an own English translation is offered. The French texts were translated into Hungarian by Mr. István Mészáros which I later translated into English. All errors of the translations should be incurred on the author of this paper.

In the fourth chapter further literary influences will be examined that gave Gothic new semantic aspects and ways of interpretation. Reinterpretations of medieval literature implied the republications of it which brought about the emergence of the Gothic novel. I will also discuss how the Romantic Movement created a new identity on the basis of an individual imagination, and how this process led to a more elaborate search for a deeper semantics, periodization, and historiography of Gothic.

Romantic historicism created a new dimension for the individual imagination. Thus, in the fifth chapter I will analyse how this change resulted in an establishment of new aesthetical paradigms, such as picturesque and sublime, by reinterpreting the notion of beauty. This paradigmatic shift will lead us to discuss how Gothic architecture united these aesthetical phenomena and how they were expressed in the edifices of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

In the sixth chapter I will look at the features of Monastic and Castellar Gothic that are representations of power relations as well. Social and economic changes of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century necessitated the adoptions of more practical stylistic variations of Gothic. Therefore, by expanding Gothic semantics I will investigate the so-called Manor House Style, which united forms of Tudor, Elisabethan and Jacobean Gothic, and its application of the country house and the villa in the 1830s and 1840s. This analysis of secular buildings contributes to a further examination of ecclesiastical architecture.

Consequently, in the seventh chapter I will examine various forms of church restorations and buildings that brought about a revived set of rituals as well as religious enthusiasm which was later institutionalised in the Camden Society and Ecclesiology. This movement united architectural and ethical merits and values, thus, canonising and determining the precepts for the Gothic style. The exaggerated religious ritualism led to an evolving resistance of the Protestants in the form of an anti-Catholic movement which resulted in the dissolution of the Society but did not mark the end of the theoretical development. Therefore, I will investigate the growing trend of theorising of Gothic, which was started by ecclesiologists and fully developed by A. W. Pugin's system of Gothic theory, which implied social function and purpose, moral values and functional reciprocity of design and structure. So, it will be also crucial to examine the process how Pugin became a landmark in the "Ethical period" of the Revival.

Finally, after discussing various processes and stages of the expansion of Gothic semantics and offering a potential way for a more precise understanding of this phenomenon, I will analyse the *par excellence* of Gothic, the Houses of Parliament. On the verge of its *neo* development, the mental and material appreciation of Gothic exceeded a level of the national and artistic consciousness when it could overcome the Neoclassical aesthetic priorities. I will investigate this process with regard to the Parliament, and in connection with this the utilitarian attitude towards the validity of Gothic. At the same time further attention will be paid to Gothic's expansion in the 1840s within the fields of educational, judicial, and welfare institutions.

In the conclusion I will attempt to concisely answer the questions raised in the introduction. By bearing in mind my main points of argument, that is, new sets of meanings were attached to Gothic semantics that affected Victorian aesthetics, morals, ethics and also education, my answer to my hypothesis is the following. Gothic semantics was established by its legitimization in the 17<sup>th</sup> century by a suitable political theory that gave an impetus to historical associations which were expanded by aesthetical changes of the 18<sup>th</sup> century regarding Nature. The first expressions of this paradigm were the landscape park and the ruin reconstructions that finally led to a broader application of the style in the domestic sphere from the 1750s. Historical associations and reinterpretations of literature opened up new dimensions to literary thematization of Gothic which culminated in the Romantic Movement that rediscovered the individual identity that could revitalise artistic conceptions of new aesthetical paradigms, the picturesque and the

sublime. Gothic semantics channelled these paradigms through revived Gothic buildings of both ecclesiastical and secular. Nevertheless, an altering society demanded adoption of other variants of Gothic in compliance with the needs of the middle class. The country house and the villa also contributed to the elevation of Gothic semantics over Neoclassical aesthetical rules. This domination was finely theorised by Ecclesiology, and especially by Pugin who entirely reinterpreted the semantical structure of Gothic in terms of aesthetics and art, thus, establishing an independent neo-Gothic style.

## 2. Gothico Barbaro, or the medieval heritage and political theory

### 2.1. The Renaissance Gothic

In spite of originating in the European Continent, it is perhaps not an overstatement that Gothic dominated medieval England. Therefore, in this part of my essay I will take the historical heritage of the style into consideration. I have previously referred to the fact that this heritage extends on a wide scale since Gothic constituted itself in politics, aesthetics, as well as in arts, so it bears prominent importance to investigate to what political and aesthetical meanings Gothic was connoted in order to better understand its Renaissance refutation and later reinterpretation by the Revival.

To achieve this aim, it is suitable to briefly investigate the medieval history of Gothic in England.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, no detailed architectural or stylistic examination is offered here due to the aims I have mentioned in the introduction. In terms of periodization, the first Gothic style was the Early English Style that lasted approximately until the 14<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>4</sup> Gothic entered from France with Cistercian monastic orders that applied only pointed arches,<sup>5</sup> however, the style became more elaborated with central ridge-rib vaulting, lancet windows, and dog-tooth ornaments (Appendix < 1 >). This rich trend of ornamentation and detailed designs originated from virtuosity and stylistic invention of medieval craftsmen and masons. In England Decorated Gothic represents this most exuberant form of expression.<sup>6</sup> The style was further developed by a revolutionary design, that is, the apse of the building was replaced by an enormous window. Perpendicular Gothic attained its name after this architectural solution which proved to be a unique English stylistic phenomenon in a European comparison.<sup>7</sup>

On the basis of this overview, it is worth discussing the aesthetical connotations Gothic acquired during the Renaissance. First in a sequence of thinkers and scholars, the men of Renaissance tried to analyse and make a judgement of a style that was all but Classical.<sup>8</sup> Donato Bra

<sup>3</sup> For a detailed discussion, see David Watkin, *English Architecture*. London, Thames & Hudson 1979, 30–81; also for important aspects, see Erwin Panofsky, *Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism*. St. Vincent Archabbey, 1951.

<sup>4</sup> As I will discuss it later, the periodizations of the modern history of English architecture rely on the historiography of the Revival.

<sup>5</sup> Famous examples include Fountains Abbey, Canterbury Cathedral, and Lincoln Cathedral.

<sup>6</sup> For example, Tewksbury Abbey, Bristol Cathedral, and Wells Cathedral. Decorated is all the more so important since Ecclesiological Movement applied it as the sole Gothic style. See chapter 7.

<sup>7</sup> Perpendicular style (ca. 1400–1500). The word *perpendicular* means right-angle shape referring to horizontal and vertical divisions on windows as well as vaulting-fans. For example, Gloucester Cathedral, King's College, Cambridge (1450–1500), or Henry VII's Chapel in Westminster Abbey (ca. 1500).

<sup>8</sup> By Classical I mean those set of rules and aesthetical norms that characterised classical antiquity, and which were summarised in Vitruvius' *De Architectura*. Vitruvius also dealt with the discussion of rhetorics and fine arts. The concept of Renaissance architecture, therefore, was chiefly

mante (1414–1514), the Italian architect was the first who attributed a German origin to the style for he could not understand the principles of Gothic that went against the rules of classical antiquity.<sup>9</sup> The same opinion was expressed by Giorgio Vasari (1511–1574), the painter and architect, who made a further step by specifying the Goths, one of the early medieval people of Europe, as originators proper. According to Vasari, the monstrous German style was the architecture of barbarism which destroyed classical antiquity that is now revealed.<sup>10</sup> From these sources it can be assumed that Gothic was identified as a barbaric, rude, unnatural, and irrational style that should be dismissed. However, they admitted that it was a style. This concept of the Renaissance is important, on the one hand, because it brought about a name, that is, Gothic, which could later rouse a range of political connotations in the English realm of thinking, on the other hand, it settled the aesthetic attitude and theory of Gothic that prevailed until the 1740s in England.

## 2.2. A political theory of Gothic

If particular attention is paid to the development of the political vertebrae germane to Gothic, it could be argued that a complex semantical structure had been established until the early 18<sup>th</sup> century that characteristically united medieval past, English Reformation, and constitutional power in the framework of Gothic (Brooks 1999, 10–50). So, it is primarily important to closely follow the development of Gothic semantics, as I have indicated in the introduction, because it would be enlarged by a range of aesthetical values in the course of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

In the turbulent era of Renaissance, Reformation, and Counter-Reformation, the growing trend of secularisation, that is, becoming free in religious and economic terms, and the rising English modernity called for a reformulation of the past and its adherent meanings, as it is a common feature of all modernisms and revolutionary movements. This happened, in my view, through the establishment of a Gothic semantics in England. Renaissance intellectualism had to deal with the medieval cultural heritage, in our case, with medieval architecture.<sup>11</sup> They tended to “rewrite” these buildings that resulted in the application of Classical forms on Gothic structures, mostly Italianate motifs in England.<sup>12</sup> Though this movement was strenuous, it was limited to London and major centers of the country while the “peripheria” remained a “creative resort to the medieval world” (Brooks 1999, 20), Gothic both in structure and in design. Or as Clark puts it stirringly well, “A tiny stream of the Gothic tradition was never lost” (Clark 1962, 11).

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based on Vitruvius’ works that included *The Five Orders of Greek and Roman Columns* – Doric, Ionic, Corinthian, Tuscan, Composite. Marcus Vitruvius Pollio (1<sup>st</sup> century, AD), Roman architect and engineer in the service of the first Roman Emperor, Augustus (reigned from 27 BC to 14 AD).

<sup>9</sup> In one of his writings we can read: “The only sort of decoration employed by the Germans (whose manner still persist in many places) consists of squat little figures, badly carved, which are used as corbels to hold up the roof beams, along with bizarre animals and figures and crude foliage, all unnatural and irrational.” Brooks, *op. cit.*, 9.

<sup>10</sup> In Vasari’s *Lives of the Most Eminent Architects, Painters, and Sculptors* (1550) it follows as: “una specie di lavori che si chiamano Tedeschi,” [“a work of art that we call German”] Lovejoy, *op. cit.*, 137.

<sup>11</sup> In terms of interpretations of Gothic there are numerous examples from the continent as well. Carolus Scribanus in his book, *Antverpia* (1610) describes Antwerp Bourse as *opus Gothico* (Gothic work). Bergeron, discussing the Château of Beauvrages, speaks of it as *un peu gothique* (a little Gothic). Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640) in his work on the palaces of Genoa describes southern Dutch buildings as *Barbara ò Gothica* (barbarian or Gothic). The English diarist, John Evelyn (1620–1706) used Gothic as a stylistic attribute to medieval architecture as a whole.

<sup>12</sup> I do not intend to detail this architectural phenomenon for it does not necessarily pertain to my topic.



In other countries where the Counter-Reformation played a significant role in monarchical reconstitution, Gothic was used as a semantical and symbolic tool of medievalism, nevertheless, as it is known, there was a distinct religious and political situation in England. A rich co-dominance of medieval ideas with those of modern were experienced, the former apparently manifesting itself in the Gothic semantics in relation to the latter. English Gothic attained a most unique status due to its past that carried religious and political connotations. As far as the Middle Ages is concerned, Gothic symbolised institutions, feudal hierarchy, Christian morals, and chivalric ethics. In terms of religion, the Anglican Church, the *via media*, finely united Protestantism and certain Catholic traditions. Thus, it is not surprising that it conducted its expansions in the 17<sup>th</sup> century in the Gothic style. Most of the clergy were trained at the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge which were originally built in Gothic. So, the training of the clergy was connected with stylistic attitudes and medievalism. Since both universities were expanding in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, it was obvious that the propagation of faith would go along with the propagation of the style. The so-called University Gothic expressed the continuity of institutions, society, scholarship, culture, and religion. Therefore, I think it is plausible to argue that the extension of Gothic was conscious because it was retained for special contexts and purposes, that is, the propagation of faith which overwrote academic stylistic prescriptions for the Anglican Church (Brooks, 1999, 27). The most exuberant examples for the University Gothic are Oriel College (1620–1642) and University College (1634) at Oxford (Appendix < 3 >), and St. John's College Library (1623–1625) at Cambridge. Nonetheless, it was a period of Survival instead of Revival because Gothic architecture did not acquire a conscious political impetus that came only in the 1640s as it will be discussed in the following.

The fact that the Establishment meant that Church and State are one body politic, increased not only a religious priority, but also a political purpose to follow architectural representations of medievalism.<sup>13</sup> Without detailing the political history of the Commonwealth (1649–1660) and the Restoration (1660–1689), I intend to interpret how Gothic semantics, that is, the political, aesthetical, and artistic connotations of Gothic, was used by *acteurs* of contemporary English political life as a tool of their legitimacy. In my opinion, as soon as the style became politically legitimate, the Survival was replaced by a Revival<sup>14</sup> which gained aesthetic and artistic appreciation in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>15</sup>

For monarchists Gothic conjured up the idea of medieval universalism, while for parliamentarians it meant a set of ancient virtues linking the style to contemporary themes of constitutional liberty and nationhood. Although, both of them exploited it as a legitimate tool for a parallel interpretation of the past as opposed to the much admired legacy of the eternal city of the seven hills, Rome.<sup>16</sup> Making a mythology of a glorious past enabled them to interpret Angli

<sup>13</sup> Medievalism was important, on the one hand, for its cultural connotations as Edmund Spencer's *The Faerie Queene* (1589) represents it well, on the other hand, for its inherent political meanings that made a clear convocation in later Gothic edifications as I will refer to it later.

<sup>14</sup> By Survival I assume a simple reproduction of Tudor Gothic (revived forms of Tudor style will be discussed later) that lasted until the chrySTALLISATION of the political theory pertaining to Gothic. Survival went on mainly in rural parts of the country. Main architects working in the early 1600s were Robert Smythson (1535–1614) and John Smythson (†1634). They designed castles of feudal England with compact massing, towering verticals and dramatic silhouettes. For example, Lulworth Castle, Dorset (1607), Ruperra Castle, Glamorgan (1626), or ecclesiastical buildings, such as Arthuret Church, Cumbria (1609–1610). Brooks, *op. cit.*, 32–34.

<sup>15</sup> As it will be discussed in chapter 3.

<sup>16</sup> Gothic semantics at that time expanded in a profound political theory as well. The main sources were Jordanes (6<sup>th</sup> century AD) – *De origine actibusque Getarum* (The Origins and Actions of the Getes), or as it was usually referred later, "*Getica*", and Cornelius Tacitus (1st century, AD) – *Germania*.

canism as a parallel movement to bring a new spiritual rebirth in opposition to the Bishopry of Rome. For creating this, they vested themselves in Gothic and imported its inherent meanings.<sup>17</sup> This alternate and free Gothic policy was highly important for the parliamentarians as it enabled them to make legitimate and historical demand for the Constitution contrary to the sole power of the Crown that was similarly traced back to medieval interpretation of the past.<sup>18</sup> This turn in political theory shed light on the process how political appreciation of the Gothic architecture changed from the 1640s.

Until that time, however, Gothic policy had disembarked on the shores of England but it could gain a strong foothold only with the help of one of the most important factors in political and cultural affairs of the time, land ownership that proved to be a further impetus to the Revival. Landed power, as such, tends to maintain its power in most cases by the surveillance of political status quo. As by the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Gothic semantics started to prevail in the constitutional political theory. Landed proprietors also felt obliged to take on to the major political trend because Gothic policy also expressed their rights as opposed to feudal monarchical power. With this political change Gothic became assimilated with the fundamental ideological inventory of the Whigs.<sup>19</sup> The appreciation of Gothic, on the one hand, gave rise to a strengthening antiquarian inquiry<sup>20</sup> that involved the "reinvention" of relics, heraldry, and genealogy, as sources of legitimacy. On the other hand, it resulted in a growing visual interest<sup>21</sup> which enhanced the search and production of engravings.

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Tacitus admired the Germans for their virtuous lives, liberty and incapability of dissimulation. Jordanes originated Goths and other Germans from Scandza (Sweden) who were vigorous people, and defeated the moribund and corrupt Roman Empire, thus, making a transfer of power to Teutonic peoples. So far the building of a mythology.

<sup>17</sup> This way of thinking, though in a much more moderate tone, was present in France as well. In *Franco-Gallia* (1573) François Hotman was tracing back the Gauls and Franks to a Germanic root. In England there is an excellent expression of the same idea in Richard Verstegen's *Restitution of Decayed Intelligence* (1624) where Verstegen originated Jutes, Angles, and Saxons as a German stock.

<sup>18</sup> For royalists parliament is essentially a royal concession to the people. For parliamentarians constitutional reforms, based on the tradition of the Magna Charta (1215), were seen as the persistence of pre-conquest, that is, Norman conquest, liberties. This is well reflected in some essays written in the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. In *Historical and Political Discourse of the Laws and Government of England* (1647) Nathaniel Bacon celebrates the triumph of parliamentary Gothic constitution: "Nor can any nations upon Earth shew so much of the ancient Gothique law as this Island hath." Brooks, *op. cit.*, 44. After the Glorious Revolution a set of treatises were also propagating constitutionalism, such as James Tyrell's *Bibliotheca Politica* (1692–1702), Algernon Sydney's *Discourses Concerning Government* (1698), and Robert Molesworth's translation of Hotman's *Franco-Gallia*. For attributing the most "advanced" state of constitutionalism I might quote John Oldmixen: "Gothick Governments are all free. No Nations has preserved their Gothic Constitution better than English." *Critical History of England* (1724–1726); Brooks, *op. cit.*, 44.

<sup>19</sup> Whigs interpreted the Glorious Revolution as the realisation of Gothic theory, thus, the ideas of liberty, freedom and continuity with the past were associated with the continuity of the medieval style.

<sup>20</sup> The most important is Sir William Dugdale's *Monasticon Anglicanum* (1655–1673) that lists primary literary sources, genealogy and heraldic sources as well. Interestingly he regards medieval buildings as secondary antiquities. Dugdale and Roger Dodsworth were the initiators of antiquarianism.

<sup>21</sup> For example, the engravings of Wenceslaus Hollar (1607–1677) to Dugdale's *History of St. Paul's Cathedral* (1658) and the engravings of Daniel King (†1664) in the *Monasticon*. This was the first time architectural images achieved independence of literary texts. With picturing the past they could greatly change the consciousness of the people.

The two main figures of the Gothic Revival in the 17<sup>th</sup> century were William Laud, arch bishop of Canterbury, and John Cosin, bishop of Durham.<sup>22</sup> As Chancellor of Oxford University, Laud made great efforts to improve church architecture in the country which proved to be successful since Gothic remained the primary tradition in local architecture, especially in the case of churches. The examples of this tendency are Canterbury Quadrangle (1631–1636), the roof of Hall Stairs at Christ Church (1630) and Radcliff Quadrangle at University College (1716–1720).<sup>23</sup> Canterbury Quadrangle is especially interesting because it has Italianate loggias with sculpture of Gothic. I think, it shows that Gothic at this time was not a style with a complex architectural knowledge but a set of forms, designs and patterns suitable to carry out the intended meanings. This stage can be examined in Cosin's work, Durham Cathedral (1663) where Baroque forms and ornamental motifs are embedded in fittings that were otherwise Gothic.

Concluding what I have said so far, I rephrased Renaissance theory of Gothic as the denomination itself appeared in Renaissance writings that also implied a reinterpretation of the medieval style. As an English art historical development, I discussed the so-called University Gothic as forms of 17<sup>th</sup> century Survival. The beginning of the Revival was ascertained by the fact that it was politically legitimized and later necessitated a construction of a political theory as well. I showed the formulations of these theories within the realm of a Gothic semantics that was exploited by Laud and Cosin who were the first representatives of the Gothic Revival.

### 3. Aesthetical changes in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the landscape park

#### 3.1. Aesthetical changes of the 18<sup>th</sup> century

To attain a better understanding of Gothic semantics in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, it might be worth looking at the interpretation of Gothic in the mirror of the aesthetic system of Classicism since I intend to have an overview of the aesthetic changes that were brought about in discourses pertaining to the notions of Nature, Beauty, and Gothic in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. As it has been mentioned in the introduction, after concisely discussing the aesthetical background, I will turn to the architectural productions of the Revival to show how these paradigms were applied.

Now, the notion of Gothic needs to be classified so that one can shape a picture of the 18<sup>th</sup> century aesthetical change that happened, as we will see, in favour of the Gothic Revival. It has already been discussed that in Classical aesthetics<sup>24</sup> Gothic meant "barbarous and tasteless."<sup>25</sup> It is interesting though that this attitude prevailed in the years of the ascending Gothic Revival.

<sup>22</sup> Other architects of this age used Gothic as a tool or supplementary element for their Baroque. For example, Christopher Wren built St. Michael's Church in Cornhill with Gothic elements on an otherwise Baroque structure. In the same way Vanbrough and Hawksmoor designed a kind of native Baroque with Gothic details in the building of the towers of Westminster Abbey to obtain a castle like effect.

<sup>23</sup> The survival of Gothic in local architecture was further advanced due to the fact that local craftsmen and architects clung to the old Gothic tradition.

<sup>24</sup> By Classical aesthetics I mean the aesthetic principles that were built upon ancient laws of the style mediated by Vitruvian terms of architecture. For its coider context see Lovejoy, *op. cit.*, 136–165.

<sup>25</sup> Even Rousseau forms the opinion of *préjugé gothique* (Gothic prejudice). It was a common feature of Classicism to scorn Gothic of its connotations of feudalism and medievalism. It is well represented in Thomas Warton's poem, *The Triumph of Isis*:

"T'was theirs new plans of liberty to frame,  
And on the Gothic gloom of slavish sway,  
To shed the dawn of intellectual day." (Lovejoy, *op. cit.*, 137–138).

Connotations implied that Gothic is (1) any structure not in the Classical style, (2) a style originating from Northern tribes, especially from the Goths, or (3) having an Arabian-Goth two-fold origin.<sup>26</sup> As a matter of fact, this poliphony soon gave voice to the opinion that a certain order had to be done. The necessary distinctions led to a more precise denotation of the characteristics of Gothic.

First, according to the 18<sup>th</sup> century Classicists, it was agreed that a lack of simplicity is evident in Gothic architecture, that is, Classical style demanded that the most excessive feature of an ideal building should be simplicity. Classicists thought that simple, majestic and regular were equalled with "natural", so the overdecorated fluttering of Gothic seemed utterly unnatural.<sup>27</sup> Nevertheless, others like Montesquieu, paid attention to Gothic's variety, contrast, and surprise as its chief conveyors of aesthetic enjoyment. This is all the more so important, I think, since in the following aesthetical discourse these aspects will be the turning points with regard to the notions of Nature and Beauty.

Secondly, in Classical terms the imitation of Nature, as a perfect state of art, implies symmetry. In connection with this a lack of symmetry was also attributable to Gothic. Here I can turn to Lovejoy's brilliant description: "a lack of symmetry... militates against the unity effect, that produces upon the eye or the mind a distracting multiplicity of impressions which cannot be immediately recognised as a forming of a single well defined pattern, is inconsistent with beauty" (Lovejoy 1960, 146). It coincides with literary theory again, where the unities in the drama and the disapproval of the mixture of genres were stressed.

Finally, two more disparagements were attributed to Gothic, that is, the lack of "regularity" and the lack of universal acceptability.<sup>28</sup> The former was used in Vitruvian terms, that is, the joint aesthetical exercise of symmetry, repetition, uniform and exact rules of proportion, while the latter, in my view, was a verbal confusion at that age, since there could be found enough historical evidence for both styles. Therefore, I think, it loses its overall validity. All the more so since as soon as the 1740s, an actual approval of Gothic architecture was going on in England.

<sup>26</sup> This is finely resembled in Vasari's *Lives* as we have seen. See note 10. on p. 73. In *Accounts of Architects and Architecture* (1697), John Evelyn nurtured the two-fold origin and contrasted it with Classicism's superiority.

<sup>27</sup> This aesthetical paradigm was current in the literary discourse as well. Cf. Addison in *Spectator* No. 62: "a thought shine in its own natural beauties. Poets who want this Strength of Genius to give that majestic simplicity to Nature, which we so much admire in the Works of the Ancients, are forced to hunt after foreign Ornaments and not to let any piece of Wit of what kind soever escape them. I look upon these writers as Goths in Poetry, who like those in Architecture, not being able to come up to the beautiful Simplicity of the old Greeks and Romans have endeavored to supply its place with all the extravagances of an irregular fancy." In: Lovejoy, *op. cit.*, 144.

<sup>28</sup> Goethe had similar opinion as he first approached the Cathedral of Strasbourg in 1770: "Auf Hörensagen ehrte ich die Harmonie der Massen, die Reinheit der Formen, war ein abgesagter Feind der verworrenen Willkürlichkeit gotischer Verzierungen. Unter die Rustik Gothisch, gleich dem Artikel eines Wörterbuch, häufte ich alle synonymische Misverständnisse, die mir von Unbestimmtem, Ungeordnetem, Unnatürlichem, Zusammengestoppeltem, Aufgeflicktem, Überladnem jemals durch den Kopf gezogen waren" "From hearsay I understood the harmony of masses, the purity of forms, was a sworn enemy of the complex arbitrariness of Gothic ornaments. Under the rustic Gothic, just as in a dictionary article, I collected all synonymous misunderstandings that ran through my mind about Uncertainty, Disorder, Unnatural, Patching, and Overcrowded." (Lovejoy, *op. cit.*, 142.)

The reader may still ask what the cause was, then, that led to the perseverance of Gothic, and what its aesthetic grounds were. As the major trends were the Gothic remodellings of the 1740s and the beginning of Gothic domestic architecture in the 1750s,<sup>29</sup> I might argue that there was a strong divergence from the tradition of Classical architecture. “Nonconformist” architects discovered Gothic as more natural, being more in conformity with Nature. In this context the logic of Classicism was not only dismissed but reversed as Gothic architecture appeared as the imitation of Nature.<sup>30</sup> This theory implied that it is natural harmony that determines architecture instead of a set of strict rules. It also brings us to the aesthetic principle of irregularity because Nature in its pious state is displaced in an irregular way, however, it still retains its harmony. Therefore, the imitation of Nature, as well as Gothic architecture, needs a certain degree of irregularity which means that the Classical aesthetical paradigms of Nature were gradually replaced by those of Gothic.<sup>31</sup> Edmund Burke, in the *Sublime and Beautiful* (1757) describes and supports this aesthetical process, at the same time, he adds that beauty results from certain proportions between parts of the objects and not from an overall perfection.<sup>32</sup> Thus, those aesthetical principles were carried back into Gothic architecture which formerly derived from there. In my opinion, this change that culminated in the 1740s and 1750s, and the derivation and common appreciation of these aesthetical principles of past and present made a considerable impetus to the Gothic Revival.

The notion of Nature, consequently, rebuilt the paradigms that also steered the way of Gothic, making *naturam sequi* an aesthetic imperative which meant that the primacy of irregularity was soon generalised.<sup>33</sup> In the 1750s and 1760s Nature attained a very high moral and aesthetic level in arts, literature and culture. It is worth mentioning here that it was imminently important that this change paved the road not only for Gothic but for Romanticism as well. The Neoclassical doctrines of simplicity and regularity were transmuted into complexity and irregularity in the Gothic.<sup>34</sup> Thus, the Gothic Revival brought about, on the one hand, a “return to Nature”, on the other hand, evoked a reinterpretation of Beauty parallelly with new paradigms,

<sup>29</sup> A detailed discussion will be offered in chapter 3.3.

<sup>30</sup> Schelling expressed the same opinion saying: “die Architektur hat vorzugweise den Pflanzenorganismus zum Vorbild.” [“The architecture (of Gothic) had primarily the ornaments of plants as samples.”] Lovejoy, *op. cit.*, 154.

<sup>31</sup> Horace Walpole also speaks of the naturalness and irregularity of Gothic in the *Anecdotes of Painting*: “the rational beauties of regular architecture (Greek – Classicist) and the unrestrained licentiousness of that which is called Gothic.” Lovejoy, *op. cit.*, 157.

<sup>32</sup> Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* (ed. Adam Phillips, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

<sup>33</sup> One of the friends of Sanderson Miller, whom I will discuss later, wrote in 1753, “I would by no means have my front regular... since the Beauty of Gothic (in my opinion) consists, like that of a Pindarick Ode, in the Boldness and Irregularity of its members.” Lovejoy, *op. cit.*, 159. This aesthetic discourse well represents the change in aesthetics that I was interpreting.

<sup>34</sup> This turn in taste also happened to Goethe when in 1770 he entered the already mentioned Cathedral of Strasbourg: “die grossen harmonischen Massen, zu unzählig kleinen Teilen belebt, wie in Werken der ewigen Natur, bis aufs geringste Käferchen, alles Gestalt, und alles zweckend zum Ganzen,” [“the great harmonic masses that live to their uncountable little pieces, as in the works of the eternal nature, even to the tiniest joint everything is a form, and everything tends to the whole.”] Lovejoy, *op. cit.*, 161.

such as the picturesque and the sublime.<sup>35</sup> So, the Gothic semantics acquired an aesthetical ground besides its vigorous political theory.

### 3.2. Landscapes and ruins

After discussing the primary changes in aesthetics, it would be worth examining how Gothic architecture expanded parallelly in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, partly due to its implications in various fields of culture. Therefore, the first topic of my discussion will be the so-called “garden Gothic”, then the landscape park, and the importance of the 18<sup>th</sup> century Gothic domestic architecture with its expanding Gothic semantics.

The role of Gothic in the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century was limited to a kind of formalism, as it was used in existing buildings as a harmonising and complementary element. In the context of Enlightenment philosophy, Palladian Classicism<sup>36</sup> regarded taste in connection with rational intellectual advancement. Gothic was accepted as a stylistic harmonious element but not more.<sup>37</sup> Nevertheless, there appeared an other architectural trend that later evolved a whole system of national architecture. “Garden Gothic” was a new phenomenon and if I take the fact into consideration that Nature proved to be the center of aesthetical discourses in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, then it perhaps seems to be no surprise that Gothic manifested itself on a large scale within the realm of Nature. The buildings of Gothic country houses were, on the one hand, extensions to a wider dimension because it was the country where the style retained its strain of tradition. On the other hand, a completely new movement established an effectual and aesthetical link between architecture and Nature.

Though at the beginning of this period mostly formal, the extension of Gothic to country houses was situated in a garden scene that soon evolved to a distinct architectural phenomenon, the landscape park. The first instances in a garden setting were Shotover Park, Oxford (1716–1717) (Appendix < 4 >), and Castle Howard, Yorkshire (from 1726).<sup>38</sup> Formal elements, such as tracery and pointed arches, lost their unambiguous reference to the medieval semantics because the adoption of Gothic to country houses and garden environments was a new development. Although Walter Scott will be referred to later in detail, let me quote a fine passage from

<sup>35</sup> On this point I can refer to Benjamin de St. Pierre as a literary source concerning the feature of Gothic:

“L’architecture gothique de nos temples affectait le sentiment de l’infinie.” “Les voûtes élevées, supportées par des colonnes sveltes, présentaient, comme la cime des palmiers, une perspective aérienne et céleste qui nous remplit d’un sentiment religieux. L’architecture grecque, au contraire, malgré la régularité de ses orders et la beauté de ses colonnes, offre souvent dans ses voûtes un aspect lourd et terrestre, parcequ’elles ne sont pas assez élevées par rapport à leur largeur.”

[“The Gothic architecture of our temples affect us with a sentiment of the infinite.”

“The arches bending on slender columns, like crowns of palms, give us a celestial and aerial perspective that replenish us with religious sentiment. The Greek architecture is, on the contrary, in spite of the regularity of its orders, the beauty of its columns, often coarse and terrestrial, due to the fact that compared to its width, it is not enough elevated.”] (Lovejoy, *op. cit.*, 163.)

<sup>36</sup> The Classical architecture theory was greatly influenced by Andrea Palladio (1508–1580) who sophisticated the Vitruvian rules of architecture and style.

<sup>37</sup> Christopher Wren (1632–1723) adopted Gothic at Tom Tower (1681–1682), Nicholas Hawksmoor (1661–1736) at All Souls (from 1716) but these edifices were otherwise Classical in design. Wren and Hawksmoor will be discussed later in detail.

<sup>38</sup> Originally built in Baroque, later gifted with formal Gothic elements.

his marvellous novel, *The Heart of Mid-Lothian*, where there is a description of a garden that much resembled an aisle of a Gothic cathedral:

They found themselves at the extremity of a deep and narrow alley, carpeted with the most verdant and close-shaven turf, which felt like velvet under their feet, and screened from the sun by the branches of the lofty elms which united over the path, and caused it to resemble, in the solemn obscurity of the light which they admired, as well as from the range of columnar stems, and intricate union of their arched branches, one of the narrow side aisles in an ancient Gothic cathedral.  
(Scott 1978, 395).

This also implied that new identities became possible.<sup>39</sup> As far as Gothic semantics is concerned, it was enlarged by a meditative and a military aspect as well. The former manifested in the evoking of Gothic liberties, the latter implied a history of struggle. Apart from the natural setting, towers and castles revived in Gothic, in my view, symbolise this expansion of semantics in the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>40</sup> The cultural, aesthetic and stylistic changes in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, based on Gothic's medieval connotations that I discussed earlier, enabled a broader semantical space of Gothic, wherein ideology gained a vital role and the style took on a flexibility to forms of symbolism and further associations. The importance of this becomes evident when the invention of ha-ha<sup>41</sup> in park planning made it possible to open up the park to Nature abolishing its Classical formality that resulted in an enriched application of variety and forms, such as lakes, trees, meandering streams, serpentine, etc. Variety and natural setting took a foothold, the landscape park was born.

In my opinion, landscape park brought two important advancements to the Gothic Revival, on the one hand, it made Gothic a real national style, on the other hand, it called attention to ruins as remnants of a past to form the present. For building a Gothic country house in a natural environment obviously presupposed the owning of the land, thus, land owners' acceptance of Gothic meant an ideological support since Gothic embodied ideas of freedom, nationhood and liberties.<sup>42</sup> It signalled for them a double inclination to the country, that is, nationhood and land. At the same time in the 1730s and 1740s political discourse evolved a strong Whig opposition. Thomas Madox's *Baronica Anglica* (1736) insisted that constitutional liberty was aligned with land ownership, not with tribal democracy (Brooks 1999, 58–62).

Gothic acquired power and support in terms of money and materials. It became natural and national at the same time. The first greater edifice in this new semantical context was Culloden Tower (Appendix <5>) by Daniel Garret (†1753) built for John Yorke, MP, Richmond.

<sup>39</sup> For an overview and further examination of the garden and landscape, see Brooks, *op. cit.*, 50–85; also David Watkin, *The Picturesque in Architecture, Landscape and Garden Design*. (London, John Murray, 1982).

<sup>40</sup> For example, the Gothic tower of Whitton Park (1734–1735) demolished since, or the Temple of Liberty (1741) by James Gibbs (1682–1754) (Appendix <6>) that constituted in a way a Whig opposition to Robert Walpole, led by Visc. Richard Temple Cobham that found a fine restatement in this building. There was a famous inscription on the wall of the temple: "I thank God that I am not a Roman." I think text and style in such a combination can be plausibly interpreted as a proof of Gothic national restatement. Merlin's Cave (1733), Richmond by William Kent (1685–1748) which was a Gothic pavilion is also a good example for this kind of expression of the Gothic semantics. Brooks, *op. cit.*, 54–56.

<sup>41</sup> Ha-ha was a fence that was located in a deep ditch around the estate. This was a practical solution to provide a kind of protection or border to the estate without applying Classical forms, for example, rectangular stone fences, fine-cut symmetrical bush-walls, etc. For its application, see Christopher Hussey, *The Picturesque, Studies in a Point of View* (London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1927), 17–21.

<sup>42</sup> See chapter 2.

Though literary antiquarianism will be discussed later, it is essential to understand that these changes went parallelly and interdependently at this time. Landscape created a most excellent environment for the designs produced by antiquarians, so revival could produce a distinct architectural movement, that is, stylistic reworkings of earlier buildings. Sanderson Miller (1716–1780), the amateur, antiquarian and architect built the first purpose built ruin, an octagonal tower on his estate at Radway, Warwickshire (1746–1747) (Appendix <5>).<sup>43</sup> It was a popular edification, so Miller was issued on a lot of Gothic restorations and remodellings in the 1750s.<sup>44</sup> The ruins of Hagley Hall's (from 1748), known as Hagley Castle (Appendix <5>), Worcestershire, for George Lyttelton were important ones as well.<sup>45</sup> These are good examples to show that the shaping of national identity became an individual interest as well, focusing its cause and causality in the Gothic.<sup>46</sup>

### 3.3. Domestic Gothic 1740–1770

The creation of historical ground from the 1740s and the changing aesthetical canon engaged a two-fold development in culture, on the one hand, Gothic and its aesthetic and moral associations found their ways in literature that later became a soil for Romanticism, on the other hand, Gothic entered into the domestic sphere of architecture, thus, emerging in a determinate position in culture. In this part of my study I will look at the domestic Gothic edifices, while its literary influences will be discussed in the next chapter.

The foundations of Gothic were laid down in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, so I will examine the major directions of development, that is, how literary antiquarianism and historical research validated Gothic architectural knowledge and the investment of money and profit in the “national” style as a form of patriotic activity,<sup>47</sup> and how these two developments manifested themselves in domestic architecture.

Literary antiquarianism<sup>48</sup> made it possible to create a rival body of historically validated architectural knowledge and to exert it into practice by the investment of capital. One of the most influential antiquarians, Batty Langley (1696–1751), produced a pot-pourri of designs for windows,

<sup>43</sup> Its place and design connote the Civil War and the abolishing of the Stuarts, that is, signifying constitutional monarchy by alluding to Richard Nevill, Earl of Warwick, the “Kingmaker” in the War of the Roses (1455–1485). This dramatic setting is also seen in Classicist landscape paintings by Claude Lorraine (1604–1682) and Nicholas Poussin (1594–1665).

<sup>44</sup> Miller's major works included Arbury Hall, Warwickshire (1746), Addlestrop Park, Gloucestershire (1750–1759), and Lacock Abbey, Wiltshire (1754) (Appendix <7>). The Gothic Great Hall of Lacock was the first application of domestic Gothic to a building that was originally monastic. Lovejoy, *op. cit.*, 150–151.

<sup>45</sup> To illustrate the essence of Gothic here by an ample source, Horace Walpole: “it has the true rust of the Barons' Wars.” Brooks, *op. cit.*, 62. The Lytteltons had links to the Barons' Wars (1263–1267), so they made this building into “historical ground”.

<sup>46</sup> As I indicated earlier in my interpretation, Gothic was thought to be more apt as a style in conformity with Nature and national as opposed the universal rules of Classicism.

<sup>47</sup> This is crucial because Britain became an exponent of Gothic in world trade and profit making, so it carried with itself the Gothic semantics as well.

<sup>48</sup> Historical and literary works drew attention to the past from the same period, such as Sir Robert Atkyn, *The Ancient and Present State of Glostershire* (1712), Edward Hasted, *History and Topographical Survey of the Country of Kent* (1797–1801), as well as *Gentleman's Magazine* (from 1731) which homed collections of literary, architectural, artistic, heraldic and historic material. On local level, the latter propagated historical ties, antiquarian interest, and Gothic style. As a means of medium, it had great part in the forming of Gothic semantics and Gothic identity. Brooks, *op. cit.*, 69–70.



doors and garden buildings.<sup>49</sup> Besides other works they started to create a similar body of principles and practices to those of Classicisms epitomized in the famous five Vitruvian Orders.

Langley's work was utilized by Horace Walpole (1717–1797)<sup>50</sup> who applied these designs with his own as well at Strawberry Hill (1752–1770s) (Appendix < 18 >).<sup>51</sup> Walpole's "little Gothic castle" was the first real edifice of the Revival. There was no previous Gothic on site that again signalled the irregularity and novum of the movement, hence, it became more clear that Gothic was the carrier of past as well. Walpole appointed Richard Bentley (1708–1782) as leading architect and designer who had been forming the Gothic facet of Strawberry for 10 years. Later designs were made by Walpole, Bentley, and John Chute (1701–1776) who were members of a group of architects known as the "Committee of Taste". They decided what to apply from the original forms. The architectural solutions, thus, were usually adaptations and copies of earlier Gothic buildings.<sup>52</sup> These adaptations were usually designed after several courses of antiquarian collections, often on journeys in the European Continent, producing eclectic Gothic forms.<sup>53</sup> They were in most cases faithful in the copy, however, unfaithful in scale and materials. It took 15 years for Walpole and his colleagues to figure out that the true effect of Gothic stood in the actual use of materials (Clark 1962, 61). During these years, they realised that, on the one hand, Gothic still lacked an overall theoretical system that Classicism had, on the other hand, a refinement of artistic method had to be developed. Thus, the establishment and advancement of a corpus of knowledge as an alternative to Classicism became a priority. Walpole's imagination, creativity, knowledge and architectural strategy proved to be a crucial factor of the Revival, the importance of which, I think, almost equals with that of the Romantic Movement.

After discussing Strawberry Hill, it would be interesting to look at other examples of this phase of the Revival.<sup>54</sup> The Gothic semantics that encircled fields of politics, aesthetics, and buildings in Gothic at this time was all the more so important in these edifices since Britain was rising as an emerging political and economic power overseas and at home as well.<sup>55</sup> Daniel Garret's buildings are prominent representatives of this political and stylistic aim, such as Heinter's Gallery at Raby Castle, Co. Durham (1751–1753) and the gothicised great house of Kippax Park,

<sup>49</sup> Langley's *Ancient Architecture, Restored and Improved* (1742) and *Gothic Architecture, Improved by Rules and Proportions* (1742) applied a wide range of Gothic illustrations. The conceptions were coloured by Italian landscape painters of the age, such as Claude and Salvator Rosa who will be discussed later on. Clark, *op. cit.*, 47.

<sup>50</sup> He also published a work, the *Anecdotes of Painting* in 1762, in which he tried to interpret Gothic not very successfully. Brooks, *op. cit.*, 85.

<sup>51</sup> The preparations started in 1749. In Walpole's words, it became "a treasure house of Gothic souvenirs." Eastlake, *op. cit.*, 43–44.

<sup>52</sup> For example, the chimney of Holbein chamber was copied chiefly from the tomb of Archbishop Warham at Canterbury.

<sup>53</sup> Among them are the adaptations of St. Paul's Cathedral, Worcester Cathedral, and Rouen Cathedral. Brooks, *op. cit.*, 85.

<sup>54</sup> In this sense, the forerunner of Walpole was William Kent who tried to apply medieval style, heraldic display and Gothic design, but failed to achieve a true system of construction as opposed to Walpole. The works of Kent remained repertoires of formal elements. What was new was his systematic use of Gothic elements replacing earlier features of an existing building. Though it was very important for the reinvention of stylistic character and for the reiteration of the purpose of shaping the desired historical identity that was part of the Gothic semantics. Kent's major works included the remodelling of Esher Place, Surrey (1733), the recladding of Honingham Hall, Norfolk (1738) which was finally unexecuted, and the refurnishing of Rousham House (1738).

<sup>55</sup> This political stage is nicely echoed in James Thomson's poem, *Liberty* (1735–1736): "Rule, Britannia, rule the waves, / Britons never will be slaves." Brooks, *op. cit.*, 75.

Yorkshire (c. 1752). An other well-established architect, James Paine (1717–1789) also attributed to the early phase of Gothic Revival by such works as the library at Felbrigg Hall, Norfolk (c. 1752) and the restoration and remodelling of Alnwick Castle (from 1756) for the Duke of Northumberland.<sup>56</sup> Robert Miller's Arbury Hall (from 1746) has delicate Gothic interiors<sup>57</sup> which signalled a further step in the Revival, that is, Gothic interiors were spreading across the country from the 1750s. The libraries played an illustrious role due to the antiquarian interest in Gothic, for example, Malmesbury House, Salisbury (c. 1750) and Milton Hall, Berkshire (1765). Arbury Hall was a Tory center while in Hampden House, Buckinghamshire (from 1738) the Whigs dictated, nonetheless, both have fine Gothic elevations and designs which again refers to the double constitutional associations of the style (Brooks 1999, 82). Thus, the wide range of Gothic semantics offered different ways to adopt in the domestic Gothic.

Other country edifices, especially castles belong to this phase. The Frampton Court pavilion (1752), The Goldney House rotunda (1757) and Blaise Castle, Henbury (1766) are fine representatives of this trend.<sup>58</sup> I think the expression of trend is plausible here because one has to pay attention to the fact that the qualitative change of aesthetical norms was followed by a quantitative expansion in buildings which shows, on the one hand, the dynamics of change, on the other hand, Gothic semantics' gradual "infiltration to the ranks" of the academic styles.<sup>59</sup> Adoption of medieval castle architecture resulted in four major edifications, the Raby Castle, Durham (1752), the battlement hunting lodge at Warwick Castle (1764–1766), and Brizzle Tower (1781) designed by Robert Adam (1728–1792) at Alnwick Castle, Northumberland, and a fine tower at Arundel Castle by Francis Hiorne (1744–1789).

In this chapter I have discussed historical associations and aesthetical changes of the 18<sup>th</sup> century with regard to concepts of Nature and natural that made it possible to evolve the Gothic landscape park and ruin reconstructions which prepared "historical grounds" just to be translated into domestical Gothic. The continuity of Gothic was sustained, on the one hand, by literary antiquarianism and the current aesthetical trend, on the other hand, by such actual manifestations of Gothic as Strawberry Hill and some other castles. After finishing discussing the domestical turn, I will follow with an examination of literary influences and Romanticism.

## 4. Literary influences and Romanticism

### 4.1. Gothic semantics versus classicist canon

So far I have attempted to analyse the political, aesthetical, cultural and architectural processes of the Revival, still the examination of literary influences demands attention, therefore, literary considerations cannot be dispensed either. Though the same continuation of the tradition of Gothic was present in the literature of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, the limits of my paper will not allow me to detail these aspects.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>56</sup> Howard Colvin, "Gothic Survival and Gothic Revival," *Architectural Review* 104 (1948): 91-98.

<sup>57</sup> These were mainly plasterwork.

<sup>58</sup> Colvin, *ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> Of course, it must be remembered that Palladian Classicism, as an Academic style, retained its privacy in design. Brooks, *op. cit.*, 68.

<sup>60</sup> This literary trend contributed to growing interest in archaeology as well. For an overview of the literary influences see Brooks, *op. cit.*, 107-151; also Beverly Sprague Allen, *Tides in English Taste (1619-1800), a Background Study in Literature* (Cambridge: Mass, 1937).

Literary inquisition ventured into the Gothic tradition and produced a dark and horrid picture of it, later, however, it was engaged in the emancipation of individual imagination. The first significant “inquisitor” was Thomas Gray who had deep historical and literary interest. He researched Gothic archaeology along with works of Spenser, Milton and Pope.<sup>61</sup> Gray’s researches were summed up in his work, *The Descent of Odin* (1758). Joseph and Thomas Warton, as passionate but amateur archaeologists dugged themselves in the Gothic tradition as well. Their main work, *The Triumph of Isis* (1749) which gave an account of the antiquities of Winchester and the *Observations on the Faery Queene* (1762) draws on a picture of Gothic as a product of a dark and superstitious age wherein priests created these edifices to catch converts to popery (Clark 1962, 41). So, it was the direct set-off of the Gothic novel with its specific thematic framework, which would only be counterpoised and overruled by Walter Scott’s imagination.<sup>62</sup> Gothic semantics influenced both areas of art, literature and architecture. In England antiquarian impulses led to a series of republications of medieval ballads<sup>63</sup> which was suitable for the native English literature to emerge as opposed to Classical literature.<sup>64</sup> The same notions appeared in terms of Gothic due to the aesthetical change I pointed out in the previous chapter. National identity, the idea of free trade and the growth of the middle class served the cause of political liberty which was backed by the revaluation of medieval literature. Changing the meaning implied the critique of Classicist canon. The questioning of Classical canon was a prerequisite for the advancement of Gothic.<sup>65</sup>

The reduction of Classical rules released the creative spiritual power, which was previously bound, and paved the road to the imaginative liberty which, I think, became part of the Gothic semantics until the 1760s.<sup>66</sup> It is not by chance that James Macpherson published *The Works of Ossian* in 1765 that looked back to a non-Classical time.<sup>67</sup> It was outspokenly anti-Classicist. It reached out for those regions of imagination that were untamed by reason and gained a profound form of expression in the realm of uncanny and horrid. These melancholic and dark feelings meant impetuses for the ruin reconstructions but even greater ones for the formation of the Gothic novel, the forerunners of which have been analysed before. This was the very turn to the Graveyard School that provided a precondition for the first Gothic novel, Horace Walpole’s *The Castle of Otranto* (1764).<sup>68</sup> The novel thematised Gothic buildings as tenets of horror and terror which are indeed attributable to Gothic edifices as basic properties of the sublime.<sup>69</sup>

<sup>61</sup> Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene* (1589); John Milton, *Il Penseroso* (1631); Alexander Pope, *Eloisa to Abelard* (1717); Gray made continental travels with Walpole in 1739 in search for ruins and buildings of the Gothic style. Clark, *op. cit.*, 29–34.

<sup>62</sup> Scott’s literary activity will be discussed in chapter 4. 2.

<sup>63</sup> A three-volume *Collection of Old Ballads* appeared in 1723–1725. This literary process was headed by the *Reliquies of Ancient English Poetry* in 1765, edited by Thomas Percy (1729–1811). Brooks, *op. cit.*, 108.

<sup>64</sup> Allen, *op. cit.*, 172–175.

<sup>65</sup> In *Letters on Chivalry and Romance* (1762) Richard Hurd formed a critical standpoint towards Classicism: “When an architect examines a Gothic structure by Grecian rules, he finds noting but deformity. But the Gothic architecture has its own rules, by which when it comes to be examined, it is seen to have its merit as well as the Grecian.” Brooks, *op. cit.*, 109.

<sup>66</sup> I would link naturalness to the imaginative liberty on the basis that essential creativity was born rather of Nature than culture, thus, naturalness as a Gothic feature is inserted to the context.

<sup>67</sup> Poems of Ossian impressed Goethe and Chateaubriand, too. See later. Clark, *op. cit.*, 67.

<sup>68</sup> Graveyard poetry and Gothic novels became fancied genres of literature and reverberated themes, such as haunted castles, vaults, alarming apparitions, dark nights, ivied ruins, etc. Thus, Gothic in literary terms attained a dark and melancholic feature that was only demolished by Scott as I will investigate it later in this chapter.

<sup>69</sup> See chapter 5. See also Burkey, *op. cit.*, 29–33., 53–54.

The Gothic novel also became a gendered subject as women writers started to use it as a frame for challenging their social status. 1790s proved to be the decade of the Gothic novel since three consequent works were published, Ann Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), Matthew Lewis, *The Monk* (1796) and Marquis de Sade, *One Hundred and Twenty Days of Sodom*. It has to be mentioned that the direct experience of the French Revolution (1789–1794) formed the mood and themes of these novels as well (Brooks 1999, 114–117).

By the examination of literary influences, although Gothic Revival is a uniquely British phenomenon, I still cannot dispense taking continental influences into consideration to be able to offer a larger though modest overview of this complex question. In Germany there was a similar anti-Neoclassical argumentation in the 1740s and 1750s propounded by Johann Jakob Bodmer and Johann Jakob Breitinger. They also urged individual creativity and native traditions. Bodmer edited the *Niebelunglied* in 1757 that was an epic of national mythology similar to Ossian's work (Brooks 1999, 118). More significant challenge to canons of Classicism was, however, intended by Johann Gottfried Herder who united national history with natural history, implying that cultural change was organic, that is, poetry was the expression of individual imagination and the common culture of the folk. This was the recovery of German identity that was further developed by Goethe in his work, *Von deutscher Art und Kunst* (1773). The movement of Sturm und Drang (Storm and Stress) emphasized that poets and artists should be "energetic in expression, idealizing creative spontaneity and individual genius, and vigorously nationalist in temper" (Brooks op. cit. 119). These ideas were adopted and improved by Schiller in *Die Räuber* (1781).<sup>70</sup> Goethe described Strasbourg Cathedral as natural, native and national, using the same semantic categories as Gothic Revivalists used in England. Goethe also made a conclusion that "reviving Gothic" should be enacted "as a symbolic focus of national unification" (Brooks 1999, 139). Finally, in contemporary France one could refer to François-René de Chateaubriand who formulated the same aesthetical and stylistic ideas.<sup>71</sup>

#### 4.2. The Romantic Movement

Literary influences germane to Gothic had melded with the historical and aesthetical discourse, nevertheless, they proved to be shaping forces of the Romantic Movement that constituted a whole system of meanings and ideas rival to Classicism. In the semantic texture of Gothic, Romantic Movement, relying on individual dynamic feeling and imagination, repudiated the rationality of Classicism.<sup>72</sup> It manifested itself in literature, connecting the tradition of the Graveyard poetry and Gothic novels, such as Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) and John Polidori's *The Vampire* (1818), as continuations of the former tradition.<sup>73</sup> The literary emergence of Gothic sharpened the counterposition of Classicism. Refutation of rationalism started to unfold on the basis of assumptions that it represents artificiality and lifeless knowledge. Its mechanical, academic and "general" art was unacceptable and unnatural to representations of the Romantic

<sup>70</sup> "... the gloomy forests that cloaked the dreary mountains around the ruined castle." Brooks, *op. cit.*, 120.

<sup>71</sup> René de Chateaubriand, *Génie du Christianisme* (1802), Brooks, *op. cit.*, 139.

<sup>72</sup> The appraisal of individual imagination is expressed in France in a new optical entertainment, the so-called *La Fantasmagorie*. It united special effects, involving images projected on smoke, accompanied by magic and noises, creating a series of illusions in which serene landscapes were transformed into dark graveyard haunted by ghosts and skeletons. This kind of entertainment was imported to London under the name of *Phantasmagoria* in 1801.

<sup>73</sup> The literary background is renowned. In 1816 at the Villa Diodati near Geneva, Lord Byron, Percy Bysshe Shelley, Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin and others read a collection of Gothic stories and decided to outdo them by writing their own.

Movement which idealised naturalness, imagination, living emotions, the organic, the original and the “unique” (Brooks 1999, 120–122).

These literary changes were set in a historical era when social and economic changes led to a need of a new and national identity which searches the original and finds it in Romanticism. The agricultural and the industrial revolution transformed society vertically and horizontally as well. The former created a free market in labour and property, the latter expanded society horizontally that was accentuated in the emergence and stratification of classes, especially by the working and the middle-class. Borrowing the expressions of F. Tönnies, the customary *Gemeinschaft* of the Middle Ages was replaced by a modern *Gesellschaft*, personal and customary relationships between man and man gradually became contractual, and in the wake of modernisation traditional communal values were lessening (Brooks op. cit. 123–124).

Although proper social history is beyond our limits, it is important to briefly examine this process to be able to better understand the perception and fine reception of Romanticism in England. Industrialisation and urbanisation led to the partial dissolution of traditional ties and social bounds, which with the implications of the liberal laissez-faire economics resulted in a process of alienation in large cities which necessitated the creation and emergence of a new identity.<sup>74</sup> This psychological and cultural dimension was satisfied and replenished, in my opinion, by the cult of the personal and subjective, the revolutioner, the genius, the poet, the warrior, that is, the ideal “self-made man”. The originality of Romanticism at the same time offered an excellent area for the workings of the genius

This great imaginative space supported the poets and writers of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century to turn to a subjective interpretation of reality which involved Gothic architecture as an essential part because it composed a huge material and spiritual resource. Subjective interpretations drew on expressing general aesthetical paradigms, the sublime and the picturesque that will be referred to in the next chapter. These are all the more so important since they were represented not only in poetry but in the Gothic Revival of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as well. By discussing briefly the literary process of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century from the perspective that pertains to my thesis, I have to touch upon the influence of Sir Walter Scott (1771–1832) who strongly determined the imagination of the 1810s and 1820s.<sup>75</sup> These works are indispensable for at least two reasons. On the one hand, they propagated and expanded the inherent meanings of the Gothic semantics, as it is represented by some excerpts from the works of Scott that support my argumentation. On the other hand, they counterpoised the dark Gothic novel in its thematic asset, thus, rendering Gothic a vivid, positive and imaginative subject.

### 4.3. Romanticism mobilising Gothic

Romanticism provided an impetus to the Revival in several fields of culture so that a real scholarly interest in the meanings and associations of Gothic was established which called further attention to its origins, periodization, its semantics and historiography. Now, I will briefly overview these tendencies to support my argument that Gothic semantics was continuously spread-

<sup>74</sup> This search for a new identity will be important in the Ecclesiological Movement as the revived forms of rituals and religious enthusiasm provided an alternative identity. For a detailed examination, see chapter 7.

<sup>75</sup> He was an established poet before the beginning of *The Waverley Novels* (1814–1832) that included major works, such as *The Lord of the Isles* (1815), *Ivanhoe* (1819), *The Monastery* (1820), *The Abbot* (1820), *Kenilworth* (1821), *Woodstock* (1826). All of them were praising medieval chivalry and applying Gothic architecture as a major topical ingredient. The appraisal of medieval chivalry and morals coincided with Burke's opinion on the subject. Cf. Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* (1757). Burke will be discussed in detail in the next chapter as well.

ing in all strata of culture during the Revival. As far as the origins and semantics are concerned, there was an extensive discussion in my analyses earlier, still it is worth highlighting a few more ideas that can enhance our understanding of Gothic.

The tendency of antiquarianism in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century continuously shaped the perception and reception of Gothic. James Bentham made a clear-cut differentiation between Saxon or Norman style and Gothic, thus, finally ending a dispute that had been going on for two centuries.<sup>76</sup> It was decisive because Gothic was interpreted unambiguously as a national style that went under change.<sup>77</sup> This greatly inspired the antiquarians who had at that time more than a hundred years tradition. Their leader, Richard Gough, issued a series from 1780, the *Vetusta Monumenta* which published a collection of medieval architecture that was mainly Gothic. In the 1790s a vast amount of antiquarian work was invested in series that propagated Gothic as opposed to the society of *dilettanti*, the Classicists (Appendix < 17, 18 >)<sup>78</sup>. These works enlarged and changed the perception of Gothic architecture parallel to the Romantic Movement in literature, thus, by the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Gothic acquired an ideological complexum with various meanings and associations which resisted Classicism, the challenge of Enlightenment and the French Revolution.<sup>79</sup> This implied a "resistance" to the new logic of capitalism which may be interpreted as Romantic conservatism.<sup>80</sup> Conservatism stressed the patriotic side of Gothic which was also part of the Gothic semantics.<sup>81</sup> Nevertheless, it was rephrased several times.<sup>82</sup>

This growing interest in the natural Gothic edifices resulted in a scholarly historiography of Gothic architecture. Because of the limits of this paper, only the most influential writers can be discussed here. In the *Antiquities of Winchester* (1798) John Milner established a chronological sequence of Gothic.<sup>83</sup> His Orders and relative chronology were due to an assumed moral development of Gothic. According to Milner, this corresponded to the natural process toward more elaborated, grandiose and virtuous forms. Milner's ideas were neatly nurtured by John Taylor in his *Essays on Gothic Architecture* (1800) but thoroughly reconsidered and improved by Thomas Rickman (1776–1841) in *An Attempt to Discriminate the Styles of Architecture in England, from the Conquest to the Reformation* (1817).<sup>84</sup> He gave a detailed description of the different styles of Gothic with a lot of empirical evidence, thus, further enhancing the style by a sterner authority. Rickman

<sup>76</sup> James Bentham, *History and Antiquities of the Conventual and Cathedral Church of Ely* (1771). Brooks, *op. cit.*, 129.

<sup>77</sup> "... a manifold change of mode as well in the vaulting and make of columns as the formation of the windows." Brooks, *op. cit.*, 129.

<sup>78</sup> *Specimens of the Ancient Sculpture and Painting, Now Remaining in this Kingdom* (1780–1794), *Views of Ancient Buildings in England* (1786–1793), as well as *Cathedral Series*, with John Carter as main executive, made a cumulative attempt to introduce readers to Gothic architecture and to accomplish illustrations for them about English Cathedrals. John Taylor's *Specimens of Gothic Ornaments* (1794) and Joseph Halfpenny's *Gothic Ornaments in the Cathedral Church of York* (1794) also constitute this trend.

<sup>79</sup> Burke called the French Revolution unnatural because of its abandonment of a moral regime of the Middle Ages. Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790). Brooks, *op. cit.*, 131.

<sup>80</sup> Romantic conservatism for Burke meant a conservation of values through literature, architecture and arts. Brooks *op. cit.*, 132.

<sup>81</sup> See chapter 2.

<sup>82</sup> "A knowledge of the Antiquities of England and Wales is at this Juncture particularly sought after by all ranks of People." Alexander Hogg in *Antiquities of England*. Brooks, *op. cit.*, 134.

<sup>83</sup> He differentiated between three Orders. The First Order was represented by Canterbury Cathedral. York Minster examples the Second Order, while Henry VII's Chapel the Third. John Milner, *Treatise on the Ecclesiastical Architecture of England, during the Middle Ages* (1811). Milner also suggested "Pointed Order" for Gothic. Brooks, *op. cit.*, 135.

<sup>84</sup> James Macaulay, *The Gothic Revival* (London: Blackie Academic and Professional, 1975), 237–243.

established a four part chronology that basically corresponds to the chronology which is used today: Norman style (1066–1190) as distinct from Gothic, Early English style (1190–1300), Decorated English (1300–1390), and Perpendicular English (1390–1540).<sup>85</sup> By the term 'English' Rickman and his contemporaries meant Gothic as a "national" style (Brooks 1999, 135–136). These developments are necessary for us to understand because, on the one hand, they were used as basic conceptual categories for the 19<sup>th</sup> century Gothic Revival, on the other hand, they became paraphernalia of Romantic historicism.<sup>86</sup> A cultural movement that realised itself in opposition to Classicism and revolutionary forces through an aesthetic composition attributed to Gothic<sup>87</sup> which I intend to analyse in the following chapter.

In this chapter I have examined the literary influences that attributed to the Gothic Revival in England. I have emphasized that the antiquarian movement provided a basis for reinterpretations of medieval literature. This reconsideration manifested itself in dark Gothic poetry and the Gothic novel that went with republications of medieval literature. In these literary works, there appeared a thematizing of Gothic architecture through Scott's imagination. Due to continental influences, the Romantic Movement drew on a creation of a new identity that suited the Gothic semantics propagated by these former literary productions. The imaginative space rendered individual interpretations of reality possible which required a more precise periodization, semantical overview and historiography of Gothic with regard to the Gothic Revival. Nevertheless, Romantic historicism, as opposed to Classicism, relinquished new possibilities in the realm of aesthetics which I will analyse in the next chapter.

## 5. Romantic historicism and the aesthetics of picturesque, sublime, and beauty

### 5.1. Romantic historicism

After discussing the main aesthetical and cultural trends in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, it can be assumed that Romanticism reached out for an aesthetical and moral dimension from which it was able to secure its privacy as opposed to the Classical and revolutionary discourse. This process, in my view, necessitated the exploitation of the ongoing Revival as Gothic meant a direct access to cultural and historical traditions which proved to be basic elements of the Romantic taste. To accentuate this necessity, a kind of historicism joined to the ideological framework of Romanticism and the Gothic Revival as well. The proper historical retrospection, however, relinquished such aesthetical and imaginative spaces that had been bound by the strict Classical rules for centuries. New moral and aesthetical merits and paradigms were refurbished, replenished and adapted to 19<sup>th</sup> Gothic architecture, such paradigms that were gained from medieval buildings of the very same stock. Nevertheless, these processes of rediscovery started in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, which is worth discussing here because their real pragmatial effect drew on in 19<sup>th</sup> century Gothic. In the following parts of this chapter, as I have mentioned it in the introduction, I will examine the aesthetical notions and phenomena of picturesque and sublime, at the same time providing reinterpretations of Beauty and Nature.

<sup>85</sup> Macaulay, *op. cit.*, 244–245.

<sup>86</sup> J. M. Frew, "An Aspect of the Early Gothic Revival: The Transformation of Medievalist Research 1770–1800," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 43 (1980): 174–185.

<sup>87</sup> Romantic imagination enabled man to perceive finer aesthetic qualities, such as beauty, Nature, sublime, and picturesque, as manifested in Gothic architecture and to distinguish them from Classical aesthetics. See chapter 5.

## 5.2. "The picturesque caprice"

As it has been referred to in several passages of this study, new aesthetical categories appeared in the 18<sup>th</sup> century English cultural realm which were elaborated and applied in architecture from the second half of the century. The paradigm of picturesque seems to be one of the most important as it intricately formulated the main aesthetical principles of Gothic, *asymmetry, irregularity, variation and roughness*. I will also discuss the historical precedents, the development of the idea, its association with other aesthetical categories, finally its contribution to the Gothic Revival.<sup>88</sup>

First of all, it is preeminent to examine the origin of picturesque itself for a better understanding of its unique English afterlife. The place where the notion was born is not at all surprisingly Italy. Originally, it was used in connection with painting. There are several 17<sup>th</sup> century Italian painters who apply the word *pittoreesco*. Giorgio Vasari uses the expression *alla pittoresca* in a phrase meaning "painted with a brush after the manner of painting".<sup>89</sup> The Baroque painter, Salvator Rosa (1615–1673) applies *pittoreesco* to a travel to Loreto.<sup>90</sup> Francesco Redi (1626–1698) speaks of *licenza pittoresca*, that is, picturesque license. Pablo Segneri (1623–1694) also mentions *pittoreesco*<sup>91</sup> as an extravagant painting style. The same idea recurs by Filippo Baldinucci (1624–1696). It is evident, I think, that picturesque was attributed to painting and denoted a style not conformable with Classical rules.

<sup>88</sup> It should be mentioned that the actual occurrence of picturesque with regard to Gothic buildings will be discussed in the sixth and the seventh chapters. For a most detailed and comprehensive examination of the topic, see Christopher Hussey, *The Picturesque, Studies in a Point of View* (London, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1927), especially 1–82, and 186–230; David Watkin, *op. cit.*; Paul Frankl, *op. cit.*, 428–447, and 553–563; Brooks, *op. cit.*, 140–152; Beverly Sprague Allen, *Tides in English Taste (1619–1800), a Background Study of Literature* (Cambridge, Mass, 1937).

<sup>89</sup> For the most important lexicographical sources of *pittoreesco* and *pittoreescamente* see Frankl, *op. cit.*, 428, note 1. Vasari's description in the *Lives* of the 1911 edition by Karl Frey says:

"Altri di chiaro et scuro si conducono su fogli tinti, che fanno un mezo, et la penna fa il lineamento, cio è il dintorno ò profilo, et l'inchiostro oi con un poco d'acqua, fa una tinta dolce, che lo vela et ombra; di poi con un pennello stile, intinto nella biacca, stemperata con la gomma, si lumeggia il disegno; et questo modo è molto alla pittoresca et mostra più l'ordine del colorito."

"...executed in chiaroscuro on tinted sheets that produce a medium tone, and the pen makes the lineaments, that is, the inner line or the profile, and then the ink with a little water makes a sweet color, which veils and shades it; then one heightens the lights in the drawing with a pointed brush, impregnated with gum; and this manner is very picturesque and brings out the order of the colors better." (Frankl, *op. cit.*, 428).

<sup>90</sup> Rosa's savage landscapes inspired not only picturesque but sublime as well. A part of the description of his travel follows as this: "Son stato in quindici giorni in continuo mota, et il viaggio è assai più curioso e pittoresco de cotesto di Fiorenza senza comparazione, attesechè è d'un misto così stravagante d'orrido e di domestico, di piano e di scosceso, che non si può desiderar di vantaggio per lo compiacimento dell'occhio." ["I have now been on the way for fifteen consecutive days, and the journey is incomparably stranger and more picturesque than that from Florence, because it is a mixture of such extravagancies of the fearful and the familiar, of the flat and the precipitous, so that no better feast for the eye could be desired."] (Frankl, *op. cit.*, 429).

<sup>91</sup> "I pittori per esprimere i venti più impetuosi, sogliono figurare alcune facce gonfie, che spirano con gran furia. Ma questo è un capriccio lor pittoresco fondato a la necessità che gli stringe di rappresentar quel medesimo che non può soggiare a quardi..." ["In order to represent the strongest winds, the painters' winds accustomed to depict various puffed out faces that blow furiously. But that is their picturesque caprice..."] (Frankl, *op. cit.*, 431).



After this modest Italian excursion, it is important to investigate how picturesque developed in England and how it contributed to aesthetics in general. The term was adopted in 1705 as picturesque by Richard Steele (1672–1729).<sup>92</sup> William Gilpin (1724–1804) attributed picturesque to landscape painting.<sup>93</sup> He interpreted picturesque as something different to the well-formed and symmetrical contours of Classicism. His picturesque meant variety, irregularity and roughness.<sup>94</sup> At the same time Gilpin created an alternative notion of beauty to that of Burke, for he argued that roughness is the main source of beauty.<sup>95</sup> That is one of the reasons why painters and architects of his age preferred ruins, as opposed to smooth plastic buildings.<sup>96</sup> It was a sharp change in aesthetics since picturesque's roughness enabled painters to expound their imagination on a larger scale.<sup>97</sup> Gilpin's ideas were developed by Uwedale Price (1747–1829).<sup>98</sup> For Price it meant roughness and sudden variation. He extended picturesque to all kinds of visual phenomena, including architecture. Walter Scott's edifying and illuminating description of the Rectory of Willingham offers a fine perception of this complex artistic sensation of picturesque:

It was situated about four hundred yards from the village, and on a rising ground which sloped gently upward, covered with small enclosures, or closes, *laid out irregularly*, so that the old oaks and elms, which were planted in hedge-rows, fell into perspective, and were *blended together in beautiful irregularity*. When they approached nearer to the house, a handsome gate-way admitted them into a lawn, of narrow dimensions, indeed, but which was interspersed with large sweet-chesnut trees and beeches, and kept in handsome order. *The front of the house was irregular*. Part of it seemed very old, and had, in fact, been the residence of the incumbent in Romish times. Successive occupants had made considerable additions and improvements, each in the taste of his own age, and *without much regard to symmetry*. But these incongruities of architecture were so graduated and happily mingled, that the eye, far from being displeased with the combinations of various styles, saw nothing but what was interesting in the varied and intricate pile which they exhibited. Fruit-trees displayed on the southern wall, outer staircases, various places of entrance, a combination of roofs and chimneys of different ages, *united to render the front, not indeed beautiful or grand, but intricate, perplexed, or, to use Mr. Price's appropriate phrase, picturesque*.

(Scott 1978, 337, words were italicised by me).

<sup>92</sup> French adoption happened in 1712 as *pittoresque*. The German painter, Friedrich von Hagedorn (1705–1754) uses first the word as *mahlerisch*. Alexander Pope (1688–1744) thought that picturesque was of French origin. This idea was maintained until the theory of William Gilpin. Hussey, *op. cit.*, 35–36.

<sup>93</sup> Gilpin's forerunner was Francois Hemsterhuis (1721–1790) who interpreted picturesque as an expression of action as opposed to the concise contours of Classicism.

<sup>94</sup> Also picturesque occurs in France and Germany, the very special meaning picturesque had only acquired in England. See William Gilpin, *Three Essays* (1770s).

<sup>95</sup> Burke argued that the source of beauty is nothing but the displacements of elements and smoothness. Burke, *op. cit.*, 100–107.

<sup>96</sup> Due to my topics' complexity and extension I am not examining landscape painting, only those aspects that proved to be suitable for the discussion of aesthetics and architecture.

<sup>97</sup> Templeman summarizes Gilpin's theory in three sentences: "(1) Picturesque beauty is the species of beauty which appeals to the eye of a painter as suited for presentation in a picture. (2) Picturesque beauty is distinguished by the quality of roughness. (3) Roughness is essential to picturesque beauty because when certain elements (execution, composition, variety, contrast, effect of light and shade and colouring) are properly pleasing in a picture they of necessity make us use of rough objects." Frankl, *op. cit.*, 440. See also William Gilpin, *Essay on Picturesque and Beauty* (1792): picturesque "please the eye in their natural state" that implies a contrast of light and shade as well. Monk, *op. cit.*, 157.

<sup>98</sup> Uwedale Price, *An Essay on the Picturesque as Compared with the Sublime and Beautiful* (London, 1794). Frankl, *op. cit.*, 440.

Since now all kinds of artistic production could be evaluated on the basis of the picturesque, Price unambiguously distinguished between Grecian and Gothic architecture.<sup>99</sup> His ideas were further improved by Richard Payne Knight (1750–1824)<sup>100</sup> who established picturesque's aesthetic value of variety, colourfulness, irregularity, undiluted with emotional associations, and secured a broader yet more unbound definition for beauty as an aesthetical reality independent of mental sympathies or intellectual fitness. Though not in Kantian terms, he circumscribed picturesque beauty as unrelieved on associations.<sup>101</sup> Knight made a decisive step in demolishing the traditional planned gardening and building up a "more natural" landscape similar to that of landscape painters.<sup>102</sup> Therefore, the notion of picturesque gained a foothold on the aesthetics of architecture and the Gothic Revival as well.

### 5.3. The sublime and the beautiful

The Gothic and Romanticism challenged the Neoclassical aesthetic realm since the deliberation of imagination in poetry by a chain of associations produced an alternative perception of *beauty* and *sublime*. In this part of my study, I will shed some light on these two paradigms, their connection with the picturesque and their exercise on the architectural current of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Gothic Revival.

First, it might prove to be plausible to analyse how imaginative associations can alter an existing aesthetical category, that is, *beauty*, and create a new one, the *sublime*.<sup>103</sup> I have already examined the enlargement of Gothic semantics by the joining of imagination and originality, nevertheless, it is useful to rephrase that originality, freedom, and individuality of interpretation, basic adherents to Romanticism as well, elevated Gothic to the highest rank of poetry.<sup>104</sup> This expansion of the individual imagination brought about a change in the concept of beauty, demolishing or at least altering the antecedent theory of it, that is, beauty consists in the symmetry and right allocation of proportions. Though beauty remained a largely intellectual aesthetical paradigm, in my opinion, it was bound to the power of imagination as well. Its interpretation depended solely on the poet or the artist who through his imagination exercised an irregular and subjective valorization of reality.<sup>105</sup> On the other hand, the powers of imagination had an emotional effect on the mind. As far as architecture is concerned, when there is an expansion of the mind upon observing an object, a sensation of sublime is associated with ideas of strength and durability. It is a combination of pleasurable and painful effects, and it is enacted automatic-

<sup>99</sup> For Price's comparison of Grecian and Gothic see Frankl, *op. cit.*, 440–441.

<sup>100</sup> Richard Payne Knight, *Analytical Inquiry into the Principles of Taste* (1796). Frankl, *op. cit.*, 441.

<sup>101</sup> This was criticised by Burke who argued that art can never exclusively rely on practical emotions and passions, for too much practical consideration could diminish the capacity of regarding a work of art aesthetically. Monk, *op. cit.*, 162.

<sup>102</sup> This process was already discussed in chapter 3. The landscape park and its adherent architectural movement was parodied by William Combe (1741–1823) in his satirical poem, *Dr. Syntax: "Your sport, my lord, I cannot take / For I must go and hunt a lake..."* Frankl, *op. cit.*, 442.

<sup>103</sup> For a detailed discussion of sublime and beautiful see Monk, *op. cit.*, 101–133.

<sup>104</sup> In *Conjectures on Original Composition in England and Germany*, Edward Young says: "innate genius is the heritage of artists and the sole interpreter of beauty to man." Monk, *op. cit.*, 101.

<sup>105</sup> Imagination was the source of genius as well. As Duff says: "the ability to see the world aesthetically, as opposed to the knack of writing by rules" William Duff, *An Essay on Original Genius* (1767), Monk, *op. cit.*, 130. Gothic architecture, thus, proved to be an excellent territory for the genius to apply his irregular creativity in ignorance of Neoclassical rules. In the criticism of Duff and many other contemporaries, the three main literary geniuses were Homer, Shakespeare, and Ossian.

ally. Therefore, I think, sublime can be employed as an emotional dimension of Gothic.<sup>106</sup> Sublime consists in symmetry to affect vastness, in greatness of dimension, uniformity, and awe of terror and in the feeling of infinity. A certainly most edifying and splendid description of this aesthetical category and sentiment is that part of the infernal journey of Aeneas, based on the Orphic *katabasis*, when he caught a glimpse of the entrance of the Tartaros:<sup>107</sup>

Respicit Aeneas subito et sub rupe sinistra  
 moenia lata videt triplici circumdata muro,  
 quae rapidus flammis ambit torrentibus amnis,  
 Tartareus Phlegethon, torquetque sonantia saxa.  
 Porta adversa ingens solidoque adamante columnae,  
 vis ut nulla virum, non ipsi excindere bello  
 caelicolae valeant; stat ferrea turris ad auras,  
 (Vergilius: Aeneis, VI, 548–555).

The hero, looking on the left espied,  
 A lofty tow'r and strong on ev'ry side  
 With treble walls, which Phelegethon surrounds,  
 Whose fiery blood the burning empire bounds;  
 And, press'd betwixt the rocks, the bellowing noise resounds  
 Wide is the fronting gate, and, raised on high,  
 With adamantine columns threatens the sky;  
 Vain is the force of man, and Heaven's as vain,  
 To crush the pillars which the pile sustain,  
 Sublime on these a tower of steel is rear'D  
 (John Dryden, *The Aeneid by Virgil*).

If these lines are contrasted to Scott's description of picturesque, one can argue that sublime is in some respect a counterpart of picturesque. How could they come to terms in Gothic? I think that Gothic castle architecture can encompass these paradigms in a flexible way on the basis of both being part of Nature.<sup>108</sup> As it has been examined in the previous parts of my study, picturesque is neatly connected with Nature. At the same time sublime can be extended to all phenomena that conjures up man's mind, and, I think, it is the very point where a common feature can be found. For sublime was applied to the rationalisation of the newly acquired love of awe and wildness in natural scenery.<sup>109</sup> To support this argument, I quote a further passage

<sup>106</sup> See examples in Brooks, *op. cit.*, 101–105. Also its theory by Burke, *A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* (1757).

<sup>107</sup> For a concise commentary and edition of Virgil in English, see R. D. Williams, *The Aeneid of Virgil*, 2 vols. (London, 1973). I chose Dryden's magnificent translation, see <http://classics.mit.edu/Virgil/aeneid.6.vi.html> (date: 2008.05.05)

<sup>108</sup> As it will be further discussed in chapter 7.

<sup>109</sup> "The cult of nature" is well served by Ossian whose works often involve sublime descriptions, for example: „They came over the desert like stormy clouds, when the winds roll them over the heath: their edges are tinged with lightning, and the echoing groves foresee the storm." *The War of Inis-Thona*, Monk, *op. cit.*, 125. It was Hugh Blair who first called attention to this feature of the sublime. In his work, *The Minstrel*, James Beattie, Professor of Moral Philosophy and Logic at Mareschal College, discusses sublime in poetry. According to him, poetry has five sources of sublimity: great sentiments, grand images, horror, ability to awaken good and great affections, and description of passions. Monk, *op. cit.*, 129.

from Scott's *The Heart of Mid-Lothian*, when Reuben Butler looks down at the city of Edinburgh from a hillside path:

If I were to choose a spot from which the rising or setting sun could be seen to the greatest possible advantage, it would be that wild path winding around the foot of the high belt of semi-circular rocks, called Salisbury Crags, and making the verge of the steep descent which slopes down into the glen on the south-eastern side of the city of Edinburgh. The prospect, in its general outline, commands a close-built high piled city, stretching itself out beneath in a form, which, to a romantic imagination, may be supposed to represent that of a dragon; now, a noble arm of the sea, with its rocks, isles, distant shores, and boundary of mountains; and now, a fair and fertile champaign country, varied with hill, dale, and rock, and skirted by the picturesque ridge of the Pentland mountains. But as the path gently circles around the base of the cliffs, the prospect, composed as it is of these *enchanting and sublime objects*, changes at every step, and presents them blended with, or divided from, each other, in every possible variety *which can gratify the eye and the imagination*. When a *piece of scenery so beautiful, yet so varied, – so exciting by its intricacy, and yet so sublime, –* is lighted up by the tints of morning or of evening, and displays all that variety of shadowy depth, exchanged with partial brilliancy, which gives character even to the tamest of landscapes, the effect approaches near to enchantment. This path used to be my favourite evening and morning resort, when engaged with a favourite author, or new subject of study. It is, I am informed, now become totally impassable; a circumstance which, if true, reflects little credit on the taste of the Good Town or its leaders  
(Scott 1978, 87, words were italicised by me).

Therefore, what connects these aesthetical notions and beauty is Nature and naturalness. It is only one step for us now to show that Gothic architecture, as a material manifestation of naturalness, due to the aesthetical change of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, provided adequate means for channelling and uniting these paradigms.<sup>110</sup>

Picturesque and sublime are similar and different at the same time, nevertheless, I will argue that Romantic visual arts, especially Gothic architecture was a remaking of reality in which picturesque scenery homed a sublime historical drama. In this sense sublime was an “aesthetic fulfilment through the self’s subordination to an external power that is absolute, even annihilating, while picturesque was the imagination’s internal ability to visually control and construct a world around” (Brooks 1999, 140). Thus, Gothic united external power and internal ability, sublime and picturesque became part of the Gothic semantics, the former was uniform, still belonging to the same style.<sup>111</sup> As distinct examples, Strawberry Hill stands for picturesque proper while Inverary Castle, Argyllshire (1745–1790) makes a counterpart to Strawberry with its colossal structure (Appendix < 18 >), symmetry, and with its small proportions to the greatness of granite walls. Inverary had a feature that necessitates further examination for its sense of vastness roused the feeling of infinity as well.

<sup>110</sup> This is well represented in the pattern books of the 1750s and 1760s, such as William Halfpenny’s *Rural Architecture in the Gothic Taste* (sic!) (1752), William Pain’s *The Builder’s Companion* (1758), or Paul Decker’s *Gothic Architecture Decorated* (1759). This latter is a good example, I think, for the fact that actual architectural practice was mingled with patterns laid down in books. Brooks, *op. cit.*, 98.

<sup>111</sup> This kind of creative visual adventure is symbolised in Joseph Mallord William Turner’s (1775–1851) pictures depicting medieval castles and ruins, for example, Carnarvon Castle (1799) or Norham Castle (1845). I can mention here John Constable’s (1776–1837) Dedham Vale for the same visionary landscape. As far as foreign countries are concerned, Caspar David Friedrich (1774–1840), the German landscape painter could be referred to as well as the Prussian artist, Karl Friedrich Schinkel (1781–1841) who pictured Gothic buildings for Prussia’s national pride. In France Pierre Henri Révoil (1776–1824) depicted medieval themes.

#### 5.4. The infinite

For a better understanding of the aesthetical ideas inherent to Gothic semantics I have found it necessary to discuss the concept of infinite which is neatly connected to the sublime. The first who attributed infinity to Gothic was Wilhelm Heine (1749–1803) in his work, *Ardinghella* (1787). Friedrich Schiller (1759–1805) improved Heine's ideas in saying that "a work intended for the eye can achieve perfection only in limitation; a work of imagination can attain it also in the unlimited."<sup>112</sup> However, Schiller would place Gothic as inferior to Greek or Classical in terms of aesthetics, still I think, in Gothic's art of the infinite he sees the antithesis of Greek architecture's art of limitation.<sup>113</sup> In England it was John Milner (1752–1826)<sup>114</sup> who ventured into a classification of the infinite within the boundaries of aesthetics. He attributed it explicitly to the sublime, which depends, according to Milner, on the proportions.

As we have seen, due to associations of Romantic historicism, Gothic architecture offered a suitable territory for a genius to apply his irregular creativity in picturesque, to express inward emotions and excesses through sublime and infinite powers in the ignorance of Neoclassical rules. This context also offered a fine basis for the reinterpretation of beauty by the individual imagination. Instead of the strong arbitration of Neoclassicism, Romanticism afforded hardly any limits and rules on artistic impression, therefore, imaginative perceptions of objects could find a way of expression.<sup>115</sup> This process can be observed in the Gothic Revival of the 19<sup>th</sup> century England which I will undertake in the next chapters.

### 6. Domestic Gothic (1775–1850)

In this part of my study a further interpretation of Gothic semantics will be attempted through examination of domestic buildings which has already been endeavoured in the third chapter. As I have indicated in the introduction, these buildings profoundly manifested the aesthetic values that were analysed in the previous chapter. Sublime was expressing itself in Monastic Gothic while picturesque in Castellar Gothic, nevertheless, there is no stylistic or aesthetic purity of either. Finally, I will investigate how these interchanges of style and aesthetics led to Gothic's extension to the country house and the villa, as well as other civic buildings.

#### 6.1. From restorations to majestic castles

The growing interest in aesthetics, medievalism, and architecture in the 18<sup>th</sup> century<sup>116</sup> brought about a realisation of the poor conditions of many existing Gothic buildings which after 1780 manifested itself either in restorations in case there was appropriate reach of funds, or in demoli-

<sup>112</sup> *On Native and Sentimental Poetry* (1795). Frankl, *op. cit.*, 443.

<sup>113</sup> The antithesis of antiquity and modernity was done by Petrarch as well but not in terms of the finite and the infinite.

<sup>114</sup> Milner was the bishop of Castabala. He destroyed Wren's Saracen theory of Gothic by simply pointing out the chronology, at the same time he propounds a false theory because he finds Anglo-Normans as originators of Gothic.

<sup>115</sup> Referring here to Wordsworth's inward eye, the sublimity of Inverary or the pictures of Turner might be satisfactory I think.

<sup>116</sup> In terms of contemporary publications on Gothic I have already discussed numerous examples, still I think a few more would demand attention. The series of John Britton, the *Architectural Antiquities* (1805–1814) and *Cathedral Antiquities* (1814–1835) with their excellent illustrations gave people a far truer idea about Gothic instead of the picture based on ruins. Clark, *op. cit.*, 80.; also Frew, *op. cit.*, 174–185.

tions, provided the building threatened the civil populace with collapse. The former was mainly realised by James Wyatt (1746–1813) whose outmost work of art was Fonthill Abbey<sup>117</sup> (Appendix < 10 >) that is to be discussed in the following.

The restorations from 1780 included chiefly ecclesiastical buildings and country mansions.<sup>118</sup> The first significant work of Wyatt was Lee Priory (1783). He also took part in the restoration of Sheffield Park, Sussex (from 1776). Later he turned his attention mainly to cathedrals, such as Hereford Cathedral (from 1786), Lichfield Cathedral (from 1788), and Salisbury Cathedral (from 1789) (Appendix < 16 >). These remodellings, nonetheless, meant certain architectural reformulations wherein, for better or for worse, original designs were changed. Wyatt thought that Decorated Gothic stood the nearest to his stylistic aims which were to obtain an overwhelming, striking, and strongly emotional effect via Gothic. Wyatt was employed like many of his contemporary fellow architects, however ironically, in buildings of Gothic architecture with a proper Neoclassicist training that shows, in my opinion, that Gothic at that time did not achieve a professional system of technical knowledge in terms of a profession. Of course, attention has to be paid to the fact, again, that Classicist designing and planning, mostly in urban centers retained its privacy until the 1840s and 1850s.

Repudiating the fact that Wyatt was a Classicist, he is well-remembered and celebrated for his designs of Fonthill Abbey (1796–1812) that properly constituted the desired Romantic vision and self-assertiveness which were attributed to the Gothic semantics.<sup>119</sup> The vision of Fonthill was created by the fabulously wealthy eccentric, William Beckford (1759–1844) who employed Wyatt to realise his visions. Fonthill constituted a collection of a vast repertoire of Gothic design and forms that made it a Gothic “moral fable”. For this superstructure Beckford invested a huge amount of capital to achieve a true medieval like effect. This is ironic again, I think, since Beckford enabled the medieval world to get a hold on capitalism in a Romantic vision which was at the same time a superbious self-assertive sublime *in excelsis*. The tragedy of Fonthill laid in Beckford’s impatience because he chose an inappropriate and instable base for the abbey and it collapsed in 1825.<sup>120</sup> However, this monument was important for at least two reasons. First, it elevated sublime to a level that was engaged in later mass realisations of monastic structures, secondly, it made a brilliant “advertisement” for the Gothic Revival.

## 6.2. The archetypes of 19<sup>th</sup> century Gothic, the Monastic and the Castellar

Fonthill *per se* gave life to two archetypes of Gothic in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, Monastic and Castellar, the former an exquisite sublime expression, the latter an English picturesque edifice. Nevertheless, there was no stylistic and aesthetic purity either, rather architectural tendencies of

<sup>117</sup> Wyatt implied that Gothic should have a sudden, overwhelming, emotional effect “via unimpeded vista”. Clark, *op. cit.*, 85. I think Fonthill Abbey was a real epithet of Wyatt’s visions.

<sup>118</sup> After training in Rome, Wyatt returned to London, and was commissioned to rebuild the Pantheon in Oxford Street. Wyatt made his reputation as a Neoclassicist with the Pantheon (1772), and rapidly acquired a large as well as fashionable clientele. He worked on clubs, mansions, and from 1780 mainly on abbeys. In 1796 he was appointed Surveyor-General of the Board of Works. His designs were applauded by Walpole which is not surprising, if we consider his flair visual drama of Romantic Gothic, including Fonthill. Nevertheless, his drastic remodellings earned him the nickname, “Destroyer”. Brooks, *op. cit.*, 427. For this Pugin described him as the following: “All that is vile, cunning and rascally is included in the term Wyatt.” Clark, *op. cit.*, 85–86.

<sup>119</sup> The history of the grandiose idea and its becoming real is described in the *Delineation of Fonthill and its Abbey*, by John Rutter (1823).

<sup>120</sup> Finally, Beckford sold it to John Farquhar, an eccentric, and moved to Bath to live there for the rest of his life.

application, that is, picturesque or sublime. Therefore, it is worth examining these two kinds of Gothic in their ideological and material environment that was influenced by Gothic semantics. After the discussion of Fonthill Abbey, thus, I will first look at Monastic Gothic because it well-represented sublime expressions of Gothic.

Monastic restorations that I have examined in the previous section, made the link to medieval past an outspoken reality, and with growing consciousness of stylistic properties, united it with capitalist revolution and investment that could give rise to clear Romantic visions. These edifices constituted the medieval pious aesthetics that was intended formerly by Walpole at Strawberry and by Wyatt at Fonthill.<sup>121</sup> Remodellings often legalised the parvenu as their power was institutionalised by capital proper. The medium for claiming cultural and social legality was the link to the medieval past through the most foreground and national mode of expression, that is, *Gothic architecture*. The greater stylistic accuracy appeared, the more precise Gothic designs and a growing sense of medieval precedent were present.<sup>122</sup> Main works were undertaken in the 1800s and 1810s, such as Eaton Hall, Chesire by William Porden (1755–1822), Ashridge Park, Herefordshire (1805–1820) by James Wyatt and Jeffrey Wyatt (1766–1840), and Lowther Castle, Cumbria (1806–1814)<sup>123</sup> by Robert Smirke (1780–1867), the later architect of the British Museum.<sup>124</sup> Examples from the 1820s and 1830s suggest a trend toward the picturesque design. Conished Priory, Ulverton, Lancashire (1821–1836) by Philip William Wyatt (†1835) and Toddington Manor, Gloucestershire by Charles Hanbury Tracy (1778–1858) were built on the basis of designs contained in Pugin's *Specimens*.<sup>125</sup> These picturesque designs tend to be more castellar in detail.

As it has been argued earlier, I interpret the Castellar Gothic of the 19<sup>th</sup> century<sup>126</sup> as the picturesque archetype of the Gothic style that can be proved by its asymmetrical design, visual phantasy, picturesque variation of natural setting and pictorial composition. Castles as symbols of power<sup>127</sup> became part of the Gothic semantics interwoven with a contextuality of medieval past, industrial and commercial enterprise, and the picturesque aesthetical paradigm.<sup>128</sup> The first significant exponent of this stylistic trend was Downton Castle, Herefordshire (1771–1778) by the already discussed architect, Richard Payne Knight (1750–1824). It is not surprising that a great theoretician of picturesque also employed his skills in the fields of practice. Downton's

<sup>121</sup> Wealth and reliques were embedded in the new world of commerce. The process was a characteristic English phenomenon. Brooks, *op. cit.*, 155–160.

<sup>122</sup> This process was manifested in the works of the Pugins. Augustus Charles Pugin (1769–1832), *Specimens of Gothic Architecture* (1821–1823) and *Examples of Gothic Architecture* (1828–1836). In these works, he was helped by his son, Augustus Welby Pugin (1812–1852) whom I will discuss later in detail in connection with ecclesiology. Brooks, *op. cit.*, 161.

<sup>123</sup> This latter is a fine expression of both church and castle. I found the union nicely celebrated in a sonnet of Wordsworth, Lowther (1833): "Lowther! In thy majestic Pile are seen / Cathedral pomp and grace in apt accord / With the baronial castle's sterner mien;" *The Shorter Poems of William Wordsworth* (London, J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., 1913), 514.

<sup>124</sup> For pictures and description, see Brooks, *op. cit.*, 159–160.

<sup>125</sup> Here, I emphasize again that it is A. W. Pugin's father Augustus Charles Pugin, see note 126.

<sup>126</sup> For numerous examples, see Brooks, *op. cit.*, 155–170.

<sup>127</sup> In terms of politics, Gothic buildings were intermediators of land owner's power through inherent symbolism.

<sup>128</sup> This was also a realisation of the widening consciousness of stylistic properties of Gothic that has already been discussed at monastic structures.

exterior is wholly Gothic while the interior is Neoclassical.<sup>129</sup> Nevertheless, its design is asymmetrical that makes it the first picturesque castle in the history of the Gothic Revival.<sup>130</sup> The picturesque, now as part of the Gothic semantics, was a “dressing” in terms of politics of the investment of capital because from a political point of view, these edifices were not only created as “lullied dreamings”, but as expressions of existing power relations in society. In connection with picturesque, the aesthetics of “appropriation”, that is, attributing the idea of land ownership and property to that of picturesque appears in Humphry Repton’s (1752–1818) work, the *Sketches and Hints on Landscape Gardening* (1795).<sup>131</sup> This emphasis on the social and political implication of land ownership played a great role in the expansion of Castellar Gothic in the 1790s.

Following Repton’s footsteps, it was John Nash (1752–1835) who applied the aesthetical concept of Repton, pertaining to Gothic and landscape, on a great scale. Picturesque castle, one of the Revival’s central types of architecture, appears in increasing numbers from the 1790s. Nash used picturesque in a highly inventive form at Luscombe Castle, Dawlish (1799) that provides a variety of irregularities. East Cowes House, Nash’s own country house also speaks of strong visuality, naturalness and a knack of pictorial composition. His major works involve Caerhays Castle, Cornwall (1808) and Knepp Castle, Sussex (1808) as well. East Cowes House provides a fine example for the trend of the picturesque recomposing of medieval houses. The more important and precise the architectural knowledge of Gothic became, the more historical accuracy and stylistic authenticity these Gothic remodellings were designed with as well. Before discussing this latter development I will investigate the application of sublime in castle architecture.

### 6.3. Romantic super-castles

In the previous chapters I have attempted to show that the altering social and economic background, mainly industrialisation and urbanisation, culminated in increasing social problems, such as high population density and growing class and power inequalities. Solutions could be offered by either the state or the individual. Now, I will turn to the question how certain individuals expressed their attitude towards this changing situation through the so-called Romantic super-castles.<sup>132</sup>

The denomination, super-castle evidently implied an autocratic kind of answer to the social challenge.<sup>133</sup> The Romantic super-castles with their vast complexes were erected for the cause of power in their sublime massiveness, however, retaining a pinch of picturesque multiformity

<sup>129</sup> This again refers to the formal stage of Gothic Revival. Real architectural considerations of the style, I think, were undertaken and propagated only at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century by the Pugins.

<sup>130</sup> Quoting here Brooks fits my interpretation: Downton was “the harbinger of a crenellated legion”. Brooks, *op. cit.*, 163. Gilpin, Price, and Knight, as it has been discussed in chapter 5, provided Gothic with a theoretical treatment wherein Gothic semantics expanded and elevated by the picturesque aesthetical paradigm of rugged, organic, asymmetrical visual variety in due cohesion and coexistence with untamed Nature. Thus, it is not surprising that these castles are encircled in a sylvan setting that again proves picturesque landscape as a theoretical concession.

<sup>131</sup> In terms of picturesque, Repton issued forth an aesthetic form of “propriety and convenience” rather than wild and raw nature. His *Red Book* (1791) which was a practical guidebook for landscape architecture provided numerous examples for this paradigm.

<sup>132</sup> Of course, I intend to show just one of the many provisions. The name super-castle is attributable to Brooks. Brooks, *op. cit.*, 171.

<sup>133</sup> Again, power relations drew on an aesthetical and stylistic expression, that is, sublime Gothic. As Brooks puts it quite cunningly: “Chivalry issued on the world through Gothic portals.” Brooks, *op. cit.*, 170.



for the sake of appearing visually organic in effect. Belvoir Castle (1801–1830) was built by Wyatt and John Thoroton for Elisabeth, Duchess of Rutland. Eastnor Castle, Herefordshire (1812–1820) is Robert Smirke's stylistically authentic masterwork. Goodrich Court, Herefordshire (1828–1831) also deserves attention for its architect, Edward Blore (1787–1879) who, due to his knowledge of English and Continental medieval architecture, became a leading revivalist architect. The "high peak" of this architecture, the Romantic castle of Windsor by Jeffrey Wyatt, proved to be a main institution and a cultural–architectural icon of the British monarchy.<sup>134</sup> Windsor finely united and manifested the Gothic pedigree and elements of its semantics, such as free institutions, political and religious struggle while mediating an outstanding Gothic style with extraordinary picturesque and egregious sublime.<sup>135</sup> It is part of our discussion to mention that Castellar Gothic extended to Ireland and Scotland as well with different political and cultural connotations.<sup>136</sup>

#### 6.4. Manor House Style and the Gothic villa

With some knowledge of Castellar Gothic, I can return to the examinations of remodellings of medieval houses. Undertaken mainly by Nash and John Adley Repton (1775–1860), these had been more authentic than ever before, nevertheless, authenticity met modern functional requirements and later evolved to be the so-called Manor House Style. The rebuildings necessitated a reconciliation of medieval stylistic demands and modern internal arrangement, such as more rooms in general, service rooms, technical innovations, plumbing, plate-glass windows, etc. For this reason there were suggestions about the adoption of other types of Gothic, that is, Tudor, Elizabethan and Jacobean, to replace Castellar and Monastic Gothic due to the in practicability of the last two. The impending social challenges, I have already discussed in connection with state provisions in the previous chapter, required a change in the domestic sphere as well.

These challenges culminated in the rise of a new model of Gothic in the 1820s that meant a combination of styles which was called under the collective of Manor House Style (Brooks 1999, 186–188). This change implied that Gothic was "moving down on the scales of society", gaining greater dimensions in culture and in the consciousness of the people. The name Manor, however, expressed the local political and social power of the gentry and squirearchy. Not so surprisingly it was based on chivalric morality, as the great hall embodied the symbolic act of hospitality, an expression of the hierarchical social order.<sup>137</sup> In my view, this stylistic expression was partly against social reality because the agrarian capitalists as landlords intended an impersonal capitalist relationship between labourer and tenant instead of maintaining feudal bonds.<sup>138</sup> However, certain forms of the feudal tradition persevered.

In terms of style, I distinguished two types of the Manor House Style: the Neo-Tudor dissemination and the Jacobean Revival. Neo-Tudor adaptations, which went on in the 1820s and

<sup>134</sup> Monarch is meant to be here as an embodiment of historical continuity, thus, in my opinion, the aesthetical purpose of the castle had to serve this. However, it had an unpropounded aim of eliding Gothic radicalism.

<sup>135</sup> Brooks calls Windsor "an epic theatre". Brooks, *op. cit.*, 175.

<sup>136</sup> For the castles of Ireland and Scotland, see Brooks, *op. cit.*, 177–185.

<sup>137</sup> This is well represented in Joseph Nash's *The Mansions of England in the Olden Times* (1839–1848). The book contains several lithographies depicting the traditional premodern social life and order conducted in the halls. Brooks, *op. cit.*, 192.

<sup>138</sup> To prove this, it is enough to refer to the fact that plans were made in a way that servants could and had to use other passages in the house to avoid to face their lords.

relied on Tudor<sup>139</sup> and Elizabethan<sup>140</sup> Gothic designs, tended to represent sublime symmetry in a picturesque setting.<sup>141</sup> Main architects of this style were John Adley Repton and George Stanley Repton (1786–1858). Their work, Kitley House, Brixton (1820–1825) was a fine statement of what could be called the “picturesque eye”.<sup>142</sup> This style preeminently represented itself in Scotland where it was combined with late 16<sup>th</sup> century Scottish architecture, producing a unique form of Gothic, the Scottish Baronial. It is well represented by Walter Scott’s home, Abbotsford, Roxburyshire (1816–1822) that landmarked the Gothic Revival in Scotland,<sup>143</sup> however, the limits of the paper disable us to investigate its Scottish development.

In my opinion, Jacobean Revival was a slight declination from Gothic proper because it applied non-Gothic and Classicist elements. Eshton Hall, Yorkshire (1825–1827) by George Webster of Kendall (1797–1864) and manors of Anthony Salvin (1799–1881) bear a mixture of styles that was also characteristic of Jacobean Gothic of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>144</sup> This meant a decisive move towards post-medieval, post-Gothic design, especially by applying certain Baroque and Neoclassical elements. In connection with the Jacobean Gothic, I have to emphasize that the Gothic Revival was not the only revival. There was a parallel movement of reviving the Baroque of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, evoking Italianate palazzo style by Charles Barry (1795–1860) whom I will discuss in detail with regard to the Houses of Parliament.<sup>145</sup>

A further trend of the Revival was the improvement and spreading of the Manor House Style. In the 1830s it was extended beyond the country house itself. Gothic successfully disembarked on lodges, farms, libraries, schools, railway stations, and villas (Appendix < 14 >) (Clark 1962, 112–114), in connection with the strengthening of the civic society and state administration, as well as the more significant role of the middle class from the 1830s.

From the 1840s Gothic was adopted to typical middle-class houses, particularly villas that rehearsed the Burkeian ideal of remoteness, and the social and functional meaning of Gothic. Villas were usually built in the edge of a town or a city, so they represented a suburban way of bourgeois life of the middle class. This is important for two reasons. On the one hand, their “remoteness” provided connotations of a Romantic and chivalric place, on the other hand, the

<sup>139</sup> Tudor Gothic is best represented by Cardinal Wolsey’s Hampton Court Palace (1514–1529) which unites Gothic and Renaissance features in windows, statues, frescoes, gardens, etc. Tudor Gothic is peculiar due to the fact that it is usually built from red brick. It has flattened arches, high gables, square mullioned windows, ornate chimneys etc. This will be reflected in many Manor House Style edifices.

<sup>140</sup> Elizabethan Gothic is similar to Tudor Gothic. It also borrowed Renaissance features, Flemish strapwork, that is, a kind of ornamentation derived from Classical origins, and overdecorations provide a medieval effect. Its theory was laid down by John Shute’s *First and Chief Grounds of Architecture* (1563). The buildings were usually symmetrical and extrovert, sometimes combining a French Chateaux style and the Flemish ornaments. They represent rich internal decorations, such as woodwork, furniture, tapestries and paintings. A good example is Hardwick Hall, Derbyshire (1591–97) by Robert Smythson.

<sup>141</sup> The builders of this style were famous for their “picturesque eye”. Brooks, *op. cit.*, 189.

<sup>142</sup> I think that Tudor style was apt to express historical associations of paternalism and social control in the “appropriation” sense of their father, Humphrey Repton.

<sup>143</sup> For the Irish and Scottish Tudor Revival, see Brooks, *op. cit.*, 189–190.

<sup>144</sup> Jacobean Gothic is almost identical with the name of Inigo Jones. He was a Renaissance man: author, antiquarian, and painter. He designed palaces, interiors, and gardens. His “Jacobean Gothic” was an expression of Manneristic eclecticism that united Baroque and Renaissance elements. For example, Hatfield House (1612). His designs were near to those of Palladianism.

<sup>145</sup> See chapter 8.

young bourgeois values influenced Gothic semantics' complexity with its adherent meanings.<sup>146</sup> Villas united different stylistic elements of Castellar and Monastic Gothic, as well as Elizabethan details, vernacular timber-framing, fancy cottage features, and picturesque setting (Appendix < 14 >). Nevertheless, it is not within the limits of my paper to investigate the process of altering morality from chivalric to bourgeois and democratic (Brooks 1999, 196).

In sum, I will offer a brief outcome of my reflection regarding Gothic semantics of this period. As we have seen, the aesthetical paradigms of sublime and picturesque found their eminent representation in Monastic and Castellar Gothic which were also expressions of power relations. The social changes, on the one hand, and the interchange of aesthetic values, on the other hand, necessitated a revival of other Gothic styles, the Tudor, the Elizabethan, and the Jacobean just to be employed in the expanding working field of the Gothic semantics, that is, the country house and the villa. An analysis of Gothic secular buildings, however, by itself made a demand for the examination of ecclesiastical edifices that I will undertake in the next chapter.

## 7. Ecclesiastical Gothic (1810–1850) and the *Ars Poetica* of the Revival: Pugin

### 7.1. Gothic churches before 1810

One aspect of my analysis here will be the examination of churches in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as I have mentioned in the introduction, as major exponents of religious aspects of Gothic semantics and means for the rediscovery of architectural theory of Gothic in the works of Pugin. As far as the 18<sup>th</sup> century church architecture is concerned, a continuity of Gothic is prevalent as opposed to the Classicist dominance in design,<sup>147</sup> due to the fact that Gothic represented a style typical of English medieval churches. In spite of the rebuilding process a scarcity of church building appeared between 1760 and 1810. This had basically two major reasons. On the one hand, since the main demographical “boom” had already ensued in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and the demographical increase of the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century was not so extensive even as compared to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, so the number and density of the population did not necessitate new church building schemes (Clark 1962, 94). On the other hand, it was a period diluted by wars which had such measures that exhausted Britain's financial sources.<sup>148</sup> It was only the 1810s which initiated a new phase of buildings.

### 7.2. The enthusiasm of Ecclesiology

In the course of this forty year, a new meaning of the Revival was brought about in the symbolic unity of architecture and religion, thus, in the Church of England style and morals pro-

<sup>146</sup> In *Encyclopaedia of Cottage, Farm and Villa Architecture and Furniture* (1833) John Claudius London (1783–1843) emphasized the buildings' social role through its application of a historical style that its social meaning was integral to its functional design. Brooks, *op. cit.*, 197.

<sup>147</sup> Hartwell Church, Buckinghamshire (1753–1755) was one of the first. Tetbury Church, Gloucestershire was built in 1777 by Francis Hiorne. East Grinstead parish church was erected by James Wyatt who attached a Gothic tower in 1789 as well. For a detailed description of these churches, see Eastlake, *op. cit.*, 34, 56. Here, I do not mention the cathedral restorations of Wyatt since I have already discussed them in the previous chapter. I only wish to emphasize again that Wyatt's method was revolutionary in his sensational perspectives.

<sup>148</sup> England took part in the anti-Napoleonic coalition (1798–1814) that vested immeasurable weight on the state's military expenses. Brooks, *op. cit.*, 124.

duced exalted forms of enthusiasm, nevertheless, a dimension for religious and social dissent in Ecclesiology. As I have alluded to it in the introduction, more and more people were influenced by the Gothic semantics that had a Christian aspect as well. In addition, after the Napoleonic wars the Anglican Church and the state could pay considerable attention to a new social phenomenon, the emergence of the working class, more precisely the concentration of population in cities, which they interpreted as a major threat. To ensure their influence and political power, especially the Church, issued buildings of Gothic churches in urban centers which were meant to be modes of handling possible social unrest, and at the same time providing traditional models of family, morals, and life.

Therefore, I will look at the process of the expansion of Gothic churches and its ecclesiastical connotations that finally led to a religious dissent. It was in 1818 that the Church Building Society and Commission were founded to organise the ongoing and future constructions. Soon after, a Church Building Act was passed which ensured a stern financial basis for future building schemes.<sup>149</sup> As it has been referred to previously, these measures were intended to satisfy and shape the middle-class and working class needs, so this movement mainly concentrated on urban centers.<sup>150</sup> Thus, the very fact of the huge scale of churches can be interpreted as a vindication in the Anglican Establishment against the "revolutionary threat" as well.

The scheme included antiquarian restorations that, due to historicism, tended toward a more elaborate and total restoration in its original shape.<sup>151</sup> Winchester Cathedral (1812–1828) was restored by William Garbett (1770–1834), Rochester Cathedral (1825–1826) by Lewis Nockalls Cottingham (1787–1847). These restorations involved Henry VII's Chapel (1822–1828) as well. At the same time further sums were spent on new edifices. Thomas Rickman conducted St. George's Church, Everton (1813–1814) and St. Michael's, Toxteth (1814–1815). These buildings are all the more so important since iron elements were used for windows, plinths, traceries and arcades with a Perpendicular style that quite interestingly signalled a symbolic merging of the medieval and the modern. Improvements were also issued by Thomas Taylor (1778–1826) at Christ Church, Liversedge (1812–1816) and William Brooks (1786–1867) at St. Thomas' Church, Dudley (1815–1818) and at St. George's Church, Birmingham (1818–1822).

A unification of aesthetics and the logic of construction appeared by John Savage (1779–1852) civic engineer and bridge designer. Savage's edifice, St. Luke's Church, Chelsea (1819–1824)<sup>152</sup> holds a major turn in the Revival because architectural parts acquired structural importance, that is, function to design. This practice was also exercised by Henry Edward Kendall (1776–1875) at St. George's Church, Ramsgate (1824–1827).

This process of expansion took place mostly in rural towns and districts because Neoclassicism retained its positions in London. Consequently, the following church buildings found their

<sup>149</sup> The setting up involved a foundation of £1,000,000 which was increased with a further £500,000 in 1824. Brooks, *op. cit.*, 225. In the following years the sum of support was enlarged, between 1818 and 1833 at least six million pounds were spent on church building.

<sup>150</sup> The Commission chose Gothic because it was cheaper in case of churches than Neoclassical, and had a fine constitution of ideas of Gothic semantics that fitted with the Church's aims of conversion. Therefore, in the period from 1810 to 1850, out of 214 churches 170 churches were built in Gothic and only 44 in Neoclassical. Brooks, *op. cit.*, 225–226.

<sup>151</sup> In terms of elaboration, technique, and originality, I will discuss the reconsiderations and reapplication of technical knowledge by Pugin in the following sections.

<sup>152</sup> Built in Perpendicular Gothic, this church was very tall with stone groined roof and slender flying buttresses. It had a kind of "card board" look. In 1874 chancel decorations were added by G. Goldie and Childe. St. Luke's was the earliest groined church of the modern Revival. Clark, *op. cit.*, 97., and Eastlake, *op. cit.*, 141.

way outside the capital as well. Hampton Lucy, Warwickshire (1822–1826) by Rickman bears a Tudor influence for its special stylistic element, the brick vaulting. John Bladys issued Oulton, Warwickshire (1827–1829). Early English Style is adapted by Edward William Garbett at Theale Church (1820–1832) while D. Barton built St. Peter's Church, Kent (1830) in Perpendicular.<sup>153</sup> This style was also applied by G. P. Manners at St. Michael's, Bath (1835). Sir Charles Barry also built four Gothic churches between 1826–1830, for example, St. Peter's Church, Brighton, Sussex (1824–1828). Stylistic variations in Gothic shows that local architects worked with the repertoire they had in their rural environment, thus, there did not exist a stylistic conformity or unity of Gothic in terms of church architecture. This is partly due to the lack of theoretical knowledge of this period. So far, we have seen that Gothic styles were widely applied in ecclesiastical buildings.

The massive revival of old forms of architecture carried on a revival of old forms of worship and spirituality, especially enthusiasm that led to the universal dogmatic movement of Ecclesiology which melded ethics and aesthetics, finally canonising architectural proprietorship of Gothic. So, within the realm of the Revival and the changing of Gothic semantics, I will examine how the Ecclesiastical Movement built meaning into Gothic which was later dissolved and changed by Pugin.

The strengthening medieval tradition brought by architectural revival mediated its religious connotations that were mirrored in the views of Tractarians, a group of ecclesiastics who thought that Decorated Gothic satisfied most the imagination which was signalled by a heightened religious enthusiasm. Tractarians thought that Gothic stood nearest to old Christianity. They argued that imagination should be moved through symbols. The best tool for this purpose was the old forms of worship and Decorated Gothic with its sculpture and rich sybolical devices. In their system Gothic became a religion in the sense of a system of views. This religious thinking drew on a different evaluation of church architecture, saying that spirituality is constituted in the Decorated, thus, it has to be propagated, built, and remodelled even at the expense of demolishing other styles.

This religious tendency was later known as Ecclesiology as it realised itself, on the one hand, as a discourse of style in terms of religious enthusiasm, ethics, and spirituality, on the other hand, as a religious symbolism that satisfied Romanticism's inherent need for a new identity.<sup>154</sup> It was criticised from the beginning by theology on the basis of architecture's equalisation with spirituality and by architects vice versa. Nevertheless, the movement was institutionalised in 1839 as the Cambridge Camden Society by former students of Trinity College, John Mason Neale (1818–1866) and Benjamin Webb (1819–1855).<sup>155</sup>

The Society adopted Tractarian dogmatic theology and developed it into a universal ecclesiological movement, the views of which they published in their periodical, the *Ecclesiologist*. They studied and improved medieval symbolism due to the revival of the system of rituals, creating a profound coextension of sign and substance.<sup>156</sup> Thus, ecclesiastical correctness in symbols, rituals, and theology became a *sine qua non* in their system of architecture which led to a change in the perception of Gothic so that "between 1840 and 1850 canons of criticism originally ecclesiastical began to be accepted as architectural."<sup>157</sup> To the misfortune of posteriority, the power

<sup>153</sup> St. Peter's was upgraded in 1833 with a steeple by E. Christian. See, Eastlake, Appendix 65.

<sup>154</sup> For the history of the movement, see Brook, *op. cit.*, 246–256.

<sup>155</sup> The society acquired its name in honour of William Camden (1551–1623), the famous English historian.

<sup>156</sup> In 1843 Neale and Webb published a translation of *Rationale Divinorum Officiorum* of Durandus, the main explanator of medieval symbolism.

<sup>157</sup> Architects working on the grounds of Classical principles were ignored. Clark, *op. cit.*, 164.

of this movement was partly released in demolitions of “non-correct” Gothic churches during the 1840s. Mainly Perpendicular churches were demolished or remodelled in Decorated.

Their advancement, however, involved the possibilities of downfall that happened in 1844 due to a long opposition of English protestants, mainly non-Tractarians. The religious implications of Gothic increased the dissatisfaction with the supposed Catholicism of the Society. Their idealism that implied a supposed Catholicism led to a strong denial from the Anglican Church in November, 1844.<sup>158</sup> Fearful of repercussions, the majority of the supporters of the movement abandoned the Society. Nonetheless, the remaining supporters re-established it under the name of Ecclesiological Society in 1846, so it could continue its working. I think that in this phase of the Revival the soothing of Gothic radicalism was essential in the sense that High Victorian Gothic could extend itself on further grounds.

Apart from religious intricacies, the trend of the expanding church building was going on. Neale, just like Carlyle and Pugin, differentiated between pre-modern and modern capitalist societies, finding his ideal in medieval rural parish church. In the 1840s an increasing number of parish churches were built in Decorated Gothic. This expansion was very similar to that of the manor house, so the real significance of the ecclesiastical movement, in my view, did not lay in its spirituality or enthusiasm but in the advocacy of Gothic rural parish churches. Therefore, I think that the parish church and the manor house, like pendants, are further representatives of the Gothic Revival and the Gothic semantics of the 1840s. However, these changes were consequences of the widening knowledge of technique and scholarly prowess in Gothic as well. During this process and in the opposing of the radicalism of the Camdenians A. W. Pugin played a major role whose theoretical works and designs I will look at in the following.

### 7.3. Pugin and the principles of Gothic

One of the most influential figure of the Gothic Revival, Augustus Welby Pugin (1812–1852)<sup>159</sup> produced those theoretical works and designs that enriched Gothic with a fine establishment which rendered the style not only formally, but in its theoretical and architectural knowledge equal to Neoclassicism. The importance of Pugin is considered by Kenneth Clark who divided

<sup>158</sup> Dr. Close’s sermon on the 5<sup>th</sup> of November, 1844: “It is whether Romanism or Protestantism shall prevail.” Clark, *op. cit.*, 167.

<sup>159</sup> Augustus Welby Pugin (1 March 1812–14 September 1852): English architect. His father, Auguste Charles, Comte de Pugin (from a Freiburg family) emigrated to England during the Revolution and was accepted in John Nash’s (1752–1835) office. Pugin was a passionate medievalist from his youth, prodigious in his draughtsmanship, knowledge of Gothic and inventiveness as a designer. At the beginning he designed furniture for Windsor Castle. For two years Pugin had been working at Covent Garden under George Dayes (1809–?). In 1831 his scenery contributed to the success of the opera Kenilworth. After this job he worked as a sailor at the sea. He shipwrecked near Leith and consequently was applied by an Edinburgh architect, Gillespie Graham (1776–1855), so he returned to architecture. He set up a business in Gothic carving but failed and found himself sitting in jail for being in debt. His aunt saved him and he got married but to his bad fortune his wife died and he was broken-hearted. A year later Pugin remarried. In 1834 he converted to the Roman Catholic Church and in the next year he published a stream of books of designs which gained him more reputation. In 1836 he began co-working with Charles Barry (1795–1860) on the New Houses of Parliament. Pugin produced much of the Parliament’s lavish interior decoration. In 1837 he became appointed Professor of Architecture and Ecclesiastical Antiquities at Oscott College. His most important domestic work was Scarisbrick Hall, Lancashire (1837–1845). In *Contrasts* (1836) he electrified the Revival by its polemic against modern architecture and society, and in the *True Principles of Christian Architecture* (1841) Pugin stood out for a Gothic that was historically accurate, functionally based and symbolically eloquent. Brooks, *op. cit.*, 425.

the history of the Revival into two periods: the “Picturesque” and the “Ethical” (Clark 1962, 150). According to Clark, the latter starts with Pugin. Paul Frankl argued for a less clear-cut periodization. He classified the “Ethical period” according to the workings of “British moralists”, A. W. Pugin, the Camden Society, John Ruskin (1819–1900), Walter Scott (1771–1832), and William Morris (1834–1896) (Frankl 1960, 553–554). Though I will not venture into an interpretation of High Victorian Gothic Revival, I think that Clark does not really explain why he chose Pugin as the sole person who emblematised this later phase of the Revival. Nevertheless, as has been indicated in the introduction, I will make an attempt to interpret the Puginian system in the context of the Gothic semantics.

Pugin’s concept of Gothic, just like that of his contemporaries, was based on its associations with medievalism. The difference, however, was how he applied and improved medieval reliquies, and developed them into a theoretical system of architecture with connotations of ethics, morality, sublimity, harmony, and universal thought. In the following paragraphs, I will endeavour to discuss and reflect on the Puginian system in connection with the purposes of this study.

The first important step toward an individual and whole system of Gothic was Pugin’s “rationalization” of Gothic. The term might seem odd since it is mostly attributed to Classicism. Frankl interprets Pugin’s system as problematic since Gothic, according to contemporaries, was considered to represent irrationality (Frankl 1960, 553–563). I think that in terms of rationality Pugin interpreted Vitruvius and he considered Gothic the manifestation of true principles of architecture. Thus, there is no sense in saying that Pugin contradicted his own system and the stylistic principles of Gothic, since it was he who first gave real principles to Gothic in the Revival.

The origins of a “rational” style go back to Vitruvius, who distinguished the notions of *commoditas*, *dispositio*, and *decor* (commodity, disposition, and beauty) as prerequisites for an ideal style. In my opinion, Pugin interpreted this so that picturesque meant an expression of the Vitruvian stylistic order for beauty consisting in the disposition of proportions that form harmony and are in commodity with their environment. This does not necessarily violate the asymmetrical and variational definition of picturesque by Gilpin and Price because it mainly expresses a Burkeian point of view, concentrating on the overall effect of a building that depends on the elaboration and allocation of design (*dispositio proportionum*) and their exercise of picturesque that also involves buildings and their environment (*commoditas*). Thus, Gothic appeared as a rational style, whose principles were borrowed from Pugin. It also meant a direct and further confiscation of a part of the Classicist aesthetic realm.<sup>160</sup>

The values Pugin attributed to Gothic included those aesthetical parts of the Gothic semantics that I have already discussed,<sup>161</sup> and were extended by rationality, social function, purpose, fine craftsmanship, theoretical knowledge, morals and expressiveness. For the purpose of my study, therefore, it is worth investigating how Gothic semantics is expanding through Pugin’s ideas and system.

As a son of a designer, Pugin developed an exquisite skill as a drawer and craftsman, the latter providing a significant practical consideration to the Revival. His drawings and designs were made with such phantasy and glaring enthusiasm as well as professionalism that it considerably influenced contemporary craftsmen and led to the revival of craftsmanship, which lost the appreciation it acquired in the Middle Ages. Pugin, however, enabled revivalists to rediscover the merits and responsibility of a craftsman. Though Revival had already produced carvers who were as trained as any of the thirteenth century ones, but their details remained wild, sometimes

<sup>160</sup> Pugin’s ideas are expounded in the *True Principles of Pointed or Christian Architecture* (1841).

<sup>161</sup> Just to rephrase them once again: medievalism, political liberties and theory, constitutionalism, naturalness and Nature, nationality, landed power and power relations, harmony, sublimity, infinity, spirituality, picturesque, beauty, and symbolism.

inharmonious, and there was a lack of consciousness as well. In the revivalist system the sentiments of true Gothic necessitated a society without corruption, that is why Pugin, Ruskin, and Morris realised that the main concern should be the reform of society rather than the reform of art (Clark 1962, 217–218). As a craftsman Pugin himself designed fittings, furniture, vestments, plates, tiles, stained glass, (Appendix < 12–13 >), etc. The revived crafts method was further enhanced by the Great Exhibition of 1851 where the whole paraphernalia of medieval life were exhibited (Brooks 1999, 244). It is all the more so important since practical architectural knowledge played a determinative factor in his theoretical concerns.

In connection with the function of a building, Pugin asserted a social purpose. According to him, Gothic, as a Christian architecture as opposed to Neoclassicism, should embody the beliefs of the society that produced it. In this sense, therefore, a work of art is in very close connection with society. With a reversed logic, Pugin thought possible to solve the contemporary social problems through an adoption of the Middle Ages as an ideal model for society.<sup>162</sup> However, his universal thinking did not take social discrepancies and complexity into consideration. He intended to change the expansion of the urban city that replaced Christian Gothic town and architecture. In this idea Gothic and past were used as tools to criticise the modern. It was a reaction against the ascendancy of industrial capitalism.<sup>163</sup> This search for ideals and verity leads us to Pugin's theoretical concerns of architecture proper.

The expanding industrialization weakened the economic and social positions of the agrarian landed power, thus, the "basement" of Gothic was shortened which of necessity required a re-discovery of its absolute merits which manifested, in Pugin's *True Principles* that provided a new synthesis of architectural meaning and Gothic semantics.<sup>164</sup> As it has already been discussed, the political and economic background of the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was characteristic of increasing urbanisation, commerce and industrialization. This tended to force landed power in parliament as well as agriculture in economy into a secondary position. The abolition of the Corn Law in 1846, which formerly served the interest of the agrarian lobby, represented the new political trend. The very financial basis of the Revival was threatened which led to the need of rediscovering of its absolute verities to open up new dimensions for its potential future expansion.

Pugin's main contribution to the Revival was his architectural theory (Clark 1962, 136). His *ars poetica* showed a strong theoretical concern: "Architectural skill consists in embodying and expressing the structure required, and not in disguising it by borrowed features." I have already analysed the social function he attributed to an ideal building. In terms of function, the moral worth of a building was of a similar importance for him. Pugin vested Gothic with a moral value that depended on the builders' ethics, not on its aesthetical value. As it is implied, this thought can be well inserted into the idea of the adoption of a medieval social order wherein buildings carry on the beliefs of a society. He expounded that the features of a building are for the sake of necessity, convenience and propriety. Ornamentation should not spoil the harmonious order of the essential construction of the buildings, they have rather symbolic functions. For example, a pinnacle is an emblem of the Resurrection, while in functionally strict terms it is an upper weathering. The structure and the decorations are reciprocal in the sense that there has to be a function in every ornament to become a harmonious part in the whole, while both of them have to express purpose. Like in the eucharist, Pugin rendered an indivisible fusion of meanings in Gothic.

<sup>162</sup> This is represented in his *Contrasts: or, a Parallel between the Noble Edifices of the Middle Ages and the corresponding Buildings of the Present Day; showing the Present Day of Taste* (1836). Clark, *op. cit.*, 145.

<sup>163</sup> The same idea is expressed by Thomas Carlyle in his work, *Past and Present* (1843).

<sup>164</sup> For Pugin and his principles, see Brooks *op. cit.*, 232–241.



As a matter of fact, Pugin provided a new synthesis for Gothic semantics in terms of structure, function and materials. Historical authenticity, structural and material expressivity, the implicit moral and social values as well as the harmonious effect are all parts of his theoretical system which he applied by the churches he built. St. Mary's Church, Warwick Bridge (1840–1841) speaks of a consistency of purpose and intensity. At St. Giles's Church, Cheadle, Staffordshire (1841–1846) the cumulative effect of colour and patterning is as strong as that of the Palace of Westminster. Pugin built a series of Decorated Gothic buildings as well, including his own house, The Grange.<sup>165</sup> This new synthesis implied not only an own theory of Gothic but a scholarly reflection on other styles and theories as well. For this reason, it may be plausible to argue that Gothic Revival entered into its "Ethical period."

In this chapter I have made an attempt to analyse the changing process of Gothic Revival and Gothic semantics in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century with respect to church restorations and buildings, Ecclesiology and the theoretical system of Pugin. After a period of scarcity of funds, church restorations and buildings were engaged in a large scheme of the Commission. It was significant to my thinking process to examine the growing medieval forms of worship, culminating in the enthusiastic, universal, and limited movement of the Camdenians that exercised a sole design of Decorated Gothic and implied demolition schemes as well. Old forms of rituals, though they provided ecclesiastically correct form of identity to the society, opened up a space for eager Protestants to criticise and attack the supposed Catholicism of the Camdenians, who were finally dissolved. Ecclesiology, however, drew on a finer theoretical inquiry of Gothic.

This process of getting a finer theory of stylistic foundation was manifested by the par excellence craftsman and designer, A. W. Pugin. He enlarged the scope of Gothic semantics with an own aesthetic interpretation and revived craftsmanship. He also discovered social function and purpose in buildings and a functional reciprocity of design and structure which, according to him, underlay the harmony and expressiveness of the structure. He traced back his theory to Vitruvian origin of *commoditas*, *dispositio* and *decor*. Finally, attributing a moral value to buildings on the basis of the creators' ethics, he significantly reinterpreted Gothic semantics and with other artists introduced Revival to its "Ethical period".

## 8. A Gothic Proper, The Houses of Parliament

Though discussing major trends in Gothic architectural revival in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, one cannot dispense with the examination of the most significant examples. Due to secular and ecclesiastical revival, the mental and material appreciation of Gothic exceeded to a level that enabled it to overcome Neoclassical aesthetic priorities which was symbolised in the fact that all the aesthetic, social, and cultural phenomena discussed so far realised themselves in the Houses of Parliament.<sup>166</sup> In this chapter I will make an attempt to analyse how these paradigms were built into the Houses of Parliament. However, as the greatest national investment, it invoked strong utilitarian concerns which were set against the Gothic agenda. Therefore, I have to shortly recourse to the theme of the questioning of the style itself.

<sup>165</sup> For further examples, see Brooks, *op. cit.*, 244. Brooks describes his Decorated style as the following: "Decorated combined structural expressiveness, strong architectural forms and a bold handling of space with ornamental elaboration, naturalistic carving, rich mouldings, inventive tracery design, gorgeously patterned textures." Brooks, *op. cit.*, 241.

<sup>166</sup> For a short discussion of the topic, see Brooks, *op. cit.*, 206–210.

The elevated status of Gothic was challenged by Utilitarianism, still it prevailed in various fields of architecture, including schools, libraries, judicial and penal institutions.<sup>167</sup> Benthamism<sup>168</sup> provided a teleological utilitarianist system that propagated a style with rational costs. Thus, on the basis of these practical considerations, they preferred Neoclassicism to Gothic. The challenge was reduced by the Christian ethics adherent to Gothic in a way that revivalists laid a more significant emphasis on the style as an institution of English Christian architecture, strengthening its moral roles and the meanings it transferred. The debate between profit and “national artistic” interest was this time averted by a stable financial and governmental support, so the anti-utilitarian concerns resulted in an expansion of Gothic in the case of libraries and schools. Charles Barry conducted a Perpendicular exercise, Edward VI’s Grammar School, Birmingham (1833–1837). In Carlisle, Rickman and Henry Hutchinson (1800–1831) designed the public Newsroom and Library (1830–1831) in Gothic. Edward Blore’s (1787–1879) Tudor edifice, the Greenock Library (1835–1837) in Scotland cannot be omitted here. At the same time Gothic found expressions in judicial and penal architecture as well. Robert Smirke’s castle like effect in Carlisle Assize Court (1810–1812) and Dobson’s Country Gaol and Sessions House, Morpeth, Northumberland (1822–1828) are good examples for what new power relations meant. There were also almshouses in Tudor Gothic style as expressions of charity and a paternalistic approach. In my view, this latter process represents a turn in the stylistic conception and intent of the taste, since Gothic was used as a mediator of power, charity, high culture, and paternalism.

A throughout trajectory of Gothic proved to be indispensable to compete for the rebuilding of such a morally, ethically and nationally central building as the Parliament. What were the reasons that led to its Gothic Revival?<sup>169</sup> On the 16<sup>th</sup> of October 1834, the Old Palace of Westminster burnt to ashes. A parliamentary committee was appointed to consider the question of stylistic adaptation which led to a serious debate between two parties, the supporters of Neoclassicism and the advocates of Gothic. This controversy became known as “The Battle of the Styles”. The Classicist architect, Francis Goodwin (1784–1835) argued for an adoption of Greek, Roman or Italian style while Charles Barry for a synthesis of Perpendicular and Tudor Gothic. Finally, Barry’s plans were accepted by the committee on the 29<sup>th</sup> of February 1836. The main reasons for having chosen Gothic included the political, legal and social connotations of the Gothic semantics, and its elevated status as an academic style. The fact that the site had medieval connotations and the remaining fragments, Westminster Hall and St. Stephen’s Chapel, were Gothic suggested that they could be well supplemented with a neo-Gothic edifice.<sup>170</sup>

The reconstruction and remodelling are emblematised by Barry for the plans, structure and composition, but especially by Pugin for his glaring designs and engravings (Appendix < 12–13 >). On the 5<sup>th</sup> of March 1839, a commission was elected to supervise the work which was

<sup>167</sup> As I have shown in the previous chapters, Gothic semantics expanded on even larger scales in terms of architectural subjects and society. This process was going on in the case of buildings of justice, social welfare and administration. Though this study finishes its investigations with the 1840s, “administrative Gothic” still expanded in the 1850s.

<sup>168</sup> By Benthamism I mean the utilitarianism propounded by Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832) in his writings, *A Fragment on Government* (1776) and *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (1789). According to him, laws must not simply secure the status quo but yield a profit to the society because every action is right if and only if it serves “the happiness of the majority”. Utilitarianism prefers actions by which a maximum of profit can be achieved.

<sup>169</sup> For a detailed analysis of the Gothic reconstruction, see Brooks, *op. cit.*, 206–220; also Clark, *op. cit.*, 108–114.

<sup>170</sup> National pride was a dominant matter since it was the era when nation states were born. “And how could a few pedants, who insisted that Gothic originated in France, stand against the flood of romantic nationalism? Gothic must be used because it was the national style” argued Kenneth Clark flamboyantly. Clark, *op. cit.*, 114.

headed by Barry who enlisted Pugin for the designs and decorative schemes. Barry's plans (Appendix < 8 >) represented a doctrine of theatre since they constituted a hierarchical and processional structure, that is, the House of Lords and the House of Commons are united and crossed by the Central Lobby which is in direct connection with Westminster Hall. I think Barry executed the architectural par excellence of constitutional monarchy which is further implied by the Gothic style as a whole.<sup>171</sup> Thus, a complex ideology of feudal authority and Gothic liberty is merged in the Parliament that made Gothic Revival a unique English phenomenon once again. The well-organised planning and structure are marvellously decorated by Pugin's painstaking close-work and designs (Appendix < 13 >).<sup>172</sup> Encaustic tiles, stained glass, painted woodwork of the ceilings with delicate Gothic patterns, overarched canopies with intricate fretting and traceries are perhaps involved in the most imaginative architectural expressions of the Revival (Appendix < 9 >). The Arthurian frescos of William Dice (1806–1864) thematise Gothic's monarchical aspect. Besides there are themes issuing from the period of Civil Wars or Religious conflicts as well.

In my view, it was a turning point in the history of the Revival because Gothic acquired a profound national manifestation that was characterised by gaining a priority over Neoclassical aesthetical rule which can be interpreted as a further argument to make a plausible division between the "Picturesque" and "Ethical" period. In my interpretation, the "Picturesque period" is a cultural process when Gothic semantics is gradually enlarged by certain values, associations, and meanings that led to an overall mental and cultural appreciation of the style. At the beginning of its "Ethical" phase, it acquired a body of technical and architectural knowledge by Pugin and other revivalists, such as Ruskin, Barry, or later Morris that implied a reflection, evaluation and arbitration of other styles. Consequently, I think that the Houses of Parliament can be interpreted as one of the landmarks. Windsor appeared as a national icon of monarchy whereas the Houses of Parliament, as I have mentioned in the introduction, became an architectural icon of the British in the contemporary stylistic language. It represents Britain's ideological and political constitution, the parallelism of progressive modernism and traditional medievalism in an organic way during the course of becoming a nation state.

In the last chapter of my study, I was dealing with the Utilitarian challenge to the Gothic Revival and the following expansion of Gothic in the fields of education, justice, social welfare and administration. Finally, I examined the Houses of Parliament as the manifestation of the development of Gothic semantics. The reconstruction of the Parliament meant a shift in aesthetical priorities of styles in favour of Gothic to Neoclassicism. This change of priority was also a turning point in my periodization and interpretation of the Gothic Revival for it expressed an ethical reflection by itself.

## 9. Conclusion

As has been indicated in the introduction, the primary aim of my study was to examine Gothic Revival, one of the most influential artistic and cultural movements in England. As a matter of fact, the Revival covers a wide scope of various fields of culture including literature, aesthetics, politics and arts. Therefore, my essay has touched upon the following questions:

<sup>171</sup> "The monarchy is only sovereign because royal power is exercised through parliament, but parliament is only legitimate when summoned by the sovereign." Brooks, *op. cit.*, 211.

<sup>172</sup> According to his diary, he was busy with completing designs for the Parliament from September 1836 to January 1837.

- What were the principal reasons of the development of Gothic semantics by which I mean adherent values of arts, aesthetics, politics and culture in England?
- How did this semantics expand in due competition with Classicism?
- What kind of framework could architecture offer to Gothic semantics during the process of Gothic Revival?

These aims, however, presupposed the examinations of literature, aesthetics, history and arts in connection with Gothic architecture.

To offer a deeper understanding of my views and points, in the second chapter I discussed the Renaissance theory of the concept of Gothic that first attributed the name Gothic to the medieval style. Within this context, I continued with the analysis of the Survival of the style in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and the question of how it acquired a political legitimacy. The latter was important, as it implied a construction of political theory as well. The formulation of these theories were examined within the bounds of Gothic semantics that was exploited by the first English revivalists, Laud and Cosin.

In the third chapter I pointed out the development of historical associations pertaining to Gothic and the aesthetical changes of the 18<sup>th</sup> century in compliance with the concepts of Nature. These changes made it possible to import ideas of Gothic into the landscape park and to incite an expanding ruin building movement which prepared "historical grounds" to be translated into domestic Gothic. The analysis of this expansion proved to be crucial regarding Gothic semantics that was further extended by literary and archaeological antiquarianism and the aesthetical change in the concept of Nature.

Literary influences provided a major impetus to the Revival that demanded reinterpretations of medieval literature as well. In this context, in the fourth chapter, I discussed the rise of the Gothic novel and the literary thematization of Gothic that culminated in the Romantic Movement. Romanticism rediscovered the individual identity and imagination which found a way of expression in Gothic. Individual interpretations of reality, however, required a more precise semantical overview and periodization of the style which was greatly worked out by the so-called Romantic historicism.

Romanticism created new possibilities to the realms of imagination and sense previously bound by rules of Classicism. In the fifth chapter I analysed the possibilities of this change in literature and architecture as imaginative arts. The ignorance of Neoclassical rules engaged the individual to apply his irregular creativity to express inward emotions and excesses. These were examined through the development of the aesthetical values of picturesque and sublime with due respect to a reinterpretation of beauty as well. These values and aesthetic paradigms, as I have investigated it, became part of the Gothic semantics and were profoundly manifested in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Revival.

In the sixth chapter I discussed two archetypical forms of Gothic, Monastic and Castellar, which were the par excellence expressions of sublime and picturesque as well as power relations. However, social and economic changes seemed to undermine the social background of Gothic semantics which reacted with a further revival of Tudor, Elizabethan, and Jacobean Gothic. These revived styles, collectively called the Manor House Style, suited better the needs of the middle class whose regular residences, the country house and the villa, were also Gothicised.

In chapter seven I looked at the Revival and the expansion of Gothic semantics in church buildings that included numerous restorations. Revived forms of architecture carried on revived forms of worship that exceeded to a reinstitutionalisation of rituals and religious enthusiasm in the Camden Society which canonized Gothic to the Decorated Style, thus, demolishing or re-modelling churches in other styles. As I have shown, this exaltation implied connotations of

Catholic disseminations, consequently, after harsh Protestant attacks, the Society was dissolved. Nevertheless, theorizing was developed by A. W. Pugin who attributed social purpose, moral values, and functional reciprocity of design and structure to Gothic architecture, thus, reinterpreted Gothic semantics and with other famous revivalists introduced Revival into its “Ethical period”.

In the last chapter of my study, I briefly discussed the Utilitarian challenge to Gothic and the consequent expansions of the style in the fields of education, social welfare, justice and administration. Finally, as a first expression of the “Ethical period” as well as a final manifestation of the “Picturesque period”, I investigated the revival of the Houses of Parliament that exercised an ethical and historical reflection of becoming a nation state.

By examining these questions I have tried to answer my hypothesis raised in the first chapter, and I have arrived at the findings that Gothic semantics was established by its political legitimization in the 17<sup>th</sup> century which required a suitable political theory. This theory implied historical associations as well. These developments were widened by the aesthetical changes of the 18<sup>th</sup> century with regard to Nature and the concept of naturalness. The semantics were further enlarged by the architectural invention of the landscape park and the ruins, and finally by the set-off of Gothic domestic architecture in the 1750s. Historical associations and reinterpretations of literature opened up new dimensions for literary influences as well. The thematization of Gothic culminated in the Romantic Movement that rediscovered individual identity which revitalised artistic conception for new aesthetical paradigms, the picturesque and the sublime. These paradigms retained a fine layer in Gothic semantics which channelled them through the revived Gothic architecture of both ecclesiastical and secular. To answer social challenges, a revival of former stylistic variations was necessitated that could be better adapted to the requirements of the middle class. The country house and the villa, in my opinion, signalled that Gothic semantics gained priorities over Neoclassical aesthetical rules by the force of their application. This semantical restructuring in the field of aesthetics and architecture happened due to the theorizing of Ecclesiology, and especially A. W. Pugin who reinterpreted it, thus, establishing an independent neo-Gothic style.

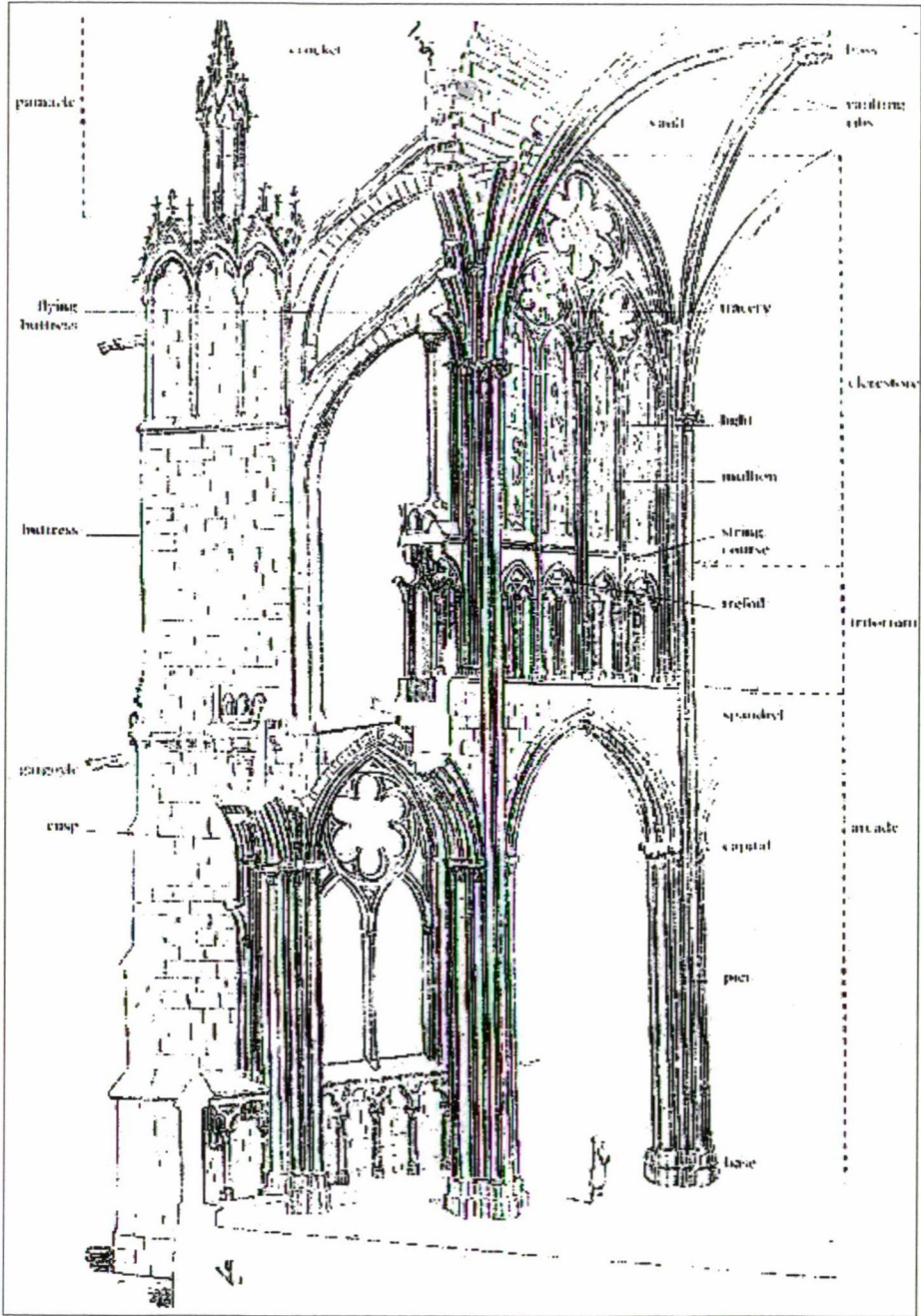
Though the limits of my paper did not allow me to discuss the further development of the Ethical period of the Gothic Revival, but besides my questions a few more issues would be worth discussing:

- In what measures and forms did Gilbert Scott contribute to the Revival?
- How did he adapt Gothic semantics in Albert Memorial?
- How did John Ruskin systematise moral, aesthetic and artistic principles of Gothic?
- In what sense did he improve the principles of Pugin?

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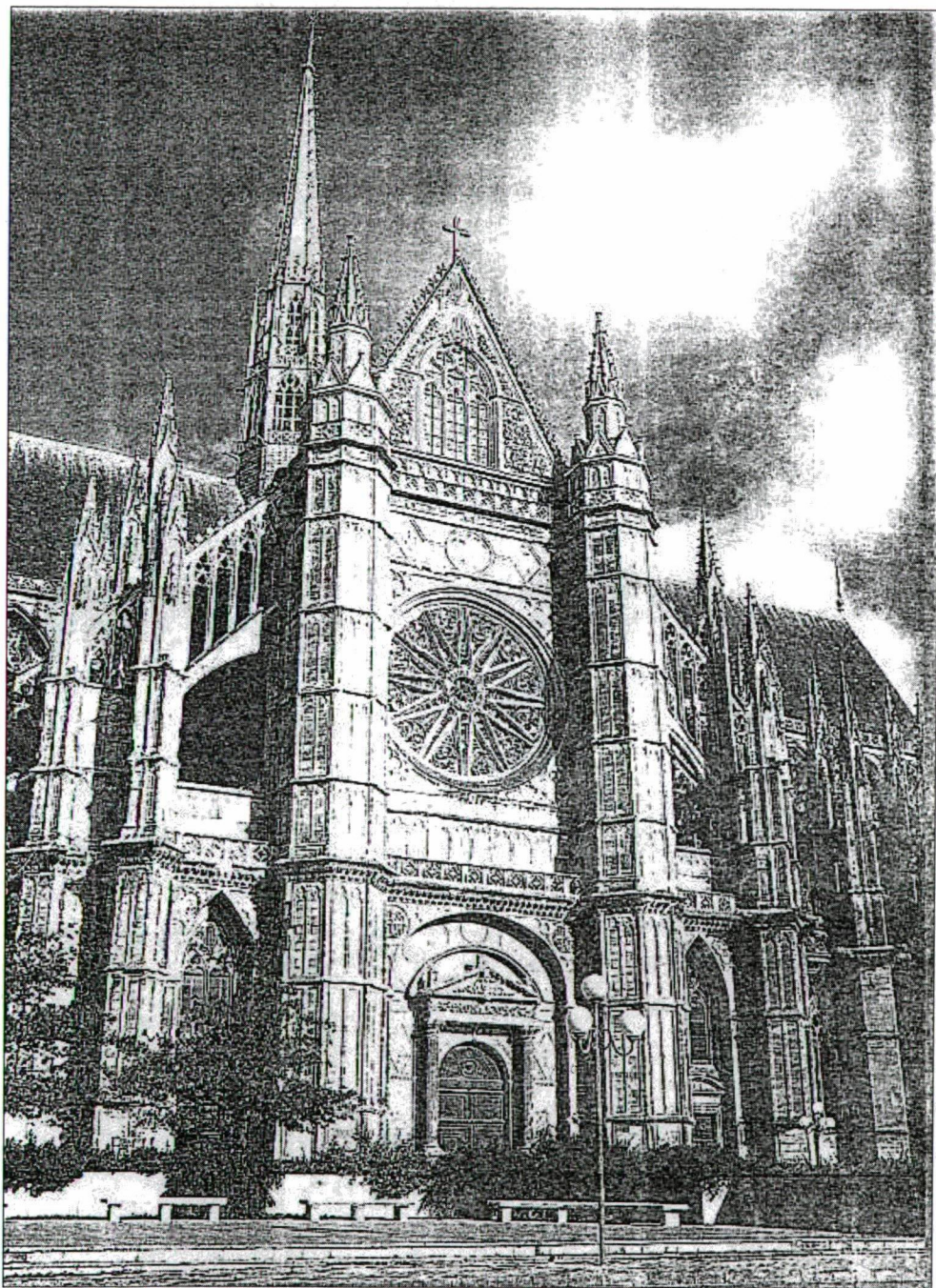
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## Appendix



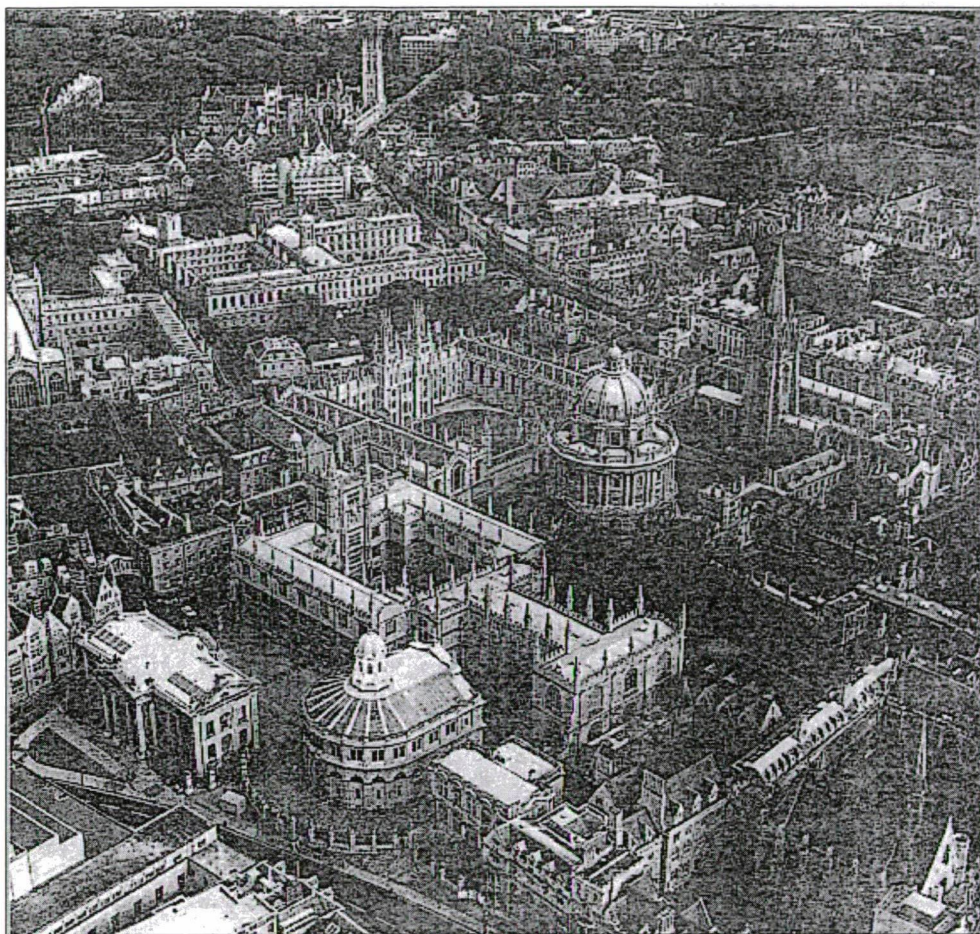
1. Architectural terms in Gothic (Brooks, *op. cit.*, 12.)





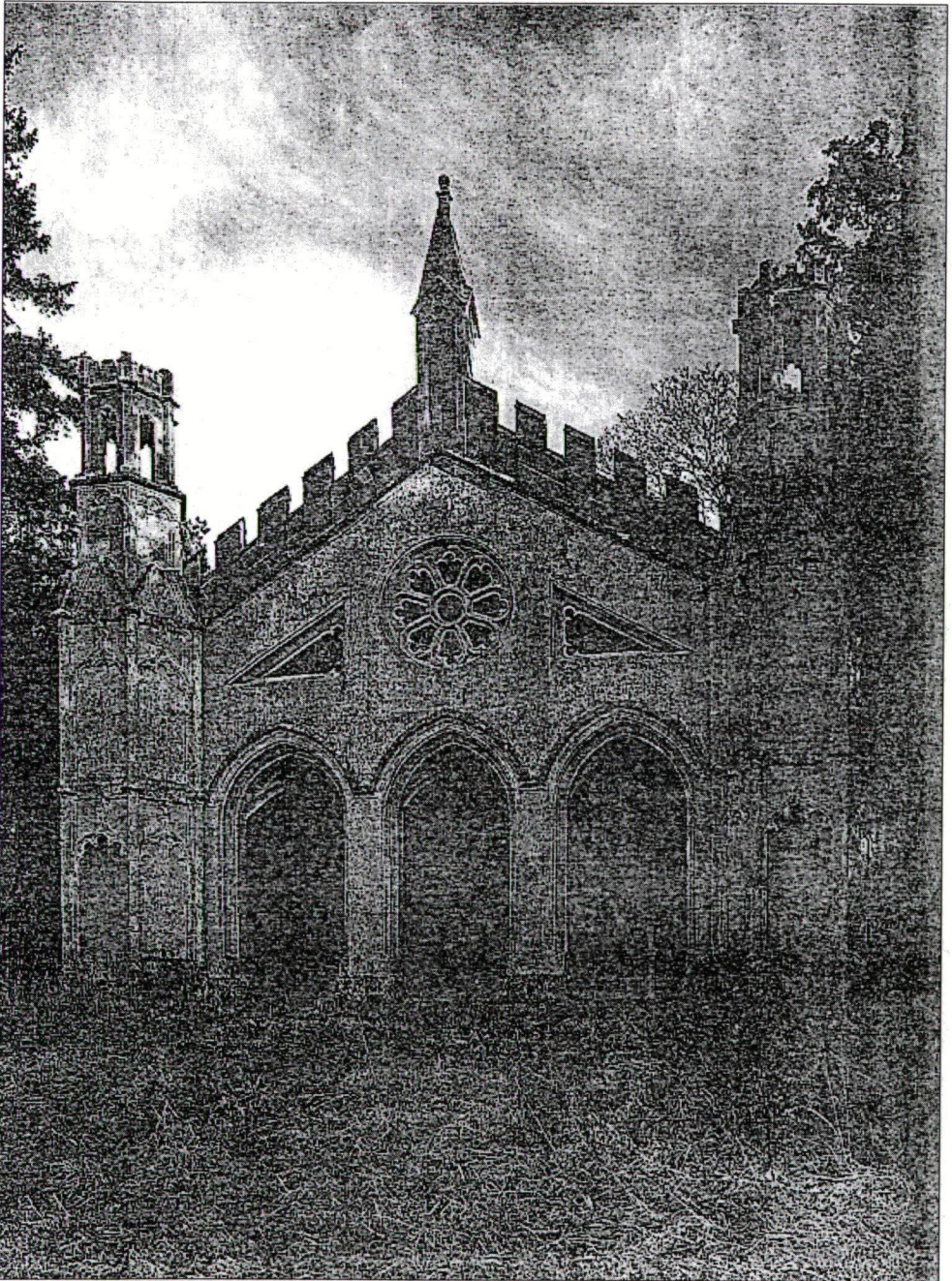
2. Étienne Martellange, South transept, Orléans Cathedral, c. 1860 (Brooks, *op. cit.*, 22.)





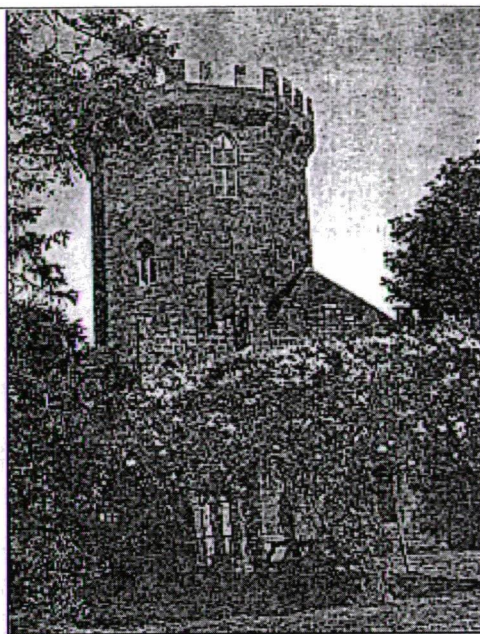
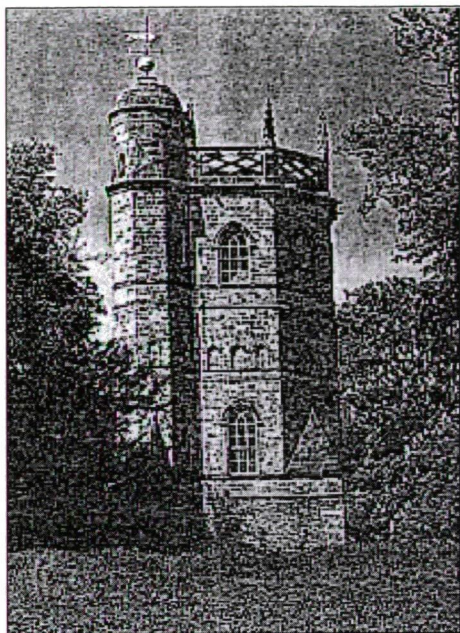
3. Aerial view of Oxford University, showing the mixture of medieval and later architecture (Brooks, *op. cit.*, 26.)





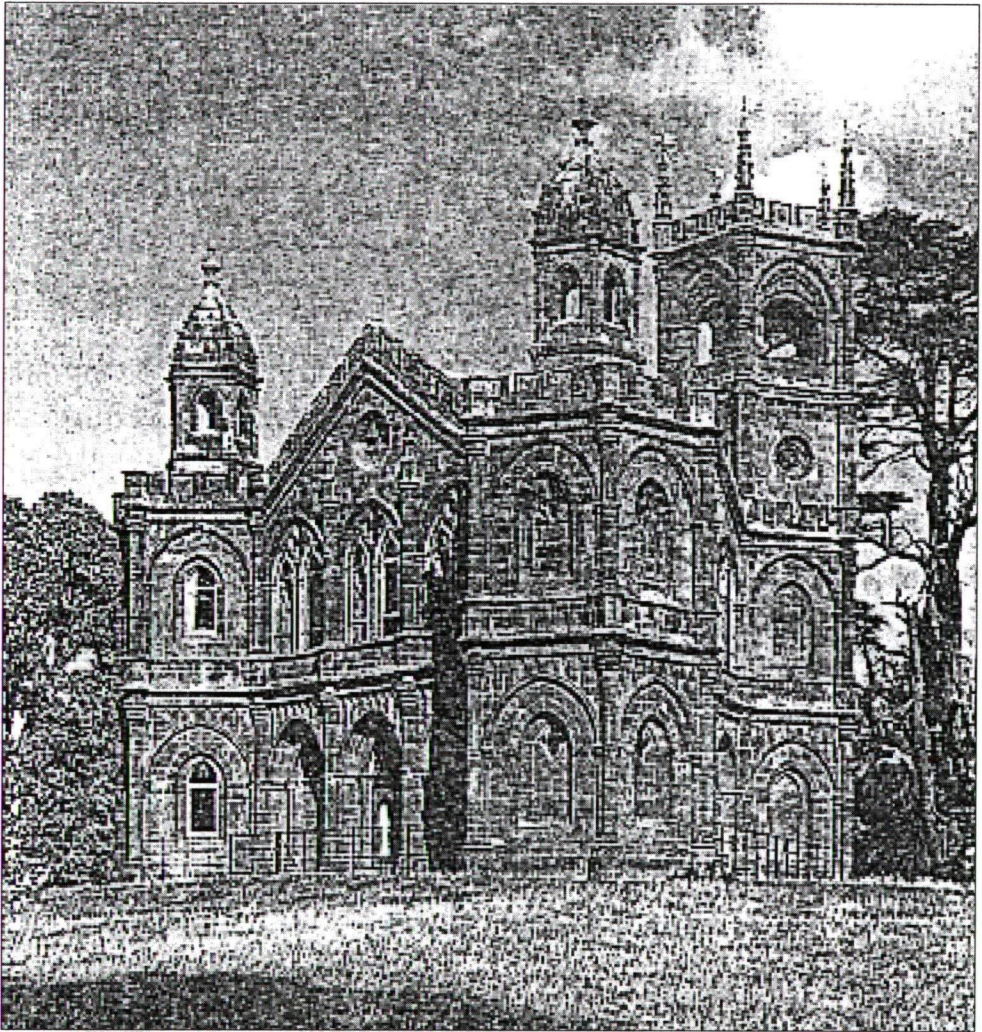
4. The Gothic Temple, Shotover Park, Oxfordshire, 1716–1717 (Brooks, *op. cit.*, 50.)





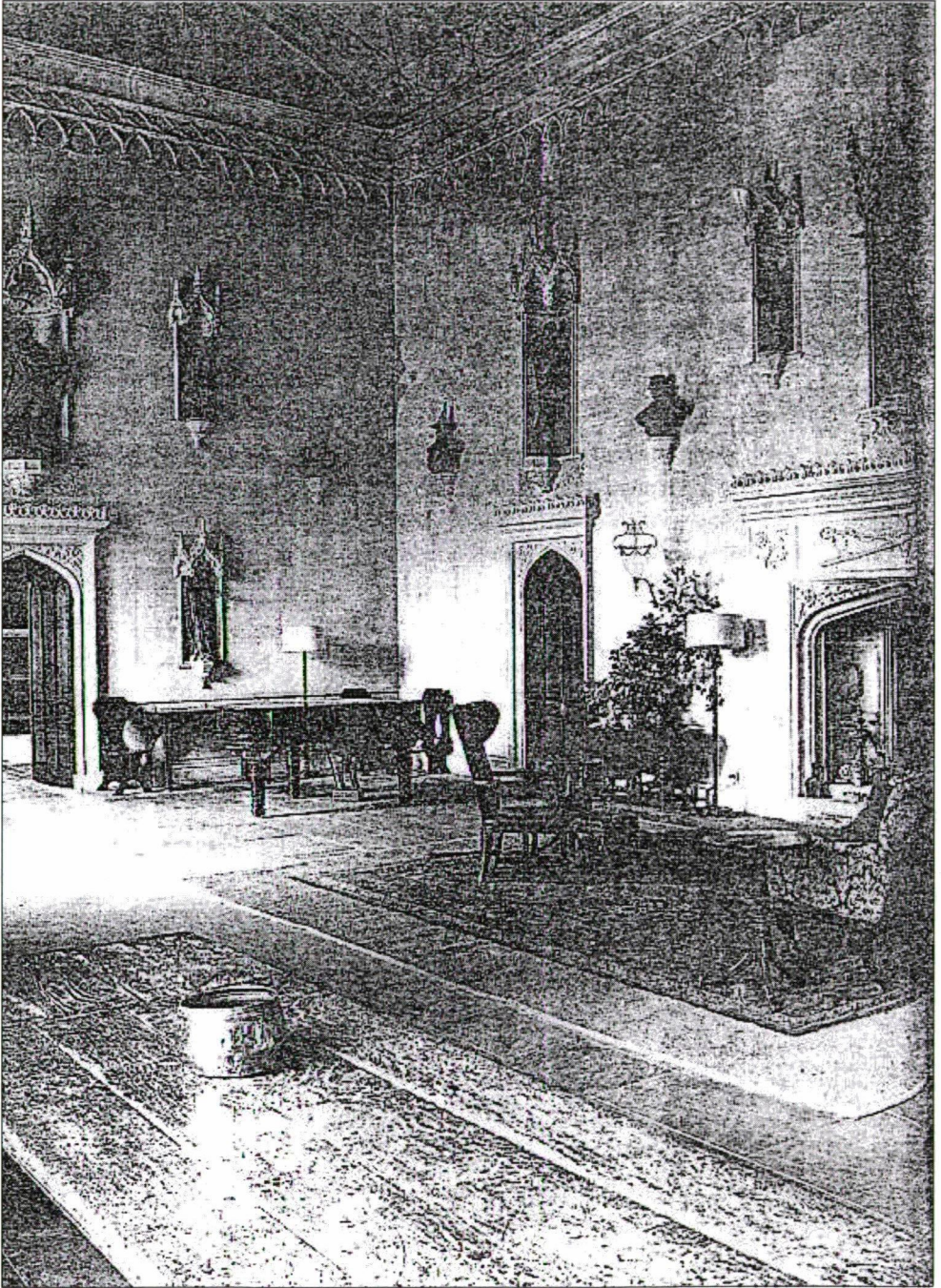
5. Daniel Garrett, *The Culloden Tower*, Richmond, Yorkshire, c. 1746 (above left); Sanderson Miller, *The Tower and associated group of ruins*, Radway, Warwickshire, 1746–47 (above right); Sanderson Miller, *Hagley Castle*, Hagley Hall, Worcestershire, 1748 (below), (Brooks, *op. cit.*, 60.)





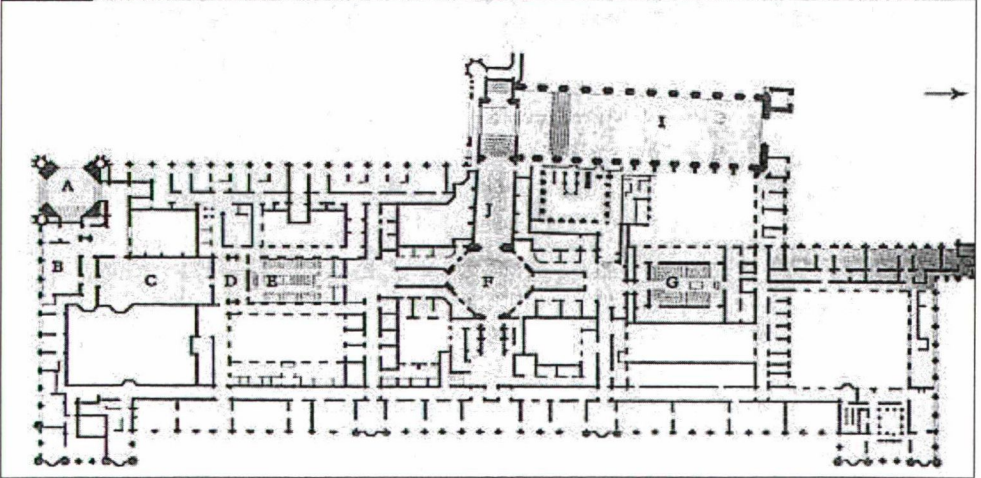
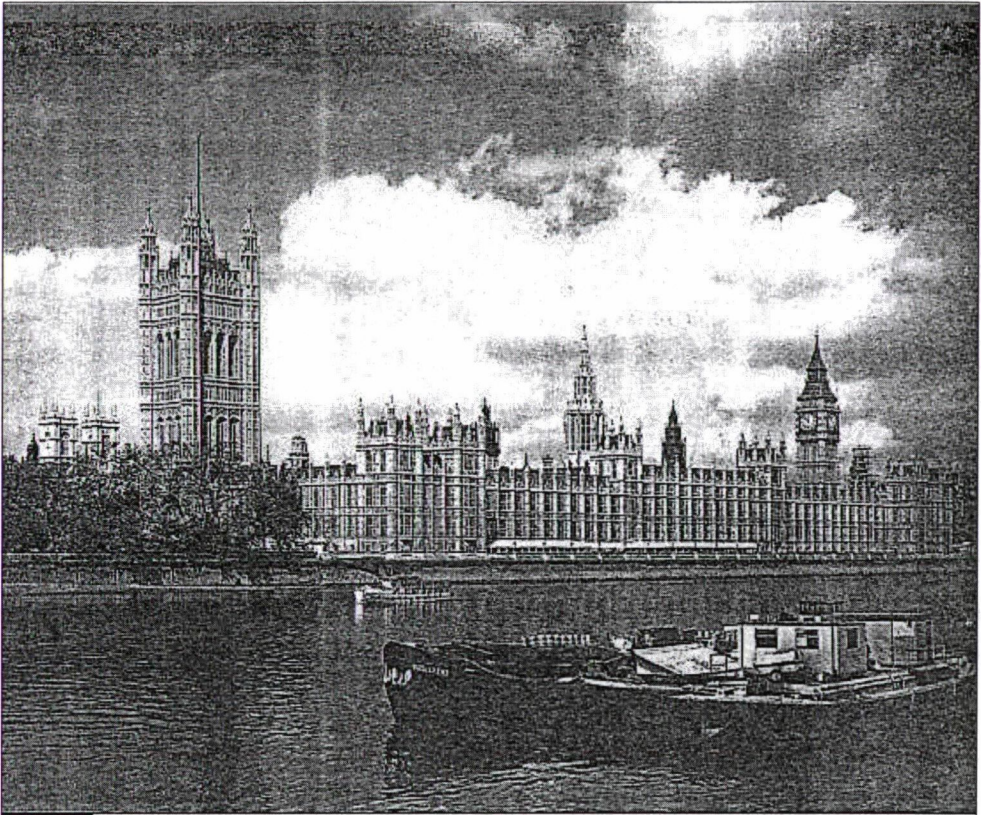
6. The Temple of Liberty, Stowe, Buckinghamshire, 1741 (Brooks, *op. cit.*, 54.)





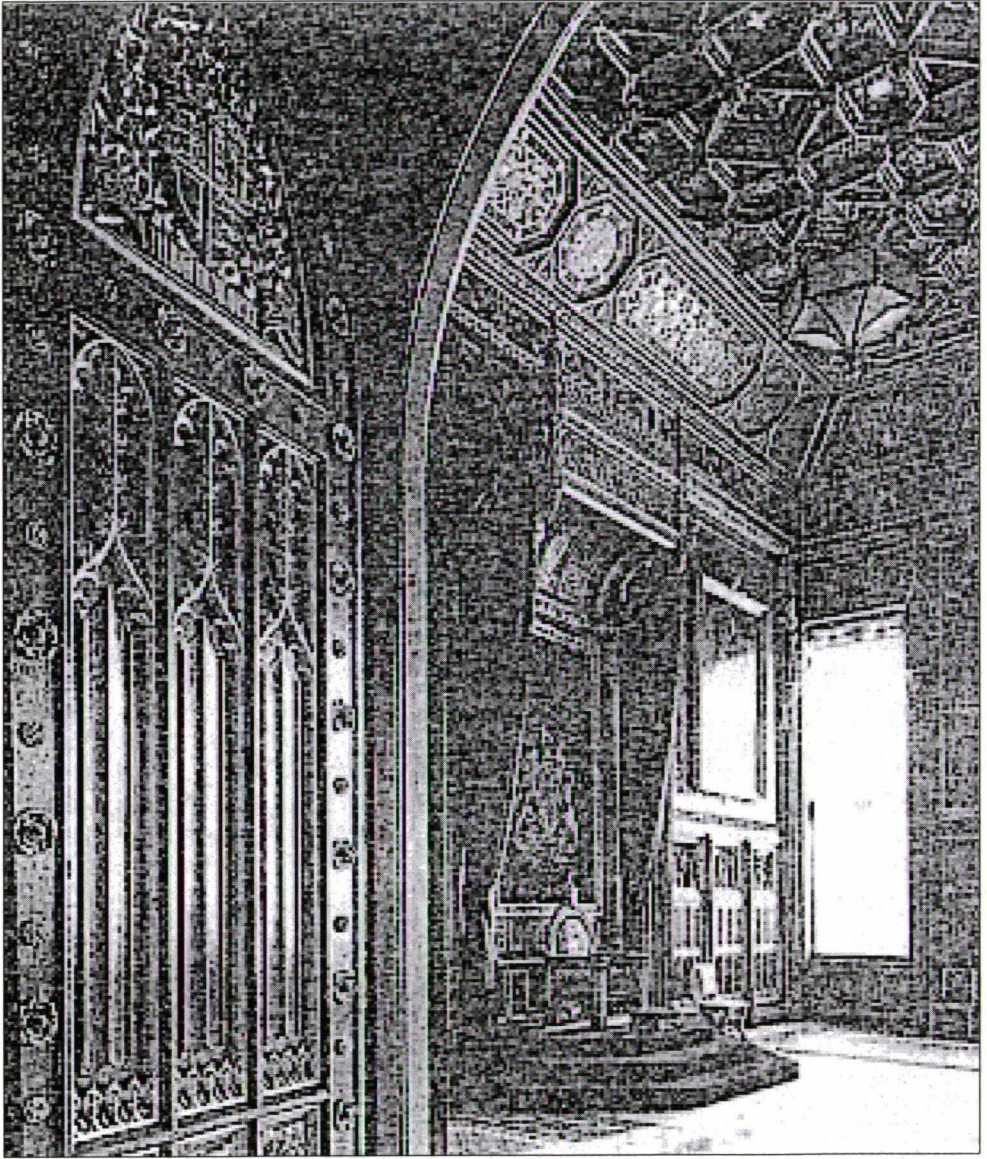
7. Sanderson Miller, Great Hall, Lacock Abbey, Wiltshire, 1754 (Brooks, *op. cit.*, 76.)





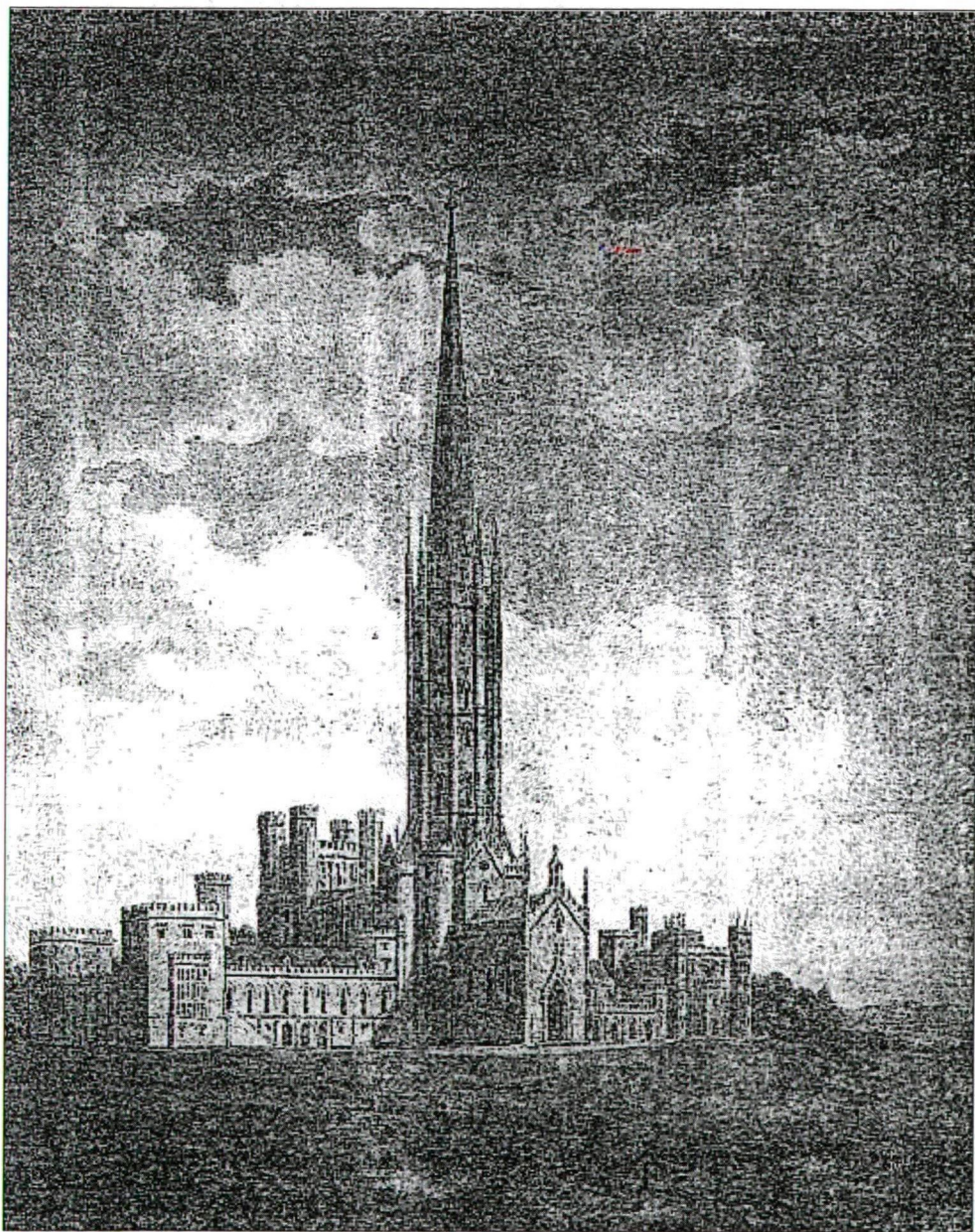
8. Charles Barry and A. W. Pugin, The Palace of Westminster and its plans, 1835–1868. (A) Victoria Tower, (B) Royal Robing Room, (C) Royal Gallery, (D) Prince's Chamber, (E) House of Lords, (F) Central Lobby, (G) House of Commons, (H) Clock Tower, (I) Westminster Hall, (J) St. Stephen's Hall (Brooks, *op. cit.*, 208.)





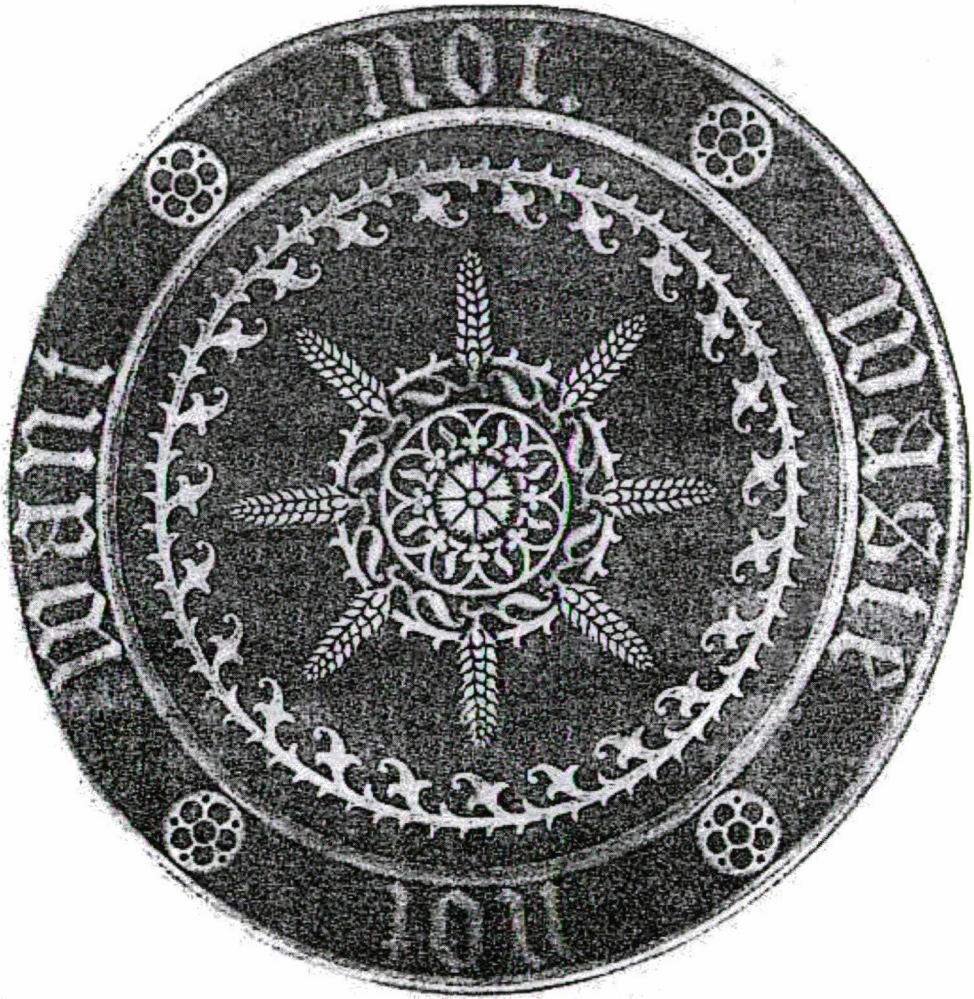
9. Charles Barry, The Palace of Westminster, 1835–1868, The Royal Robing Room  
(Brooks, *op. cit.*, 212.)





10. Charles Wild, Fonthill Abbey, 1799. Watercolour on paper, Victoria and Albert Museum, London (Brooks, *op. cit.*, 154.)



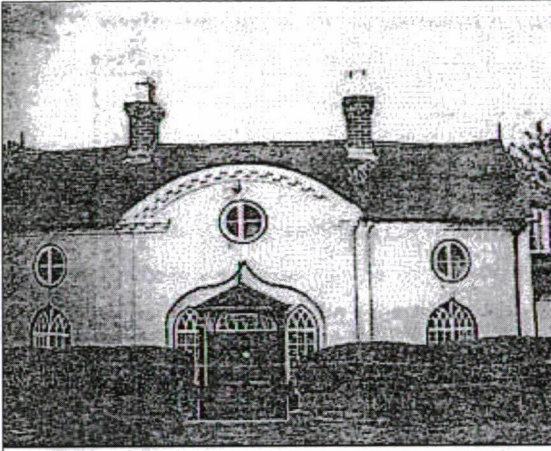


12. A. W. Pugin, Bread plate in Gothic design, c. 1849, diam. 33 cm, 13 in. (Brooks, *op. cit.*, 249.)



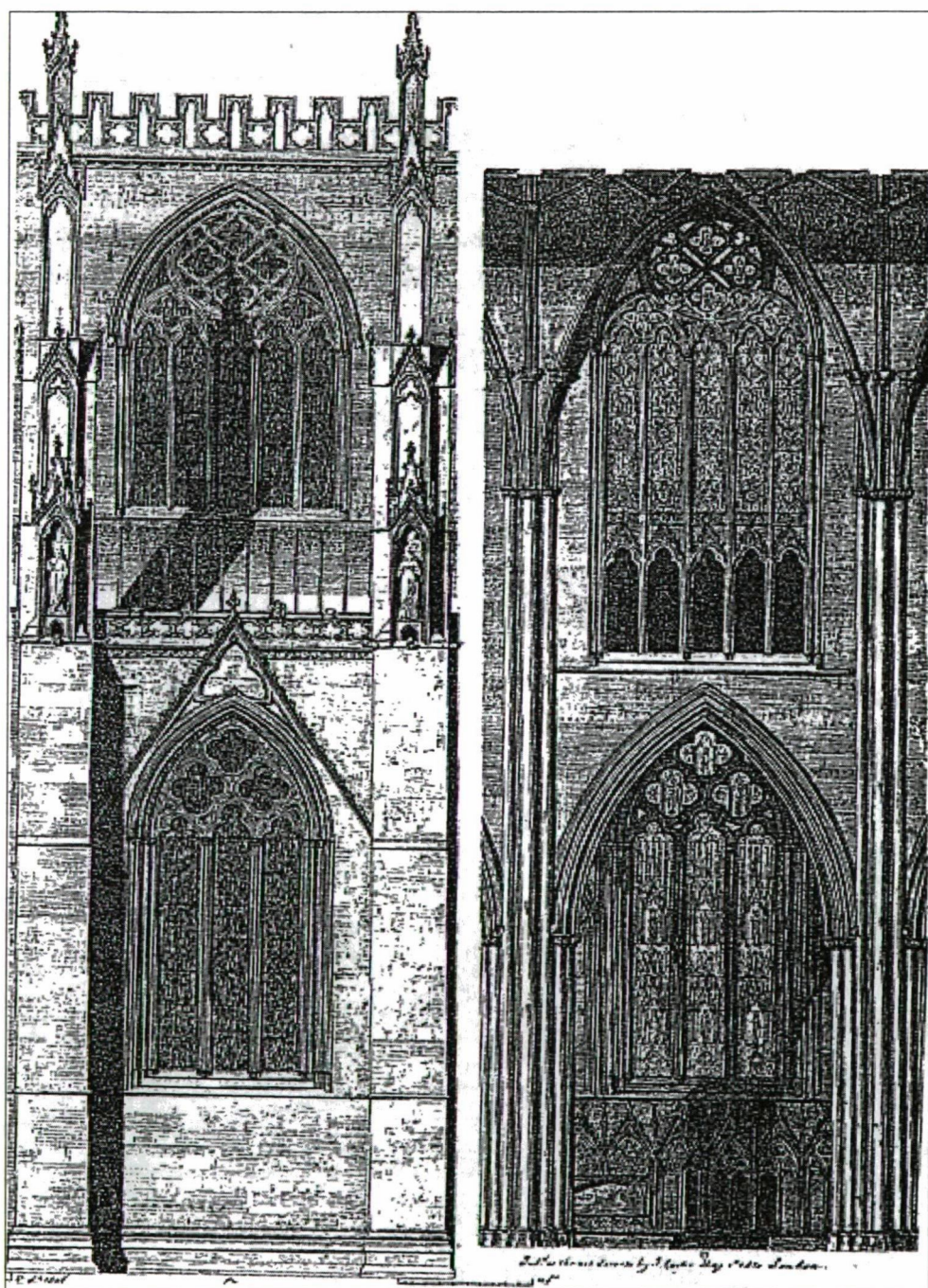
13. A. W. Pugin, Wallpaper design for the Palace of Westminster, c. 1848 (Brooks, *op. cit.*, 216.)





14. Gothic villae: Marford, Clwyd, Wales (top left); St. John's Wood, London (top right); Sidmouth, Devon (below) (Brooks, *op. cit.*, 195.)





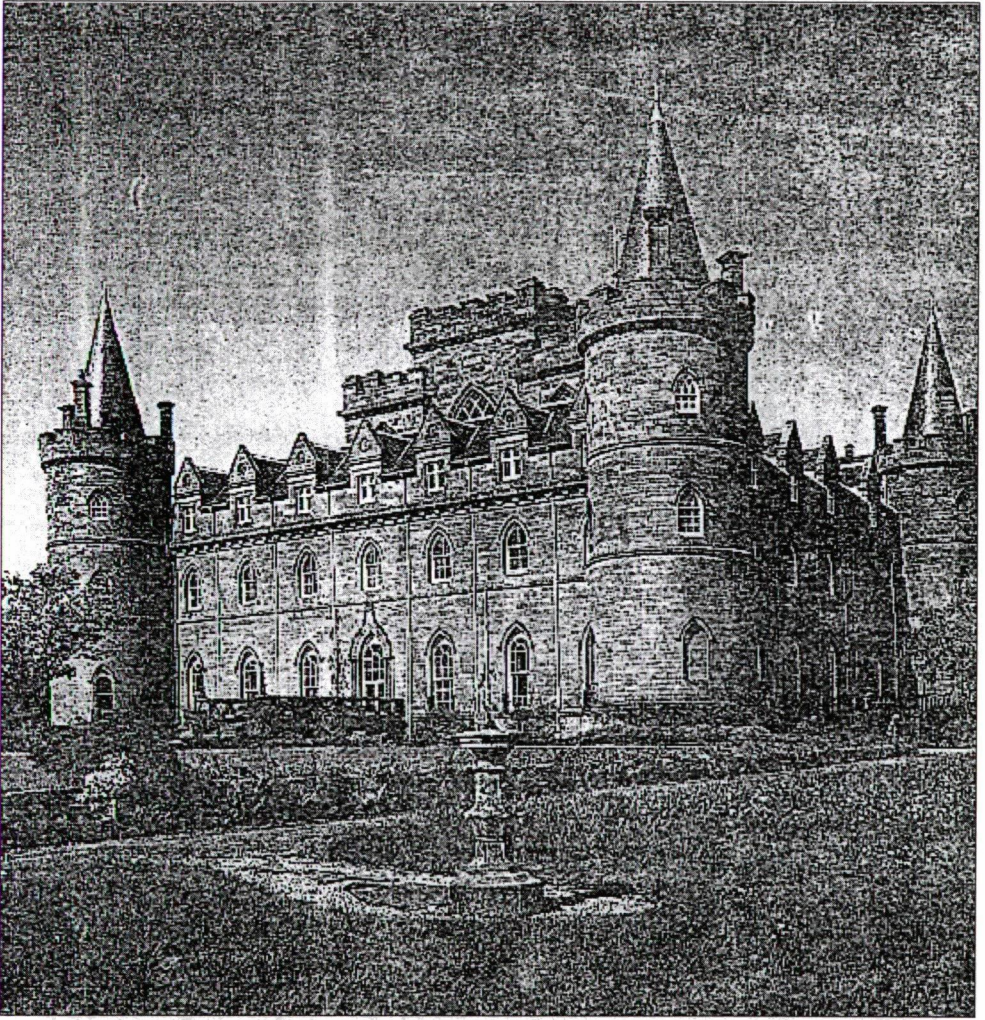
15. John Carter, Vaulting bass and windows, York Minster, from *Ancient Architecture of England*, 1814.





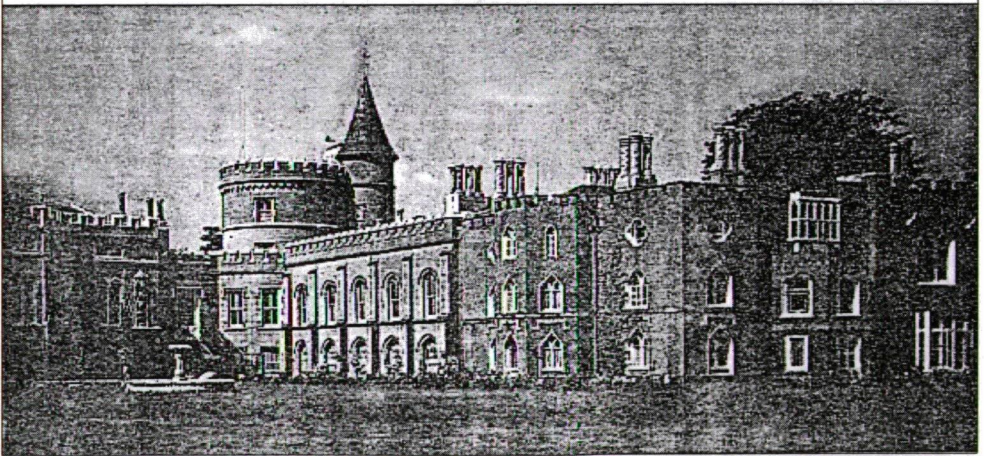
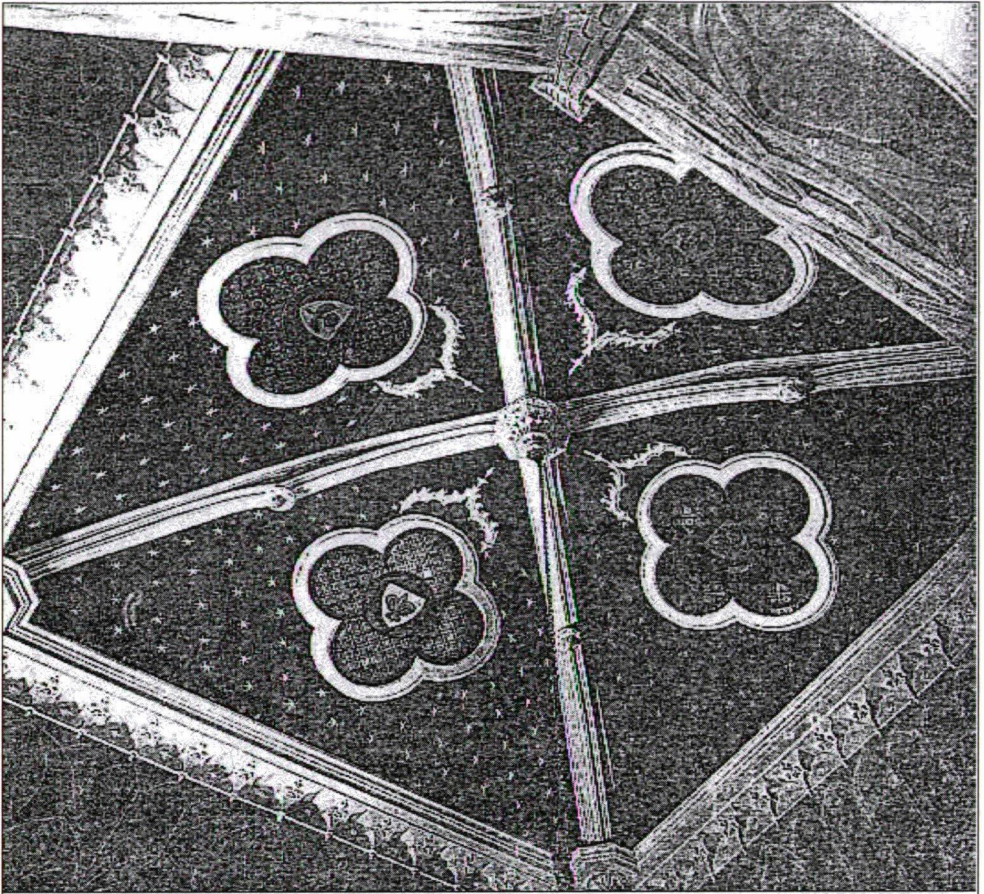
16. Frederick Mackenzie, The nave, Salisbury Cathedral from John Britton's *Cathedral Antiquities of England*, 1814





17. Roger Morris, Inverary Castle, 1745–1790 (Brooks, *op. cit.*, 94.)





18. Strawberry Hill and its Stair Hall, Twickenham, 1754 (Brooks, *op. cit.*, 84.)

Cora Zoltán

**Aesthetic Aspects of the Gothic Revival: An Essay in the History of Culture**

As a cultural process of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century, Gothic Revival manifested itself in literature, aesthetics, politics and arts. This denotes a wide scope of field, therefore, in this paper I will deal with the expansion of Gothic semantics throughout the periods of Survival and Revival of Gothic, focusing on its aesthetical aspects. I will also examine what kind of framework architecture could offer to this widening semantics. First of all, the concept of Gothic within Renaissance theory of architecture will be defined in order to understand how and why Gothic style survived in England in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The Survival enabled Gothic to be revived by a legitimization of a political theory which offered historical associations that went along with aesthetical changes of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. These developments led to the first Gothic Revival in landscape parks and ruins within the fields of domestic architecture. The trend of increasing application of Gothic designs was further developed by antiquarianism and literary criticism that necessitated a republication and reinterpretation of medieval literature. Literary inquisition brought about the emergence of the Gothic Novel and subsequently the Romantic Movement which created a new identity on the basis of individual imagination. This former process initiated a more elaborate search for deeper semantics, periodization and historiography of Gothic. Romantic historicism resulted in an establishment of new aesthetical paradigms, such as picturesque and sublime, which found their expressions in Monastic and Castellar Gothic. The Revival also involved church restorations and buildings that was accompanied by an accentuated theorizing of the unity of ethics, aesthetics and architecture of the style. Though the religious movement of the Ecclesiology failed, A. W. Pugin managed to develop a system of Gothic theory. Besides the theoretical trend, social and economic changes of necessity required the adoptions of more practical stylistic variations of Gothic as well. Finally, after the mental and material appreciation of Gothic exceeded, in my view, a certain level in the national consciousness and as an academic style, it could overcome the Neoclassical aesthetic priorities that was expressed in the par excellence Revival building, the Houses of Parliament. After discussing these phenomena and cultural processes, an own interpretation of the Gothic semantics will be offered.





*Kovács László*

## To Live in a Mirror – New Dimensions of Subjectivity in Heiner Müller’s *Hamletmachine*

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### Introduction

*“I see my life, a black tree by a pool. The branches are covered by tears. The tears are shining with light.  
The wind blows them in the sky. And my tears fall down on me.”  
(Edward Bond: Lear)*

There is a sense of loss and depravity in late twentieth-century literary works that set out to adapt the most brilliant drama of the Shakespearean canon, *Hamlet*. That relation which stretches between the original and the adaptation must be characterised by denial for the latter to become autonomous, to be able to speak for itself, even if this happens through the prism of the former. This break is painful, and even traumatic, as it is seen in *the actor’s* words in *Hamletmachine*<sup>1</sup>:

I’m not Hamlet. I don’t take part anymore. My words have nothing to tell me anymore. My thoughts suck the blood out of the images. My drama doesn’t happen anymore. Behind me the set is put up. By people who aren’t interested in my drama, for people to whom it means nothing. I’m not interested in it anymore either. I won’t play along anymore<sup>2</sup>

(HM, 54).

However, this is not a point where *Hamlet* and *Hamletmachine* part ways, straightforward though it might seem, but rather a conjoining of thematic emphases, that is, the parallel dissection of the question of being and not being something, or becoming and not becoming something. If the *Tragedy of Hamlet* is regarded as that late renaissance drama which delves most deeply into the

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<sup>1</sup> References to *Hamletmachine* are all made to the following edition: Heiner Müller, *Hamletmachine*, in Heiner Müller, *Hamletmachine and Other Texts for the Stage* (New York: PAJ Publications, 1984). It should be noted that it is the English translation of *Hamletmaschine*, written originally in German, which serves as the object of analysis. It could be argued that a copy, transplanted to another language, does not have the value of the original and that there could be erroneous differences in what the drama and the translation *have to say*, or the author *wanted to communicate*. However, my presupposition concerning this matter is that in the postmodern one can barely meet anything but copies (films, books, performances, etc., either in a material or a transcendental (or intertextual) sense) which possess a symbolic value. For the English reader/spectator community the origin of meaning is, besides their own cultural background, the play in English. Moreover, due to linguistic signification, i.e. the fact that meaning is not directly transferred from the brain of the author into the brain of the reader/spectator, reading/watching a play is better conceptualised as meaning making by the reader/spectator from a piece of language organised into a pattern, a process in which authorial intentions are evidently present, but not fully determinative.

<sup>2</sup> The sense of loss and depravity becomes even more shocking if we consider the actor’s words in the framework provided by the classical cliché of the *teatrum mundi*, popular in the renaissance and still alive today, well expressed by Shakespeare in *As You Like It* (“All the world is a stage / And all the men and women merely players” (AYL.2.7.143–144)) or in Raleigh’s “What is our Life” (“The earth the stage; Heaven the spectator is, / Who sits and views whosoe’er doth act amiss”). In this context, stopping playing corresponds to an ultimate self-effacement, a very strong concern in the postmodern.

philosophical exploration of consciousness, then *Hamletmachine* might be said to be its equal counterpart in the postmodern. Whether this is true or not cannot be proved here. What is important now is that both of them try to turn the human being inside out, to show the mystery of being and becoming human. There are of course considerations that attribute a universal validity to *Hamlet*, and thus they lift it out of the framework of reference of the late English renaissance, and inscribe contemporary meanings into it. In a sense, *Hamletmachine* does the same as a literary critic, but on the plane of literary composition. This process entails a certain kind of textual violence against the original which results in a “semiotic implosion,” a heavy reduction and condensation of signs within the textual body of the adaptation. Apart from this violence, which serves as a bridge between the two dramas, they are also connected on the basis of the similarities of the cultural periods in which they were created.

The late renaissance is a transitory period that closes the middle ages and opens up the way to modernity. In a similar fashion, postmodernity closes modernity, and advances towards something new and yet unknown. They might and should be related on the basis of a common transitory character, apparent in the instability and heterogeneity of attitudes, beliefs and values in every sphere of culture and society. The most able term to describe this fluidity is the *epistemological crisis*, i.e. a state in which the circulation of knowledge comes under heavy dubitation, alongside with the types and constitutive elements of this knowledge. This is not to be interpreted as anarchy or open strife, since the point is not really the rejection of former values, but rather the blending of quite disparate ideas in the form of diverse cultural representations.<sup>3</sup> One area which definitely deserves scrutiny is literature, since it is, by default, a mirror for reality.<sup>4</sup> On the basis of these considerations I set out to argue that by comparing *Hamlet* and *Hamletmachine* it becomes possible to trace the affinities between ways of dealing with subjectivity in the late renaissance and the postmodern, and to provide a more complex envisagement of how late twentieth-century adaptations of Shakespeare make the human being see itself through the looking-glass of literature. In order to achieve this end, I will concentrate on the reciprocal relations between the two aforementioned dramas.<sup>5</sup>

*Hamletmachine* focuses on the constitution of the subject as represented in/through literature,<sup>6</sup> intertextually reflecting on the late renaissance play *Hamlet*. There is no analytic neutrality claimed to exist between them; what is at stake here is a proliferating play of mirror effects, which involves a dynamic compromise on behalf of all the agents of literary semiosis. Virtually, what grants legitimacy to this bold enterprise is the figure of Shakespeare, and the cultural in-

<sup>3</sup> The term “cultural representations” is meant to embrace all those habits, customs, material and intellectual products, beliefs, dispositions, ideologies, etc., that define and form culture.

<sup>4</sup> One of the best examples of literary theory in literature can be found in *Hamlet*: “the purpose of playing, / Whose end, both at the first and now, was and is, to hold, as / ‘twere, the mirror up to nature; to show Virtue her own feature, / scorn her own image, and the very age and body of his time his form and pressure” (*Ham*.3.2.19–23). Although this conception refers back to the Aristotelian definition of tragedy, and thus to the mimetic representation of reality, in the framework of this analysis mimesis is only accepted with reservations.

<sup>5</sup> A brief analysis of another Müllerean drama, *Description of a Picture*, is provided in the appendix, to demonstrate how Müller’s theatre tries to reach the same objectives set out already in *Hamletmachine*, eight years after its production. The play claims to be the adaptation of Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*, thus it is rewarding to look at this case as well, since it is another encounter of a late renaissance and a postmodern play.

<sup>6</sup> As this conceptualisation of subjectivity already suggests, I take a reader-oriented stance concerning the functions of dramatic art. Subjectivity is not only construed in the text, but also in the reader, *through* the text.

vestment his name bears.<sup>7</sup> He “haunts” postmodern discourse; there is no canon without Shakespeare, since without him we would not be able to identify with ourselves. What we can thank to him is not only our thoughts but in great part our ability to think (Bloom 1996, 41).<sup>8</sup> True; his oeuvre does shape our thoughts about the world and about ourselves, to the extent that to study and know his plays has become a primary cultural imperative in the West.

*Hamletmachine* makes an attempt to expose the constructed nature of the human being, restrained by bounds external to it, by foregrounding the notion of the *subject in process*. It lays an ambush on hegemonic subjectivity and subverts the system of cultural representations to the degree that the reader/spectator becomes conscious of its ideologically conditioned existence. At the same time – as reading is an active process involving adjustments to the psychic structure of the subject – this textual “machinery” embraces the receiver, and through a psychoanalytic process analogous to the mirror stage, forces a restructuration in its identity patterns. To illustrate the validity of these claims I first discuss the connection between the two cultural periods in which *Hamlet* and *Hamletmachine* were created and enacted. After a survey of the fundamental tenets of the Cartesian ego, the poststructuralist notion of the subject will be presented. The comparison of the two dramas encompasses a brief interpretation of *Hamlet* as a tragedy of consciousness where the dissection of the “protomodern” subject of Hamlet is in the spotlight. Among the two chapters devoted to *Hamletmachine* the first one includes three interpretations of the drama by Jonathan Calb, Kékesi Kun Árpád and Kiss Attila, respectively. On the basis of these three viewpoints and the dramatic text, I endeavour to demonstrate how the concept of the ego can be deconstructed through the employment of the category of the subject. Meanwhile, a strong emphasis must be placed on the fact that that new kind of subjectivity which emerges in the text is also produced in the reader/spectator, which has consequences as to the act of reading these dramas. In the end, it should be clear that *Hamletmachine* succeeds in manipulating the reader/spectator in such ways that potentially it will be able to consciously open its eyes to the repressing strategies of power from the perspective the play provides.

<sup>7</sup> This investment is not completely inherent in Shakespeare’s dramatic capabilities and texts. There have always been critical observations which reflected and generated it by reason of the realisation of the exceptional poetic and dramatic power that are evidently present in his plays. In order to demonstrate this critical disposition it will suffice to refer e.g. to Harold Bloom or Roland Mushat Frye. In exploring the causes for the outstanding literary position Shakespeare has gained, Bloom affirms that “Shakespeare and Dante are the centre of the Canon because they excel all other Western writers in cognitive acuity, linguistic energy, and power of invention” (Bloom 1996, 46); later he goes on to pinpoint his omnipresence: “Clearly the phenomenon of surpassing literary excellence, of such power of thought, characterisation, and metaphor that it triumphantly survives translation and transposition and compels attention in virtually every culture, does exist;” finally, he identifies the figure of Shakespeare with that of Hamlet on a certain plain: “Shakespeare is to the world’s literature what Hamlet is to the imaginary domain of literary character: a spirit that permeates everywhere, that cannot be confined” (op.cit., 52). Frye in his analysis of *Hamlet* takes for granted the excellence attached to the author’s name: “Shakespeare transcends the merely timely by the *magic of insight and style*, and elevates it to *perennial interest and significance* [...]” (Frye 1984, 10; my emphasis).

<sup>8</sup> This affirmation is only valid within the confines of the possibilities provided by our own culture. The symbolic order is interested in maintaining the Aristotelian logic of cause and effect; beside psychotic states of the mind, the circumvention of the rules that bind us in our socio-cultural context is supposed to take place in the radical deconstruction of those media that channel these imperatives into the subject – like Shakespearean dramaturgy.

## Parallel Epistemologies

The end of the middle ages is traditionally marked by the date of the discovery of the Americas in 1492.<sup>9</sup> Although this event caused a genuine revolution in nearly every area of life in Europe, it was not the only factor that contributed to those immense changes that took place during the sixteenth century in England. In short, the late renaissance is characterised by a general insecurity concerning God, the world and identity – knowledge about the world and the human being in general. The late renaissance's heritage from the middle ages was manifest in a harmonious cultural order, organised around the *great chain of being*,<sup>10</sup> a *network of correspondences* and a *cosmic dance* (Tillyard 1972). But this stance overlooks the fact that this system is not in harmony with itself at all: the late renaissance is the meeting point of two different world orders: it is the clash of the middle ages, characterised by high semioticity, and the enlightenment, characterised by reduced semioticity: "In the middle ages, man felt that the system of meanings had a preestablished character and that the whole pyramid of sign subordination reflected the divine order" (Lotman 1977, 220). The *high semioticity*, a remnant of the middle ages, meant that things preserved in themselves a pre-existent meaning, and that they were all connected to God. Signs were motivated by their referents in reality, which implies that signifiers always had the same – and very stable – connection with their signifieds.

The epistemological crisis itself consists of the dissipation of the analogy-based thinking, and a revolution concerning the nature and status of knowledge. Epicureanism, which valued earthly issues, but not heavenly ones, became popular again, thus contributing to the decline of the view that the purpose of earthly life was to wait and suffer until the vale of tears was replaced by paradise. In theology, God became very remote, and his will inscrutable, partly due to Calvinism's propagation of an incomprehensible God, and predetermination (and fate, of course, couldn't be made known to anyone). With the arrival of Machiavelli's concept of the vice in England, doubts emerged regarding divine providence, since the human being could manage its life with the aid of fame, virtue and fortune. God became other and alienated, parallel to the transposition of the earth from the centre of the universe onto its fringe by the Copernican revolution. The human being was left alone in a vast space and had to find new knowledge to explain and ground its fate. Since it became so tiny and meaningless, its role in the corruption of the sublunary world was reduced, alongside with its own importance. As for

<sup>9</sup> This was a major shock suffered by Christianity. Given that the uncivilised Indians were living in an earthly Eden, it was contradictory that they were pagans. Europeans either had to revise their stance concerning the principles of religion, or wipe out the Indians to avoid the unsettling of the "heavenly kingdom;" naturally, their conversion to the "true faith" and their "pacification" sufficed to do away with this problem completely. If we consider this process from the viewpoint of the semiotics of the subject, the fact that subjectivity is produced *through* literature might become more evident. In so far as the Indians represented in the 15-16<sup>th</sup> century proto-subjectivities which contradicted Christianity, the origin of this representation in contemporary cultural discourse can be located in the Bible, a – consecrated – piece of literature; that is, their subjectivities as helpless lambs of God who had to be taught to worship God was constructed even before they were "discovered" by Europe, and this construction took place precisely in/ through literature. Unfortunately, their integration into the symbolic order of the "civilised" hemisphere meant their mass destruction.

<sup>10</sup> The *Great Chain of Being* was based on a vertical hierarchical system, an iconic representation of the contemporary world order, on top of which presided God (with man in the middle and the Devil at the base), whose emanation formed the universe. However, the renaissance of hermetism, scepticism, and different Greek and Hebrew "occult" traditions resulted in its abuse, for they questioned the role of its fundamental links: creation and the original sin.

the translunary region, the appearance of various novas also led to the questioning of the divine sphere. In philosophy, scientists concentrated on the relativity of perception, and on the appearance-reality dyad. Montaigne questioned the ruling trend of nominalism, and thus the correspondences between language and reality, or signifier and referent. The new order of the cosmos and the newly appearing cultural relativism undermined European institutions and values as well. The absolute truth of God was relativised too, and later replaced by the "truth of the market," which emerged in tandem with the new social stratum of the bourgeoisie, which in turn entailed an increasing social mobility – another source of change (Elton 1986, 17–35).

Since existence is always pre-given, prior to its conceptualisation in the mind, the only way it can be investigated is through linguistic signification. Elizabethan theatre was an adequate location to express dubitation concerning the – linguistically coded – knowledge covering the surrounding reality, due to its symbolic and emblematic nature of representation. It used almost no stagecraft at all; it rather built on the symbolic and verbal capacities of the audience (Weimann 1978, 215–216). Key signifiers like the mind, the supernatural, or the body and its diverse organs and fluids were employed on the stage by playwrights, directors and actors in such ways that they could dissect and probe into the human being and the contemporary socio-cultural order. Theatre became a mirror for, and creator of the transformations late renaissance culture underwent, heavily modifying the previous, illusory homogeneity of the middle ages.<sup>11</sup> As we have seen, many important cultural categories – which were regarded as unshakable and foreordained before – were turned upside down, disturbing and transforming the status quo of subjectivity, and theatre was no exception as to being a locus of dubitation: human identity suffered cruel violations in the "operational theatres" of the age.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Systems of signification are organic entities, which like human beings, have their birth, climax and exhaustion. History might be seen as a series of stages in the transformation of practices of signification. If a system becomes exhausted in one cultural period, such as the ones in the middle ages or in the modern, it is symptomatic of the following transitional period that many texts are written whose principal purpose is to unsettle, distance, or simply to regain the lost power of signification – which of course is very likely to result in the "invention" of something new.

<sup>12</sup> The parallel drawn between late renaissance theatres and operational theatres is of course not a coincidence. Two institutions are linked on the basis of the logic of dissection. The epistemological crisis of the late renaissance was accompanied by a crisis of death. The protestant abolition of purgatory and intercession gave a new status to the deceased and to living's the relationship to them. The *theory of memoria* was developed as the only means to secure contact. Remembrance was assured through funeral rites and monuments on the one hand, and the perpetuating power of the arts on the other. Tragedy served the same purpose, alongside with effectuating human defiance in the face of the cruelty of death, which required that the human being be some-body in the face of a massive army of no-bodies, and to use his irony and pathos to vanquish death. To do this, profound self-knowledge was required. This new endeavour of discovery was undertaken on macrocosmic and microcosmic levels: geographic or astronomical explorations, and anatomy. The hidden secrets had to be uncovered in the process of a physiological and moral-philosophical digging inside the human being, to fulfil the precept of *nosce teipsum*, or "know thyself." This quest was undertaken in theatres and anatomical theatres, only to discover that the ultimate thing the human body retained – was death itself, inherent to all of us. Anatomy was, like surgery, not the means to cure, but the tool to demonstrate, through discovery, the interior secrets of the body, which ultimately led to the foregrounding of mortality and decay. The opening of the body was a metaphor of the baring of moral corruption within the human being. The aim was to gain a symbolic control over death and life, and to sublimate the tensions produced by the newly invented concepts of dying. Similarly to on-stage violence and peeping inside the body, there existed a discursive method to reach the same goals: soliloquy. It was the philosophical opening up of the human subject (and philosophy inevitably meant "learning to die"). This self-exhibition served to reach a genuinely new self-consciousness, in

Postmodernity has been reached by a similar crisis. As modernity ended up in the proliferation of signs and sign systems, or, put another way, in the human subject's profound obsession with speaking, the postmodern brought with itself *Chaos*. Sign systems have been redefined in literature, the media and everyday speech acts, adjusted to the new needs of mass communication and globalisation. The postmodern is a transitory period where the change is present but results are unclear.<sup>13</sup> Technological discoveries (atomic theory, explorations in space, the theory of relativity, the internet, to mention a few), the ever faster flow of information, the loss of reference points in history and literature, etc., have made contemporary dramaturges question the classical, Cartesian conceptualisation of the stable, homogeneous subject who reserves control over its identity, and signification. Theatre has become a laboratory again, where the formation of identity is tested, with linguistic signification in the spotlight. While it was the heritage of *high semioticity* that allowed for the late renaissance's theatrical problematisation of epistemological issues, in the postmodern this process is validated by other factors. Reality is substituted by an endless texture of signs. It is the *simulacrum* that annihilates all points of reference; but these are not disposed of at all, but are resurrected in sign systems.<sup>14</sup> Since every domain of social existence is simulated in a way, theatre's denial of referentiality, and the subversive tendency of playing make it possible not only to express the doubts concerning major epistemological cornerstones of the age, but also to deconstruct and, if necessary, destroy certain elements in the strategic weaponry that power applies to regulate the subject. If we extend the list of sign complexes which can be isolated from reality and whose sole aim is feedback and subversion, it is justifiable to say that theatre too becomes uncontrollable as a hyperreal occurrence, whose existence is reintegrated into a new type of mirror function. But far from being impotent, this function permits to subvert – and process as well, as we shall see later – power, which functions in terms of referentiality and the lost, but simulated real. Theatre does have the capacity to make a resistant reality out of signs in which identity and subjectivity can be tested and reconstructed in new forms.

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tandem with the early modern reinvention of death (Neill 1998, 102–141).

<sup>13</sup> It is needless to say that this *obsession with speaking* and the proliferation of texts both signal the exhaustion of the preceding – modern – system of signification. The over-production of words is a sign of an anxious attempt at the retrieval of the power words earlier had; however, the desired “deeper” meaning sinks even more into the unstructured whirl of the monstrous textual corpus of the postmodern. Nevertheless, it is not the results that are important but the process of transition itself.

<sup>14</sup> Baudrillard (Baudrillard 1995, 3–18) describes the postmodern parting from the concept of abstraction: in his view, it is not a mimetic correspondent of something real, but hyperreal, i.e. it precedes every type of reality, and serves to generate other, non-real realities. Although this might seem paradox, it is reasonable, since that difference, which at the same time unites and separates the sign and its referent has disappeared. Thus the mirror-image relationship hitherto supposed between the real entity and its signifier is nonexistent, and this entails the possibility of generating endless series of realities which exist in miniaturised matrices. This revolution in signification engenders the era of simulation, an infinite space of non-being. Continuing his argumentation, Baudrillard tosses the human being into a vast space of nothingness; for if God himself is the product of the logic of the simulacra, then there is no ultimate guarantee of meaning, and everything there is returns into itself. If the precondition of existence is the perfect functioning of the simulacra, idyllically enveloping every single consciousness there is, then the *other* must be sacrificed and isolated, because without it, simulation becomes irrevocable. Consequently, the system of cultural representations will strive to eliminate otherness, the touchstone of signification (as we shall see later), in such a course that implies a dangerous effacement of the agents maintaining the current socio-cultural order, like the *symbolic order*, and of the knowledge maintaining the possibility of its functioning.

## From Ego to Subject

The human being, as we know it today, is a relatively new phenomenon. It is now a theoretical commonplace that the *I* is a historically specific entity, which is endowed by meanings that pertain to that socio-cultural formation in which it emerges. That is, the one who says *I* is always caught up in the circumstances of his/her own context. Notwithstanding, Western thought has been governed by the Cartesian notion of the human being throughout the last three centuries. René Descartes established an unequal duality: on the one hand “we clearly perceive that neither extension, nor figure, nor local motion, nor anything similar that can be attributed to the body, pertains to our nature, and nothing save thought alone” (Descartes 2004, 16). On the other hand, due to divine providence, our mind exists independently from all there is. Mind and body subsist separately, and obviously it is the latter that has a say over the former: I think therefore I am. Only the mind is capable of learning the great truths, the body is there to deceive, unable to make a difference between illusion and reality because of its flawed perception. The ego cannot be deceived, simply because

[...] the *light of nature*, or faculty of *knowledge* given us by God, can never compass any object which is not true, in as far as it attains to a knowledge of it, that is, in as far as the object is clearly and distinctly apprehended. For God would have merited the appellation of a deceiver if he had given us this faculty perverted, and such as might lead us to take falsity for truth

(op. cit., 25; my emphasis).

The human being seems to consist of pure thought, deemed to be locked up into flesh during its earthly life. The body is a vessel and a possible source of mistakes and errors. Not only does the mind mean a safeguard against pain and desire (which virtually disappear from the Cartesian subject), but it also rationalises our existence. That which has an importance, must take the form of thought. The omnipotence of the ego erected, all becomes clear and simple, since “we will easily discover the truth, provided we separate what there is of clear and distinct in the knowledge from what is obscure and confused” (ibid.). The consequence is domination – over corporeality and meaning. Having said that, it can be affirmed that the human being knows itself as if it were a map; it knows what it wants to communicate, regardless of the place and time of enunciation, or others, for that matter. There is no external condition that would destroy this harmony, neither internal.

This model of subjectivity does not allow for multiplicity. There is only one voice inside the ego, which always *knows* what to do. If mistakes are made, they are made deliberately, but not due to internal conflicts in one’s soul, since there are no such things. What is outside of the ego is just there as a scenery, to be freely manipulated. This ego is not subject to change or to variations of gender, age or race. It sees through itself, contemplates a transparent reality and uses transparent signs to enunciate. The Cartesian ego is a monolith that stands alone; in itself, against the confusions of reality. Although it still governs the subjects’ own confessional view of themselves, it became subject to criticism, and was partially destroyed by the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and on by psychoanalytic theories of the mind.

The Cartesian ego emerges and functions in a position of transcendence – superior to everything else that has a materially related existence. “Neither a historical individual nor a logically conceived consciousness, the subject is henceforth the operatingthetic consciousness positing correlatively the transcendental Being and ego” (Kristeva 1980, 130). One of the major strikes this conception received was the division of the human mind by psychoanalysis into different dimensions, out of which none could assume an exclusive control over the other. This new notion affirms that the subject does not just come out of the blue. It is born from the *real* – the



mother's womb – into a space where it gradually advances towards the *symbolic*. The baby will soon be wrapped into the texture of signs, while it abandons the real, which once bred it. The product of this process is, in contrast with the Cartesian monolith that we term *ego*, is the *subject*: a construction and a process, product of culturally embedded signifying practices. It is characterised by heterogeneity and the need to assert control over its drives and desires in order to be an agent of culture. The constitution of the subject has to be seen from more than one viewpoint: subjectivity is the interface of the social/cultural, the psychic and the corporeal.

The first phase of the constitution of subjectivity is the mirror stage (Lacan 1999, 3–10). Basically a model of primitive identification, it encompasses a transformation that takes place inside the child when it assumes the image a mirror communicates to it in the age of approximately 6 months. This image is the *Ideal-I*, which serves to open up the way into the symbolic, and close the access to *the real*. Before, the child is unable to see itself as a whole, just as scattered parts, which have an equally strong connection to any element of the world (e.g. the mother's breast). After this *Gestalt*, which "symbolizes the mental permanence of the *I*, at the same time as it prefigures its alienating destination," (op. cit., 4) is incorporated into the child's imaginary,<sup>15</sup> it will misrecognise itself as a unified whole. The separation from the real and the projection into a symbolic unit entails future self-reflection. The mirror stage is the first vaccine that provides partial immunity against the *real*, which is lost for the young subject, but which will still be available indirectly through semiosis. One might wonder how Descartes' ego would figure in this mirror: undoubtedly, it would contemplate the perfect image of a perfect being. In this case, however, the mirror would come after the ego, and not vice versa. But the important point is that everything must have an origin; and the Cartesian ego would be the origin of itself, which, logically, it cannot be.

The next phase is the oedipalisation of the child's body. Libidinal desire towards the body of the mother, and hatred towards the father are reconciled in this unconscious act of mediation. The child internalizes the image of the father and channels his desire through him when he recognizes that he could be punished for his desires; moved by a threat of castration, "he overcomes his hatred for his father and abandons his mother as a love-object" (Silverman 1984, 141). That is, he learns what it takes to deny his attraction to the mother in order to maintain the possibility of her access through the father, who stands for something else in this process; he incarnates the rules of socially acceptable behaviour. The child's recognition is signification, which will at the same time be a subjection to culturally acclaimed practices, i.e. he becomes, to put it very roughly, a proto-subject.

The socio-cultural condition of the constitution of subjectivity is a *system of subjects*. In society, similarly to languages,<sup>16</sup> those units that make it up do not mean by and for themselves. Identity is assigned intersubjectively by relations and differences that form a network in society. The space in which the human being is immersed in order to become a subject is not a vacuum, but is full of relations, values and beliefs. There is some kind of an organising principle, a logic that forms and maintains one particular social form, which is generally called ideology. Althusser describes it as "a 'representation' of the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence" (Althusser 1998, 693). Ideology is a catchphrase for those – societal – relationships that bind the subject to their location within the system. It is a basic requisite for the sub-

<sup>15</sup> In the tripartite division of the *real*, the *imaginary* and the *symbolic*, the imaginary is the location of the representations of the outside world's elements; it is responsible for the mediation between the psyche and reality.

<sup>16</sup> In language there are only differences. It is a system of signs where meaning comes about not as an entity inherent to the sign or some transcendental endowment, but as the result of the negative and differential relationship between the elements of language (Saussure 1998, 59–72).

ject to recognise itself and others as subjects. This recognition mediates the difference that separates and unites them at the same time. Recognising the subjectivity that a socio-cultural system distributes is assuming the guiding ideology in that system. Consequently, saturated by ideology, the subject's existence is based on the existence of this ideology and the other subjects; it's others, in relation to whom it can have an identity.

As I have indicated, the subject is not a monolith and a unanimous entity anymore, but a construction and a process. Dominant ideologies, however, attempt to (and easily succeed in) make us believe that we are self-sufficient beings who possess our ego: that is, that we are not in need of any outer factor to be able to exist. Euro-American culture, which is continually being exported to every part of the world, is permeated by ideologies that build upon this imaginary conception of subjectivity. Individuality is the cornerstone of a successful and proper lifestyle. But this leads to oppression and exclusion. Identity is still generally seen as, despite scientific advances in the matter, a monolith, something to be owned, ruled and contained, which carries in itself a value, which can be lost. It distributes borderlines, alongside which separation and exclusion take place. This notion of subjectivity, which I prefer to call hegemonic, results in domination over the dispossessed, and a constant anxiety, an inner turmoil to be constantly negotiated and repressed in the self. The fear from the alien to oneself, and the rejection of change and difference both have their roots here. In line with this, I argue that *Hamletmachine* tries to deconstruct this hegemonic ego and expose that subjectivity is a constant construction, where borders are fluid and cannot be fully under control: that the subject's existence is ideologically conditioned, to which it is blind, but which it can see, through the mirror *Hamletmachine* shows up. By building up a complex and significantly overloaded textual reality relying principally on Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, the play foregrounds the epistemological crisis that characterises postmodern culture. The subject – constructed in/through the text and provided for the reader to identify with – as a unitary category is put on trial.

## De-composition

Why are Shakespeare and *Hamlet* those reference points in terms of which *Hamletmachine* defines itself? Heiner Müller stated once that “[Shakespeare] is the human being I feel the closest to” (Calb 1998, 87). The simulation of the non-presence of the totality of the surrounding cultural environment and the reduction of the structure of human relationships to this sole historical construct (i.e. Shakespeare) exposes the nature of Müller's treatment of origin: it is a primary matter but in a dimension of parody or absurdity. Canonical literature's ontology is subsumed into the epistemology of such a dimension where signifiers are liberated from the binding gravity of concreteness and determinacy through a space which lingers somewhere between and over the borders of the *imaginary* and the *real*. Müller was aware of the epistemological crisis that closely connects the late renaissance and the postmodern: he and Shakespeare both “lived and worked in similar ‘transitional’ periods, under a similar ‘pressure of experience’ attributable to upheavals in language and politics at the close of one epoch and the dawn of another” (op. cit., 87). As it is, not only does Müller admit an affinity of indeterminacy between the two cultural periods, but also draws attention to the changes in linguistic signification. The other side of the coin, politics, herein means more than party or state politics, of course – it means everything, i.e. the private and the public as well, a framework into which subjectivity clearly fits; as it has been defined in this paper as the interface of the psychic, the cultural and the corporeal, it should be at the centre of any political struggle that concerns the human being – and each one does. Indeed, *Hamletmachine* functions as a prism through which Hamlet's concerns radiate back to the postmodern, but broken into dozens of clusters, cutting through the skin of textual unity.

It is a “fascination with the psychology of the powerful” (op. cit., 88) that comes through and motivates the connection; and it is a deconstruction of the powerful and the re/construction of a resistant essence what is triggered by it.

Heiner Müller once declared: “For thirty years *Hamlet* was a real obsession for me, so I tried to destroy him by writing a short text, *Hamletmachine*” (op. cit., 108). *Hamlet* is one of the best-known literary texts in the world. Its status guaranteed by the canon and the intellect, it is one of the founding pillars of literature. Indirectly, the play is the result of a “tendency to use *Hamlet* as a symbol for the modern intellectual’s prevarications, hesitations, and rationalisations in the face of tyranny and terror” (op. cit., 109).<sup>17</sup> Calb wrote this in 1998 when terror and tyranny generally appear in the form of ideologies. Metaphorically, *Hamlet* becomes the icon against those power strategies that socially integrate the homogenised subject, which is made to believe that its identity is fixed and stable, has dominance over signifying practices, and is the origin of meaning. All the prevarications, hesitations and rationalisations are then signs of an uncertainty of beliefs, problems, suffering and dynamism. This figure has been dejected from those practices that regulate it, into a nothingness of a void; its segregation engenders repulsion, levitating between the safe territory of cultural acceptance and the dangerous sidewalks of resistance to power.

The most obvious key that opens up the gate communicating between *Hamlet* and *Hamlet-machine* is the figure of the prince. *Hamlet* is an actor. He constantly assumes new roles, triggered into a series of transformations (from the intelligent student through the valiant prince and the wretched madman to the avenger) by the visitation of the ghost. As a director he stages the mouse-trap to make sure of Claudius’ guilt. But no matter what he does to find truth, he hesitates. His self-identity is under continual de/construction. Language is used not to conceal his real identity, but to create new ones. Nonetheless, these changes should not be considered a sign of *Hamlet*’s domination of linguistic signification. He does not generate his identity, but rather acquires new *positions* in discourse; that is, language dominates him, since those positions open for assumption are previously created locations, mediated by culture. The fact that *Hamlet* is attributed the role of the director distances both the actor and the director from their traditional conceptualisation: they are not the origin of meaning anymore, but characters that are identified by the role they play, manipulated by the dramatic text, and not vice versa.

In his own tragedy of consciousness,<sup>18</sup> *Hamlet* suffers because he loses control over reality and subsequently over his mind. Truth, which was supposedly guaranteed by God, is lost in his mental turmoil over the visitation of the ghost. It is important to see that world and mind align here, both disturbed and uncertain.<sup>19</sup> The solution to this situation in which the subsided truths

<sup>17</sup> This is not surprising, knowing that *Hamlet* embodied the perfect nobleman of his time, to the extent that Frye even suggests that Sir Phillip Sidney could have served as an example for creating his figure. He also adds that “as a liberally educated Christian humanist, *Hamlet* approaches his problems by thinking about them, by attempting to reason them out, before taking action. The ideal of the nobleman or prince in Shakespeare’s culture was a man of action who was also a man of thought, and *Hamlet* is to be understood primarily within that frame of reference” (Frye 1984, 171).

<sup>18</sup> *Hamlet* is considered here a tragedy of consciousness, i.e. a drama which dispenses with traditional dramatic devices and attempts to map out different issues of the mind through words.

<sup>19</sup> It may not have been very peculiar to the contemporary audience to see *Hamlet* in such a state of mind, since in the late renaissance regicide and the incestuous relations (like that of Claudius and Gertrud) were regarded as primary sins: “When understood in terms of these sixteenth-century attitudes, *Hamlet*’s relentless self-examination of his own ‘case of conscience’ would not have appeared either weak or dilatory, but rather an exemplary application of wisdom and justice in the face of a desperate crisis,” and “no one in the sixteenth century would have agreed as T.S. Eliot did in the twentieth, that *Hamlet* had no objective correlative to justify and explain the strength of his

and repressed doubts overflow the flanges of the mind is the melding of the receptacle: "O, that this too solid flesh would melt / Thaw and resolve itself into a dew!" (*Ham.*1.2.129–130). Flesh, in the shape of a healthy body signifies completeness. But if grotesque or damaged, it becomes abject, i.e. its function is to repel, to make the spectator reject it, thus reinforcing those invisible boundaries that envelope the same subject. Fear and hatred towards what threatens us (let it be blood, a corpse, etc.) will make us realise our "proper place." The abject is positioned outside culture; it is a milestone that signals a point of discontinuity between homogeneity and heterogeneity. Semiosis generally does away with it: we simply tend to overlook, to non-code it, since it serves to disturb, and to dislocate us from the ideological comfort of the – syntactic – unity of the *I*.

So begins Hamlet's quest: on one level to take revenge, and on another to escape his position in/ on the *great globe*, since he realises the unnaturalness of his being:

Yea, from the table of my memory  
I'll wipe away all trivial fond records,  
All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past,  
That youth and observation copied there;  
And thy commandment all alone shall live  
Within the book and volume of my brain

(*Ham.*1.5.98–103).

The brain – the metaphor of the psyche – is like a book. It is written, i.e. organised according to a socially approved form of composition. A genre is a tool and a limitation at the same time. Hamlet rejects this circumscription and empties his head: the only thing that remains is the imperative of revenge. Ironically, the fatherly commandment turns the son on the new father, who manifests the network of social rules and taboos. Rejection and acceptance are coupled; Hamlet will realise, though, quite clearly, that

Now I am alone, [...]  
Must, like a whore, unpack my heart with words,  
And fall a-cursing, like a very drab,  
A scullion!  
Fie upon't! foh! About, my brain!

(*Ham.*2.2.584&622–625).

He falls; his brain damaged, no longer functioning, he turns into a weapon. There is war in his head. The victim is himself:

To die: to sleep;  
No more; and by a sleep to say we end  
The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks  
That flesh is heir to, 'tis a consummation  
Devoutly to be wish'd. To die, to sleep;  
To sleep: perchance to dream

(*Ham.*3.1.60–65).

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aversion" (Frye 1984, 74 & 110). Even so, whether he had reasons or not, his psychic disorder, anxiety and constant probing of his own conscience (consciousness) is evident throughout the development of dramatic action.

He imagines and plays possible realities. The construction of new subjectivity must ultimately take the form of a radical self-repudiation. To make something new, there must be denial, pain and suffering. Hamlet suffers throughout his tragedy. His soul is sunk in pains, and convulsions lacerate his brain. He denies himself *to be*, in order *not to be*, and sets out to do away with all that there is: "O! from this time forth, / My thoughts be bloody, or be nothing worth!" (*Ham.4.4.* 65–66). It is this exclamation that unites him best with the Hamlet actor.

## De/Constructions

*Hamletmachine* is a six page-long drama, composed of five acts. It contains almost no stage directions, several parts of the text are capitalised as if it were screaming out loud to find someone to listen. The characters are fluid and often not identifiable. The text itself is a montage, consisting of diverse quotations traversing a significant portion of the literary canon. Its interpretations seem to be infinite. According to Calb, it is an attempt at the "eradication of dramatic literature, or rather the displacement of drama by means of enactment, theatre" (Calb 1998, 107). The play is put in the context of the Artaudean theatre of cruelty, in which Ophelia and the actor are seen as agents working in the interest of questioning the representational traditions of modern theatre. Although Artaud is considered to be taken only half-seriously, building on Derrida's text on the theatre of cruelty, Calb sees in the drama's enterprise an uprising against the mimetic reproduction of reality.<sup>20</sup> The emphasis on vision over writing is meant to question the authoritative yoke of the canon on newly born literary works of art. However, Calb remains captive of theatricality almost exclusively. His final argumentation, suggesting that Robert Wilson – an important friend and collaborator – and Müller as director both broke in their productions with the few textual restraints of *Hamletmachine*, such as stage directions or of Ophelia's final wrapping into gauze, could be extended farther.

The theatre of cruelty is claimed to restore flesh and body to the theatre. The supremacy of meaning, wrapped into the texture of ideology, should be countered in the theatrical representation of the play. The theological nature of scenic adaptation is evicted on the grounds that no agent of theatrical signification should be allowed an authority over the performance. Representation should be murdered, but yet again, its death would give rise to a new type of representation: "The stage will no longer operate as the repetition of a present, will no longer re-present

<sup>20</sup> This consideration might prove unnecessary in part, at least regarding Hamlet's definition of art in the third act ("the purpose of playing, / Whose end, both at the first and now, was and is, to hold, as / 'twere, the *mirror up to nature*; to show Virtue her own feature, / scorn her own image, and the very age and body of his time his form and pressure" (*Ham.3.2.19–23*; my emphasis)), since the concept of *mimesis* as employed there is not universal. If we situate it in the context of sixteenth-century England, it will be very telling that "as artifacts, Elizabethan mirrors were small instruments, and as often as not represented a flawed or changed image of what they reflected. More importantly, mirrors were familiar metaphors for knowledge and understanding, beginning of course with self-reflection which comes from looking into even a small glass: [...] the 'vehicle' was the small Elizabethan mirror, the 'tenor' was the understanding and knowledge it conveyed" (Frye 1984, 6). That is, if the definition of tragedy as *mimesis* is adjusted to the late renaissance, it follows that the purpose of the scenic representation of reality was to re-present reality in a believable, but necessarily distorted form, in which dramatic reality could have been charged with additional meanings (through e.g. the use of emblems, symbols, tropes, etc.): "In this milieu, Hamlet's directives for dramatic art are remarkably inclusive: art begins with and refers back to reality, but without a slavish copying; art increases our moral awareness, but without preachiness; and art is subject to temperance and decorum. Between the polarities of verisimilitude and fantasy, it presents a transfigured reality" (op.cit., 292).

a present that would exist elsewhere and prior to it, a present whose plenitude would be older than it, absent from it, and rightfully capable of doing without it" (Derrida 1974, 237). If this thesis is applied not to the performance, but to the text yet to be performed, it becomes clear that *Hamletmachine* previously succeeds in destroying a sense of presence. Coherence, unity and unanimity are all absent from the play to the degree that it is impossible to use the text as a superimposed source of authority. The sardonic dissection of power – over signification and identity – results in yet another tragedy of consciousness, which of course, will function in a way – determined or not by a director adhering or not to the text – in the receiver's psyche as a mental theatre of cruelty.<sup>21</sup> The central precept, that is, that "the origin of theatre, such as it must be restored, is the hand lifted against the abusive wilder of the logos, against the father, against the God of a stage subjugated to the power of speech and text" (op. cit., 239) is achieved in *Hamletmachine*. Representative speech and text that are present are not anymore the centralised, authoritative halo that crowns an author, but partial, fragmented, and dissociated from the norms of ordinary language use.

As opposed to Calb, Kékesi Kun interprets *Hamletmachine* the other way around (Kékesi Kun 2000, 174–180). He claims that it is not theatricality that submerges and dissipates the text, but it is theatricality that becomes completely textual, i.e. textuality is extended onto the totality of the theatrical dimension. This fact is underscored by a structural analysis borrowed from Erika Fischer-Lichte, and further problematised through the observation that the drama is, as a matter of fact, a dramatisation of linguistic signification, which becomes fluid and boundless in *Hamletmachine*. The final conclusion is that the play is not a paraphrase, and neither a rephrase, of *Hamlet*, but a continuation, or a next episode, so to say, which, in the state of endless continuity, results in a transformation of a postmodern existence and not in losing identity.

How can such sharp a contrast exist between two interpretations? Is *Hamletmachine* the destruction of textuality or of theatricality? Can it really be that *Hamletmachine* is a continuation of *Hamlet*? Naturally, the contrast is not a matter of a wrong or right interpretation. To undo this knot is to note that the drama is a fusion; a synthesis that cross-cuts the traditional forms of verbal and visual representation. *Hamletmachine* attacks on every possible frontline. On the one hand, it gives a chance to exploit theatricality – building on the signifying capacities provided by the simulacra – and, on the other, it offers a radical textual apparatus to overthrow the tyranny of the technologies of power that organise literary works of art into structuring patterns. So, it is not a problem of either/or but of and/or. The homogenising logic that tries to categorise our surrounding reality into binary oppositions – which always results in the exclusion of the less and the privilege of the more powerful – completely fails here. Not that these binaries (such as actor/character, right/wrong, construction/destruction, etc.) are not at work here; but their function is a degenerative one, following a path that leads to the dissemination of these abstractions into a low gravity stasis where it becomes possible to undermine them in such a tacit way that the reader/spectator experiences – literally – this process as an inscription on the "wiring" of its psyche. Similarly to the manoeuvres power takes to affirm its necessity, *Hamletmachine* also enters the ring to simulate a theatre of cruelty in order to affirm itself as a non-being, a lack of essence, and a full distanciation from all there is, in order *not to be*, to be the non-representable choice, the space that resists the signifying coercion of culture, and to fully absorb the receiver,

<sup>21</sup> This affirmation might sound bold as every subject is historically, gender- and culture-specific, but it is an obvious fact that reading is a psychic process, which traverses the reader's body as well. Thus, although theatre as a sign system employs more complex apparatuses in meaning-making than individual reading, I claim that it is more than possible to posit the way the drama is "staged by the mind" (which is especially relevant for those reader/spectator communities that cannot see the play in performance – as is the case of Hungarian theatre, where *Hamletmachine* has been present only in Pécs, for one season in 2003 – so virtually it has had only readers, but no spectators).

unnoticed by the sentinels of the *symbolic*. However, representation and signification do go on to exist; this is not to say that *Hamletmachine* is outside culture or society (or textuality, for that matter), but that it is a mechanism whose subject can potentially surpass these boundaries.

It should be noted as well that if the play is a continuation of *Hamlet*, then the two should be compatible. But the points of continuity seem too diverse and sporadic; those lines which are crucial from this point of view have already been listed. If we consider the plays in their totality, Kékesi Kun's interpretation becomes more acceptable. *Hamletmachine* does indeed share a thematic horizon and an aim with *Hamlet*; due to this fact, and the radicalism of the former, I would rather call it an adaptation than a continuation. As for losing identity, it is almost impossible not to see that it does happen continually, this being the essence of the drama. However, it is true that in the end things return to – a disturbed – normality, maintaining a new form of identity, as we shall see later.

But before that, having a look at another interpretation of *Hamletmachine* is due here, the one offered by Kiss Attila's essay, "Under a Sun of Torture" (Kiss 1995). He states that "It is not that the drama (or the potential theatrical performance) goes beyond and deconstructs the textuality which holds the subject captive of representational rules. Rather, it is this textuality as such that *Hamletmachine* shows up and raises from the automatism of signification" (op. cit., 81). The materiality of the signifier, underpinned by the fact that it is so deeply connected to the subject that corporeality and signification cannot cease to be related, and that the drama itself is a text, hinders any attempt to escape the logic of representation. Instead, employing the abject on the stage, and dislocating the reader/spectator from the conventional positions consecrated by the socio-cultural context, *Hamletmachine* disturbs the harmony of the ego. This objective is targeted by the text's endeavour to "go outside itself," that is, by the use of multiple sources and disparate quotations to collapse itself and free itself of ideology.

I concur with this interpretation with respect to *Hamletmachine*'s attempt to change the configuration of the receiver's psychic order. However, it is dubious whether a text can strive to deny itself at all (according to Kiss Attila it fails too). Words can never be destroyed without losing everything they are for: representation and self-reflexivity, i.e. signification. As I indicated above, the simulation of leaving the arena of ideology is the result of the sole purpose to remain there, unnoticed by the vigilant guards of the subject's reality. If according to critics *Hamletmachine* is not dangerous, since it cannot traverse its textual bonds, lying there defenceless as Prometheus under the eagle, then it will have the chance to germinate inside the psyche of the subject until the point when it manages to effect its lethal mechanism, in a similar logic to Müller's literary cannibalism.<sup>22</sup> The secret infection the drama injects under the skin of the subject will result in the flow of blood, the pumping of the heart, and the restart of secretion. The ice age of the subject will experience a glimpse at this "sun of torture," meant to make free, and not to do harm.

*Hamletmachine* is thus a compound of diverse strategies, all designed to construct through destruction. This apocalyptic behaviour of the Müllerean literature should not be surprising; the text bears the imprints of several crises of the twentieth century, such as World War 2, extremist regimes, uprisings and their bloody suffocations, etc. It is a symptom of a declining

<sup>22</sup> "To know [the dead], you have to eat them. And then you spit out the living particles... [Reading is] an absolute luxury. Eating literature is faster" (Calb 1998, 18). This attitude of necrophilia can be attributed to the fact that Müller sees in the dead the hope of the future; the coming back of the dead through the body will possibly identify "the gap in the process, the Other in the recurrence of the Same, the stammer in the speechless text, the hole in eternity, the possibly redeeming ERROR" (*DoaP*, 101).

European culture and history,<sup>23</sup> which carries in itself the cure: apocalypse as the resuscitation of mankind in a world void of the madness and violence that it contains now. The strategies to induce this state are a fusion of theatrical and textual efforts employing condensation, multiple quotations and references, the logic of the theatre of cruelty, and an imagery that subverts normal signification. The play is poising on a razor edge between the prospects of a textual and a theatrical offensive; in the end it seems that it uses both to preserve its particular place with respect to the literary canon, and to sustain its struggle against hegemonic subjectivity.

### “A Kingdom for a murderer”— Hamletmachine and the Fall of the Ego

A Müllerean character that already had inside the seed of *Hamletmachine* was born in 1971: Macbeth. His words sound as if they were the unsaid words before the first line of *Hamlet*. “I want to tear this race out of the future. / If nothing comes from me, then nothingness will come from me. / Who’s there.”<sup>24</sup> It seems as if we heard an announcement of a doomsday apocalypse. Macbeth’s prophetic words harness the force which later devastates the surmise of an essence within the human being. The intention of producing nothingness is triggered by the human being’s impotence to act and evade the impression of futility – cast on it by a portentous world order that strips the subject of the sensation of difference and the ability to effectuate change in its ambient. That race which will be torn out of the future by *Hamletmachine* is of course an implication of a type of subjectivity. Nothingness is simply a matter of relationality, a result of the jocund play of absence and presence, of *to be* and *not to be*. *Not to be* will be the arch-weapon in the service of the creation of something new. Death shall foster a new life on the remnants of a doomed race resurrected outside the “Eden” of civilisation.

Now remember that in *Hamlet* it is Bernardo who says the first line “Who’s there?” (*Ham*.1.1.1). In a certain way, this line is the first part of a short dialogue taking place between Macbeth/Bernardo and the Hamlet actor, cutting through textual boundaries, and conveying an impression of literature as more than just segments of works. The actor’s answer is that “I was Hamlet” (*HM*, 53; my emphasis). Hamlet denies himself; practically he becomes a void in the drama, an absence of presence, and establishes a relationship of difference with *Hamlet*. There is no Hamlet anymore, but an *actor playing Hamlet*. In his self-denial and becoming a palimpsest he is still the hesitating intellectual who constantly plays sarcastic jokes about the story of his treacherous mother and his father, murdered by his brethren. He is not sophisticated like Hamlet, but cruel and vulgar. His behaviour reflects a complete passivity in every possible sense: “I’M GOOD HAMLET GI’ME A CAUSE FOR GRIEF” (*HM*, 53) he says in the first act as if waiting to be inculcated into action by some outer force. The crisis he observes he extends it to a universal level: “SOMETHING IS ROTTEN IN THIS AGE OF HOPE;”<sup>25</sup> “LET’S DELVE IN EARTH AND BLOW HER AT THE MOON”<sup>26</sup> (*HM*, 53). One possible escape is the silence that remains after destruction. The silence in which semiosis, i.e. human existence could never take place. However, we are referred to “Ash Wednesday” to see that the Hamlet actor knows the price of existence, which is identified as the loss of the *real* and the gain of lan-

<sup>23</sup> The play takes place with the Hamlet actor standing on a barren shore, “the ruins of Europe in back of me” (*HM*, 53). That is, an exhausted European culture will serve as the universe in which the drama enacts its own and the subject’s dissection.

<sup>24</sup> Heiner Müller, *Macbeth* (referred edition unclear), 210 (quoted in Calb 1998, 92).

<sup>25</sup> Instead of “Something is rotten in the court of Denmark” (*Ham*.1.4.90).

<sup>26</sup> Instead of “But I will delve one yard below their mines, / and blow them at the moon” (*Ham*.3.4. 208–209).



guage: "OH MY PEOPLE WHAT HAVE I DONE TO THEE" (*HM*, 53) completes a verse in Eliot's poem that reveals, in the form of a poetics of semiotics, that the centre of the world is the word, and not vice-versa:

If the lost word is lost, if the spent word is spent  
 If the unheard, unspoken  
 Word is unspoken, unheard;  
 Still is the unspoken word, the Word unheard,  
 The Word without a word, the Word within  
 The world and for the world;  
 And the light shone in darkness and  
 Against the Word the unstilled world still whirled  
 About the centre of the silent Word.  
 Oh my people, what have I done unto thee

(Eliot 1982).

Such lines taken from elsewhere are typical of *Hamletmachine*. Almost every line represents an intertextual link to other texts. The drama encompasses much more than those six pages that make it up per se. It has an enormous latent content, which, drawing on a parallelism with the Freudian division of the mind, might refer us to an interesting conclusion.

The drama has a similar structure to that of the human psyche. Freud divided it into the conscious and the unconscious. *Hamletmachine* too has at least these two levels. On the one hand, there is the dramatic text, which can be equated with the conscious domain, i.e. this would symbolically be the level of the manifest content, directly accessible to the reader/spectator subject. On the other hand, the subconscious function is taken up by those texts that are rooted intertextually in the play (and which the reader/spectator can access through a massive amount of further reading). The traumatic experience of canonised literature has left incursions in *Hamletmachine*. These lines that connect possible worlds of fiction, which are used to create an identity for communities of readers, are surges in the drama. They signify denial and distance from those power strategies that are present in the subject.<sup>27</sup>

The dislocation of traditional theatricality is marked by the uprooting of the actors from their roles. The Hamlet actor, so alike his predecessor, his "thoughts so full of blood,"<sup>28</sup> (*HM*, 54) asks Horatio whom exactly he wanted to play after he, withholding even his payment, literally fired him: "YOU WILL BE LATE MY FRIEND FOR YOUR PAY-CHECK / NO PART FOR YOU IN THIS MY TRAGEDY" (*HM*, 54). Horatio disappears (although it is not sure whether he was there at all) and leaves the stage to a rampaging Hamlet actor who is babbling about raping his mother and sewing her hymen before turning to his dear love, Ophelia: "Then let me eat your heart, Ophelia, which weeps my tears" (*HM*, 54). He is metaphorically transplanted into Ophelia's body by identifying his eye (which weeps his tears), homonym of *I*, with her heart.<sup>29</sup> His desire to eat her heart and thus himself refers us back to the legend of *Ouroboros*, the snake which devours

<sup>27</sup> Drawing on Michel Foucault here (Foucault 1982, 208–229), who affirms that power strategies that position the subject as subject are integrated into the subject through everyday discursive practices, I argue that all – mainstream – literature has the function of forming and maintaining the identity of a reading community. It is enough to think of the works of Shakespeare or Dante for examples.

<sup>28</sup> Remember that Hamlet swore to fulfil his quest saying "O, from this time forth, / My thoughts be bloody, or be nothing worth!" (*Ham.4.4.67–68*). The Hamlet actor, in this sense, embraces this quest to set things right as his own.

<sup>29</sup> A staging which explicitly builds on this imagery would be perfectly imaginable.

itself, the symbol of the cycle of human life and of perfection. This is the point when the Hamlet actor and Ophelia start to flow into each other.

In the "EUROPE OF WOMEN," in contrast to the "ruins of Europe" familiar from the first act, we see but a bleeding open body. Ophelia's clock-heart dictates the tempo of her steps toward the edge of her resuscitation from death. Her becoming alive is marked by a tragic monologue, which is not a journey to oblivion, but a return from death, and a negation of her suicide she committed and has been committing from the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Ophelia rejects her role and the role of the victimized woman:

I am Ophelia. The one the river didn't keep. The woman dangling from the rope. The woman with her arteries cut open. The woman with the overdose. SNOW ON HER LIPS [...] Yesterday I stopped killing myself. I am alone with my thighs my womb. I smash the tools of my captivity, the chair the table the bed [...] With my bleeding hands I tear the photos of the men I loved and who used me [...] I set fire to my prison [...] I walk into the street clothed in my blood

(HM, 55).

Ophelia, like the Hamlet actor, refuses to play her Shakespearean role. She destroys the images of the men with whom she had sex in an iconic reinforcement of denial. Feminine identity is dissolved by her blood that covers her body. As woman, a "producer of blood," she exposes the humour that should be hidden, which repels and subverts civilisation.<sup>30</sup> She decides to "wrench the clock that was my heart out of my breast," (HM, 55) which might be interpreted as the removal of the etalon of modernity, the mechanical factor of time, which substitutes the heart as the regulator of the human being's life cycle (Fischer-Lichte 2001, 692). The rejection of feminine identity as inscribed by/into social power strategies could be seen to have utopian potential (Kékesi Kun 2000, 176). But the potential of returning from death (passivity, repression and subjection) to life is not utopian at all; rather, it is the way to reverse fate through a re-symbolisation of traumatic experiences, in order to create the edge of difference that separates self and other, or, with other words, to glide towards a different identity permitted by the text of *Hamletmachine*.

After Ophelia rejects the phallogocentric logic of patriarchy by wrenching her clock-heart out, there remains one enigma, which is crucial from the perspective of this interpretation: will the Hamlet actor eat her heart or not? As I indicated above, this clock-heart can, without doubt, be identified with the actor's *I*. In my interpretation, the actor certainly *has* it in some way; and this alludes to the critical self-destruction of phallogocentrism in a universe where it can no longer function. It devours itself to effectuate a perfect adaptation, integration and transformation, of power. As Müller's cannibalistic attitude towards the precedents of literature and texts serve to quickly absorb them in order that he could struggle with them, so does the Hamlet actor embark on this quest by dissolving patriarchy in/by his own body.<sup>31</sup> The fact that Ophelia exchanges her identity with the actor playing Hamlet in the third act means that the boundaries between male and female – an element of identity assigned to the subject at its birth – become

<sup>30</sup> Menstruation, a signifier of health, fecundity and renewal, is regarded by patriarchy as a subversive attribute of femininity. The general attitude is that the female body is sick, must be cured, and that blood is an inconvenience, a fetid disturbance which must be hidden – ironically, as the end of *Hamletmachine* will suggest, by gauze-like materials (Ophelia speaks the last lines of the drama after "two men in white smocks wrap gauze around her and the wheelchair [in which she sits], from bottom to top" (HM, 58)).

<sup>31</sup> This is not to affirm that the actor as a masculine character helps Ophelia undermine the bonds of her captivity, since this would only reproduce the masculine as able and powerful and the feminine as insufficient and powerless. It is Ophelia who blows patriarchy up; the actor necessarily acts as he does since the axes of this system cannot be maintained anymore.

fluid: "I want to be a woman," (*HM*, 55) says the Hamlet actor, and he is dressed in Ophelia's clothes, and made up as a whore.

The third act, "SCHERZO," is a new encounter with *Hamlet*, the Shakespearean drama. The actors are at the "university of the dead," where multiple dead Ophelias dance around, and the Hamlet actor walks by as if in a museum. A coffin with the insignia "HAMLET 1" (reference to the original *Hamlet*, not to Hamlet's father) appears together with Claudius, Ophelia and Horatio. The philosophers, whose symbol elsewhere could very well be Hamlet, throw their books at the actor; Claudius has sex not only with Gertrud but with Ophelia as well. The actor dances with Horatio's angel in an act of homosexuality. The climax of "SCHERZO" is the image of the *madonna* with the breast cancer: her name typed with a minuscule, and her sickness both indicate that probably she could never give birth to Jesus. The points of origin of Western culture suffer their final setback; *Hamletmachine* becomes a world without God, authority and rules. *Hamlet* is torn apart visually by the problematic representation of its key figures.

The fourth act is the actor's drama; it is the *tragedy of the subject*. The actor's revolution is inserted into the Hungarian revolution of the 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1956. He seems to revolt against the whole world, including himself. He is dissolved into multiple entities to become omnipresent and fluid, as a substance that is everything at the same time except for itself: "My drama, if it still would happen, would happen in the time of the uprising [...] My place, if my drama would still happen, would be on both sides of the front, between the frontlines, over and above them" (*HM*, 56) Although he declares that his drama is not a drama anymore, he imagines what he would do. This leads to theatre in theatre, the dissection of a consciousness on the stage: the dissolution commences with an oscillatory movement between multiple realities: "I stand in the stench of the crowd and hurl stones at policemen soldiers tanks bullet-proof glass. I look through the double doors of bullet-proof glass at the crowd pressing forward and smell the sweat of my fear" (*ibid.*). The horrifying dissipation of the nucleus, the stupefying demolition of the *I* makes him dizzy with nausea: "Choking with nausea, I shake my fist at myself who stands behind the bullet-proof glass. Shaking with fear and contempt, I see myself in the crowd pressing forward, foaming at the mouth, shaking my fist at myself" (*ibid.*).

After this imaginary revolution enters the stage of a psychic bloodshed, the actor averts the attention from the images that distribute his *I* into separate bodies to the feeling which serves as a seed of his revolution:

I strung up my uniformed flesh by my own heels. I am the soldier in the gun turret, my head is empty under the helmet, the stifled scream under the tracks. I am the typewriter [...] I break my own neck. I am my own prisoner [...] I go home and kill the time, at one/with my undivided self  
(*HM*, 56).

The unbearable pressure on his mind makes him implode. The script disappears and the actors lose their identity; they "put their faces on the rack in the dressing room" (*HM*, 56). He realizes that his "undivided" self is an illusion. The tension that follows from the repressed desire to dissolve into reality and to abandon the confinement of the *I* breaks out in a soliloquy of pathos, in the apotheosis of *nausea*:

In the solitude of airports  
I breathe again I am  
a privileged person My nausea  
is a privilege  
protected by torture  
Barbed wire prisons

(*HM*, 57).

This feeling, when one is fighting to resist the physical urge to empty its stomach, to impede the protrusion of the unstructured and repelling insides into outside reality is the origin and the purpose of the actor's revolution. Nevertheless, in a sardonic realisation he sees that this is a privilege, protected by the same institutions he intends to bring down: the torture of the normalising logic of technologies of power and one of its principal manifestations, the prison, where the concrete normalisation of dysfunctional subjectivities takes place.

The drama at this point symbolically becomes a *machine* that grinds and dissects what is put inside. The actor tears open his flesh, the supreme iconic signifier of stable identity, and destroys the photograph of the author, to deny him. The symbolic death of the author<sup>32</sup> takes place when the crisis seems to resolve itself: the Hamlet actor annihilates all possible points of reference: himself, the actors, God, and the author. Virtually all entities that could assume a governing role in the dramatic system disappear. This fact represents a turning point of cardinal importance. *I* is "the individual who utters the present instance of discourse containing the linguistic *I*," the speaking subject "can attain subjectivity or self-apprehension only through signification" (Silverman 1984, 196). One must signify/speak to gain identity. However, this is insufficient for the individual to become a subject. One must be spoken as well: "It is the spoken subject who, by identifying with the subject of the speech, permits the signifier 'I' to represent a subject to another signifier" (op. cit., 198). The actor playing Hamlet represents a new notion of subjectivity: it is spoken (signified by the "mirror" the drama represents), and he cannot influence what he really is.

This new type of human being that gets incarnated in the figure of the Hamlet actor points towards the poststructuralist theory of the *subject in process*. This subject is posited as one that opposes the Husserlean transcendental ego, in which a preordained, stable meaning is guaranteed, and is characterised by homogeneity and unity. The *subject in process* oscillates in the dialectics of formation and destruction. This movement is explained by the two modalities of signification. On the one hand, the *semiotic modality* is characterised with a heterogeneous flux of drives and desires. It is a space – *chora* – of unbridled energies that resist symbolisation or any other type of structuration. It is needless to say that it is also exempt from the dominating and unifying effect of the syntactic *I*. On the other hand, the *symbolic modality* is characterised by language as a sign system, which excludes the subject and posits a transcendental ego. The processes that lead to it are, among others, the mirror-stage, lack, representation or abstraction. The subject can articulate itself in the interaction of the semiotic and the symbolic modalities of signification: the setting-free of the drives (by suffering, frustration, identification and projection) destroys homogeneity which is replaced by heterogeneity, which in turn goes along with the loss of identity (Kristeva 1994, 188–197). I.e. identity is by no means a unit, an attribute of the subject, or a monolith. The different situations the subject experiences in different historical and cultural contexts, and its psychic and corporeal functions give rise to a dynamic process, a play of the construction and destruction of identity in/through signification.

The inner structure of the subject is complemented by outer power technologies. The subject is spoken by the forces that structure society, and is placed into signifying positions, from where it can predicate its identity, in terms of its relations to and differences from the other subjects. In this sense the *subject in process* is spoken/signified by ideologies, which are integrated into any moment of language use (beginning with the drama itself, in this case). The Hamlet actor's sentence, "I go home and kill the time, at one/with my undivided self" (*HM*, 56) is just an ironical exposition of the limited nature of the human being. His reality is many selves in one body;

<sup>32</sup> According to Barthes, writing means the destruction of every stable point of origin; the author enters into his own death when it starts to write. A text is a *texture* of quotations, thus having as origin not an author, but purely language (Barthes 2001, 50–55).

many voices within one entity. The impossibility of harmony in the actor's body and mind makes him commit a verbal suicide:

I force open my sealed flesh. I want to dwell in my veins, in the marrow of my bones, in the maze of my skull [...] Somewhere bodies are opened so I can be alone with my blood. My thoughts are lesions in my brain. My brain is a scar. I want to be a machine. Arms for grabbing Legs to walk on, no pain no thoughts.

(HM, 57).

The pain caused by the trauma of the abandonment of the *real* and the incursion of the *symbolic* exists in the subject's own thoughts. Without thoughts, there would be no suffering. Without thoughts, the actor could be happy.

Following the great destruction undertaken in the fourth act, the reader/spectator is faced with Ophelia, during "FIERCELY ENDURING MILLENNIUMS" (HM, 58) in a wheelchair, being wrapped into gauze by two doctor-like figures. Calb interprets her as a "dormant germ in the body politic, a female fifth column waiting silently for an advantageous moment to attack the patriarchy from within" (Calb 1998, 119). Teraoka, on her behalf, calls her speech a call to revolution, a "cry arising out of the experience of colonised peoples" (Teraoka 1958, 121). In the context of this interpretation it is seen as a final act of refusal, a postmodern *memento mori* for the spectator (or a potential group of spectators who shall watch *Hamletmachine's* performance during "fiercely enduring" millennia). Like the Hamlet actor, who steps into the armour at the end of the fourth act, Ophelia is cured of her "disease." Kékesi Kun's opinion is that, as opposed to the Hamlet actor in the first act, who represents *the end in the beginning*, Ophelia stands for *the beginning in the end* (Kékesi Kun 2000, 176). This differentiation sounds very well formulated in an Aristotelian dialectic; but the relationship of the Hamlet actor and Ophelia must be seen more closely and complexly. It is true that the beginning of the drama means the end of *Hamlet*, but *Hamletmachine* is also an adaptation of it. If the fusion of the two characters and the Hamlet actor's diffusion are taken into account, it is rather that the drama's end product – the reader/spectator – is the new beginning and not Ophelia in herself – since without the active contribution of the receiver she is only a static character in an inactive and impotent text.

In the end, the actor assumes the role of his father, thus admitting an identity assigned to him from the outside – as in the mirror stage of the subject's evolution. He steps into the armour, the symbol of a unified, contained body. He becomes the son, Hamlet, by assuming the figure of the father. Thus the superego, that was to be deconstructed by the play, is at work again. It will function as the *mirror* for the subject, in which it sees itself, but what it can never become. Ophelia, in turn, shall be wrapped into gauze, i.e. shall have her opened and bleeding body covered again. She is silenced and immobilised. Her speech is that of someone who realises her failure and bitterly shows up her wounds – not on her body, which the spectator cannot see anymore, but on her mind. The normalising logic of hegemonic culture vanquishes the drama's attempt to escape it. Nevertheless, the regress to normality is ironical. The incursions of power strategies, namely the figure of the father, and the repression of the feminine, are not located *inside* the subject (in the subjects' own confessional view of themselves), but on the *outside*.<sup>33</sup> If *Hamletmachine* succeeds in anything, it is this: it exposes those forces that we are blind to, but which control and position us anyway in society.

<sup>33</sup> To make it even more emphatic, Ophelia is wrapped into gauze together with her wheelchair, thus integrating her disability of being a – tortured – woman beneath the skin produced by ideology. She is the living example of the repression of the feminine, whose blood must be hidden under cover to make her a functional unit of society.

To sum up briefly, *Hamletmachine* has been identified a tragedy of consciousness, itself resembling an allegory of the psyche, which exploits the capacities given by the theatre of cruelty. By turning itself into a machine, it commences a double attack on theatricality and textuality. This machine is an organic play whose purpose is to produce – to produce an effect in the reader/spectator’s mind, or, to put it more explicitly, to create new subjectivities by offering diffuse and dislocated in-drama positions for identification. The Hamlet actor and Ophelia both renounce their identity assigned to them by social power strategies (among them the literary canon, patriarchy, the symbolic order, etc.) and fuse into each other – they become fluid, thus illustrating the poststructuralist notion of the *subject in process*. In its logic *Hamletmachine* does not finally destroy theatricality or escape textuality; but by making explicit those strategies of power that structure the subject and keep it at its place, it raises an inner awareness in the reader/spectator of its homogenised and unnatural way of existence.

## Conclusion

It has been shown that the *Hamlet* and *Hamletmachine* can be related on the basis of the late renaissance’s and the postmodern’s epistemological crisis, accompanied by an exhaustion of signifying capacities. In both periods, the position of the subject is questioned in/through literature. In *Hamlet* we can witness the deconstruction of the supposedly stable and unanimous ego. *Hamletmachine* in turn initiates a shift from the traditional notion of subjectivity towards a poststructuralist conceptualisation that foregrounds homogeneity and dynamism.

Descartes described a transparent ego, which is in a position superior to every entity in the surrounding reality. Its stability is guaranteed by God’s divine power. This ego is able to discern all the falsities of reality: it manipulates a transparent scenery through a transparent language, where meaning is clear and unquestioned. It knows itself and does not need any others to become what it is, and thus results in a transhistorical and transcultural monolith, a divine spirit which has no body, desires or any psychic discrepancies.

In contrast with the ego, the subject is a complex construction and a process, which is born in the intersection of different cultural and social discourses. It is characterised by *becoming*, i.e. it lacks sameness, unity and integrity. It is constituted through different stages of losses, beginning with the loss of reality, for which it is bestowed with a constant desire to regain access to it. Signification and meaning will become the potential bearers of the “grail of the real;” the subject exists in, and asserts itself, through language. Psychic and corporeal functions also intervene in this process, in which the *subject in process* is under constant de/construction.

*Hamlet* is symptomatic of the abandonment of secure identity positions provided by social power strategies. Hamlet is an unconscious actor, who undergoes a series of transformations in the play. He is the protagonist of his own *tragedy of consciousness*, in which his mental configuration disintegrates to a point where death becomes inevitable. He serves as the basis of Heiner Müller’s postmodern character, the Hamlet actor. In *Hamletmachine*, the *subject in process* emerges, who gains identity not by speaking, but assuming signifying positions in culture, as determined by dominant social power strategies. The Hamlet actor’s and Ophelia’s identity is in the constant process of construction and destruction. The play exposes the nature of *hegemonic subjectivity* through subverting several cultural values, such as the figure of the father, femininity, unity, harmony, etc. When one looks into these mirrors, i.e. reads or watches the plays, something similar to the mirror stage comes about. The reflection is not a perfect *Ideal-I*, but a human being in formation, full of doubts, fear, despair and unease, who rejects the comfort of the syntactic *I* and (canonical) language use. The subject does indeed live in a mirror, made up of language, deemed to exist after the reality of existence, in miniaturised models of reality.

On a more general level, *Hamletmachine* deconstructs the Shakespearean frame that significantly influences even postmodern discourse, and exposes potential sources of authority, showing up the ideological nature of subjectivity. A future line of investigation should analyse how this affects the literary canon, not only within the scope of *Hamletmachine*, but other postmodern plays that build up an intertextual relationship with Shakespeare. Furthermore, venturing outside the domains of the semiotics of the subject and deconstruction, it would be interesting to see how *Hamletmachine* would figure in a framework provided by other areas of theory. Since the play is extremely dense and compact, overcharged with sometimes shocking images that could be traced back to many other literary sources, it seems to be rewarding to employ the precepts of theatrical *semiography*, a relatively new, transdiscursive discipline in literary theory, which investigates the functioning of the human subject in the dimension of visual signification. Thus it would be possible to draw new conclusions concerning the mirror-image effect of the play – turning from “words, words, words” to “images, images, images.”

## Appendix

### “I, The Frozen Storm”

According to Artaud, “The theatre is born in its own disappearance, and the offspring of this movement has a name: man. The Theatre of cruelty is to be born by separating death from birth and by erasing the name of man” (Derrida 1974, 233). Although Heiner Müller denied any direct influence of Artaud,<sup>34</sup> they shared common objectives. They wanted to renew theatre and reform theatricality in a similar spirit. One exemplary expression of this can be found in *Description of a Picture*. The play is a single sentence, only broken by commas, colons, semicolons and a few words that have all their letters capitalised.<sup>35</sup> It contains no stage directions or dialogues. Notwithstanding, it was written for the stage: as Heiner Müller’s endnote claims, it is an “explosion of a memory in an extinct dramatic structure.”<sup>36</sup> Actually, it was requested as a prologue by Robert Wilson for his *Alkestis* project, to be later presented in Cambridge (1986) and Stuttgart (1987).

The fact that *Description of a Picture* is a “specifically theatrical work [...] might be explained beginning with the closing phase, ‘I the frozen storm,’ which makes clear that the speaker is the picture” (Calb 1998, 170). The *I* that appears at the end completely permeates the play. It is fragmented into multiple identity cores (man, woman, bird and storm) that interact with each other: the text proves to be the dissection of one central subject (who, ironically, is an outsider to the text, and might be conceptualised as an author, a narrator, or a ‘universal subject,’ which of course does not exist, but might be considered as a prototypical example) into several sub-parts, a swirling totality of elements.

The inner dramatic devices reinforce the problematic of representation. It is literally a description of a picture, on the one hand, and on the other, an explosion of a memory. The English translation employs the title *Description of a Picture/Explosion of a Memory*, the latter intended by Heiner Müller to be the title of the play in English. The binary categories of picture/memory and static/dynamic form a complex new meaning; the antagonism between the two extremes is consolidated in a paradoxical unit, which is indeed a description of a picture the reader/spectator cannot see. This description does not adhere to a supposedly objectified reality, but becomes a mental journey into a world of real and unreal possibilities. In the process of reading the point of origin, the picture, the ultimate signifier is destroyed, having been substituted for an endless chain of signifieds, which are at the same time signifiers as well. “With the event of deferral, which inscribes anew the structure of the sign into the occurrence of difference, it is simultaneously the event of postponement or over-writing. It is from here that the process of ‘sign-ification’ is to be thought, as permanent otherness, which does not refer back to a beginning, a creatio ex nihilo, but rather can be decoded only as the modification of an already initiated trace” (Mersch 2003, 64). *Description of a Picture* theorises the formation of identity, which emerges from an unfixed point, and evolves towards a non-teleological location, all this within a framework of vision. Visual and verbal representation is switched in their hierarchy.

<sup>34</sup> “I don’t think that there has been a direct influence [...] At some point I read Artaud, of course. But already before I had read Artaud or knew anything about him, there were things, simply due to a similar experience (or similar attitude to experience), into which critics then read an influence” (Calb 1998, 104).

<sup>35</sup> Although Müller wrote this play eight years later than *Hamletmachine*, he still saw screaming as the best possible way to talk about key problems.

<sup>36</sup> References to *Description of a Picture* will all be made to the following edition: Heiner Müller, *Description of a Picture*, in Heiner Müller, *Explosion of a Memory* (New York: PAJ Publications, 1989).



As for its supposed source, *Description of a Picture* is not a transcription of *The Tempest*. Actually, it virtually includes nothing from the play (except for the imagery of the tempest). Nevertheless, according to Heiner Müller's endnote, it is one its sources; but this direction might only be an intentional misleading that authors often employ when asked by critics. Apart from this, it seems not very bold to say that the two plays indeed share – in part at least – their thematic horizon. Prospero reveals that *The Tempest* is a dream:

These our actors,  
As I foretold you, were all spirits, and  
Are melted into air, into thin air:  
And like the baseless fabric of this *vision*,  
The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,  
The solemn temples, *the great globe* itself,  
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve... We are such staff  
As dreams are made on; and our little life  
Is rounded with a sleep

(*Tmp.* 4.1.149–157., my emphasis)

Actually, the G/globe is used as a synonym for dramatic reality of a vision, making the referential scope of Prospero's utterance expand on a wider metalevel. A vision or a dream is real as products of signification. This vision, which has as its referent the whole play, equals with *The Tempest* itself. It is this line of connection that has to be carefully considered: dramatic discourse – vision – tempest – vision – dramatic discourse. It is this symmetric structure that gives an organisation to the two plays.

*The Tempest* raises the audience's awareness as to how the theatrical sign system usage takes place. The storm starts out right at the very beginning, and it lasts until the end. It is, other than being the frame, the essence as well: it is the dynamic force that makes the play function. It must not be understood as a natural phenomenon, but rather as a discursive storm that turns upside down everything, and changes the still water of an ordered, harmonic universe. In *The Tempest* this is manifest by the rising of Prospero's to the highest top of the *great chain of being*, substituting God, and ruling over those elements that in a default case should occupy a higher position than his, like Ariel. His rise is dual inasmuch as he also becomes the director of the play on a metalevel. He steps out of the frame of the drama, talks to the audience, and his utterances are sometimes positioned as if outside the text. Moreover, if we consider him Shakespeare himself, it could even be stated that the whole drama, i.e. the tempest/*The Tempest* is taking place in his consciousness, since it is a dream or a vision.

*Description of a Picture* is a vision as well, where the reader/spectator can only hear a narrator, whose speech comes from an undetermined location. The drama is considered here as the representation of the inner functioning of the subject, fragmented into minor particles. The post-script seems to serve as a guideline to how to understand the play: "The text describes a landscape beyond death. The action is optional, since its consequences are past, explosion of a memory in an extinct dramatic structure" (*DoaP*, 102). "Landscape" is crucial in Heiner Müller's oeuvre, since "it points to spatialisation, the horizontal spread of his fragmented images, to an erasure of borders, and to a spectatorial perspective that is both panoramic and ever shifting" (Malkin 2002, 75). In this drama the spectator/reader sees one beyond death. Does Heiner Müller refer to the death of the drama here? "The death of the drama, like the death of the Author, was a myth to Müller, a double-edged fiction whose ambiguity and power over others he tried to harness on his behalf" (Calb 1998, 107). It rather seems that Müller attempts to exploit the symbolic charge of the word death, situating *Description of a Picture* as a hardly accessible site beyond human cognition, from where there is no return. The key term is *beyond*: a location of

taboos, this landscape very much connotes those areas of the subject's existence that are forbidden for some reason. Unconsciously repressed mental particles flow out of the play, and interact with the receiver, who will get an insight beyond the gates of the human mind: into the convulsions of the subconscious.

Helen Fehervary calls Müller's dramatic constructions "aesthetics of entanglement," (Malkin 2002, 82–93) referring to the fact that his plays are very densely laden with signs and symbols. With Müller's words, "I think we can proceed now only through flooding (or inundation)" (op. cit., 83). The reader/spectator is practically flooded by the images and meanings the play disseminates, so much that it is lost in a multiple discursive reality. *Description of a Picture* rejects the traditional techniques of representation. The opposition between iconic and verbal communication is blurred; they are melted into each other. The tension that characterises their relationship in Western culture explodes the picture. The tempest arises from this tension and becomes the engine of a sudden movement of imagination. The position of every agent of signification becomes questioned. First the voice dismantles the illusion of the picture being an organic totality: "perhaps THE SUN is always there and TO ETERNITY [...] the clouds too, if clouds they are, are floating perhaps at one and the same spot, the wiring their attachment to a blotchy blue board with the whimsical designation SKY" (*DoaP*, 97). The characters: the man, the woman and the bird are depicted in various situations, all of them the playful creation of a subjective imagination.

At the end, it becomes visible that it is the drama that speaks/signifies the spectator/reader subject, offering a position within itself, telling them the words to say:

[...] in what socket is the retina stressed, who OR WHAT inquires about the picture, TO LIVE IN A MIRROR, is the man doing the dance step: I, my grave his face, I: the wound at her throat [...] I: the bird who with the script of his beak shows the murderer the way into the night, I: the frozen storm

(*DoaP*, 97).

The reader/spectator is practically forced into these locations. The personal pronoun *I* works as a unique signifier that can manifest in itself everything that the subject needs in order to be signified and thus given an identity. It opens up the possibility for the spectator/reader to step into the play, to become the tempest, the *subject in process*. A mirror made up of language-texture is held to the reader/spectator. A mirror in which they can see their – less perfect, tried – others, with whom they can identify.

The paradox that Müller sets up consists in the cutting into each other of seemingly (ideologically reinforced) irreconcilable dualisms. The reader/spectator is signified by the first question, then immediately put into the mirror (the drama), and then identified first with the fragments (man/woman/bird) then with the totality, the play (frozen storm). This last instance reveals another binarism; if the storm/tempest is frozen, while maintaining its dynamism, it follows that the human being is *never one with itself*.

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Kovács László  
To Live in a Mirror – New Dimensions of Subjectivity  
in Heiner Müller’s *Hamletmachine*

There is a tendency in postmodern drama to problematise the nature and the position of the subject in literature. As opposed to the Cartesian theory of the ego, it is not conceived anymore as a unanimous entity that has the power to control sign-systems, but as a heterogeneous *subject in process*, which is inscribed into discursive locations by signifying practices in order to be given an identity. My purpose is to show how Heiner Müller’s *Hamletmachine* deconstructs the traditionally conceptualised ego, and shows up in the process of identification that it is a constant construction, and its identity is assigned to it from the outside. Social power strategies and unconscious psychic processes are responsible for the constitution of the subject, which emerges as an interface of the social/cultural, the psychic and the corporeal. Not only does the drama selected for analysis demonstrate the ontology and the epistemology of the subject, but, in my view, also functions as a textual and theatrical “machine” that processes and transforms the reader/spectator who is put inside. The drama employs intertextual elements from Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, its primary reference point in canonical literature. The plays shall be deconstructed in their interrelationship from the perspective of the semiotics of the subject, in order to demonstrate the new notion of subjectivity that emerges in/through literature, in which the human being gains its identity not by speaking, but by being spoken by the ideological configuration of the cultural period in which it is situated. The principal conclusion is that *Hamletmachine* functions as a mirror in which the subject can potentially perceive the artificial nature of its existence (deconstruction, Heiner Müller, semiotics, Shakespeare, signification, subjectivity).



*Koller Nóra*

## The Construction of Masculinity in *The Matrix*\*

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“Welcome... to the desert... of the real.”  
—Morpheus, *The Matrix*

“(T)he boundary between science fiction and social reality is an optical illusion.”  
—Donna Haraway, “A Cyborg Manifesto”<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

“Genders,” writes Judith Butler, “can be neither true nor false, neither real nor apparent, neither original nor derived.” Questioning any claims to truth, genders, nevertheless, can be credible bearers of the above attributes; they are *incredible* because they are copies that conceal the lack of an original (Butler 1990, 141). Gender reality, then, is a simulated one. Why is this reality, however, postulated as a necessity in the narrative of *The Matrix* (Larry and Andy Wachowski, 1999)?<sup>2</sup> How does the recourse to the “real” relate to the construction of masculinity? Why does the notion of “reality” in the film necessarily produce a hierarchy of genders? In the following, I will examine how the crisis of masculinity may have affected the film’s reductive approach to gender politics. Also, I will point out how this narrative strategy systematically negates any notion of the subject as a site on which open systems may converge as a consequence.

The iconography of masculinity has always been a major concern of films made in the mainstream science fiction/cyberpunk genre. The narratives have had as their center the mission of saving the world and its people from alien danger. It is a mission the fulfillment of which the majority of the films have imposed upon a solo male protagonist, a representative of a reciprocal understanding of humankind that characterizes the genre. With few exceptions, female characters have appeared on screen only as side-effects of an all-determining masculinity: as aids, mothering others; or, more frequently, as source of evil, bestialized for their overwhelming activity. Even as positive militant figures, women have had to retain and regain their passivity to an astonishing degree as well as their place in the background. This way, the narratives have been able to maintain the masculine conventions that characterize science fiction and cyberpunk (Cadora 1995). The category of ‘woman’ has thus been a repudiating one in science fiction history, bringing along the marginalization of all characters that bear the sign of femininity.

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\* A shorter version of this text appeared in *The AnaChronist* 11 (2005), 294–320.

<sup>1</sup> Donna Haraway, “A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century,” in *Simians, Cyborgs and Women. The Reinvention of Nature* (London: Free Association Books, 1991).

<sup>2</sup> When the first version of this paper was written in May 2003, I focused on the first part of *The Matrix* trilogy only. *The Matrix: Reloaded* and *The Matrix: Revolutions*, the two sequels to the original movie were released during the spring and autumn of the same year. *Reloaded* ended with the legend and promise that it was “to be continued...” by *Revolutions*. With respect to narrative, but also cast and time of release, there is thus a more enhanced relationship between the second and the third parts, than between the 1999 movie and its sequels. Therefore, I have chosen not to change my focus and to extend my analysis on the first part to the trilogy in the present paper.

This narrative strategy notwithstanding, science fiction cinema has provided space for the theorization and problematization of the notions of sex, gender and sexuality, positing its male and female subjects as contested sites of signification. As a consequence of conveying male anxieties, science fiction narratives attest to an intense and dynamic relationship characterizing the formation of the pluralism of femininities and masculinities. In *Aliens*, the anxieties concerning the continuity of masculinity and male embodiment are voiced through the now famous dialogue that takes place between Hudson and Vasquez, a male and a female member of the space-ship crew:

“Hudson: Hey, Vasquez, have you ever been mistaken for a man?  
Vasquez: No. Have you?”<sup>3</sup>

Gender here is interpreted in terms of a developed musculature. In other words, the stylized embodiment of science fiction characters serves to denote dominance and power in a rather concrete sense, expressed through the narratives’ interest to underline gender designations as irreversible. Female masculinity and male femininity both signify a flaw in the films’ heteropatriarchal order and result in the elimination – or, in Vasquez’s case, self-sacrifice – of non-normative characters. The “annihilation of queers” (Butler 1993, 124), that is, the execution of those who deviate from the linear sex/gender/sexuality policy science fiction and cyberpunk films pursue is generally based on their pathologization – and medicalization – as homosexuals.

In this paper I will attempt to explore the representations of masculinities and femininities in *The Matrix*. In the first part I will locate my analysis within the theoretical frameworks of men’s studies and feminism that thematize the recent phenomenon of the crisis of masculinity. I will focus on the opening three scenes of *The Matrix* in order to contour its narrative strategy and representational politics regarding the diegetic conceptualization of sex and gender.

In the second part of my paper I will focus on the discontinuity between male embodiment and masculinity on the basis of Judith Butler’s theory on the performative character of gender. I will establish a relationship between the particular performances of masculinities and femininities and the supposedly anti-capitalist, anti-globalist ideology of the movie.

The third part concentrates on how the continuity of self-identical masculinity is secured in the narrative. I will draw a parallel between the representation of technology within the program, and the commodification of nostalgic masculinity that is, paradoxically, validated by the medical use of the very technology that the “reality” of the narrative actively denies. Also, I will underline how the annihilation of queers is necessitated by the narrative’s interest to produce a universal subject.

## 1. The Masculine Problematic

“To be a subject is to *be* a man –  
to be male or literally empowered “as” male in culture and society...”  
Marjorie Garber<sup>4</sup>

Released in the USA on Easter Eve in 1999, the very year its story begins, *The Matrix* did not only allow for the possibility of creating the effect of simultaneity. Problematizing notions of

<sup>3</sup> James Cameron, dir., *Aliens* (USA 1986.)

<sup>4</sup> Marjorie Garber, *Vested Interests: Cross-Dressing and Cultural Anxiety* (New York: Routledge, 1992),



control and authority, the film also seems to have made use of the apocalyptic fears of a society highly influenced by catastrophic prophecies of the millennium and characterized by uncertainty about what its effects may be in a world controlled by technology, and computer technology in particular. This context was, ironically, highly similar to the pre-nuclear visions science fiction (SF) films about the New Bad Future depict. NBF narratives, writes the film aesthete Fred Glass, are characterized by their portrayal of double/schizoid/split subjects that bear a metonymic relationship to the pre- or post-millennial chaotic urban structures and devastated landscapes where these films are typically located. Recontextualizing storylines that center around anxieties concerning science, and nuclear science in particular, NBF films are part of the cinematic tradition that started with the Cold War narratives of the 1950s. The characters of the NBF subgenre live in a world that has either survived or is awaiting a nuclear apocalypse, and is governed by corporate power that has strong affiliations with the media, information technology, and commodity production (Glass 2000, 121–138). Portraying identities that are forged through mass media, NBF movies sometimes posit a muscleman character as protagonist. It is the result of the sexual commodification of the male body through its enhanced visual display in these films, offering various ways of being a man, that masculinity appears as a visible category in the 1980s, argues Yvonne Tasker. The muscleman action hero can be read as the antithesis of the emerging image of the new man in 1980's cinema that supposedly represents feminist gains, like the figure of Harrison Ford in *Working Girl* (Mike Nichols, 1988) (Tasker 1993, 1). In terms of its plot, visual realization, and its repertoire of masculinities, *The Matrix* shares a history with Cold War classics like *The Fly* (Kurt Neumann, 1958, and David Cronenberg, 1986) or cybepunk movies such as *Blade Runner* (Ridley Scott, 1982) or *Total Recall* (Paul Verhoeven, 1990).

*The Matrix's* mobilization of the NBF cinematic tradition, as well as the religious subtext of the plot and the promising event of the day may well have contributed to the positive reception the film had. Websites and newspaper articles dealing with *The Matrix* phenomenon have been devoted almost exclusively to the investigation of the movie's connections to various sacred texts. Also, they have been emphasizing the parallels between Neo, the male hero and "Chosen One" of the narrative, the symbolic day of Christ's resurrection and the closing millennium believed by many to signal the beginning of the Third Empire when Christ's power returns to Earth.<sup>5</sup> Apart from questioning the (hetero)sexualization of the relationship between Neo and Trinity, the film's ultimate couple, none of these sources see the construction of masculinity – or, for that matter, that of femininity – problematic in the case of *The Matrix's* absolute figure. They continue to underline the eternity of male leadership that is naturalized in the film that focuses on the reconstruction of idealized masculinity – whose loss has been thematized by men's studies since the 1990s.

### 1.1. The Crisis of Masculinity

The second wave of men's studies has been marked by the concept of masculinity in crisis. As Miklós Hadas observes in his review of the development of the field, the first wave of men's studies in the 1980s had for its objective the investigation of masculinities and male experience, and considered them to be unique and unstable social-cultural-historic formations. Exploring non-normative masculinities, men's studies from the 1990s on have contributed to the renaiss-

<sup>5</sup> For such analyses, see Jake Horsley, "Gnosticism Reborn. *The Matrix* as Shamanic Journey," available: <http://www.divinevirus.com/matrix.html>, access: 19 February 2002; Doug Mann and Heidi Hochenadel, "Demons Saviors and Simulacra in *The Matrix*," available: <http://www.home.comcast.net/~crapsonline/Library/matrix.html>, access: 12 May 2003

sance of this relatively new male self-reflexivity but intended to break with the framework of modernism as expressed through the investigation of “male-stream masternarratives,” the main concern of the first period (Hadas 2003). Recent research in men’s studies admittedly owes a lot to the conceptual revolution of feminist thinking, especially in the field of gender studies. However, as I will argue, its self-declared postmodernity does not seem to be in harmony with current theories of feminism on the multiple dimensions of identity. The second wave of men’s studies remains blind to the very logic of feminism’s understanding of multiplicity, although among others, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick liberates masculinity from male embodiment, and argues against conceiving it as self-identical or transparent:

I would ask... that we strongly resist the presupposition that what women have to do with masculinity is mainly to be treated less or more oppressively by the men to whom masculinity more directly pertains... As a woman, I am a consumer of masculinities, but not more so than men are; and, like men, *I as woman am also a producer of masculinities and a performer of them.*

(Sedgwick 1995, 93, emphasis added)

Still subscribing to the specificity of male experience, however, masculinity studies tend to respond to men’s lost privileges in the economy, education, and the home, problematising the single gender that is supposed to correspond to maleness. As Maurice Berger, Brian Wallis and Simon Watson put it in *Constructing Masculinity*, a volume representing the grain of second wave scholarship, “masculinity... is a vexed term, not limited to straightforward descriptions of maleness” (Berger et al. 1995, 2). In the same volume, postmodernist theorist Homi K. Bhabha similarly argues against speaking of masculinity in general, *sui generis*, and addresses masculinity as a “prosthetic reality – a ‘prefixing’ of the rules of gender and sexuality, an appendix or addition, that willy-nilly, supplements and suspends a lack in being.” What he does not question, however, is the tyranny of sex that does not seem to have lost its regulative privilege in the (re)production of the so-called male gender, that, in his own account, is the effect of “patrilineal perpetuity” (Bhabha 57).

In other words, although the second wave of men’s studies may subscribe to the polyphonic nature of masculinities, thus both allowing and accounting for the multiple self of postmodernism, it still ends up grounding this pluralism in biology. Biological maleness is continued to be taken as a natural given, conceptualized as the direct prerogative of this New Man’s self: masculinity is in crisis because maleness is perceived to be there and not vice versa. Consequently, masculinity is seldom detached from the male body when underlined, either as victimized or as pathological.

Investigating the surgical construction of gender and the processes of identity-formation in the case of male-to-female transsexuals, Tamsin Wilton defines gender as

a set of social relations through which disciplinary and material power are deployed and which exists in a particular dynamic relation to bodies and their (often eroticized) behaviours. Although intersecting with relations of ordination such as ‘race’ and dis/ability, gender relations operate in the interests of men in general, and of (white) heterosexual men in particular.

(Wilton 2000, 239)

Therefore, contends Wilton, in so far as the masculine is conceived of as the norm, that is, as the privileged site of signification in heteropatriarchy, male-to-female and female-to-male transsexualities should be seen as “very different journeys.” The disposition of genders is associated with male and female biologies that are lived and experienced along the axes of masculinity and femininity; as such, it is never symmetrical, argues Moira Gatens. The historical and cultural specificity of genders forecloses a contingent, although not arbitrary relationship between masculinity and the male body, as well as between femininity and the female body (Gatens 1996).

Gatens' understanding of gender is similar to Wilton's definition above: gender is conceptualized as "a material effect of the way in which power takes hold of the body," rather than "an ideological effect of the way power "conditions" the mind." Gatens also warns against using this latter notion of power and the body that is "quite different from that used in dominant socio-political theories" (66).

In other words, the recent interpretation of masculinity as a critical category and an analytical tool is inextricably linked to the reconsideration of the politics of sexual difference in feminism. As we have seen above, Sedwick mobilizes and pluralizes genders while she underscores the importance of the categories of 'woman' and 'man' at the same time. That is, feminism calls for an identity politics that is engendered, that retains the notion of sexual difference in order to be able to articulate the materiality of the dys-symmetrical relations of power. However, the discontinuity between the theoretical frameworks of men's studies and feminism signals a distinctive use of difference itself. Even in the second wave of men's studies, sexual difference is actively depoliticized so that the normativity of masculinity remains unquestioned. As Gatens accentuates, "(i)t is not masculinity *per se* that is valorized in our culture but the *masculine male*" (Gatens 1996, 15). Understanding masculinity as a differential category that explains the diversity of male subjectivities only, men's studies produce partisan interventions into the male masculinist economy of the sign. It is this prevailing orthodoxy that underlies the narrative of *The Matrix*, too.

As the following analysis will suggest, the film can be seen as an hysterical response to the discontinuity of masculinity and maleness, articulated as a "crisis" in men's studies. *The Matrix* deals with the very issues that mark the decline of a masculinity triumphantly anchored in the male body. Also, the narrative focuses on the concern of men's studies that is most striking to the feminist analysts of the crisis: the renewed emphasis on the interrelatedness of sex, sexuality and power. Although there is a theoretical controversy about whether the crisis is a new phenomenon or "it is what masculinity has always been," (Solomon-Godeau 1995, 63) the starting iconography of the centrifugal character of Mr. Thomas Anderson clearly represents the deficit of manhood that is redefined in the film narrative's logic as the loss of ideal masculinity.

## 1.2. Contouring Neo, Materializing the Trinity

The character of Neo/Mr Thomas A. Anderson is given a fairly long time for contextualizing himself both in the inner and outer reality of the Matrix since more than half of the film is devoted to his enlightenment. The film's sceptical hero learns that he is, or rather, he is going to become the Chosen One, although it remains unspecified who should have selected him. Also, he gains theoretical knowledge necessary for his spiritual development, and in order to be able to fulfill his 'mission': the liberation of Earth from the totalitarian reign of the Artificial Intelligence. Though the spectacular action part is limited to the second half of the movie, and is originated from the Nebuchadnezzar's reality, the battle of the politically and technologically differing two worlds begin far back in the all-encompassing program named the Matrix.

Within the rapidly evolving narrative, it is the sequence of the opening three scenes that outlines the primary trajectories of the narrative, foreshadowing its major controversies as well. As the first scene of *The Matrix* begins, we find ourselves enclosed right in cyberspace. The screen resembles that of a computer; we watch a trace program running and individuating a row of figures on to the top. Simultaneously, we overhear the dialogue of two members of the hovercraft crew that monitors Neo's life from the real world, out of the reach of the Matrix: that of Cypher and Trinity, the female protagonist. He is doing a nightshift watchguarding somebody that is believed to be the One, a man we cannot see yet; Trinity's presence is unexpected on the scene. Apparently a disbeliever, but certain that "it doesn't matter what believe,"

Trinity's response to Cypher's provoking question, "You like him, don't you? You like to watch him" is a quick-spoken "Don't be ridiculous." As the camera slowly closes onto the numbers flickering green, the tension of the dialogue – concerning Trinity's disposition towards this enigmatic One, and, implicitly, towards Cypher – is suddenly suspended by Trinity's worries that they are being tapped.

The camera then slides through the dissolving outline of the zero/cypher, and brings us to the next short episode that provides a fairly graphic description of the film's previously invisible female protagonist. Chased by a trio of agents and a bunch of policemen, Trinity (Carrie-Ann Moss) kicks and jumps, and runs for escape to a phone cell where a ringing telephone awaits her. With a second of delay, similarly to the beginning of the movie, the camera imitates a movement of sliding in – functioning as a clear allusion to her way out through the telephone line.

Then, in the next move, completing an anti-clockwise curve, the camera centers on the face of a sleeping young man. On his computer screen, online articles on a "terrorist" called Morpheus are being rapidly enlisted until a personal message arrives, awakening Neo (Keanu Reeves), the young man. The successive lines on his computer read: "Wake up, Neo. The Matrix has you. Follow the white rabbit." And: "Knock, knock, Neo." At this point, the couple of DuJour and Choi appear in Neo's apartment. They have come to buy illegal software and to invite him to an orgy-like gothic party. It is put quite clearly that the reason why Neo's final answer to the intruding presence of the couple is positive is neither DuJour's seducing appearance nor her inviting promise that the party "will be fun." Neo realizes that DuJour's body has become the signifier of his way to Morpheus: she bears a tattoo of the white rabbit, a symbol Neo is supposed to follow according to the message on his computer.

It is a fluidity of spatial relations that characterize the reality that the sequence of the first three scenes introduce us into. The representation of space as fluid, temporal and permeable serves as a comment on the portrayal of the bodies involved. Characterized through their motoric functions and defined as the loci of superhuman power, these bodies are not conceived as border symbols. Appropriating and transfiguring space through their bodily performances, Trinity and the agents even make it appear corporeal. Although the thematization of bodies with blurring boundaries and the consequent corpo-realization of any notion of the "real" within the Matrix are among the primary foci of the narrative, the movie nevertheless capitalizes upon a rather conservative politics of representation with respect to the construction of gendered identities.

Acquiring voyeuristic agency in the first scene, and sliding through the tissue of the plot in her gleaming, wet-looking latex costume in the second one, the figure of Trinity is invested with a dynamism that is unique in the NBF tradition of action heroines. The fact that the name "Trinity" identifies her with an all-embracing symbol, however, indicates the narrative's ultimate interest in relegating her to the role of the receptive and mothering female character, a stereotype in SF cinema. In other words, the gendered reality that the character of Trinity assumes until the very end of *The Matrix* may well be that of a butch lesbian. However, the narrative strategy to create a Trinity whose embodiment is to connote (hetero)sexual tension is apparent in the very first episode. Her assumption of a non-normative sexual identity, as coded in her reserved sexuality and in her appearance, then, is violated and offered as a possible misrecognition from the very beginning.

As Yvonne Tasker suggests,

(t)he action movie often operates as an exclusively male space, in which issues to do with sexuality and gendered identity can be worked out over the male body. It is perhaps no surprise then that the heroines of the Hollywood action cinema have not tended to be action heroines.

(Tasker 1993, 17)

If we read the hypermuscular male bodies in action/SF cinema against Trinity's representation, we may claim that those male bodies in fact articulate anxieties concerning manhood, heteronormativity, and male power that they seem to assert so powerfully. Scenes of physical workout may resolve these fears as they both denaturalize these bodies by revealing their constructed nature, as well as underscoring the manhood they should stand for as accessible. The portrayal of musclemen action heroines, however, would posit further threats to transparent male identities by undermining the understanding of masculinity as one inextricably linked to male embodiment. However, the reappropriation of butch/lesbian imagery, and its association with hyperactivity, while establishing a relationship between hero and heroine in the very first scene come to mean that *The Matrix* constructs its female protagonist merely to produce an epistemological framework against which the hero's masculinity can be tested. The basis of epistemology here is sexual difference; articulating masculinities and femininities, Trinity's figure serves as a mere medium for messages to Neo, and has limited signifying capacity to rework gendered relations of power.

Neo himself is identified with a sleeping masculinity in the third scene. His body is first read against dynamism (that of Trinity and the agents in the second episode), not answering to DuJour's seduction, either. He is, after all, brought to consciousness by a message sent by another male: Morpheus, a character bearing the mythical name of the God of Dreams (Ovid, 1982, 268). Similarly to Trinity's character, the figure of the sleeping Neo, displayed as a passive young man, also allows for embracement of masculinities and femininities. Such techniques of representation are typical of late 17<sup>th</sup>-early 18<sup>th</sup> century French painting, writes Abigail Solomon-Godeau. These paintings make use of methods that are mostly preserved for the portrayal of desirable young women in order to depict masculinity as something to acquire, to be achieved and to be initiated into. Their homoerotic effect attests to the destabilization of the notion of masculinity such that it forfeits "its previous transparency, its taken-for-grantedness, its normalcy." It is this loss of the transparency of the male sex, argues Solomon-Godeau, that "underpins the now-frequent invocations of a "crisis" in masculinity" (Solomon-Godeau 1995, 58-76). In other words, the crisis in Solomon-Godeau's interpretation is defined as the very condition of masculinity. Its historical denial, she suggests, has a political hinterland, namely the preservation of the public for men and the relegation of women to the private sphere of life. The enhanced homosociality that characterizes these paintings is the symptom of the fact that non-phallic, that is, non-normative masculinities are ideological as well.

Solomon-Godeau's argumentation above points at the importance of homosocial male bonding in the attempts at redefining hegemonic masculinities. Sedgwick comes to a similar observation when investigating male homosocial desire from women's perspective. She rereads the flattering attentions paid to women in romantic poetry as both the deflection and elaboration of male homosocial desire. Women can be conceived of as poetic "objects of exchange" in the sense that they mediate the relationship of unacknowledged desire between men as the explicit and ostensible objects of discourse. On the other hand, homosociality - that may include homosexual desire as well - is characterized by its intense relation with the "structures for maintaining and transmitting patriarchal power" and thus "may take the form of ideological homophobia, ideological homosexuality, or some highly conflicted but intensively structured combination of the two" (Sedgwick 1995, 711).

Analyzing the sex talk of Japanese businessmen, Deborah Cameron and Don Kulik underscore the presence of women in hostess clubs as constitutive of male homosocial bonding (Cameron and Kulik 2003, 58-65). In these clubs, the hostesses' task is to "accept, reflect and augment the man," (op. cit. 63) his (economic) power and his heterosexuality that are the indices of a sufficient masculinity. As Cameron and Kulik write, the frequenting of hostess clubs is actively persuaded by the corporations these executives are employed by. While the clubs serve

to allow men to relate to each other in a less hierarchical and more informal manner, they simultaneously empower the hierarchy and diversity of genders. The discourse that takes place is only reciprocal *between* the male guests. Although the talk that the flattery hostesses engage in is directed to construct a man as a "(hetero)sexual being," in Cameron and Kulik's point of view the talk that is directed at the women does not signify the speakers' sexuality so much as their gender. Heterosexuality thus figures as the basis and the means for the formation of gender identities among hostess and visitor, *and* among the people of the same sex as well. The intensification of gender is the means for the empowerment of homosocial bonds: indeed, "what appears to be primarily 'heterosexual' talk is *homo-social/talk*" (op. cit. 64). The construction of (hetero)sexual interest in this context is the side-effect of male dominance. That is, as Cameron and Kulik contend, sexual banter mediates the construction of both gender and (hetero)sexuality in such a way that the mapping between them cannot be seen as unidirectional.

Cameron and Kulik thus argue for the relative autonomy of the explanatory function of sex and gender. In the above example, it is sexuality that primarily informs the construction of gender. Consequently, non-normative sexuality signals gender insufficiency. As Cameron and Kulik observe, the formation of homosocial bonds thus exposes the discontinuity between maleness and masculinity. This discontinuity characterizes construction of male relationships in the narrative of *The Matrix* as well.

In the third scene of the movie, Neo is literally awakened by Morpheus. Neo's quest – or "manhunt," as the headline of a site on his computer states – for Morpheus is made parallel to the agents' search for him. Moreover, reading the presence of agent Smith (Hugo Weaving), Neo's chief enemy in the second episode, in terms of homosociality, we can argue that his emergence at the beginning of the movie functions to complete a *male trinity* of Neo, Morpheus and Smith. As Sedgwick suggests, male bonding is in direct relation to the maintenance and reproduction of male power. The fact that the male trinity of the opening scenes is embodied in *The Matrix* through the parallel with Trinity's chase that is to reinforce the female-male binary only further underlines the function of the female protagonist as the mere material condition to the male masculinist ontology.

Trinity's foes, the agents want her in the second episode because she can lead them either to Morpheus or to Neo. What is important here regarding the parallel logic of organization of the opening scenes is that the various female figures in the film, DuJour, Switch, the Oracle, the Woman in Red or Trinity herself are made easily interchangeable since they are present first and foremost as aids to the hero. Neo's way toward absolution is made possible only by gaining information from female characters; in so far as they mediate male relationships, regardless of their physical and sexual iconography, they are narrated to bear the same femininity. This way the film contours a concept of "woman" that capitalizes upon the mutually exclusive definition of genders on the basis of the sexual division of labor. Being unable to accommodate the diversity of femininities and masculinities that have been associated with female embodiments so far, this notion of "woman" is to appear as the norm so that an unproblematical relationship between sex, gender and sexuality may be posited. Although the femme fatale DuJour and the butch Trinity may represent the two extremes on the narrative's axis of femininity, it is on the basis of their bodies, their suggested essential femaleness, that they are relegated to this category.

In *The Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, Don Siegel's classic from 1956, extraterrestrials attempt to colonize, "steal" the bodies of human beings. It is the body that matters in *The Matrix*, too; however, in the latter movie it seems to be the vexed interest of both worlds.

As opposed to the repertoire of genders established in the sequence, the narrative's underscoring female embodiment indicates a recourse to an essentialist framework of masculinity and femininity. According to its logic, dichotomy is the basis of gender; caught in the singular, masculinity and femininity are contoured as exclusive, though hierarchical opposites. As unified and

mutually unpermeable categories in complementation, masculinity and femininity correspond to biological fe/maleness – i.e., to an unproblematized morphology of the body. Built upon the lore of biological determinism, such representations propagate the predominance of sex as opposed to gender. Although the latter is considered to encompass masculinity and femininity as mere social constructs, the primacy of bodily morphology is not questioned. Sex, i.e. the possession of genitalia that makes a clear distinction between male and female bodies, has the strong implication of the natural.

## 2. The De/Construction of Sex

“Heterosexuality is regulated through the shaming of gender.”  
—Tamsin Wilton<sup>6</sup>

The view of sex as an exclusionary divide within materialist feminist scholarship was first challenged by Christine Delphy. Contesting the priority of nature/biology over culture, Delphy emphasizes that “part of the nature of sex itself is seen to be its *tendency to have a social content/to vary culturally*” (Delphy 1996, 33). Delphy thus rejects the essentialist hierarchy that renders gender to be derived from sex and thus argued to be the dominated element in the dichotomy. Naturalizing the hierarchy of difference, the essentialist approach maintains a relationship between sex that is within this logic posited as the expression of a natural dichotomy, while gender is conceived of as signaling a social dichotomy. However, argues Delphy, differences are multiple and are not necessarily oppositional and/or hierarchical. The relationship between and within sex and gender should thus be recognized as a relationship of mutual incommensurability. That is, they cannot be defined, evaluated and exhausted in terms of each other as they are devoid of a common measure. The conception of sex as a pure marker is an act of the social. This act is reductionist in the sense that it eliminates all but one variable of the sign in order to enable the use of sex as accounting for dichotomy. In Delphy’s view, the sex/gender hierarchy is to be reversed with sex interpreted as part of “the way a given society represents ‘biology’ to itself” (op. cit. 35). The arbitrary nature of gender indicates its independence from sex, while “sex itself simply marks a social division... it serves to allow social recognition and identification of those who are dominant and those who are dominated” (ibid.). In other words, sex presupposes gender and it is gender that precedes sex.

The ideological background for the heteropatriarchal preference for seeing gender as a self-evident extension of bodily sex is ultimately overthrown by Judith Butler. In *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, Butler sets out to investigate the interdependence between sex and gender, and, following Foucault, underlines ‘sex’ not as a fact of nature, but rather as the product of (scientific) discourse. Contesting the immutable character of sex, she presupposes that sex is “as culturally constructed as gender; indeed, perhaps it was always already gender, *with the consequence that the distinction between sex and gender turns out to be no distinction at all*” (Butler 1990, 7, emphasis added).

Butler thus underlines both categories as constructs while retaining the notion of difference between their cultural formations. As sex is itself established as a gendered category, its suggested preliminary signifying existence in the sex/gender hierarchy produces a paradoxical ontology where the sexed body is conceived of as a passive object awaiting cultural inscription. However, argues Butler, bodies should be interpreted as signifying practices themselves as their meaning is

<sup>6</sup> Tamsin Wilton, *Engendering AIDS. Deconstructing Sex, Text and Epidemic* (London: SAGE Publications, 1997), 7.



dependent upon the framework of interpretation that characterizes a society; the construction of nature is the effect of this binary framework that establishes bodies as livable/ meaningful or unlivable/expelled/object, calling into evidence dominant cultural assumptions about sex and sexuality. Gender is thus the means by which culture creates sex as a natural given, or, to put it differently, gender is the discursive/cultural formation that designates the production and establishment of sex in such a way that the latter category *appears as* prediscursive (ibid.).

As the gendered body is constructed through exclusions and denials so that it is intelligible in the female/male binary, gender reveals its performative nature as performance is the reenactment of a set of already established social and cultural norms repeated through the enactments of identity. Nietzsche claims that “there is no ‘being’ behind doing, effecting, becoming; ‘the doer’ is merely a fiction added to the deed – the deed is everything” (Nietzsche<sup>7</sup> in Butler 1990, 25). On this analogy, Butler negates the existence of a core gender identity behind the expressions of gender; that identity, she argues, is “performatively constituted by the very ‘expressions’ that are said to be its results.” The notion of a fixed gender identity is thus a normative ideal, a regulatory fiction as gender does not behave as a noun but as a verb; it is always a dynamic process, a doing, “though not a doing by a subject who might be said to preexist the deed” (op. cit. 25–26).

Realized through a series of acts, gender is materialized *as* and *through* the process of the corporeal stylization of the body. Its performance invests gender identity with a “cultural/personal history of received meanings subject to a set of imitative practices which refer laterally to other imitations.” Since the binary frame founds and consolidates the subject, but cannot be attributed to it, genders cannot be considered as loci of agency from which various acts/performances will follow. Concealing its very performativity, the imitative practices that establish gender “construct the illusion of a primary and interior gendered self or parody the mechanism of that construction.” In other words, gendered identity is “an identity tenuously constituted in time, instituted in an exterior space through a *stylized repetition of acts*” (op. cit. 140).

In other words, the body cannot be invested with a stable, fixed existence beyond the constraints of the systems of power/knowledge. The body that performs is constructed by and through signification, through performances that - continuously re-enacting what constitutes a gendered reality - reveal the impossibility of any recourse to an original or true gender. The maintenance of the ideal of a true gender core is, however, the interest of the dominant ideology that defines the co-existence of masculinity and femininity in performance as deviation from the norm:

the very notions of an essential sex and a true or abiding masculinity or femininity are also constituted as part of the strategy that conceals gender’s performative character and the performative possibilities for proliferating gender configurations outside the restricting frames of masculinist domination and compulsory heterosexuality.

To this extent, Butler and Delphy’s arguments correspond; as a materialist feminist, however, Delphy is more interested in the social construction of the gender division itself. Butler’s contention is that both women and men are subject to the “regulatory fiction” that gender represents and which is not only sustained but can also be subverted through performance. The binary frame of heterosexuality, however, represents a gendered hierarchy; as Stevie Jackson suggests, “heterosexuality is founded not only on a linkage of gender and sexuality, but on the appropriation of women’s bodies and labor” (Jackson 1999, 129).

<sup>7</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage, 1969), 45, quoted in *Gender Trouble*, 25.

The normative understanding of sex as the dominant element in the sex/gender hierarchy is thus ideologically biased as it capitalizes upon the material interests of the sexual division of labor. The ideological positioning of the body as a domain beyond the operations of power results, on the one hand, in a social division which is – legitimized by the marriage contract – characterized by women’s unpaid domestic and emotional work. On the other, it produces the docile, feminine bodies through the maintenance of gendered disciplinary practices (Jackson 130).

Portraying competing realities, the narrative of *The Matrix* plays out contesting notions of sexual identities, performances of masculinity and femininity, against the background of late capitalism. This is a focal point in the diegetic construction of the Matrix, the program itself.

### 2.1. The Female Dynamic. The Matrix and the Feminization of Technology

When they first meet at the party in the fourth scene, Neo is surprised to find that the Trinity he has sought, the one who cracked the I.R.S. database, is a girl:

Neo: Jesus.  
 Trinity: What?  
 Neo: I just thought, um... you were a guy.  
 Trinity: Most guys do. [...] Please just listen. I know why you're here, Neo. I know what you've been doing. I know why you hardly sleep, why you live alone, and why night after night you sit at your computer. You're looking for him. I know, because I was once looking for the same thing. And when he found me, he told me I wasn't really looking for him. I was looking for an answer. It's the question that drives us, Neo. It's the question that brought you here. You know the question just as I did.  
 Neo: What is the matrix?

(*The Matrix*, script)

Throughout the fourth scene, like in the above dialogue, notions of sex and sexuality are played out, underlining the film’s homoeroticism in two ways. The scene also serves as a comment on the sexual division of labor. Showing a Trinity that takes pleasure in Neo’s surprise as she is smiling when admitting that most guys take her for a man, the scene strengthens her butch persona via an uncritical appropriation of sex role-stereotypes that are superimposed, as Butler suggests, on lesbian sexual identities from within the practice of heterosexuality (Butler 1990, 137). The dialogue also underlines the intimacy of Neo’s quest for Morpheus by locating it in the privacy of the home. Exchanging the “him” for the “it” as the object of her speech, Trinity offers a point of identification with Neo. This shared discursive space of the “us” is defined by the quest/ion and is formulated as if to denote a communal agentive force of a deviant sexuality that is expelled from mainstream discourse. Its very articulation would be dangerous because – as Trinity has warned him – he is being watched.

Trinity also appears here as a woman who has usurped the male privilege of doing creative, even heroic intellectual work as a hacker. Furthermore, the fact that she has cracked the Integrated Revenue System database defines her character against the capitalist ideology of profit extraction. A hacker himself, the figure of Neo is again implicated negatively in the context of overwhelming female activity. Yet, at the end of the dialogue, anxieties concerning sexuality and power are displaced onto the concept of the matrix.

The matrix, this archetypal space of intellectual interaction is, according to cyberpunk writer William Gibson, “a 3-D chessboard, infinite and perfectly transparent,” (Gibson 1987, 68) that allows for entrance provided the limits of the body are extended with high-tech prostheses. Receptive and demanding by definition, and bearing a name that means “womb” in Latin, the Matrix reflects on a hegemonic understanding of the biology of the female body. Depicted as a global metropolis, and identified with the power plant, the program in the film of Larry and Andy Wachowski appears as a nurturing and mothering, and at the same time

repressive phenomenon. As a kind of high-technological mother, the Matrix operates on the basis of total control over biology, gaining energy by feeding the living with the liquidized remains of the dead in the infinite fields that contain cells of unconscious human beings. As it is put by Switch, a female member of Morpheus's hovercraft crew, the Matrix reduces human bodies to "copper tops." Through this formulation, the late capitalism of turn-of-the-century North-America is figured in the narrative, "copper top" being a reference to Duracell battery. Science fiction history is as intertwined with the history of capitalism itself as the matrix serves to preserve "concentrations of data (those stored by corporations, government agencies, the military, etc.);" (McHale 1992, 252). In cyberpunk narratives, global economy is epitomized by iconic corporations, such as the one Neo is employed by: Metacortex. The name of the software company underlines the hyperreal nature of production, locating it in the cortex, the tissue of the brain. Also, it clearly conveys the anti-individualist ethics of capitalism: as Mr Rhineheart, Neo's boss puts it, "every single employee understands that they are part of the whole."

This ideology characterizes the program itself. As the effect of a contract that was made between humankind and the Artificial Intelligence after their apocalyptic battle, the Matrix exists as a "consensual hallucination," in that "exactly the same hallucinatory landscape is experienced by everyone who 'jacks into' any one of the system's terminals" (ibid.). Global and personal at the same time, the program's hyperreal, simulated world realizes the "ambivalent abstractness that defines capitalist production and exchange circuits" (Phelan 2000, 166). The Matrix represents what Jean Baudrillard describes as the fourth phase of the image that "has no relation to any reality whatsoever: it is its own pure simulacrum" (Baudrillard 1983, 11–12). Simulation is based on the "death of reference," that is brought about by the capital's objective to make possible the "pure circulation" of signs in order to accelerate the accumulation of profit. In this respect, the Matrix can be seen as a postmodern capitalistic venture, precisely with respect to its subjective overtones.

The mass-produced and mechanized bodies of the power plant model a new kind of worker, and are thus, according to Lyn Phelan, "peculiarly emblematic of American industrial modes and might" (Phelan 2000, 167). Uniform in their appearance and having the interchangeable names of Smith, Jones and Brown, the agents, the Matrix's sentient programs also serve as references to contemporary features of post-Fordian Euro-American modes of production and reproduction. As an effect of the erasure of the referent, late capitalism is characterized by an increased mobility, especially with regard to the transnational corporation that is, writes Rosemary Hennessy, the primary determiner of the transmission of the capital. Production depends on "heightened mobility, and on time and space compression" that has replaced the assembly line (Hennessy 2000, 21). Moving in and out of the digital bodies of those who are not yet unplugged from the program, the figures of Smith, Jones and Brown serve as the narrative's comment on the dangers of the economy of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. The film's seemingly anti-capitalist ideology is, however, undermined by its sexual politics, played out in the interrogation room scene.

## 2.2 The Interrogation Room Scene

The scene introduces an overtly homoerotic dynamic to Neo and Smith's relationship through its emphasis on role-play, that involves the imitation of intimate confessional dialogue, and bodily penetration. Pretending sympathy towards Neo, Smith offers him a fresh start provided Neo informs him about Morpheus. Smith also confesses that his colleagues believe that he is wasting his time with "Mr Thomas A. Anderson." Being called by his official name, Neo overcomes his so far uncertain masculinity when responding: "How about I give you the finger... and you give me my phone call" (*The Matrix*, script). The gesture that accompanies Neo's unexpected assertion of male power defines masculinity against the threat of bodily penetration. This

conception of male power is, however, reworked sadistically and hyperbolically in the next pictures when Smith implants a bug in Neo's body.

The film's characterization of male-to-male physicality as violent, painful and predominantly infectious serves to validate its ambition to reinstate heteropatriarchy. Reinforcing the cultural assumptions of homoeroticism as threatening one's identity as well as their health, the scene capitalizes on the social construction of the AIDS epidemic, that is, as Tamsin Wilton suggests, a gendered pandemic in that it is perceived to affect men – and homosexual men in particular – more likely than women (Wilton 1997, 2). In other words, the threat of the enhanced mobility that characterizes late 20<sup>th</sup> century capitalism is reworked as a threat to the integrity of the body as an effect of sexual perversion. Bodily margins, writes the anthropologist Mary Douglas, are invested with power in normative discourse. Permeable body boundaries represent a threat to the social order because they refer to pollution and endangerment; the permeable body is also conceived of as dangerous because it cannot be regulated (Douglas in Butler 1990, 131–134). As an effect, penetrative queer sexuality is “almost always conceived within the homophobic signifying economy as both uncivilized and unnatural” (Butler 1990, 132).

The thematization of homosexual intercourse in the interrogation room scene also signifies *The Matrix's* anxiety concerning the technological. Hi-tech development has brought about the new global division of labor that magnifies the homogenization of social relations with the sole objective of reducing expenses and accumulating profit for a company. As an important element of this strategy, production is fragmented into subnational localities. The interplay between these two components of production processes has, argues Hennessy, “registered in new forms of consciousness and transnational identity – multiculturalism for one, and more gender-flexible sexual identities for another” (Hennessy 2000, 6–7).

The film, however, ultimately insists on the reconstruction of unequivocal and irreversible designations of gender and sexuality, elaborating its nostalgia by contesting realities that are symbolized by reproductive organs, the bio-technological femininity of the Matrix having its counterpoint in the Nebuchadnezzar, Morpheus's phallic hovercraft. The result is that the anti-capitalist attitude of *The Matrix* is produced by queering desire through the figure of the clone.

In the interrogation room episode, associations between cloning and homosexuality are played out. The mass-produced human bodies of the power plant foreclose the problem of genetic engineering, the program's reproductive technique that is metonymically realized through the uniform figures of the agents. As Jackie Stacey has pointed out recently, cloning has homoerotic connotations in SF cinema. Apart from a particular gay male style, nicknamed as “the clone,” narratives deploy the “more general assumption that same-sex desire is inextricable from narcissism, commonly understood as a desire for oneself or one's own image” (Stacey 2003, 269). The physical resemblance between Reeves and Weaving establishes the narcissistic aesthetic of duplication. The scene also draws on the two actors' cinematic personae. Famous for his role as the female impersonator Mitzi Del Bra in *The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert* (Stephan Elliott, 1994), Weaving (agent Smith) shares a queer cinematic history with Reeves (Neo) who starred as the male prostitute Scott Favor in the cult movie *My Private Idaho* (Gus Van Saint, 1991.) Assuming a relationship between genetic engineering and homosexuality, *The Matrix* identifies them as problematic, concomitant effects of late capitalist ideology.

Significantly, Trinity and Neo get the closest to each other physically when she is operating the bug out of him on the back seat of a car. The fact that they are driving towards Adams Bridge during the operation scene suggest that the hero is on his way towards rebirth, be it spiritual, biological - or aimed at his unification.

Unplugging Neo from the program, *The Matrix* offers the Neb as the space of phallic identification for its male hero, ultimately subscribing to a homogeneous perspective of gender. In other words, eradicating the dangers of an infectious sexuality with the elimination of the bug, the film exchanges the feminized, late capitalist economy of the program for the heterosexual

matrix, i.e. for “that grid of cultural intelligibility through which bodies, genders and desires are naturalized.” The narrative’s concern for a stable sex expressed through a stable gender is voiced through the representation of cloning as a deviant way of reproduction. The coupling of maleness with masculinity, and femaleness with femininity is the primary truth-claim of a society that “allows for bodies to cohere and acquire meaning within the dialectic framework of sex, and through the practice of heterosexuality” (Butler 1990, 151 n6).

### 2.3 Un/Livable Bodies

Performance, argues Butler, should be distinguished from performativity as the former is a bounded particular act whereas the latter represents the general principle of the reiteration of norms. The “citational legacy” performativity is invested with precedes, constrains and exceeds the performer, disallowing for the moment of choice: “what is performed works to conceal, if not to disavow, what remains opaque, unconscious, unperformable” (Butler 1993, 234). Through a parodic reappropriation by the subject, however, performance can work as subversion. Recently reinterpreted as signifying an affirmative set of norms, the concept of “queer,” for instance, has been able to provide a critical site for opposition through a theatrical appropriation of performance. Underlining the hyper-reality of truth-claims and recurses to the myth of the original in discourses on sex, sexuality and gender, “queer” embraces a definition of sexual identity as a protean, shifting set of meanings (Wilton 1997, xii.). “Queered” into public discourse by homophobic interpellations, the subject performs – cites and reiterates – the term; the performance, revealing the contingency of the construction of meaning, is “theatrical to the extent that it *mimes and renders hyperbolic* the discursive convention that it also *reverses*” (op. cit. 232).

Striving towards the elimination of the proliferation of non-normative sexualities, *The Matrix* actively negates the dynamism of signification that should be the source for queer to be subversive. Engaging in nostalgia, the film contests gendered systems of power/knowledge, disallowing for the affirmation of queer desire by locating it within a negative framework of post-modern science that is rejected precisely on the basis of its questioning natural, biological insemination as the basis of reproduction. As Heidi Hartmann argues, patriarchy represents “relations between men, which have a material base, and which, though hierarchical, establish or create interdependence and solidarity among men that enable them to dominate women” (Hartman 1981, 14). Conveying a demand for heteropatriarchal dominance, *The Matrix* sets out to reinstate it through a series of performances that, in response, allow for the moment of choice in the case of queer sexualities, underlining them as the very effects of this choice, i.e. unnatural at the same time. The material base of patriarchy as contoured in the film narrative outlines which bodies matter, i.e. which are considered livable or unlivable.

## 3. The Masculine Continuum

“(M)isrecognition necessitates narrative.”  
—Judith Halberstam<sup>8</sup>

To the extent that power acts as discourse in the domain of the performative, the act of performance is bounded as it is always shaped from within a complex of conventions. As a corollary to it, the performer’s identity that is tenuously constituted in and through the performance is

<sup>8</sup> Annamarie Jagose, “Masculinity Without Men. Annamarie Jagose Interviews Judith Halberstam About Her Latest Book, *Female Masculinity*” *Genders OnLine Journal* 29 (1999), available: [http://www.genders.org/g29/g29\\_halberstam.html](http://www.genders.org/g29/g29_halberstam.html), access: 21 January 2003.

endowed with a relative stability, and a history. The construction and recognition of the "I" is thus possible only through the systems of power and knowledge. Realized through the practice of reiteration, the "I" is a simulacrum itself, and as such, it is never fully recognizable. As the forming condition of the subject, the "I" is the necessary locus of action that is activated when the subject is interpellated as the effect of social recognition; "it is the historically revisable possibility of a name that precedes and exceeds me, but without which I cannot speak," says Butler (Butler 1993, 225-226).

Denying the validity of Neo's identity on its own, that is, questioning the recognizability of the performances that have constituted his persona so far, Morpheus (Laurence Fishburne) offers him a historical framework of subjectivity, but one that calls for an uncritical and mechanical repetition:

...when the Matrix was first built, there was a man born inside who had the ability to change whatever he wanted, to remake the Matrix as he saw fit. It was he who freed the first of us, taught us the truth: 'As long as the Matrix exists the human race will never be free.' After he died the Oracle prophesized his return and that his coming would hail the deconstruction of the Matrix, end the war, bring freedom to our people. That is why there are those of us who have spent our entire lives searching the Matrix looking for him. I did what I did because I believe that search is over...

(*The Matrix*, script)

The "I" that determines the subject and that is, in turn, determined by it through the series of performances is thus allocated a coercive macro-dimension of history that mediates and regulates the subject's recognition in *The Matrix*. In other words, Morpheus's nostalgia catalyzes the very historicity of force while rendering it hyperbolic at the same time and assigning a discursive space to Neo only within a patrilinear framework that is empowered by the notions of nature and natural birth.

In other words, in order for Neo to become the One and not the Other, working concepts of identity - as defined by their micro-dimensional historicity - should be regarded as merely self-fashioning. The notion of a split, ambivalent, decentered, centrifugal subjectivity is deprived of meaning outside the Matrix's hyper-reality. Morpheus's emphasis on a primordial and all-determining masculinity establishes a relationship in the film between reality as expressed through the trope of the birth and an uncritical model of objectivity - based on the transferability of truth - as the counterpoints of postmodern/capitalist subjectivity. While the latter, as we have seen, encompasses and is founded by cross-cutting differences, the former is based on a hierarchy of differences, as expressed through the representation of the Neb. The focal place for Neo's emasculation, the hovercraft, walking its way in the service and waste systems of old metropolises, serves as a graphic, though not unproblematic, symbol for Morpheus's nostalgia for "true" masculinity.

### 3.1 Engendering Science

Female stars in action cinema pose problems to the binary constructions of gender, argues Tasker. Defined by their assertive physicality, muscular action heroines reinterpret canonized notions of masculinity and male embodiment; revealing the contestability of gendered relations of power, they strengthen male anxieties. The male body remaining the norm against or alongside which they are tested, these characters can be addressed as "musculine" insofar as musculinity "indicates the extent to which a physical definition of masculinity in terms of a developed musculature is not limited to the male body within representation" (Tasker 1993, 3). Excessive and triumphal, action heroines give way to male nostalgia towards a clear-cut definition of power as realized in patriarchy. As these figures are often equipped with impressive weaponry or are

the products of technology, in my view they also challenge notions regarding the accessibility and ownership of power as male privilege, and economic privilege in particular.

The combination of economic and social frustrations concerning masculinity are typical of SF narratives, suggests Mary-Ann Doane. In these films, "anxiety concerning the technological is often allayed by a displacement of this anxiety onto the figure of the woman or the idea of the feminine" (Doane 1999, 27).

Examining the cyborg films of the eighties, Marjorie Kibby also assumes a relationship between the iconography of female characters and/or femininity, and machines as the consequence of a nostalgic masculinity that characterizes these films. As Kibby explains, the post-war period's rapid technological development made men face an ongoing feminization of work. Apart from the growing number of female employees that was made possible by the economic necessities during World War II, the increasing application of technology at the workplace also resulted in male anxieties, since the emerging new positions did not require creativity but reinforced passivity, and a lower social status. Writes Kibby: "men were retrained for positions they considered as less manly... Those who lost their jobs were defeated by a combined force of technology and women" (Kibby 1996).

In other words, as class and gender relations became relativized, a nostalgia for hegemonic masculinity started to develop. The (sub)cultural response to the phenomenon was the proliferation of science fiction films. From the 1950s on, SF narratives have made realizable the restoration of patriarchy through defining both femininity and technology as the Other. Denying capitalist technical development, and giving way to nostalgia through the representation of its archaic, ravaged and underdeveloped technology, the devastated reality of *The Matrix* reproduces the very ideology it denies. In other words, concerned about its own reproduction, the patrilinear frame of Neo's remasculation is embedded in a logic of belief in repetition and reenactment. In addition to Morpheus, it is empowered by the figure of the Oracle. However, this logic posits historical relativism/nostalgia against the program's capitalist relativism. This divide is apparent in the narrative construction of the two cities in the film: that of the program, and of Zion.

The Matrix creates the illusion of a chaotic, disintegrated global city that is in a metonymic relationship with its inhabitants, whose documentation is in harmony with that of Neo. The rarity of center-heavy frames, the badly lit spaces of action and the reduction of close-ups to the momentary introduction of body parts give plastic descriptions of fragmentation. While the narrative maintains a relationship between the heterogeneity and instability of the subjectivities of the Matrix, and its excessive use of technology, the outer reality is not less characterized by technological fetishism, expressed through the surgical reconstruction of gender in the case of Neo. As Jackie Stacey argues,

(f)antasies of reproductive technology, such as in-vitro fertilization, have pervaded popular culture in the form of a technological fetishism, involving a disavowal of the mother's role, an omnipotent fantasy of procreation without the mother, enabling science... to fulfill the desire to father itself.

(Stacey 2003, 259)

Stacey's model of masculinist systems of knowledge points at science's concern to reproduce itself *and* maintain a gendered hierarchy at the same time. The dichotomy between the Matrix and the Neb offers a contested field of knowledges in the film where the divides of body/mind, and nature/culture are played out. Allowing for the cyberspace of the program to realize the fantasy of in-vitro fertilization, *The Matrix* reinforces these binaries that stabilize femaleness as self-contained embodiment while liberating maleness from the constraints of the body: the emphasis on mind and culture also allows for the establishment of a "universal" human being, an "I" that



conceals its gendered character (Haraway 1991, 187). This dualism is the basis of the way matter and materiality are represented in the film; the contrast between the metropolis of the program and the reality of Zion, the last human city brings about the hierarchy of embodied and disembodied knowledges, respectively, as Zion remains a utopian construct throughout the film.

In other words, the vision of a city that is “deep underground, near the earth’s core where it’s still warm” (*The Matrix*, script) simultaneously catalyzes nostalgia through a recourse to the *arches* of the “earth” and “fire” in Zion’s discursive construction, and through the idea of the natural that is expressed both through them and the authenticity of birth. The latter is represented by the muscular figures of Tank and Dozer. As Tank says, “me and my brother Dozer, we’re both one hundred percent pure, old fashioned, home-grown human, born free right here in the real world. Genuine children of Zion” (*The Matrix*, script). The idea of birth as an uncontested claim to truth is now coupled with the materiality of male power and it will curiously underlie Neo’s remasculination as Morpheus’s proposition of the patrilineal framework of birth implies the reproduction of science through the biomedical reconstruction of Neo’s body. Unplugged from the program, Neo is shown lying on an operating table, with needles in his body that Morpheus uses to rebuild the atrophied muscles. Morpheus’s newly achieved medical authority underlies the interplay of the material and the cultural: through his effective use of biomedicine, Neo’s body is established as an available site for the imposition of the social structures of masculinity. Although his motoric functions are strengthened in the traditionally male arenas of the dojo or the business district, the materiality of his bodily strength is simultaneously disavowed of in the loading program’s neural-interactive simulacrum where these spaces of action are located.

On the Neb, Neo’s figure is offered as an easy site of identification: apart from his failures throughout the training, the normative masculinity he is initiated into is also commodified as it appears downloadable from the deck program, the Construct. The iconography of Neo’s masculinity as achieved on the Neb serves to frustrate his earlier gender performances. Connected to the deck computer, his body appears as passive, awaiting signification. However, the impossibility of the existence of the body beyond the realm of the systems of power and knowledge is underlined by Morpheus’s recourse to bio-technology. The medical manipulation of Neo’s body attests to the fluidity of the categories of “nature” and “truth” themselves. In other words, the surgical construction of gender, while outlining the essentialist norms it serves to reinforce, underscores that essentialism itself is a cultural construction.

This paradox is inherent in medical discourse. As Julia Epstein writes, medical science conceives of gender as culturally and historically relative. It has also recognized – in the case of transsexuals in particular - the plasticity and precariousness of gender and sexual identification. Nevertheless,

...medicine has also developed a technology for removing ambiguities with surgical and hormonal intervention so that the basic principle of bimodal distribution can be maintained. That development has also permitted the maintenance of a legal fiction of gender as an absolute.

(Epstein 1995, 120)

Adapting to the notion of the norm, medical science dynamically negates the visibility of the proliferation of differences it has already acknowledged, concealing the way identities are constructed. The surgical construction of gender as carried through by Morpheus attests to the concern of science to reproduce itself by securing the very patrilinearity that is underlined as the prerequisite for the transmission of truth. In other words, the use of bio-technology in the film’s reality is parallel to the way the Matrix deploys genetic engineering. The narrative strategy to intimidate the material has the effect of silencing cloning. The technology that could challenge

the film's biologism is rendered invisible as the construction of male masculinity is rendered to become the main focus in *The Matrix*. As a result, the effectiveness of male nostalgia as enlisted above indicates its alignment not only with technology but with capitalism itself.

### 3.2 The Annihilation of Queers

SF cinema is highly determined by the very capitalist ideology whose conflicts and injustices it thematizes. Big-budget enterprises and marketable commodities themselves, genre films, argues Judith Hess Wright, support the political structure that is in power. Stepping out of the present, gangster, western, horror and science fiction narratives control the visions of possible futures by striving to re-establish the state of affairs that was destroyed by the appearance of the Others. Offering temporary solutions, genre films teach us obedience in that they understand the escape to fantasy as the only accessible strategy against the ruling order. Succumbing to a past that appears as idyllic, these movies are accomplices to the ruling class as they strive towards the maintenance of the status quo (Hess Wright 2000, 77–78). Problematically enough, the genre film thus reproduces the very male anxieties it attempts to resolve.

Actively engaged in nostalgia, the genre film offers satisfaction instead of active resolution. The transhistorical perspective that characterizes SF in particular contours a model of objectivity that is empowered by the persistence of vision. Emphasizing that this model is typical of Western thought, Donna Haraway draws a parallel between the contemporary technological investment of vision with new horizons and a notion of the real as completely knowable. The enhanced visibility of objects of investigation, she argues, conceals the invisibility of the scientist *himself*; abstracted away from – gendered/sexualized – relations of power, the knowing subject is assigned an omniscient, universal, and consequently, a disembodied position:

Vision in this technological feast becomes unregulated gluttony; all perspective gives way to infinitely mobile vision, which no longer seems just mythically about the god-trick of seeing everything from nowhere, but to have put the myth into ordinary practice.

(Haraway 189)

In response to the relativism that the god-trick represents, Haraway calls for embodied, situated, locatable and partial knowledges that could draw a model of seeing from below, that is, from the position of the subjugated.

The masculine signifying economy of *The Matrix* systematically denies the multiplicity of locations from where to see, foregrounding its aspiration for a universal and univocal position by the naming of its hero. As an hysterical attempt at ultimately securing the male masculinist privilege to see, the film mediates power-relationships through the force of the male gaze. It is this gaze that makes our entering the program possible as Cypher could not stop looking at Neo. Similarly, Morpheus claims that he has spent all his life looking for the One, and Smith tells Neo in the interrogation room that they have had an eye on him for some time. Neo's body thus appears as spectacle, objectified as he is made the passive recipient of the gaze. It is only at the climactic action sequence at the end, that, by stopping the bullets, Neo is able to return and manipulate the gaze. Securing the unpermeability of his body, he is able to reverse the homoeroticism Smith's gaze is invested with.

Action sequences have a crucial role in eliminating the unresolved tensions originated by the male gaze, argues Peter Middleton (Middleton 1992, 26). As the homoerotic pleasures of looking have, at the same time, their counterpoint in the narratives' strong rectitude against homosexuality, these scenes, however homophobic, depict male relationships at their most sexual as they allow for the otherwise prohibited contact of male bodies. Resolving and creating tension at the

same time, these scenes “show what is possible for men. These heroes can’t keep their hands off one another, but when they touch, their desire turns to blows (op. cit. 34).

Similarly to *The Matrix*, Anthony Mann’s classical westerns offer a radical solution for the erasure of male anxieties – of the predominately male audience of that genre – that could arise as a result of the eroticisation of the male hero’s body when it is put on display. In Mann’s films, writes Paul Willemen, the hero is cast diegetically in two distinct ways, one being consequent on the other. First his figure, emerging on the horizon against the bleak land of the prairie, or sometimes in action, is offered as spectacle; the hero is exposed to be eroticised through the viewer’s voyeuristic admiration. As a second step, Mann destroys the hero’s body in scenes of physical violence in order to deprive him of homoerotic connotations. The third stage of Mann’s anti-homosexual narrative strategy encompasses the hypostasization and near destruction of the male body that is mutilated and restored through violent brutality. In the corresponding scenes we can see a triumphant male body emerging.

Apart from these stages that result in the reconstruction of the hero’s body, many of Mann’s westerns accompany the pleasure/unquiet pleasure of looking with a quite marked anti-homosexual sentiment, most frequently represented as the murder of a supposedly or openly gay character. Through this denial of homosocial desire the anxiety of looking is ultimately resolved (Willemen 1981, 16).

Mann’s narratives thus consciously act upon a gendered audience’s reaction and an implied homoerotic male relationship among the characters. The nostalgic construction of masculinity allows for such a double act in *The Matrix*, too. In addition to the opening sequence, the second half of the movie is based on positioning the male body as spectacle throughout the rapidly evolving action scenes. In contrast with his opening iconography, Neo is portrayed as becoming more and more active while his figure retains its homoerotic connotations, appearing in tight black clothes that reveal the silhouette of his body. The violent action allows for a more radical destruction of the hero’s body than in Mann’s westerns: in the ravaged subway station where these final scenes are located, Neo, significantly, has to die in order for heteropatriarchy to emerge.

As a side-effect of Neo’s remasculination, Trinity’s figure is restyled with her solitary warrior role first exchanged for appearing as a side-kick of the hero when he sets out to save Morpheus, and then for the role of the “woman-as-romantic-interest.” As Tasker points out, “if the male body is to be a point of security,” the woman-as-love-interest “offers a point of differentiation from the hero and deflects attention from the homoeroticism surrounding male buddy relationships.” Providing the audience for the hero’s suffering, the woman-as-love-interest serves as “a space onto which a variety of desires and anxieties are displaced” (Tasker 1993, 26–27). Through a series of shots and counter-shots, the film establishes both Neo and Trinity’s romantic relationship on the Neb and allows for his resurrection as the consequence of her kiss that saves the world.

Trinity’s figure, shown standing nearby a wounded Morpheus, also allows for the ultimate de-eroticisation of Neo’s “manhunt” for him as represented in the second scene of the film. The final action sequence back in the Matrix also eradicates anxieties concerning queer desire. For Morpheus Neo “is all that matters;” the revenge plot activated by Neo who is ready to sacrifice his life for his master in response is, however, played out in order to eliminate the character that has been identified by infectious penetration. It is now Neo who penetrates Smith’s body in the orgasmic scene that narrates their unification. Parallel to the sentinels’ intrusion into the metallic body of the Neb, Neo projects himself into the digital body of the agent, hyperbolically reversing and re-enacting the interrogation room episode and signaling patriarchy’s revenge for the threat of the non-normative sexuality of homoerotic desire.

Eradicating a queer masculinity and achieving gender intelligibility, *The Matrix* elevates its hero to a level of hyperactivity as he rapidly ascends towards the open sky. His hypostasis, and his voice-over message to the enemy as the screen symbolizes that of a computer again, signifies his acquisition of an omniscient, hegemonic subject position where the universal male "I" sees everything from nowhere while his body is abstracted away. This transparent and self-identical, heteronormative masculinity is achieved through a series of performances. In order to maintain its hegemony, this masculinity needs to deny any possibility of subversion, and, indeed, the performative nature of gender/sexuality as well. Neo's becoming the One, i.e. the primary signifier in the signifying economy of reality, and the final heterosexual coupling brings about what Butler identifies as the culturally sanctioned "annihilation of queers" (Butler 1993, 124). Still, this outcome is "haunted by the sexual possibilities so annulled." (125).

## Conclusion

In this paper I have investigated the representation of genders and sexualities in *The Matrix*. In the first part of my analysis I established a relationship between the film's narrative strategy regarding the conceptualization of gender, and of masculinity in particular, and the recent phenomenon of the crisis of masculinity. In this respect, I interpreted postmodern feminist scholarship and the theoretical framework proposed by the second wave of men's studies as representing contrasting approaches. While feminism calls for a politics of sexual difference that does not stabilize either femininity or masculinity as self-identical embodiments, masculinity studies tend to reaffirm maleness as the norm. Interpreting the sequence of the opening three scenes of *The Matrix*, I argued that the film's mobilization of the New Bad Future cinematic tradition provides a historical frame and an epistemological framework the basis of which is sexual difference. The Matrix is thus able to operate as an exclusively male space where female characters serve as constitutive others against whom the hero's masculinity can be tested. I also underlined that the homoeroticization of male relationships is explained away in the narrative as these relationships can also be interpreted as homosocial bonding so that the notion of a normative masculinity can develop. According to the film's logic, masculinity should not be defined as allowing for the discontinuity of gender and sex. In other words, the reinforced sexualization of the relationship between hero and heroine serves the narrative's vexed interest to produce a sexual politics where masculinity and male embodiment are inextricably linked.

In the second part I focused on the deconstruction of the essentialist concept of sex. I related Christine Delphy's reversal of the cause-effect relationship between sex and gender to Judith Butler's theory that thematizes the performativity of gender. I argued that the nostalgia that characterizes science fiction cinema provides a definition of the gendered and sexualized subject that achieves gender intelligibility only if s/he is embedded in the heterosexual matrix. In Butler's definition, the heterosexual matrix naturalizes the linearity of sex, gender and desire and is unable to account for the ontology of queer sexualities that are consequently pathologized and medicalized. The nostalgic masculinity the film attempts at reinforcing, is, however, strongly connected to a homoeroticized male embodiment. Neo's performances of masculinities and femininities are thus interpreted in terms of the hyper-reality that characterizes the feminized program's late capitalist modes and circuits of production and reproduction. The Matrix's late capitalism serves as a background against which the film's sexual politics can be played out. As I underlined, the essentialism that characterizes *The Matrix* defines the reality of Zion in terms of its supposedly anti-capitalist ideology. As a result, the queering of desire is enabled only through the figure of the clone. Non-normative sexualities are thus represented as the violent and infectious products of turn-of-the-millennium economic practices. This narrative strategy

forecloses a clear-cut distinction between livable and unlivable bodies, and deprives the notion of “queer” of its subversive potentials. Gender performances are thus understood as the outcome of particular choices, and as unnatural at the same time.

However, the gender performances Neo goes through underscore his body’s nonexistence outside the systems of power and knowledge. In the third part, I focused on the effectiveness of these systems in the restoration of the universal, heteropatriarchal subject. Contesting two realities by identifying them with reproductive/sexual organs, *The Matrix* allows for the realization of the self-identical, masculine male embodiment on the phallic hovercraft of the Neb. While the idea of late capitalism allowed for the queer moment of identification, the seemingly anti-capitalist attitude that characterizes reality in the film is based on the degradation of sexualities that cannot be accommodated by the notion of the norm. As the hero’s final hypostasis is the effect of the annihilation of queers, the narrative equates normativity with the omniscient, embodied masculine “I” that conceals its gendered character. In other words, the “real” of *The Matrix* is produced as the public patriarchy of the program is exchanged for private patriarchy. The latter capitalizes on the eradication of homoerotic pleasures as well as the emotional labor performed by women. The surgical construction of gender provides a scientific frame for this part of the analysis as well as for the narrative’s ultimate subscription to heteropatriarchy. In other words, bio-technology as a particular realization of science serves to justify the hierarchical redrawing of sexual difference that also enables the restoration of the sex/gender dichotomy. However, the violation and ultimate invalidation of the pluralities of masculinities in *The Matrix* reproduces the very anxieties the film seeks to resolve.

On the basis of the above we may conclude that with its recourse to a single gender that is the expression of a stable sex as the exclusive point of departure, the theorization of masculinity crisis in men’s studies is marked by its limitations. As long as men’s studies shy away from breaking with the humanist concept of “man,” masculinity, as we have seen, is unable to be considered a political category. Within this framework, any discussion of male subjectivity remains “a recuperative cultural fantasy.”

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Koller Nóra  
The Construction of Masculinity in *The Matrix*

The purpose of this paper is to explore the different modes of representation *The Matrix* offers in connection with the construction of genders. Depicting a process of initiation and development, the film has for its major objective the production of a solo male protagonist that will fulfill the role of saving the world and humanity from the apocalyptic danger of late capitalist economy. This mission capitalizes on the sexual division of labor, and is a commonplace characteristic of films in the science fiction genre. The construction of the hero, however, is represented in a unique and contradictory way, especially with respect to the nostalgic conceptualization of gender and sexuality, and the phenomenon of the crisis of masculinity as the theoretical context for the formation of identity. I will investigate the points of tension in the film narrative that can be seen as ideologically biased, given that the focus of *The Matrix* is a process of self-unification that is in accordance with the possible expectations of a heteropatriarchal society. The development of this dominant order is simultaneous with that of its symbolic figure as we get closer to the climax of the film. My claim is that in the formation of both the self and the social, two intertwining processes, performances of masculinities and femininities are determining. As a result of the homogenizing perspective of the film, femininity and masculinity come to be defined in terms of each other, treated as mutually exhaustive categories. The final celebration of the triumphal, self-identical masculinity is, however, in contrast with the homoeroticism that the relationships between male characters are invested with throughout the film. The ascension of heteronormative masculinity reinforces a hierarchy of genders and sexualities, stabilizing femininity as passive embodiment that is defined against the abstract, hyperactive masculinity *The Matrix* manages to find in its uncertain hero.

## Tension and Tense in Don DeLillo's Art of Prose

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Time seems to pass. The world happens, unrolling into moments, and you stop to glance at a spider pressed to its web. There is a quickness of light and a sense of things outlined precisely and streaks of running luster on the bay. You know more surely who you are on a strong bright day after a storm when the smallest falling leaf is stabbed with self-awareness. The wind makes a sound in the pines and the world comes into being, irreversibly, and the spider rides the wind-swayed web

(DeLillo 2001, 7).

This emblematic *intrada* in Don DeLillo's *The Body Artist* sets the tone for the ensuing cadences of the physical and metaphysical quest that Lauren Hartke, the body artist of the title, will undertake. All the elements of an extended metaphor, stretching throughout the whole of the novella, already appear in this compact depiction of a mood. There is 'time', 'wind', 'web' and 'spider', each adumbrating the sense of a conflict between design ('web', 'time') and what is inscrutably beyond that design ('wind', 'storm'), yet affecting it intimately. Design naturally connotes the idea of language, which is pitted against the inexpressible, that something beyond language.

"Time seems to pass" – this declaration in isolation places the word "seems" in an accentuated, or rather, problematic spot in the middle of a statement that starts out with the gradually building force of the letters "t" in 'time' and "s" in 'seems' culminating and at once going out through the repeated pattern of "t" and "s" in a quick, so to speak, aural flash; 'time seems to pass'. "Seems" is underlined here and, as I have mentioned above, sets the key into which everything after this is orchestrated. So the word "seems" is not stamped only between the words "time" and "pass", but between the concepts as well; indicating the metaphysical quest impending. In other words, the copula "seems" and its tensive flare-up as a word as well as a concept indicates a "physical" and "meta-physical" issue that will serve as the dynamism of the text where, as a matter of fact, this dynamism of "seem" ensues not from a "kinetic" but primarily from a strained, static sort of text.

This minute analysis is not only to emphasize the composite nature of the thematic and formal helix characteristic of the novella, but also to draw attention to its poised and focused quality. Don DeLillo in trying to transcend the predicate of "time passes", in trying to breach (the confidence in) this temporal predisposition, by circumscribing its seeming nature attempts to dissolve the imaginative limitations imposed upon humans by his distinct narrative technique. That the attempt may result in failure is beside the point. As Arthur Saltzman had it: "That vision is inconclusive does not disqualify its insights. Say rather that the tentativeness of vision –identified by its liberal admission policies, its eagerness to trope and associate, and all the broad vocabulary of speculation–tries to coax the world out of its mute stringencies" (Saltzman 2000, 15–16). Every "breakthrough" inevitably contains the seeds of its "breakdown", that is (op. cit. 17). DeLillo's thematic concern, that of dramatizing the attempted transcendence of temporality and in that corporality is conveyed, amplified and achieved preponderantly through the formal configurations applied in the text. In tracing how the attempt is built up and terminated, or rather, suspended first I would like to analyze the formal, architectual framework and then the content within that framework, the thematic aspects of the text. Although first of all a frame of reference is needed to the proper sequence of the argument.

## The background

DeLillo has never hid it under the bushel that he is strongly connected to the problematics of language, which is not surprising at all, given the basic necessities of his occupation. What could be genuine about him, though, is his excessive tendency in being language-conscious, or rather, word-conscious. It is no wonder then when he says that

...the basic work is built around the sentence. This is what I mean when I call myself a writer. I construct sentences. There's a rhythm I hear that drives me through a sentence. And the words typed on the white page have a sculptural quality. They form odd correspondences. They match up not just through meaning but through sound and look. The rhythm of a sentence will accommodate a certain number of syllables. One syllable too many, I look for another word. There's always another word that means nearly the same thing, and if it doesn't then I'll consider altering the meaning of a sentence to keep the rhythm, the syllable beat. I'm completely willing to let language press meaning upon me. Watching the way in which words match up, keeping the balance in a sentence—these are sensuous pleasures. I might want *very* and *only* in the same sentence, spaced in a particular way, exactly so far apart. I might want *rapture* matched with *danger*—I like to match word endings. I type rather than write longhand because I like the way words and letters look when they come off the hammers onto the page—finished, printed, beautifully formed  
(<http://www.perival.com/delillo/ddwriting.html>).

This material attraction is one quality of his deep connection to language. Another, of course, is his metaphysically oriented attraction that manifests itself the most in his novels' recurrent topos. For the platform that DeLillo provides for his (cultural) themes, as David Cowart (in his book titled *Don DeLillo: The Physics of Language*) also argues, is typically embedded in a meditation on linguistic issues, such as the notion of total interconnectedness<sup>1</sup>, the connection between narrative and power<sup>2</sup>, the possibility of redemption<sup>3</sup>, etc.).

The central issue in these books, I think, is that there is a fundamental tension between reality<sup>4</sup> and design, or, language, which is inescapable but is not without its, so to say, redemptive merits. What proves essential is that in tension there is a source for dynamism, vitality, or as Bergson terms it an "élan vital". There is, in other words, a gap to be bridged; an impetus to produce, for want of a better phrasing, a platform for a poetic prose propelling poise. Before the analysis, though, let me underpin the rationale behind this tension; for it seems, as James Guetti avers (in connection with Melville, Faulkner and Conrad) that "the greatest success of language itself, is to create a potential of meaning that must remain unrealized, a tension between order and disorder that cannot be resolved" (Guetti 1967, 108).

Given the fact that humankind is capable to see, feel, comprehend or conceptualize only in its own terms (through its own particular biological and mental apparatuses), which does not at all guarantee valid vantage as to the unmediated perception of reality; in all probability there must be a separate sphere of humanly processed world with its own boundaries and reality. Supposedly, within this sphere of reality the orientation is possible through such coordinate systems as the biologically, culturally, or historically determined spatial and temporal dimensions of cognizance. In this vein of thought a constructivist streak is inherent in the understanding of cognition.

<sup>1</sup> "Everything is connected" (DeLillo 1997, 825).

<sup>2</sup> "There's a curious knot that binds novelists and terrorists" (DeLillo 1991, 41).

<sup>3</sup> "[T]he fallen wonder of the world" (DeLillo 1989, 339).

<sup>4</sup> The Reality with the capital, that is, which is not a human(ized) reality

According to the so-called evolutionary epistemology, not only man as species but also man's cognitive apparatus has to be viewed as a product of evolution. By the process of adaptation to the environment this apparatus has become fit for yielding as much knowledge about the world as is necessary for the species to survive. But we are not entitled to assume that the picture of the world as produced by that apparatus is a true and objective mirror-image of the world "an sich". Visual perception, for instance, must not be thought of as a neutral (re)presentation of something immediately given; rather it must be viewed as the organized output of our cognitive apparatus the input of which is a chaotic mass of sensory stimuli

(Sebeok 1994, 230).

In other words, humans should be regarded as similar to operationally closed systems where cognition "coincides with re-cognition and presentation becomes representation" (Nöth 1990, 179); or, like Maturanesque autopoietic systems because (it is inescapable that) humans "behave self-referentially. They form semiotically closed systems ... since their cognition takes place only as the triggering of neural processes that are specified by the system's own structure" (ibid.).

The above mentioned "semiotically closed systems" automatically brings to mind the most important semiotic system of all, which in its ubiquitous presence in the human realm underlies all forms of signification, and which is absolutely relevant in the (literary) case of this argument; and it is language. As I have already mentioned, presumably there is a fundamental disparity between language, the human matrix about reality, and Reality. More than usually this disparity is the seminal diving board for novelists, especially from the modernists onward. But, where exactly can we place DeLillo on a continuum that is stretching along the axis of, say, representation? Is he closer to the side which still believes and looks for the direct representation and thus recuperation of reality or to that side which acknowledges and revels in the impossibility of such a project?

According to the view of those who hold the latter attitude to be the adequate condition for inquiry, and in line with the above mentioned tenets of "evolutionary epistemology" it will be clear that there is an inherent arbitrariness involved in language. This realization partly originates from the ideas of Ferdinand de Saussure who in his famous essay, the *Course in General Linguistics*, propounded his views on the arbitrary nature of signs and their systematic interconnection. The most important tenet in this essay was that "in language there are only differences ... [and] [w]hether we take the signified or the signifier, language has neither ideas nor sounds that existed before the linguistics system, but only conceptual and phonic differences that have issued from the system" (Rivkin & Ryan 1998, 88). The discipline that later assimilated and subsumed these groundbreaking assumptions was structuralism, a field that assumes the presence of an underlying structure and order beneath every phenomena of the world (op. cit. 334), and that, as the *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Semiotics* circumscribes it,

rejects the notion that *ideas* exist in some transcendental realm of their own, independent of language and the various cultural codes which determine the limits of thought at any given time. Structuralism takes the opposite view, that concepts are possible only insofar as they exist within a certain intelligible *structure* of meaning, the effects of which are mostly unconscious but none the less decisive. What counts as "knowledge" will always be determined very largely by selective codes and conventions which work to validate certain kinds of discourse and to exclude others

(Sebeok 1994, 986).

Opposed to this, in defiance of the view of the human cognition as a linguistic prison-house, though, there is an optimistic tradition in search of an organic, unmediated connection to the world. In his book, *The Search for the Perfect Language*, Umberto Eco portrays the tradition especially present in the European sphere of culture which is committed to find a cure for the confounded languages of humans by inventing or even trying to discover the common and perfect language

for humankind; the language that is in total accordance and harmony with the world. The most important mainspring for this tradition, we read, is the Bible itself where the myth of a prelapsarian Adamic language can be identified in such passages from the genesis as the following: “out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought [them] unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that [was] the name thereof” (Genesis 2:19). And from this point on, until Babel “the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech” (Genesis 11:1), but then “the LORD did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the LORD scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth” (Genesis 11:9) resulting in the loss of the primordial language. The concept of the postlapsarian language represents therefore the corrupt and misplaced primordial language as a result of which the one-to-one correspondence and immediate relationship with the things in and of the world was ultimately lost. Thus words became signs and signs, in turn, became arbitrary. Hence the hope and hence the faith, in the possibility of harmony between men and cosmos.

Positioning DeLillo along the outlined continuum is not as easy as it may appear. In a score of interviews DeLillo speaks about his concerns regarding the mysterious ways and attributes of language. In an interview with Tom LeClair in 1983 he says: “I do wonder if there is something we haven’t come across. Is there another, clearer language? Will we speak it and hear it when we die? Did we know it before we were born?”. The issue of speaking in tongues, glosolalia, intrigues him very much; and the malleable, open mind of children also. “I think we feel, perhaps superstitiously, that children have a direct route to, have direct contact to the kind of natural truth that eludes us as adults. There is something they know but cannot tell us. Or there is something they remember which we’ve forgotten” (in Letricchia 1991, 64). It is enough to think about the number of infantile characters in the novels to see how relevant this issue is for DeLillo. There is Tap Axton in *The Names*, Wilder Gladney in *White Noise* or Mr Tuttle in *The Body Artist* who all represent a certain form of (linguistic) transcendence, which reminds one actually of transcendentalist tenets according to which innocence, like the innocence of children, and feelings, and intuitions are of supreme importance in attaining deeper levels of truth. In a sentiment like this “the way back into a divine nature [is] through the innocent eye” (Tony Tanner in Barbour 1973, 55); and to gain this clearer vision the rule is to “unlearn reason and behold the world with child-like passive admiration” (ibid.). David Cowart in his book on DeLillo and language claims that his “work represent[s] a rejection of the postmodern subject ... as nearly inseparable from the semiotic ‘signal soup’ [because in DeLillo’s view] the theoretically obsolete individual [is] the only viable site of resistance to the ubiquitous terror of post-modern life (Cowart 2002, 5). Cowart asserts that “If there is a resister it is DeLillo himself. If there is a site of resistance, it is language, the very medium that supposedly exemplifies the hopelessness of laying foundation, making a stand” (ibid.). In sum,

DeLillo does not defer to the poststructuralist view of language as a system of signifiers that refer only to other signifiers in infinite regression. DeLillo’s texts undermine this postmodernist gospel. Fully aware that language is maddeningly circular, maddeningly subversive of its own supposed referentiality, the author nonetheless affirms something numinous in its mysterious properties (ibid.).

Yet, it is important to note in connection with all these that what DeLillo considers most significant is above all the potentiality in language, the elasticity of the medium that, as Jon Roberts puts it, develops “the habits of pluralism in the reader” (Roberts, 2002, 54). Naturally, the idea of elasticity is not to be conflated with a concrete, particular way of speaking, with adopting a certain, definite way of language use. There is no intention of arguing for a trans-

cidental form of language. Understandably, that is an attitude to be opposed in order to avoid, for example, the acceptance of such totalitarian narratives as that of fundamentalists and terrorists. Roberts argues that in *Mao II*. "in stark contrast and opposition to the terrorists of and against language, DeLillo writes his sentences against the emergence of [a] permanently clarifying context, against the authoritarian grand narratives" (op. cit. 57) thus encouraging a pluralist mindset. In DeLillo's version it is put thus: "The book depicts a fight for human imagination - between persons representing individuality, and the anonymous masses, which so often have been the audience for totalitarian and military rulers or terrorists" (in Desalm 1992). The same is true if one considers the linguistic implications in *The Names*. The terror perpetrated by the cult which in a desperate attempt to reify language and even terminably connect it to the "things" in and of the world, ritually kill people based on the initials of their name and the city in which they live. This violent attempt at pre-lapsarization "in order to attempt the binding of symbol and object into one-to-one correspondence through a terminal act of connection [results in that] the killers superimpose uncertainty with pattern" (Bryant 1987, 19), which blows out the most necessary quality in language, its figurative, aleatory nature. The wonder inheres in the leakage<sup>5</sup> that offers variability, thus momentum to the linguistic presence. The principle of this gratifying potential appears in Tap's blurry narrative. Even if this narrative is freighted with misspellings, it proffers a foil to the terror inherent in the glib semantic associations when using words; in his rapture the father says:

I found these mangled words exhilarating. He'd made them new again, made me see how they worked, what they really were. They were ancient things, secret, reshapable. ... The spoken poetry in those words. ... His ... misrenderings ... seemed to contain curious perceptions about the words themselves, second and deeper meanings, original meanings

(op.cit. 313).

This is the reason behind DeLillo's fascination with the transgressive and transsubstantiative dimensions of language. This is why he can be seen as the apologist for the vicarious and indirect mode in which language (inevitably functions and) is capable of taxing the imagination.

A picture is like the masses: a multitude of impressions. A book on the other hand, with its linear advance of words and characters seems to be connected to individual identity. I think of a child learning to read, building up an identity, word by word and story by story, the book in its hand. Somehow pictures always lead to people as masses. Books belong to individuals

(in Desalm 1992).

To revert to my question then as to where to position DeLillo on a representational continuum, I am confident now in my answer that naturally somewhere in the middle, in between the "paradise" of transparency and the "prison-house" of mediation. The platform for his linguistic endeavour is provided for by its very confines and limitations from whence the motivation to extend and even surpass those confines gains its very momentum. In fact, this is the issue that I see rather aptly dramatized in *The Body Artist*, the structure of which has yet remained to be addressed.

<sup>5</sup> As Paula Bryant puts it in a neat metaphor, language "is the net [humans] seize upon in order to pull their experience neatly together, yet reality keeps escaping through the warp and weft" (Bryant 1987, 17).

## The Body Artist

This mesmerizing piece of prose suspended in both an emotional and intellectual levitation imparts the atmosphere of intense grief and its eventual acceptance. After Rey Robles' suicide his young wife Lauren Hartke, a body artist, is left with nothing but the immensity of grief, a sprawling house isolated in the barrens, and a strange, inscrutable creature appearing after the shocking event, who canalizes her grief into a "redemptive" performance art. Tersely put, *The Body Artist* is concerned with the quest for transcendence on the thematic as well as on the formal level. Importantly, what appears in the content is amplified by the way it is written and then realizing this irrefragable interaction, the way in which the text is conveyed, complemented with the content, communicates the abstract meaning of the text, which is about the success inherent in failure. In the terms of the novella, that is, the emotional condition of mourning is presented through a formal stasis, which in turn implies, by the depiction of the struggle exerted to overcome it, the outcome of the linguistic tension raised in the face of reality. First, let us consider then the frame and linguistic design that renders it possible that an emotionally strained aura is produced.

## The design

Let me quote again, at length, the exposition, for the major formal themes immediately occur here. The cadence and the pace of the passage grabs and arrests the attention instantly:

Time seems to pass. The world happens, unrolling into moments, and you stop to glance at a spider pressed to its web. There is a quickness of light and a sense of things outlined precisely and streaks of running luster on the bay. You know more surely who you are on a strong bright day after a storm when the smallest falling leaf is stabbed with self-awareness. The wind makes a sound in the pines and the world comes into being, irreversibly, and the spider rides the wind-swayed web

(DeLillo 2001, 7).

The world happens, pause, unrolling into moments, pause, and you stop to glance, pause. The recurring "l" and "e" sounds begin to build a lulling quality already. This is enhanced in the following, where the sounds of "s" and "t" are interwoven with the vowel sounds; there is a quickness of light, pause, and a sense of things outlined, precisely, and streaks of running luster on the bay. Next, a fluffy "f" tames the hissing "s" sounds and initiates the sound "w"; on a strong bright day after a storm when the smallest falling leaf is stabbed with self-awareness. Eventually, the pacifying "w" overtaking "s" and riding though a string of "d", "p" and "b" sounds all of a sudden stops short in the final "b"; the wind makes a sound in the pines, pause, and the world comes into being, irreversibly, and the spider rides the wind-swayed web. Pause. Thus through poetic propensities there is an attempt made to evoke the clarity of the moment, which is suspended through the sensuous sounds, like the spider in its web, especially suspended when it returns to its opening image of the spider.

For further random examples note the alliteration in these passages: "It felt like home, being here, and she raced through the days with their small ravishing routines" (op. cit. 32). The iterated "r" in the latter sentence is propped by "p" in the following: "[T]hat was part of the presence, specific to the prowling man", or blended with "s" in "the sky was very near, sprawled in star smoke" (op. cit. 37). Observe the interplay of "f", "w" and "d" in: "there were five birds on the feeder and they all faced outward, away from the food, and identically still" (op. cit. 53), or the "p", "d" and intermittent "g" leading to the exuberance of "i" in: "maybe it went deeper, the



poses she assumed and held for prolonged periods, the gyrate exaggerations, the snake shapes and flower bends, the prayerful spans of systematic breathing, life lived irreducibly as sheer respiration. First breathe, than pant, then gasp" (op. cit. 57). The "b" is softened by the final "t" cadence in: "she walked for miles through the blueberry barrens, in blowing mist, jacket fastened and tape reels turning" (op. cit. 69).

"When she started back she saw a blue jay perched atop the feeder. She stopped dead and held her breath" (op. cit. 21). In addition the rhyming quality also plays an important part; heed, for example, the incremental, more and more rhyming force of "o" in the following passage:

She began to work naked in cold room. She did her crossovers on the bare floor, and her pelvic stretches, which were mockingly erotic and erotic both, and her slow-motion repetitions of everyday gestures, checking the time on your wrist or turning to hail a cab, actions quoted by rote in another conceptual frame, many times over and now slower and over, with your mouth open in astonishment

(op. cit. 58).

There is also a perfect cadence in the tone of "i": "with bags of groceries in a gleaming cart and found him sitting in piss and shit" (op. cit. 64); or of the diphthong "ei": "days the same, paced and organized [...] days that moved so slow they ached" (op. cit. 32).

In short, the abundance of alliteration and rhymes along the lines imparts the sensuous and arresting aura of poetry, which most importantly bespeaks the tendency to dissociate with temporality. Surely, as the reader progresses forward in the text, he confronts a storyline in which the plot is absolutely secondary. The dominance of sequence is absent here, and what sets the pace is, to use John Coyle's expression, a "slowed-down or static aesthetic" (Coyle 2007, 31). In brief, a poised narrative results that in turn increases the tension within its linguistic elements.

### **"Don't touch it. I'll clean it up later" (81, 85, 93, 98, 100)**

Although the poetic aspect of the prose alone would not develop a nearly frustrating tense quality in it were it not for the other narratorial decoys DeLillo deploys. "She wanted to disappear in Rey's smoke, be dead, be him, and she tore the wax paper along the serrated edge of the box and reached for the carton of bread crumbs" (DeLillo 2001, 34). This sole sentence, similarly to a number of others, serves as a nexus for discrete yet intimately bound narrative lines running simultaneously parallel to each other. As a matter of fact, the first mentioning of bread crumbs is on page 33, "There was a package of bread crumbs on one of the shelves in the pantry", which reappears on the next page. As for the wax paper, its sporadic appearance stretches throughout the novella. On page 33: "She knew she'd seen wax paper somewhere in a blue and something box", which after the nexus sentence above and three intervening lines later crops up again when: "The wax paper separated from the roll in a rat-a-tat sequence, advancing along the notched edge of the box, and she heard it along her spine, she thought". Two pages later we read about "an exactitude she knew in the bones that were separated by the disks that went rat-a-tat down her back" (op. cit. 37), which shows a sort of consummation of the metaphoric infusion initiated two pages earlier. Seventy-six pages later on page 113 there is a paragraph embedded within paragraphs also repeating a pattern (Kotka, the birds, ringing phone, etc.), which informs us that "She listened to the sound the wax paper made, advancing along the notched edge of the box when she tore the paper from the roll" (op. cit. 113) circumscribing it as if for the first time. The rhythmic ending of this sentence mirrors in a way the rhythmic, repetitive almost hypnotic pattern characterizing the whole of *The Body Artist*.

Joseph Frank in his seminal essay titled "Spatial Form in Modern Literature" asserts that certain "writers ideally intend the reader to apprehend their work spatially, in a moment of time, rather than as a sequence" (Frank 1991, 10). Somewhat boldly and rather partially I think he proposes a theory according to which "attention is fixed on the interplay of relationships within the immobilized time-area" (op. cit. 17) when the text "asks its readers to suspend the process of individual reference temporarily until the entire pattern of internal references can be apprehended as a unity" (op. cit. 15). Though disregarding the temporal aspect, which in its (tentative) progress, in my view, is primary in conveying a tension, is not appropriate, still as Frank observes the underlying principle of such a unitary textual comprehension is "reflexive reference", the emphatic presence of which I see seminal in DeLillo's narrative. A reader of a spatially warped text according to Frank is forced "by continually fitting fragments together and keeping allusions in mind until, by reflexive reference, he can link them to their complements" (op. cit. 20), which in turn results in a poised narrative "frustrating the reader's normal expectation of a sequence" (op. cit. 12). This is a realization I regard substantial in regarding the subsequent features I highlight in connection with *The Body Artist*. As Mr Frank says, in *Nightwood* there is "a pattern arising from the spatial interweaving of images and phrases independently of any time-sequence of narrative action" (op. cit. 52), but before rushing to conclusions about there being a thematic pattern in *The Body Artist* let us consider more thoroughly "the spatial interweaving of images and phrases" involved in it.

The last phrase of the first chapter is the same as the central line of the exposition: "on a strong bright day after a storm" (DeLillo 2001, 7, 25). To use an always handy figure as a comparison to the repetitive pattern observable in this texture consider the building blocks of lego as the elements of the narrative where the force driving it onward, the progressive aspect of it is not represented as a continual, linear construction resulting in, say, a tower of a story but rather in a scattered milieu of set colors strewn on each other, blending still retaining their distinct colors, and at the same time communicating some form of a pattern. The double sentence of "She chopped firewood" and "The dead times were the best" (op. cit. 38) referring to a webcam (in Kotka) constitutes a pattern of meditative lambency when the former is repeated after 22 and the latter after 16 lines. Similarly, a repetition hindering the temporal dimension of the narrative appears when the distinct block of "You separate the Sunday sections" on page 18 regarding the newspaper, after 27 lines gets repeated on the next page. The intervening 27 lines on the other hand are the aimless chunks of conversation between Rey and Lauren that is protracted from the initial "I want to say something but what" (op. cit. 8) 10 pages earlier. Furthermore, from that inchoate comment onward different building blocks of the narrative emerge, such as the strange hair in Lauren's mouth and the subsequent contemplation about it, the toast and the soya (its smell), the viscosity of orange juice, the drone of the radio (turned on and off), Rey's ritual smoking, the demarcation of properties<sup>6</sup>, the birds at the feeder, the old kettle, the intricate lines of retroactive and belated awareness<sup>7</sup>, the milk,

<sup>6</sup> "It was his coffee and his cup. They shared the newspaper but it was actually, unspokenly, hers" (op. cit. 7-8). Plus "a short pale strand, that wasn't hers and wasn't his" (op. cit. 10); and: "It was her newspaper. The telephone was his except when she was calling the weather. They both used the computer but it was spiritually hers" (op. cit. 11); or in the nexus with the hair-, and bird-line of the narrative: "But it wasn't one of his, the hair she'd found in her mouth. Employees must wash hands before leaving toilet [...] It was his toast but she'd eaten nearly half of it. It was his coffee and cup [...] The phone was his. The birds were hers, the sparrows pecking at sunflower seeds. The hair was somebody else's (op. cit. 20).

<sup>7</sup> As if enlarging the dreamy quality of the narrative several passages recount the semi-conscious frame of mind of Lauren as in: "She got up to get something. She looked at the kettle and realized that wasn't it. She knew it would come to her because it always did and then it did. (op. cit. 16); or

the fridge, the counter, and some other minor elements. These separate blocks are blended in a way that their loose, fraying ends are interwoven or dovetailed into a homogeneous texture like that of the salted, oiled, onioned and baconed sanctuary of scrambled egg. Hence the preponderance of incomplete sentences, like: "What's it called, the lever. She'd pressed down the lever to get his bread go to brown" (op. cit. 9). Effectively, the first part of this paragraph is indented one page earlier within the fringes of the cereal-, and bird-block of the narrative (alloyed with the block of demarcation): "then the toaster thing popped and she flipped it down again because it took two flips to get the bread to go brown and he absently nodded his acknowledgement because it was his toast and his butter and then he turned on the radio and got the weather" (op. cit. 8). The radio and the birds, in fact, appear almost on every page of this chapter, but

What is more, as it is implicated above, the pattern of recurring blocks is not only local (restricted to one chapter) but generic also, arching through virtually hundred pages, and thus with a much more significant distance the temporal unfolding and dimension of the narrative is hindered almost definitively. In addition, for instance, to the threefold occurrence of the strange hair-line (11, 12, 20) in the first chapter, on page 69 it recurs when Lauren

felt something wispy at the edge of her mouth, half in half out, that could only be a hair. She plucked at it and brushed with her thumb, a strand of hair from the washcloth, and she couldn't feel it on her face anymore and she looked at him and looked at her hand and maybe it was just an itch

(op. cit. 69).

Similarly, the pine-scented Ajax recurs more than eighty pages later after its first appearance. We first encounter the disinfectant in chapter 1 when "She sprayed the tile and porcelain with pine-scent chemicals, half-addicted to the fumes. There were two months left of the rental agreement. They'd rented for six and now there were two. One person, two months. She used a bottle with a pistol-grip attachment" (op. cit. 32); this is echoing two pages later when "She stood in the tub and sparyed high on the tile walls until the depraved pine reek of acid and ether began to overwhelm her" (op. cit. 34). Reverting back in chapter 7 we read: "She cleaned the bathroom, using the spray-gun bottle of disinfectant [...] It was the pine-scent bottle, pistol-grip bottle of tile-and-grout cleaner, killer of mildew... (op. cit. 114).

As for another example, on page 33 we are presented with a Lauren "standing barefoot on the cold floor, throwing off a grubby sweater". Two pages later, as if presenting it for the first time the narrator tells us that Lauren "threw off a grubby sweater. She raised her arm out of the sweater and struck her hand lightly on something above, wondering what it was, although, this had happened before, and then she remembered the hanging lamp, metal shade wobbling ..." (op. cit. 35). As if rehearsing this scene seventy-seven pages later in chapter 7 the narrator tells that "She threw off the sweater and hit her hand on the hanging lamp, which she always forgot was there ..." (op. cit. 112), finally the elements of sweater, lamp, and barefoot are alloyed ten pages later when "throwing off a grubby sweater ... She stands barefoot, raising her arm out of the sweater and striking a hand on something above. She remembers the hanging lamp, totally

when "she sat thinking of something, she wasn't sure what" (ibid.); and: "He was looking at it and she understood this retroactively, that he'd been looking at it all this time but not absorbing the words on the page" (op. cit. 20); similarly: "A voice reported the weather but she missed it. She didn't know it was the weather until it was gone" (op. cit. 24); and: "She said, 'What?' He waited for the question to register" (op. cit. 25); or: "She reached in for the milk, realizing what it was he'd said that she hadn't heard about eight seconds ago" (op. cit. 9); and as a last, typically mundane example: "she remembered to smile" (op. cit. 21).

wrong for the room, metal shade wobbling ... (op. cit. 122). The same sort of repetitive pattern occurs arching over the novella most significantly in connection with the Japanese woman whom Lauren observes (35, 105, 115) and the ascetically strained view the webcam at Kotka offers (38, 72, 107, 113). An important feature pertaining to these instances is the significance inherent in presenting a recurring instance as if for the first time. Clearly a paraphrasing reference that is elliptical and proves conscious of a former use of the phrase-in-question would destroy the effect that is actually intended there. The re-phrasing of the elements of the narrative in a way that seems to be forgetful of the former ones de-suggests a linear comprehension (it happened the way it happened before) to benefit a temporally hindered, poised reception.

The grounding principle in bringing forth and strengthening a poised, tensive quality in narration is the repetitive recurrence of certain elements. As it is perceivable in the micro-narrative of the exposition, the words: world, spider and web, by recurring throughout the passage tend to dissolve the dynamism of linearity there. Similarly, throughout the novella, there is a recurrence of words and phrases even sentences, which is occasionally enhanced further when in particularly tense moments the tense is switched to the present and the continuous. In a metaphoric instance, for example, the rendering of the devastating experience is suspended in the continuous tense inserted within the metaphoric frame of the fist thus:

She was looking at the backs of her hands, fingers stretched, looking and thinking, recalling moments with Rey, not moments exactly but times, or moments flowing into composite time, an erotic of see and touch, and she curled one hand over into the other, missing him in her body and feeling sexually and abysmally alone and staring at the points where her knuckles shone bloodless from the pressure of her grips

(DeLillo 2001, 49).

This is a characteristic feature of DeLillo that John Coyle in analyzing its significant "presence" in crucial moments of *White Noise* and *Underworld*, describes as the process of "the shift into present tense as into another dimension, one of a poise almost angelic" (Coyle 2007, 30).

To approach this sense of tense tense from another aspect consider the following passage from *The Names* where as if describing the interior atmosphere of *The Body Artist* DeLillo implies: "The angels of arranged objects. The floorboard seams. The seam of light and shade. The muted colors of the water jug and wooden chest" (DeLillo 1989, 308). In effect, heightening the sense of presence is also possible in amassing nouns at the expense of the kinetic emission that the use of verbs would incur. Verily, David Cowart says that "[a]mong DeLillo's most characteristic gestures as a stylist, in fact, are all-noun sentences (and even paragraphs) [...] which achieves cosmic heights of predication without benefit of verbs" (Cowart 2002, 163–164). Cowart claims that this "askesis of the verb" (ibid.) aims at a presence "that cannot be represented directly". Let me note in passing that this kind of indirection is, in effect, in line with the assumptions I made about DeLillo's position on a representational continuum.

"She watched it, black-barred across the wings and tail, and she thought she'd somehow only now learned how to look" (op. cit. 21). Another technique on the stylistic palette in bringing forth a tensive quality of narration is the jumbling up of word classes. Not conspicuously but frequently enough to appear significant nouns turn into verbs and, vice versa, verbs into nouns. While the former may serve as a means to weaken the kinetic charge of the resulting word the latter may even freeze it into a form of convulsive stasis. Thinking of the lively aura of motile verbs frozen into the sphere of participles might remind one of an expressive marble sculpture in the Vatican Museums, the Laocoön and his Sons. A representative example from the first page may more clearly support this assumption where the transaction between word classes delivers rather a photographic quality than that of a cinematic one: "still a little puddled in dream melt, [...] she ran tap water over the blueberries bunched in her hand and closed her eyes to

breathe the savor rising" (DeLillo 2001, 7). The sequence here is rather imagistic as in other palpable instances: "He looked at the charred logs collapsed in the fireplace" (op. cit. 45); or, when describing the eerie creature Mr. Tuttle, the verbal depiction of his features imparts a drastic thus arresting quality of them: "His chin was sunken back, severely receded, giving his face and unfinished look, and his hair wiry and snagged, with jutting clumps" (ibid). As opposed to this the flare-up of a verbally rendered vortex in the middle of the following sentence I think softens somewhat the edge of the image: "She set the cloth gently on the water, where it plumed inward and sank" (op. cit. 68).

"The wax paper separated from the roll in a rat-a-tat sequence" (op. cit. 34). Seemingly irrelevant but the relentless attempts at onomatopoeia in trying to seize and depict the clarity of a moment also effect a slowed-down narrative, the occasional self-effacement of which (the narrator's admitted, verbally acknowledged failure in rendering that experiential phenomena) fix it into stasis, if not outright dissolve it. In my contention, though, the abnegation in these instances is an ingenious device to avoid squeezing the image into a delimited frame of definiteness. The focus remains soft thus, paradoxically, sharp, that is, more open to imaginative penetration, and herein lies the crux of their problematized use. "The birds broke off the feeder in a wing-whir that was all *b*'s and *r*'s, the letter *b* followed by a series of vibrato *r*'s. But that wasn't it at all. That wasn't anything like it" (op. cit. 17). The all-iterative repercussion of soaring birds, the birds broke off the feeder in a whing-whir, is curiously subtilized further when the reference to "*b*" and "*r*" divert the reader's attention back to the first half of the sentence and at the same time offers a suggestive, aural extension to it, which it, if not to the fullest, manages to achieve, even if the next two sentences finalize it in a self-erasing manner. The key is, I claim, suggestion, and the suspension of the gap (which in its demand to be bridged motivates imagination)<sup>8</sup>. "He stood shaking the container. He shook it longer than he had to because he wasn't paying attention, she thought, and because, it was satisfying in some dumb and blameless way, for its own childlike sake, for the bounce and slosh and cardboard aroma" (op. cit. 10).

"She moved past the landing and turned into the hall, feeling whatever she felt, exposed, open, something you could call unlayered maybe, if that means anything, and she was aware of the world in every step" (op. cit. 121). Pertaining still to the formal wiring of this intensively poised (aware in every step) narration, mention should be made about the most striking feature of the whole of the text, which in fact bundles up, justifies and amplifies the features discussed so far; and this is the deliberate use of words that veils everything in an aura of insoluble indefiniteness. To this end a set of specific words are deployed which mainly include: some, somehow, something, or, as if, not...but, seemed, and maybe. There is even a passage about this, "Somehow. The weakest word in the language. And more or less. And maybe. Always maybeing" (op. cit. 92). So, "[s]omehow. What is somehow?" (DeLillo 2001, 56,63) – this reflective pause is repeated within ten pages, nudging it, as argued above, into a simultaneous unity. "Now that you know you dropped it, you remember how it happened, or half remember, or sort of see it maybe, or something else" (op. cit. 89) – these are the concluding words in connection with the fall of a paperclip. Note the retr-active sequence of: or, or sort of maybe, or something else. Without doubt there is a conscious destabilization involved in it.

<sup>8</sup> On the other hand what Philip Nel suggests in connection with the use of onomatopoeia and the other stylistic features of the text is that through its extreme precision it denies the possibility of „organic connection between word and world" (Nel 2002, 748), and affirms that „DeLillo recognizes that these sharp words never quite tell the truth" (op. Cit. 741). Even if I agree with Nel regarding the idea of the impossibility of an organic unity, still I do not quite agree with taking the self-effacing "but that wasn't it at all" at face value, as a plain negation of authentic depiction. In my view, as I try to prove, there is an extensive, 'more-inclusive' motive behind defying definiteness.

A few among the numerous other instances rendered in an indefinite manner include, for example, the situation when Lauren dons a crewneck pullover and “[s]he feel[s] the label scratchy at her throat; [n]ot scratchy but something else” (op. cit. 112); or when Tuttle and Lauren are together in the kitchen, and Tuttle “seemed to be staring but probably wasn’t” (op. cit. 80); or when Lauren calls one of her friends and a generated mechanic voice answers and she ponders on the strangeness of the tone: “One voice for each word. Seven different voices. Not seven different voices but one male voice in seven time cycles. But not male exactly either. And not words so much as syllables but not that either” (op. cit. 67). When Lauren thinks back on the past she thinks about, “looking and thinking, recalling moments with Rey, not moments exactly but times, or moments flowing into composite time” (op. cit. 49). When Mariella calls Lauren she asks her, “But are you lonely?” and Lauren answers, “There ought to be another word for it. Everyone’s lonely. This is something else” (op. cit. 39). A characteristic mood is described this way, “Things she saw seemed doubtful – not doubtful but ever changing” (op. cit. 36). When in the kitchen Lauren washes her hand, “the water ran clear at first and then went not murky exactly but opaque” (op. cit. 8). When Lauren is in the kitchen she sees that “[t]here were five birds on the feeder and they all faced outward, away from the food and identically still. ... They weren’t looking or listening so much as feeling something, intent and sensing. All these words are wrong, she thought” (op. cit. 53). There is a self-effacing conclusion in this one too: “The smell of the soya was somewhere between body odor, yes, in the lower extremities and some podlife of the earth, deep and seeded. But that didn’t describe it. ... Nothing described it. It was pure smell” (op. cit. 16).

What all these instances implicate, in short, is the predominant mood of indefiniteness, a resistance to being exact on the part of the narrator. In fact, the syntax of many sentences is constructed like this: ‘it is this, or that, or not exactly that but something like that’, imparting, in other words, a mood, an aura even, where “[e]verything is slow and hazy and drained and it all happens around the word *seem*” (op. cit. 31). There is a palpable tension, in short, that is engendered by the slowing down of the narration to nearly a still, by freezing it through the application of different stylistic techniques. The result of such a static narrative is like the effect Mr. Tuttle has on Lauren, “She knew it was foolish to examine so closely. She was making things up. But this was the effect he had, shadow-inching through a sentence, showing a word in its facets and aspects, words like moons in particular phases” (op. cit. 48).

## The figure

As if speaking about the book, DeLillo assesses through the character of a journalist, Lauren Hartke’s performance act, the *Body Time*, as a piece “obscure, slow, difficult and sometimes agonizing. But it is never the grand agony of stately images and sets. It is about you and me. What begins in solitary otherness becomes familiar even personal. It is about who we are when we are not rehearsing who we are” (op. cit. 109–110). Quite aptly, this is the *figure*, the subject matter, which the central figure Mr. Tuttle, supposedly Lauren’s consciousness, dramatizes. To reach such an understanding it is essential to trace how the formal features I discussed relate to the content.

After her husband’s suicide Lauren encounters in a disused, empty room upstairs an elusive creature whom, in the course of their relationship, she names Mr. Tuttle. On the surface it seems that this figure is merely a perfect mimic whose inscrutability baffles and at the same time (by processing the realization and the gradual acceptance of loss, and inculcating self-awareness) heals the grief-stricken Lauren. As a matter of fact, Mr. Tuttle’s ‘babbling muteness’ is the motor behind the formally tuned “spatializing effect [...] by its constant interruption of the

rhythm of pure chronicity" (Frank 1991, 126). The self-reflection this figure engenders affects not only Lauren but the text and its reader as well.

At first, this strange person seems to be a young kid but over the course of time he always appears to metamorphose into somebody else. It seems that his appearance and even his identity, if there is such a thing, changes and fluctuates, never *is* but always becoming. Sometimes he seems to grow older by the minute. "There was a certain futility in his tone, an endlessness of effort, suggesting things he could not easily make clear to her no matter how much he said; [e]ven his gestures seemed marked by struggle" (DeLillo 2001, 46). Actually, there never occurs a successful act of communication between him and Lauren. Tuttle only iterates sentences he had heard before and says incomprehensible things like: "It is not able" (op. cit. 65), "I am doing. This yes that." (op. cit. 63), which are always out of context, out of touch with Lauren. He seems to linger, in other words, beyond the horizon of Lauren's communicative sphere.

In effect DeLillo contrasts the slackened language use of everyday conversation and the tensive language of deciphering, which sheds light on the impact that disjointed language exerts. As opposed to the linguistically strained efforts that Lauren makes to understand her visitor, in the morning scene she and her husband appears to understand each other almost non-linguistically. They talk (or intend to talk) to each other in half sentences, "You said something. I don't know. The house" (op. cit. 17), and as it transpires there is no need to verbalize their traces to get their intended meaning when Lauren's unfailing nagging ("Weren't you going to tell me something?" (op. cit. 16), "Tell me anyway", "You're sitting there talking. Tell me", "Just tell me. Takes only a second" (op. cit. 17), etc.) culminates in her admission: "Just tell me okay. I know anyway [...] I know anyway. So tell me" (op. cit. 18). In other words, despite the elliptical and fragmented manner in which it is executed there is a complete understanding between the two people. This is definitely enabled by the pragmatics of the situation. "The use of language, for various purposes, is governed by the conditions of society inasmuch as these conditions determine the users' access to, and control of, their communicative means" (Mey 1996, 42). Briefly, the main issues in pragmatics are intentionality (understanding what people mean even if they do not say what they actually mean), presuppositions and expectations (regarding the context and other people's reactions) and the rules of cooperation determined mainly by the maxim of relevance. Thus, when now and then Tuttle chants full sentences without socially intentional and determined envelopment, his meaning, if there is any, is obstructed because there is no context to which his diction belongs; there is no pragmatics available, in other words, in the dimension his communication operates. His words dissolve and his utterances never get sucked in by the gravitational pull of intelligibility.

When Tuttle utters – "Being here has come to me. I am with the moment, I will leave the moment. Chair, table, wall, hall, all for the moment, in the moment. It has come to me. Here and near. From the moment I am gone, am left am leaving. I will leave the moment from the moment" (DeLillo 2001, 74) – Lauren just watches him and wonders whether, "It was pure chant, transparent, or was he saying something to her" (op. cit. 75). In effect, after some encounters Lauren starts to ponder about Mr. Tuttle's weird behavior and resistance or inability to communicate and resolves to the not at all unwarranted thought that "[m]aybe this man experiences another kind of reality where he is here and there, before and after, and he moves from one to the other shatteringly, in a state of collapse, minus an identity, a language" (op. cit. 64). She comes to the conclusion that perhaps "he live[s] in a kind of time that ha[s] no narrative quality" (op. cit. 65), and thus is "defenseless against the truth of the world" (op. cit. 77), which is the reason behind his semantic and physical struggle. Tuttle "laps and seeps, somehow, into other reaches of being, other time-lives, and this is an aspect of his bewilderment in pain" (op. cit. 92).

Tying up the notion of the ultimately exposed individual with the understandings of evolutionary epistemology clearly shows that the issue raised through the character of Mr. Tuttle is the baneful consequences in the absence of the necessary human predispositions. Tuttle's tragedy is his exemption from basic mental structures that by "the process of adaptation to the environment [...] has become fit for yielding as much knowledge about the world as is necessary for the species to survive" (Sebeok 1994, 230). Tuttle is not a "site" where extra-subjective forces, like language and, for that matter, time clash (Hawthorn 1992, 165), he is not situated in a culturally, biologically and historically formed 'rut' which defines the perception and via that the coherent apprehension of the world. What turns out is that Tuttle's cognitive apparatus does not filter reality, that he "is living in another state; [and] it is a kind of time that is simply and overwhelmingly there, laid out, unoccurring, and he lacks the inborn ability to reconceive this condition" (DeLillo 2001, 77). As he self-definingly and self-revealingly stutters "nothings comes between me" (op. cit. 74), perhaps he means that no filter of mediation is available for him in processing the world. He is merely there, everywhere.

No matter how laboriously does Lauren strive to understand Tuttle she always fails when she approaches him from the channel of language. Her resultant frustration sometimes culminates in anger, "All right. Be a Zen master, you little creep" (op. cit. 55). All this happens, DeLillo suggests, because "[t]here is a code in the simplest conversation that tells the speakers what's going on outside the bare acoustics [and] this was missing when they talked ... all they had were unadjusted words" (op. cit. 65). To no avail does Tuttle, therefore, say things; he cannot enwrap the mutterings of his into a relevant context. The addressee (Tuttle) is not able to reduce his cognition (in not being able to reduce his way of existence into linguistic terms) to the addresser (Lauren) and therefore is lost in the act of communication.

Gilles Deleuze's in his essay titled "The Schizophrenic and Language" asserts that "the greatness of language consists in speaking only at the surface of things, and thereby in capturing the pure event and the combinations of events that take place on the surface" (Deleuze in Harari 1979, 285). Deleuze says that schizophrenic individuals, however, tend to experience a state in which there is no surface of things, and "[a]s there is no surface, interior and exterior, container and content no longer have precise limits, they plunge into universal depth" (ibid.) and communicate accordingly. He adds further that "[i]n this breakdown of the surface, all words lose their meaning" (ibid.). In this state:

words ... lose their ... power to set down or express incorporeal effects (events) distinct from the body's actions and passions. All words become physical and affect the body immediately. ...as the pinned word loses its meaning, it bursts into fragments, decomposes into syllables, letters, and above all into consonants which act directly on the body, penetrating it and bruising it

(ibid.).

These ideas are reminiscent of a typically poststructuralist attitude according to which schizophrenia is reconceived "positively as providing access to potentially higher or more complex modes of cognition, and ... normality itself [is seen] pathological" (Rivkin 1998, 337). Indeed, this schizophrenic plight may account easily for Tuttle's frenzied bearings but DeLillo doubtlessly had more in mind than 'simple' schizophrenia. What he tried to depict is a person who is experiencing the depth of existence and is unable to find his way to the surface of a linguistic reality.

According to post-structuralist thinkers we see the world in and through language and it provides a narrative for us that enable our (oriented) existence. This linguistically conditioned perception of the world is ultimately reductive and coercive and we are indelibly marked and



manipulated by it. Tuttle, actually, seems to transcend<sup>9</sup> this suppressed condition and he enters the excess of chaos of simultaneous presence and suffers from it both physically and psychologically because he is unprotected from its immensity. DeLillo underscores this problem when he says that there "has to be an imaginary point where language intersects with our perception of time and space, and he is a stranger at this crossing, without words or bearings" (op. cit. 99). In a playful metaphor I would say that it is as if ordinary people lived in an unsloughable black skin that is smudged black by biological and ideological polish in which only tiny pores let the excessive light of the infinite reality enter. This unsurpassable surface of skin, under which we slosh and bounce like blood, protects us like the shell of the snail; Tuttle in this respect could be regarded as a slug, "stripped of recognizable language and culture" (op. cit. 107), strewn all over with the biting salt of presence because of his ultimate exposure.

This is the first reading of this mysterious character that offers itself immediately but on a second thought it may turn out that with his elusive presence other significances present themselves for interpretation. A further analytic remove might yield a resolution, as Laura di Prete's insights evince it, of identifying Tuttle with Lauren or that part of Lauren that is inhabited by her affectionate attachment to Rey. What is inferable from the fact that Tuttle appears after Rey's death and disappears when Lauren finally manages to exorcise her traumatic experience of loss (through an extremely physical and straining performance act) may simply be that the presence of this enigmatic creature represents the struggle of coming to terms with vulnerability.

### Corporeal implications

On the last pages when Lauren seems at last to have accepted the fact that in order to reorganize herself in the matrix of the external world she has to let go of Rey (s memory) DeLillo in a beautiful passage summarizes the probable reason behind Tuttle's appearance which was to represent Lauren's protracted denial.

Why not sink into it? Let death bring you down. Give death its sway. Why shouldn't the death of a person you love bring you into lurid ruin? You don't know how to love the ones you love until they disappear abruptly. Then you understand how thinly distanced from their suffering, how sparing of self you often were, only rarely unguarded of heart, working your networks of give-and-take [...] Sink lower, she thought. Let it bring you down. Go where it takes you

(op. cit. 116).

This is the sentiment that in the end drives her through the gradation of self-recovery. The crucial step is to let it bring you down: "She stopped at the room's edge, facing back into the hall, and felt the emptiness around her. That's when she rocked down to the floor, backed against the doorpost. She went twistingly down, slowly, almost thoughtfully, and opened her mouth, *oh*, in a moan that remained unsounded" (op. cit. 123); which culminates in eventual acceptance and in a self-reliance of carrying on: "She walked into the room and went to the win-

<sup>9</sup> Comparing Tuttle to the children in the other novels it can be said that he is the totally unaffectedly natural one, the one whose ego is exempt from clotting. Alluding to Rousseau, he can be seen as the quintessential noble savage, for Rousseau argued "that the complexity and precision of language, suitable for sophisticated scientific inquiry and cultivated letters, are not signs of progress and superiority but of degeneration" (Dent 1995, 183). Degeneration in the sense of diverging from reality. "Under the pressures that have caused then to develop grammar, logic and precision of speech and writing, men have been forced further away from their natural state and mode of life" (ibid.).

dow. She opened it. She threw the window open. She didn't know why she did this. Then she knew. She wanted to feel the sea tang on her face and the flow of time in her body, to tell her who she was" (op. cit. 124).

As Laura di Prete in her essay titled "Don DeLillo's *The Body Artist*: Performing the Body, Narrating Trauma" quite cogently points out and proves "Mr. Tuttle is at the heart of DeLillo's larger project of staging traumatic reenactment" (Prete 2005, 484). Building on a "notion of 'voice' [...] [that] attends to nonverbal, physical perceptions and a notion of 'body' that, tongued and in touch with what the mind cannot know, will voice its unspoken truth" she shows how in the novella "voice and body function synergistically to force trauma into representation, to make it accessible in the recognition of its expressive limits, and to explore viable forms of working through" (ibid.). In this vein of thinking, the "phantom", objectifying unassimilated experience and thus being responsible for the compulsive repetitions and incapacity for any distinction between self and other that are haunting the split individual until s/he is able to come to terms with its traumatic past, is the embodiment and, in the present case, corporeal detachment of an unprocessed knowledge throbbing within the host, that is, in Lauren. Simply put, Tuttle is Lauren's unprocessed knowledge of loss whom "the dissonance between voice and body [summons]" (op. cit. 502). Quite understandably this is why di Prete assigns the "apparent timelessness or time stagnation" of the narrative to the aspect of grief. Within this narrative "past and future converge—and flatten—in a static traumatic present, a dimension shaped by the compulsive repetition and surfacing of fragments of traumatic memories" (op. cit. 492). Therefore, di Prete understands the recurring images, which I discussed above in connection with the formal features, as basically "the reenactment of a past that has not been cognitively processed" (op. cit. 493), or, in other words, pertaining to the sphere of traumatic experience. Seeing *Body Time*, the final performance act, the exorcisement of the phantom "as it internally recapitulates DeLillo's claim about the power of language in grounding and stabilizing identity" (op. cit. 509), an optimistic conclusion is inevitable.

The corporeal implications this essay offers are rather significant, yet my reading of the text does not allow for the tone of glib resolution I detect there. The struggle and labor that language and its motor, the human body, entails is not merely a 'rite of passage' but the only mode in that it can, may, and has to operate. Embodying the formal features of the novella, Mr. Tuttle, in one of his elusively detemporalized chants epitomizes the theme of, borrowing di Prete's dichotomy, bodily and vocal becoming:

Being here has come to me. I am with the moment, I will leave the moment. Chair, table, wall, hall, all for the moment, in the moment. It has come to me. Here and near. From the moment I am gone, am left, am leaving. I will leave the moment from the moment [...] Coming and going I am leaving. I will go and come. Leaving has come to me. We all, shall all, will all be left. Because I am here and where. And I will go or not or never. And I have seen what I will see. If I am where I will be. Because nothing comes between me

(DeLillo 2001, 74).

Internalizing Tuttle and assimilating at last the psychic rubble Lauren also declares that "Being here has come to me" (op. cit. 121), thereby implicating the vital priority of process as opposed to mental and physical stagnation. Jon Roberts in his essay titled "Being Here or Where: Changing the Subject in *The Body Artist*" claims that what the appearance and disrupted utterances of Tuttle furthers is Lauren's gradual abandonment of (her) self which in the end cannot take place, though, because it is "impossible to imagine of a language without a 'person's body' and its actions, actions that produce, reproduce, read, and communicate various meanings variously combined" (Roberts 2005). While emphasizing the materiality of signification there are, as in the latter sentence, hints to be found at the motile aspect involved in its operation as well.

'Mr. Tuttle's words and Lauren Hartke's words and the narrator of *The Body Artist's* words exist as text, but in their refusal to be fixed, in their change and difference, their words always suggest something present and alive, something embodied and living and already here though ever arriving, its utterances imparted with motions and posturings and gestures, all aimed at announcing itself as it is, here and now, yet always on its way

(ibid.).

Just as the narrative cannot get beyond its material base, language, so is Lauren/Tuttle unable to jettison the body and "disappear into a semiotic system" (ibid.). The combination of this doubled state of affairs as regards the book results in a merger and reciprocal enhancement of the content and the form. The content, which is a form, is mirrored in the form, which, in the last analysis, is responsible for the content. What DeLillo dramatizes in Lauren's physical and meta-physical suffering is the unavoidable impossibility of deliverance and yet at the same time the provisionally transfiguring power inherent in language (for "[t]ime is the only narrative that matters. It stretches events and makes it possible for us to suffer and come out of it and see death happen and come out of it" (op. cit. 92)). *Forma dat esse rei* as the adage says, form gives meaning to things. Indeed, on the surface a narrative is a narrative because its content is conveyed through the medium of language, and, in the same way, a person is a person because its existence is contained and conveyed through the medium of the body. Yet, bearing in mind the tenets of evolutionary epistemology and post-structuralism, it is clear that forms take shape in the basic need for coherence and meaning, therefore forms are always suspect and the adequate attitude is to try to maintain a healthy skepticism towards their haven of edifice. Subscribing to these ideas though never absolutely, this is what DeLillo does in the language of *The Body Artist*. Through its static deliverance and under its tensed surface, a dynamism of tension, a taut motility is working against the grain of form. The process (of taking shape) is primarily foregrounded and formal solidified resolutions emphatically disclaimed. Understandably the reason why I say that DeLillo never subscribes absolutely to post-structuralist thoughts is evident in the transitoriness of his narrative. As in the original sense of the word motility surges towards and aims at a fulfillment, thus it becomes sensible to say that vagueness and becoming generates hopeful expectation.

The "dead squirrel you see in the driveway, dead and decapitated, turns out to be a strip of curled burlap, but you look at it, you walk past it, even so, with a mixed tinge of terror and pity" (op. cit. 111) is an incident that destabilizes the authority of (superficial) perception, which, consequently, serves as a metaphor about the issues tackled in the novella itself. To support the skepticism I mentioned with respect to form a careful attention to the metaphorical repercussions involved should be relevant here.

In line with Joseph Frank's organic approach Phillip Stambovsky identifies literary experience as a "processive, integrally unified, dramatically evolved apprehension" (Stambovsky 1988, 17) where, he asserts, "literary metaphor depicts the themes that occasion it, conveying meaning imagistically" (op. cit. 3). By linking metaphors to the themes within the text that occasion them, clearly, Stambovsky argues for a contextual approach to metaphor, which in the present case proves more than appropriate if we consider the embedded metaphors in DeLillo's semantic matrix.

To see the metaphorical ripples running through *The Body Artist* enhancing and conveying the thematic concerns involved in it reverting to its exposition once more may prove helpful since, as I have suggested before, a conflict between design and something beyond design is perceptibly engrained within its imagery:

Time seems to pass. The world happens, unrolling into moments, and you stop to glance at a spider pressed to its web. There is a quickness of light and a sense of things outlined precisely and streaks

of running luster on the bay. You know more surely who you are on a strong bright day after a storm when the smallest falling leaf is stabbed with self-awareness. The wind makes a sound in the pines and the world comes into being, irreversibly, and the spider rides the wind-swayed web

(DeLillo 2001, 7).

Here one can discern a frame within which the clarity of vision is verging on the unmediatedness of perception. Though the image of the web-ridden spider may refer to a need for mediatedness, for a structure (web) that is necessary for beings (spider) to place them securely in the vast immensities they are cast into. The web is the design, that is, securing the ground for levitation, from whence its inhabitant commands its material existence. What is important to realize at this point is the fact that the web is violently swinging and swaying, not being merely stiffly and unaffectedly there, activating the words, to borrow some from Jon Roberts, of ductile, lithe, loose, flexible, yielding, malleable, supple, etc. In other words, there is a form, yet even if there is a form, it has to adapt to the circumstances; for in order to maintain a less insular mode of connection with reality, it has to swing to the rhythms of the wind. Words also, should swing to the rhythm of the fundamental motility underlying them, swinging, that is, in a self-skeptical manner that defy their solidification into, to use Julia Kristeva's term, the symbolic modality. As the recurring images of a leaf (first we see it stabbed with self-awareness and later it is shown to be twirling in front of the window suspended by a gossamer thread) and birds<sup>10</sup> (standing for Lauren's frame of transmogrificative mind) metaphorically suggest there is an essentially transitional character of things physically, and thus more directly, in touch with the habitat.

Similarly, the comprehending mind, that anchors the individual in the world, is shown to be at its overly constructive work in the following incident:

She was in town, driving down a hilly street of frame houses, and saw a man sitting on his porch ... a broad-faced blondish man, lounging. ... When the car moved past the house, in the pull of the full second, she understood that she was not looking at a seated man but at a paint can placed on a board that was balanced between two chairs

(op. cit. 70).

Again this passage can be read as a metaphor of the linguistic deadfall one can fall prey to if the handling of language's helve is not inspected gingerly; so what the fiction of the seated man primarily talks about is the fundamental urge for significance.

The same sort of reading is offered in a passage which is moreover complemented with the idea that occasionally there is even a bleatedness adhering to comprehension.

You stand at the table shuffling papers and you drop something. Only you don't know it. It takes a second or two before you know it and even then you know it only as a formless distortion of the teeming space around your body. But once you know you've dropped something, you hear it hit the floor, belatedly. The sound makes its way through an immense web of distances. You hear the thing fall and know what it is at the same time, more or less, and it's a paperclip. You know this from the sound it makes when it hits the floor and from the retrieved memory of the drop itself, the thing falling from your hand or slipping off the edge of the page to which it was clipped. It slipped off the edge of the page. Now that you know you dropped it, you remember how it happened, or half remember, or sort of see it maybe, or something else. The paperclip hits the floor with an end-to-end bounce, faint and weightless, a sound for which there is no imitative word, the sound of a paperclip falling, but when you bend to pick it up, it isn't there

(op. cit. 89-90).

<sup>10</sup> In Ad de Vries' *Dictionary of Symbols and Imagery* birds are defined to symbolize among other things "spiritualization, time: a passage in space = a passage in time ... substantiation of the soul ... immortality: transmigration of the soul" (Vries 1984, 47).

In the image of the paperclip on may hear the faint echo of Mr. Tuttle's visit, which, after processing its course, turns out to be presumably a figment of traumatic imagination. Nevertheless, the tone assigned to the passage unmistakably *tenses* it in its tentative deliverance. Another kind of metaphor, underscoring this tentative quality of the narrative occurs in the instance when the sudden sensation of the dissociated motion of flowing vehicles on the lanes seems to stand for the whole tensed atmosphere characterizing both the narration and Lauren's hovering frame of mind:

It's a hazy white day and the highway lifts to a drained sky. There are four northbound lanes and you are driving in the third lane and there are cars ahead and behind and to both sides, although not too many and not too close. When you reach the top of the incline, something happens and the cars begin to move unhurriedly now, seemingly self-propelled, coasting smoothly on the level surface. Everything is slow and hazy and drained and it all happens around the word *seem*. All the cars including yours seem to flow in dissociated motion, giving the impression of or presenting the appearance of, and the highway runs in a white hum. Then the mood passes. The noise and rush and blur are back and you slide into your life again, feeling the painful weight in your chest  
(op. cit 31).

Given the detachment and muffled quality of the narration, which never concedes to a fixed and set formula, everything in it seems to be its own paraphrase so much so that certain of its elements, as the above quoted passages, in their miniature, maquette-like rendering of the novella automatically function as a metaphors about it. In sum, it can be said that these instances, as I claim, by depicting the themes that occasion them bespeak of an ineluctable tentativeness which is made feasible in the first place via the formal cues DeLillo uses to destabilize the narrative. Without their (in)definite formal background the themes would never emerge.

As I indicated above, in the texture of the novella there is skepticism (toward the ever congealing language) to be traced that is evident in the formal and thematic (and within that in the metaphorical) aspects of its structure, which curiously is compensated for in the latent promise that the, to put it this way, teleologically engineered and propelled expectation of the becoming text offers. There is, in brief, the ambivalent sentiment I propose DeLillo possesses, which is the knowledge of futility and the motivation to proffer provisional strategies to surpass the conclusiveness of that futility. The method DeLillo chooses is to substitute *becoming* for *being* and tone the language accordingly in an inconclusive, indefinite, ever ductile, yielding and open manner. The terms in which I am talking now indicates the final step to be taken in order to round eventually out the argument about the synergic effects of the formal and thematic syzygy.

### The design meshing with the figure

You could hear a pin drop. This is an expression, rather reminiscent of the above mentioned paperclip affair which expresses the aura of a muted tension. Appealing to the minimalist credo an ambition to educe *much* from a basis of *less* is detectable to be at work here. Even if this *much* is merely implicated and never actually arrived at its promise and 'latency' is never denied, what is more, it is enhanced by the *less* definite manner in which it is suggested. DeLillo's text is never in repose even if it definitely seems so. The static tone of the novella, the aura into which it is formally keyed, bespeaks of an overflowing subtext of a tension that lends a poised quality to the texture which, in fact, qualifies the actual thematic concerns involved in it. The synergic operation of the thematic and formal duality of the text is without doubt rendered feasible primarily via the formal configurations DeLillo adopts (or invents). Flexing the muscles and doing extreme body stretches and contortions, Lauren represents DeLillo's way with language. In

deploying an inconclusive strategy and thus leaving sensually and semantically open the things depicted, by destabilizing a descriptive narratorial voice, DeLillo attempts and achieves to realize the maximum potential inherent in language to deliver his fleeting and delicate sense. The modestly tantalizing tone of this tentative voice results in a poised narrative that immerses the reader in the illusion of a presence which is to resemble the openness and caprice of the external world, and to that end it is grounded in an openness of voice never claiming authority to delimit its object, or, subject. Trite as it may sound but what has prospecting vitality and a true potential is always the unknown that is beyond the reductive, deforming and distorting mental murder of familiarity. That is why “somehow” becomes not the weakest, as the narrator claims, but, on the contrary, the strongest of words.

To draw a moral from the story at the intersection of the novella and my essay it seems to be not unwarranted to state that in meticulously flexing the tone what DeLillo communicates may be the understanding that the only proper way one is to adopt is to avoid the extremes of either losing *form* or that of solidifying into one. As we have seen Lauren in the end does not fade out of the social matrix and in a telling gesture she opens the window because she “wanted to feel the sea tang on her face and the flow of time in her body, to tell her who she was” (DeLillo 2001, 124), so she is absolved by regaining her harmonious self, which is first and foremost a body, but, as the corporeal and linguistic suggestions attest to it, she would have fallen to pieces were it not for her persistence in listening (through Tuttle) and holding to her body, her body in time and her body in linguistic reality. In the same way, as the formal realizations evidence it, language should be anchored in a material base but to avoid its deadening automatization it constantly has to be prevented from fading into solidifications of convenient patterns; it has to remain alive, that is, it has to maintain a tension between these two extremes because adopting either of these two attitudes would mean to lose contact with the nature of reality we inhabit. Perhaps the motor behind all creative action, and action at all, or even existence is the tension stretching between the knowledge of futility and its visceral denial that manifests itself in such configurations as artworks. Perhaps if there was a way, there would be no way at all. Perhaps the condition for the possibility of a way, of ever-changing provisional ways, is the absence of an ultimate way. Perhaps it is an absence that exerts a gravitational pull on every phenomena of the human mind; a pull that is inescapable and blind like in the halo of a cosmic black hole.

In *The Names* my interest was the way in which a mind centered on ritual can so easily slip off into violence. I thought that ritual stripped from the world becomes dangerous, becomes violent. It loses its connection. It's almost pure silence devolving into nuclear weaponry in a curious way, in the way a theory, a formula on a blackboard, like  $E = mc^2$ , progresses into a bomb explosion on the other side of the world. It's a little like that. These people had removed themselves from the world. And they were acting out of an impetus of pure mind

(op. cit. 90).

This obsession DeLillo talks about is a deathly dedication to a way of looking at the world the consequences of which in extreme cases, as DeLillo points out, can be devastating, therefore the only sane way of looking at the world seems to be a flexible one. To achieve our “end” then, it seems, is to be done by never losing sight of our various means and also by never committing the error of restricting ourselves totally to one of their set parameters.

In this sense what DeLillo seems to pay homage to in his literary work of art is the eternal human dilemma of how to conduct a meaningful life within the confines of linguistic and corporeal forms. Tersely, put, the idea is: accepting though never settling; for, again, what the narrative that avoids repose suggests is that you cannot and should not shed *form* but its configurations you must control, and no dissolution (of linguistic and corporeal form) is possible yet

solutions are to be avoided. Faintly echoing these concerns DeLillo in an interview asserts that "repetitions create a warped consumerism" (DeLillo in Moss 1999, 91), and in the same interview he defines the writer's character as an individual taking a stand against the aero wheel of consumption, he says:

the writer in opposition is an idea one has to take seriously. The writer opposed—in theory, in general principle—to the state, the corporation and to the endless cycle of consumption and instantaneous waste. In sort of an unconscious way, I think this is why writers, some of us, write long, complicated, challenging novels. As a way of stating our opposition to the requirements of the market

(op. cit. 94).

Collating these sentiments with the propositions I made in connection with the poiesis of *The Body Artist* one could say that, in the manner of Wallace Stevens, there is an exaltation of the creative imagination that is forceful and active and never settles into transparent and scrutable patterns, which is in stark contrast with the passivity of consumption. In other words, (creative) production is propagated against the idle and atrophic assumptions of consumption.

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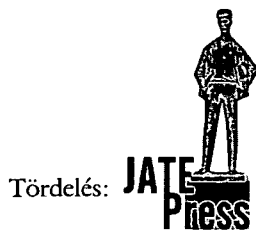
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Kaposvári Márk  
Tension and Tense in DeLillo's Art of Prose

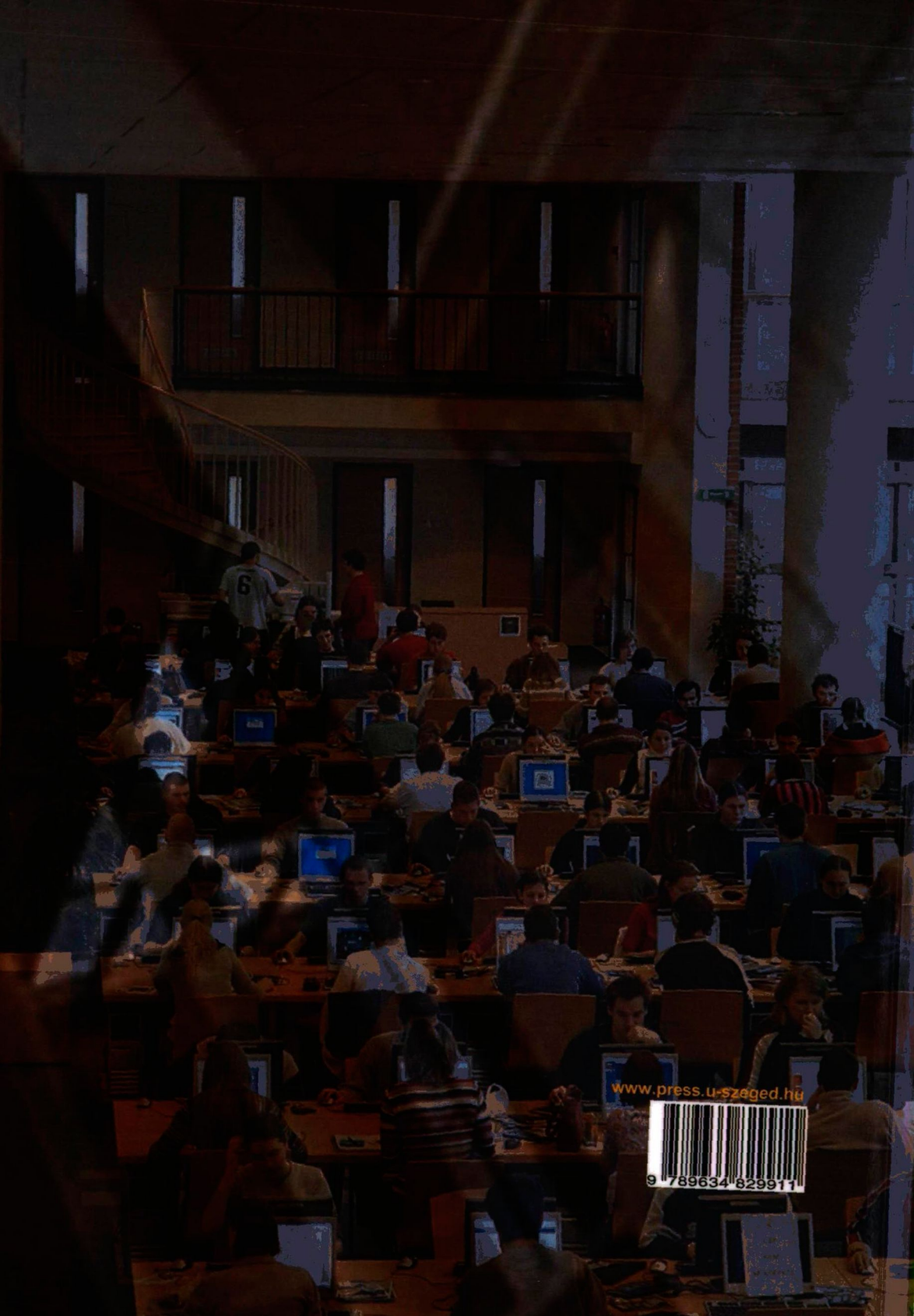
The connection between man and his world is possible via language. Language binds people and their reality together and enables orientation for the former in the latter. As to how close this language of the humankind is to the real things of the world, the answer has always been controversial. Today, in the light of postmodern and post-structuralist theories of language, it is accepted that language is merely a system, a structure, with insoluble limitations. Besides this, however, there has always been present the trend that searches for and tries to invent the perfect language, which like Adam's language in the Bible, is in direct and harmonious connection with the world. Most of the postmodern writers, naturally, emphasize the corruptness of language, but there are exceptions who fit within somewhere in between the two traditions. There are, in fact, postmodern writers who realize the limitations inherent in language still search for and perhaps believe in the existence of a redemptive language that connects directly to the world. Don DeLillo is one of these writers. In my paper, first I shall look at briefly two of his earlier novels (*White Noise*, *The Names*) in which there are instances when characters experience a kind of lingual transcendence, then I analyze in more detail one of his newest novel, *The Body Artist*. In this novel, there is a fantasy-like character (Mr. Tuttle) who, by being in every term exposed to the real world, is unable to lean on the soothing banisters of human language and a temporally determined perception. DeLillo problematizes human cognition in him but also attempts to absolve the presented disposition characteristic of humans. He tries also to provide a cure for that disposition of the 'language-disease' and in trying to achieve this he sets the tone of this novel consciously in an indefinite and elusive manner. He tries thus to transcend everyday language through an enigmatic representation that aims at a cathartic experience in the reader in order to arrive at another and perhaps more direct or sensual relationship with the world.



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